

**FRAMING POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT: A  
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POST-ELECTION NEWSPAPER  
EDITORIALS AND PARLIAMENTARY SPEECHES IN MALAWI**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of  
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**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **FRAMING POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POST-ELECTION NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS AND PARLIAMENTARY SPEECHES IN MALAWI**

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The study compares and examines parliamentary rhetoric against newspaper editorials in Malawi to establish whether or not there are parallels in the way political issues are presented in both arenas. The study intends to establish whether or not newspapers in Malawi provide critical and analytical voices for newspaper readers or whether or not they simply reflect the political positions of their owners' political parties by reflecting those political parties' rhetoric in parliament.

The study uses three case studies. Specifically, these are the one hundred days following 1994, 1999 and 2004 elections. Newly elected governments tend to use the early days of their election into office to articulate and lay the foundations of implementing their policies.

The study uses frame theory analysis as a theoretical and analytical tool. The four main components of a frame: Problem Definition, Causal Interpretation, Moral Evaluation and Treatment Recommendation are used to detect frames in the corpora. Data were coded in accordance with the grounded theory method.

Findings indicate that in 1994 and 1999, newspaper editorial writers framed political issues by reflecting the positions of their owners. However, in the 2004 case study, while the newspapers' framing of political issues did not differ from parliamentary framing, changes in ownership and owners' political re-alignment affected framing. The newspapers no longer reflected the position of the political parties, there was no division along political party-lines, and they did not take cues from parliament

The study contributes to the study of political communication in Malawi by studying frames emerging from editorial and parliamentary discourse. Further, it contributes to a further understanding of linkages between issue-specific frames and generic frames in the African context.

*To the memory of late my father, Mr. Ezra July Mchakulu,*

*and for my mother, Mrs. Sikelina Mchakulu,*

*two people who planned it all,*

*and sacrificed everything for the sake of my education.*

*Thank You!*

*I love you with all my heart*

*Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*

*Ecclesiastes 12:12-13*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFORD	Alliance for Democracy
BNL	Blantyre Newspapers Limited
CAQDAS	Computer-assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CONU	Congress of National Unity
EISA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JAMA	Journalists Association of Malawi
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MCM	Media Council of Malawi
MEC	Malawi Electoral Commission
MGODE	Movement for Genuine Democracy
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MP	Member of Parliament
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NPL	Nation Publications Limited
PETRA	People's Transformation Alliance
PPM	People's Progressive Movement
QDA Miner	Qualitative Data Analysis Miner
RP	Republican Party
TVM	Television Malawi
UDF	United Democratic Front

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This study examines editorial and parliamentary framing of post-elections political communication in multiparty Malawi since 1994. The examination of frames is undertaken in the form of case studies representing key stages in Malawi's democratic evolution since 1994 when the country made the transition from one party rule to a multiparty system of governance. As a way of assessing the independence (or lack of it) of newspapers' commentary on political issues in Malawi, the study compares and contrasts frames in newspaper editorials and opinion pieces against frames in parliamentary discourse.

The study applies this comparative approach in three case studies drawn from three post-elections contexts over a period of ten years starting from 1994 to 2004. The study will attempt to demonstrate whether or not the framing of political issues changes over a period of time as ownership changes and re-aligns itself with or away from political parties. As such the study is predicated on the assumption that for as long as a newspapers' ownership is aligned to a political party, the newspaper's framing of political issues will mirror the position of that political party as reflected in parliamentary discourse.

The study will compare newspaper discourse against parliamentary discourse using frame analysis as an assessment tool. The frames detected in both corpora will then be discussed against the background of newspapers' ownership in Malawi. This is not a frame analysis study on election campaigns. This is a frame analysis study on the framing of political issues in periods immediately following elections. This is the reason



why the newspapers' discourse is drawn from the first one hundred days following the announcement of an election's outcome, and the parliamentary discourse is drawn from the first meeting of a new parliament following an election.

Specifically, the study will examine the Malawian press discourse and the discourse of the National Assembly of Malawi, which is the official name of Malawi's parliament, in the framing of political issues in the post-election periods in 1994, 1999 and 2004. The emergent frames in both arenas will be discussed in light of the unpredictable shifting alliances of political power and newspaper ownership.

This study seeks to fill a number of gaps in the research literature on mass media and democratisation in Malawi. First, it seeks to examine the similarities and differences in newspaper discourse and parliamentary discourse on the framing of political issues. Second, it attempts to identify whether or not newspaper ownership and its alignment to political parties affects the framing, and whether or not there are shifts in framing whenever newspaper ownership and its alignment with political forces change. Third, it attempts to provide insights on the effects of this state of affairs on the mass media's role in a society in transition.

Apart from the three reasons above, the study also breaks new ground in the study of mass media and democratisation in Malawi on a number of fronts. First, a literature search did not identify any study in Malawian political communication that uses frame analysis as a tool of studying political communication. Second, the literature search did not find any study that attempts to understand the influence of ownership and its alignment to political parties by examining the text of newspaper discourse. Thus, the study is poised to open new frontiers in Malawian political communication research.

Apart from this introductory section, this chapter sets the thesis in general context through the instrumentality of six other sections. This section will be followed by a

section that sets forth the historical-political background giving rise to the present political situation in Malawi and the critical press and democratic issues arising out of this context. This section will be followed by a discussion of three case studies instrumental to answering the research questions. The next section will provide the study's three principal research questions and a brief rationale for each research question. Following this, will be a section outlining the methodological rationale of the study including a discussion on the choice of newspapers, the instrumentality of the written parliamentary record, and the rationale of the case study approach. This section is followed by another discussing the structure of the entire thesis. The chapter concludes with a summary section highlighting the main points of the chapter.

## **1.1 Background and Rationale**

### **1.1.1 Transition to Multiparty Politics**

According to Occitti (1999) the collapse of dictatorships in some African countries, Malawi included, is the end result of a combination of domestic demands and outside pressure. These changes have been linked to the changes which took place in Europe following the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War. Many African countries underwent relatively peaceful transitions to liberal democracy and market-based economies. As in Eastern Europe, students and civil society including the Church and trade unions, agitated for reforms in governance. Two major factors seem to be the catalysts of the events of 1992 and 1993 leading to a multiparty system of governance in Malawi.

First, Posner (1995) argues that prior to 1992, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi's first leader from 1964 to the end of his presidency in 1994 (See Appendix I),

had successfully convinced Western governments to support him on the basis of his anti-communist stance. Propped up by economic support from Western governments, Dr. Banda and his Malawi Congress Party (MCP) imposed an unchallenged dictatorship on the country between 1964 and 1994. The end of the Cold War and the resulting hegemony of the USA and its Western allies meant that they were no longer obliged to prop up Banda's government. The western governments pressured Banda into making the necessary governance changes by withdrawing much needed budgetary support.

The second factor is linked to the above essentially because overt international pressure and the resulting changes elsewhere emboldened Malawians to demand similar change from their government and hope for positive change (Ross and Phiri, 1996). In this regard, most important is the pastoral letter issued by Malawi's eight Catholic bishops on 8 March 1992 which severely criticised the government. Entitled *Living Our Faith*, the pastoral letter outlined the government's shortcomings in a way that resonated with the people.

Buoyed by the groundswell of support generated by the pastoral letter among the citizenry, organized opposition began to emerge from underground. Two pressure groups, which later became political parties, were formed. Led by trade unionist, Chakufwa Tom Chihana, the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) was the first to appear. The United Democratic Front (UDF) emerged from among businessmen whose common bond was their connection to the Chamber of Commerce and Industries in Blantyre. It was led by businessman and former MCP Secretary-General, Bakili Muluzi.

A referendum was held on 14 June 1993. Sixty-seven percent of voters chose a multiparty system of government. On 17 May 1994, Malawians went to the polls to elect a new government. Bakili Muluzi of the UDF was elected the second president of the country and the UDF won the majority seats in parliament.

### **1.1.2 Critical Issues on the Press and Democracy in Malawi**

The change described above brought with it unprecedented freedom for the people of Malawi. Unfortunately, the multiple political voices in Malawi also brought with them political crises that have severely tested Malawi's nascent democracy. Among these crises are the post-electoral upheavals that have come in the wake of the conduct of the 1999 and 2004 elections, as well as attempts by the ruling party to change the constitution in order to allow the then president, Dr. Bakili Muluzi, to run for a third term, and the national budget crises of 2006, 2007 and 2008.

The role of the mass media has been a continuous source of contentious political and public debate since government removed restrictions on the press in 1993. Some mass media scholars (Chimombo and Chimombo, 1996, p.25-33, p.61-74; Chipangula, 2004; Patel, 2000) have pointed to an adverse tendency of the mass media to intrude and insert themselves into the political debate on public policy and electoral issues in a manner that these scholars see as lacking objectivity and balance. The same scholars have also noted that newspapers tend to favour their owners' political parties in news coverage. In this respect, these studies have observed the adverse effects of newspapers' ownership on the public sphere.

This study makes a number of critical observations with regard to the similarities and differences in the press/parliamentary framing of political contests during the 10 years period following the re-appearance of multiparty politics in Malawi. These observations depend on a number of factors that influence parliamentary political discourse and newspaper political discourse.

This study attempts to add to this body of knowledge by examining and comparing editorials in newspapers against parliamentary discourse. It is hoped that the study will

be able to establish whether or not the newspapers mirror the position of parties aligned to their owners on political issues in post-election settings.

The study will examine press coverage in five newspapers. These are the *Daily Times* and the *Malawi News* owned by the Blantyre Newspapers Limited (BNL). The other two newspapers are the *Nation* and the *Weekend Nation* owned by the Nation Publication Limited (NPL). The last one is the *Chronicle* which was owned by Rob Jamieson. The study will pay particular attention to ownership and its political affiliation through the various epochs covered by the study. A fuller history of the six newspapers will be given in chapter three. However, a brief overview is needed here to explain why the study will examine ownership and its political affiliation.

The BNL newspapers were owned by Malawi's first president, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, with some shares being held by the MCP. However, when Dr. Kamuzu Banda died in 1997, the newspapers passed on to his extended family in 2002 after a brief period in which the government held control. The family was not affiliated to any political party. In the case of the NPL stable, the owner, Mr. Aleke Banda was a member of the UDF between 1994 and 2003. He changed political affiliation in 2004. The *Chronicle* was owned by Rob Jameson, a democracy activist between 1992 and 1994. He was variously linked with democratic civil society from time to time during the life of the newspapers. Consequently, this study intends to examine political discourse in the newspapers against discourse in parliamentary speeches to ascertain whether or not newspapers will editorially favour their owners' political position.

### **1.1.3 Frame Theory**

The study takes frame theory as its theoretical point of departure. Other studies of political communication studies in Malawi have applied discourse analysis based on a

limited sample. In this respect, framing refers to the construction of phenomena by mass media or other entities. Essentially, it is assumed by scholars of frame theory analysis that politicians, the mass media and social movements seek to influence the public's perception of an issue through careful selection, packaging and emphasis of the issues inherent in a phenomena. Thus framing seeks to encourage certain interpretations and to discourage or downplay others. Entman (1993, 2004) argues that:

*'To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described'* (Entman 1993, p. 52, his emphasis).

This study takes the above definition as its analytical point of departure. It uses qualitative methods as used and recommended by other frame theorists to break open editorials and parliamentary speeches using the four main frame components, problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation as guides in the coding process.

## **1.2 The Case Studies**

Four case studies have been identified for this study. These are the 1994 post-election period, the 1999 post-election period, and the 2004 post-election period. It is important to note that this investigation will not be concentrating on the periods prior to these elections. Rather, the study will concentrate on the first hundred days following the swearing in of a new government. Thus, the use of the term post-election period is employed. The study will concentrate on the first one hundred days for two main reasons.

The first reason is that the press in Malawi have a tradition of marking a new president's hundredth day in office with special editions evaluating the performance of the new president in the first one hundred days of his term. These first hundred days have been called the "honeymoon" days by the press (*Daily Times*, 1994, p.1; See also the *Nation*, 2004, p.4). The implication being that the new president has the goodwill of both the people and the press corps during those first hundred days to demonstrate the abilities of his government and to begin to implement his campaign manifesto. In this respect, the first one hundred are days of expectations. For the press, these days are filled with evaluative commentary on the performance of the new president and his government.

The second reason is that presidential and parliamentary elections take place simultaneously. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, Section 67 (2), the new president must call a session of the new parliament within 45 days of its swearing-in. Each sitting lasts from between six to eight weeks. It appears prudent to assume that the sitting of parliament will take place and last within the first hundred days of the new presidency. Such a timing of parliament permits parliamentarians to evaluate the new administration and the outgoing administration. This kind of environment enables a politically rich discourse in the National Assembly.

### **1.2.1 1994 Post-Election Case Study**

The UDF victory in the 1994 presidential and parliamentary election was marred by manifest regional voting patterns. While international observers declared the election free and fair, it was clear that the elections had managed to either fracture the country along regional and tribal lines or to reveal latent regional and tribal affinities among the electorate.

About 3.8 million citizens voted in the 1994 elections. Bakili Muluzi of the UDF was elected President by 1,404,754 votes representing 47.16% of the total votes cast. The incumbent, Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda of the MCP, had 996,363 votes representing 33.45% of the votes cast. The AFORD leader, Chakufwa Chihana, came third with 552,862 votes.

In the parliamentary election, the UDF won the most seats in parliament mainly due to the support they received in the populous Southern Region. The UDF also managed to secure seats in the Central Region's lakeshore districts where there are significant Yao tribesmen and Muslim populations. The UDF also won seats in Ntcheu district, and the urban areas of the capital, Lilongwe, where the population is heterogeneous. However, with 84 seats out of a total of 177, the UDF finished five seats short of an overall majority.

The MCP emerged as the second largest party in parliament with 55 seats. The party won the bulk of its seats in the rural Central Region of Malawi. They also won some seats in the Southern Region districts of Chikwawa and Nsanje from where their then Vice-President, Gwanda Chakuamba, comes and is popular.

The AFORD became the third party in parliament with 36 seats. The AFORD swept all the parliamentary seats in the Northern Region. The AFORD also won some seats in the Central Region in districts bordering the Northern Region.

The UDF and the MCP sought to gain control in the National Assembly by courting the AFORD. In this respect, the AFORD emerged as an unlikely power-broker. When the first multiparty parliament opened in June 1994, the AFORD had entered into an alliance with the MCP that threatened the ability of the UDF to pass bills. This state of affairs served as the political backdrop of the immediate aftermath of the 1994 election and the next five years into the 1999 election.



### **1.2.2 1999 Post-Election Case Study**

Unlike the outcome of the 1994 election, the results of the election of the 1999 election were bitterly disputed. The incumbent, Bakili Muluzi of the UDF, won the presidential race by 2,442, 685 votes. He won 78.3% of the Southern Region votes, 35.2% of the Central Region votes, and 9.4% of the Northern Region votes. Muluzi's total count was 335,895 votes higher than Gwanda Chakuamba who represented the MCP/AFORD alliance. Chakuamba had 2,106,790 votes. He won 88.6% of the Northern Region votes, 62.4% of the Central Region votes and 18.5% of the Southern Region votes.

The UDF also emerged as the largest single party in parliament with 93 seats out of the 192 seats contested for nationwide. However, the UDF won only one constituency in the Northern Region and 16 in the Central Region. The MCP emerged as the second largest party in parliament with 66 seats. The bulk of these seats (54) were won in the Central Region. The MCP won only four seats in the Northern Region and eight in the Southern Region. The AFORD won 26 seats. Twenty-five of these seats were won in the Northern Region. The party won one seat in the Central Region and none in the Southern Region. The election results also produced four independent MPs who decided to vote with the UDF during their term in parliament.

A number of factors ensured that the outcome of the 1999 election was always going to be a flashpoint of violence as Wiseman (2000) notes. Such factors included the perceived bias towards the ruling party by the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) Chairman, mismanagement of voter registration by the MEC, and the tendency by the ruling party of using state resources for campaign purposes. It was no surprise, therefore, when the MCP/AFORD alliance bitterly disputed the results and charged that there was widespread fraud in the process. They implicated both the ruling UDF and the MEC. They refused to recognise Bakili Muluzi as the elected president of Malawi.

Violence erupted in the Northern Region. Seventeen Mosques were burned by rioters who identified Islam with the UDF because Bakili Muluzi is a Moslem. Businesses belonging to UDF supporters were looted and destroyed and some Southerners were expelled from the Northern Region leading to some individuals fleeing to the Southern Region. This, in turn, provoked retaliation in the Southern Region where opposition party offices were destroyed and opposition supporters were attacked. Sectarian violence was reported in Mangochi district, which has a majority Moslem population, where some churches were destroyed by rioters. The opposition boycotted the opening session of the new parliament. This boycott had significant effects on the framing of political issues in parliament as will be noted in chapter five of this thesis.

### **1.2.3 The 2004 Post-Election Case Study**

An array of political parties emerged to contest the 2004 election alongside the traditional ones. Some of the new parties including the Republican Party (RP), the Movement for Genuine Democracy (MGODE), and the People's Progressive Movement (PPM) formed a coalition called the Mgwirizano Coalition headed by the former MCP President, Gwanda Chakuamba, as its presidential candidate. AFORD entered into an alliance with the UDF in which Bingu wa Mutharika was the presidential candidate. The MCP and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) each decided to contest alone much to the annoyance of civil society (For a fuller discussion of this aspect see Muula and Chanika, 2004; see also EISA, 2004, p.12) who had hoped that the two parties would join the Mgwirizano Coalition.

Since the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi limits presidential terms to two, the incumbent Bakili Muluzi was ineligible to contest the 2004 elections. Dr. Bingu wa

Mutharika, a former World Bank economist and former Secretary-General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, was handpicked by Muluzi and the UDF executive as its presidential candidate (see Maroleng, 2004 and Khaila and Chibwana 2005). Some senior members of the party were dissatisfied with this state of affairs and left.

As with the 1999 election there were serious issues with the management of the election. The opposition and civil society complained about the management of the voter registration exercise. As in 1999, there was a serious shortage of cameras, film, batteries, transfer forms and duplicate forms most noticeable in the opposition strongholds in the Central and Northern Regions (Dulani, 2004). Further, Dulani (2004) notes the use of state resources by the ruling UDF's campaign and the inability of the MEC to do anything about this. Indeed, Neale (2004) confirmed the biased coverage of the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) in favour of the ruling party. The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) 2004 monitoring report noted that this unequal use of state resources could have tilted the elections in favour of the UDF.

In the presidential race, Bingu wa Mutharika of the UDF won 1,119,738 votes. This was 35.8% of the total votes cast in the presidential race. John Tembo, of the MCP received 846,457 votes representing 27% of the total votes in the presidential race. Gwanda Chakuamba of the Mgwirizano had 802,386 votes representing 26% of the total.

After the elections, observers of politics noted the lingering regionalism. The UDF candidate, Mutharika, had drawn most of his support from the traditional UDF stronghold, the Southern Region, where he received 55% of the vote. In the Central Region, he managed 23% and 18% in the Central Region. The MCP candidate, John

Tembo, drew most of his support from the Central Region where he managed 64% of the vote. He got only 3% in the Northern Region and 2% in the Southern Region.

The MCP emerged as the largest party in the new parliament with 59 seats representing 30.5% of the total seats in the National Assembly. The UDF had 49 seats representing 25.3% of the total. The Mgwirizano Coalitions had 27 seats representing 13.9% of the total and 38 seats were taken by independent candidates representing 19.6% of the total. Other political parties took 14 seats representing 7.2% of the total. It is important to note that these elections marked the beginning of the demise of the AFORD as a major party in Malawi. It only managed one seat in the new parliament.

Given this chaotic background during the campaign period and run-up to the general election, it was not surprising that the election outcome was disputed. This is particularly true of the presidential race. There were riots in the largest commercial city, Blantyre in the Southern Region, and the city of Mzuzu in the Northern Region. The main opposition parties challenged the outcome in the High Court.

The above factors shaped the discourse on political issues in the post-2004 election. The economy was in ruins due to years of fiscal indiscipline and corruption. There was a food crisis looming due to a drought. The ill-will generated by the perceived poor management of the election only seemed to exacerbate the political situation. Further, the perceived notion that the new president was a political puppet of the former president, Bakili Muluzi, meant that he could not expect much respect from parliament.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The preceding sections have set out the political-historical context of the study. Further, it has identified gaps in present literature on the media's role in a multiparty

Malawi, and how this study will fill these gaps. In view of the preceding discussion, the research study attempts to answer the following related research questions:

**Research Question One:** What were the similarities and differences in newspapers editorials and parliamentary speeches framing of political issues in the period immediately following the 1994, 1999, and 2004 general elections?

**Research Question Two:** Based on the analysis in Question One above, is there evidence suggesting that changes in newspapers' ownership and its alignment to political parties result in changes in the nature of framing in editorials across the case studies?

With respect to Question One, the study will attempt to address the issue of whether or not newspapers have attained the much desired level of critical independent journalism reflecting the national interest rather than narrow political ambitions of the newspapers' owners (Chimombo and Chimombo, 1996, p.25-33; Chimombo and Chimombo, 1996, p. 61-74; Chipangula, 2004; Patel, 2000). The question will attempt to establish whether or not newspapers act as an arena where popular political will is shaped, to paraphrase Dahlgren and Sparks (1991, p.2). To establish that aspect, a comparative approach is taken in which editorial frames are compared to parliamentary framing where framing is shaped by political party affiliation.

With respect to Question Two, the study will attempt to establish the evolution of frames over the ten years covered by the case studies. In doing this, the frames detected in the analysis for Question One will be examined against the backdrop of changing newspapers' ownership and its alignment to political parties represented in parliament over the ten years period. This is in view of the historical position of the press in Malawi as will be discussed in the literature review chapter.

While the study will discuss the frames detected within the historical and contemporary context of media ownership in Malawi, this study is not a political economy study. Discussion about media ownership will only be used to understand the forces that shaped frames that emerged from the editorials corpus. Further, while the study will discuss the frames detected in the context of the media's role in enhancing democracy, this study is not primarily about the public sphere in Malawi. It still remains primarily a study on framing and frame analysis in Malawian newspapers compared against frames in parliamentary discourse.

## **1.4 Methodological Considerations**

The study investigated framing in two major institutions of a democracy - newspapers and parliament. The study approached this issue through a computer-assisted detection of frames in three case studies in editorials and news articles in five newspapers – *The Daily Times*, the *Malawi News*, the *Nation*, the *Weekend Nation*, and the *Chronicle*. This study uses archived newspaper articles and archived parliamentary debates recorded verbatim in the parliamentary record called *Hansard* as data sources.

### **1.4.1 Newspapers**

Two main reasons necessitated the use of newspapers in this study. First, newspaper back issues proved to be more readily available than radio broadcast archives. The different national libraries including the National Library Service, the National Archives and the University Library have archival systems that collectively covered the chosen study periods. Most of the radio stations did not have archives to draw from for this study's data needs. Only the MBC had an archive. However, access to that archive for

this study was denied. Thus, the study was best served by drawing from the readily available newspapers' archives.

The second reason has to do with the issue of ownership which is quite important in this study. In this regard, it could have been impossible to examine the issue of ownership and its influence on framing had the study investigated the broadcast media. The only private radio station in Malawi until 1999 was a religious and training radio station which does not broadcast news.

The third reason for choosing newspapers is that it proved relatively logical in an initial study such as this one to compare media that are similar to a certain extent. The parliamentary record, *Hansard*, is in print form. This enabled the researcher to use the paragraph as a unit of analysis at the opening coding level for both newspapers and the *Hansard* as will be noted in chapter three.

#### **1.4.2 Parliamentary Discourse and Records**

The analysis of parliamentary debates is at the confluence of a number of developments in political communication. The rise of theories of deliberative democracy (for example, Habermas, 1996; Gutman and Thompson, 1996, 2004) has focused attention on the discursive elements of political interaction, including interaction among political representatives (Uhr, 1998). If democratic politics involves the giving and exchange of reasons in public discussions, then the study of how reasons are given becomes important. In parliaments, representatives offer arguments in support of positions they adopt and an important function of such arguments is to frame issues in certain ways. Thus studying parliamentary discourse contributes to an understanding of how policy issues are framed. Further, within the philosophy of social science, the legitimising role of discourse has been used to refute claims that parliamentary debate is merely

epiphenomenal to the motivation of real interests (see Skinner, 1974, on the work of Namier, 1957).

The choice of the *Hansard* as the source of parliamentary frames provides this study with one important advantage. Parliamentary speeches in the *Hansard* (even with the minor editing mentioned above) are unrefined by third parties. Unlike interviews, which usually take place after a crisis, parliamentary debates do not allow parliamentarians to reconstruct their positions. This state of affairs really leaves the researcher with no other source for a near perfect representation of a written parliamentary record other than the *Hansard*.

### **1.4.3 Case Study Approach**

The case studies have been chosen because they will permit a discussion of the political communication environment in the various epochs of this investigation. Different dynamics were inherent in the political communications environment during these phases of Malawian political history. Consequently, a more reliable understanding can be expected. Further, there were no political phenomena greater than these starting from 1994 to 2004. Thus, these case studies represent crucial defining periods for Malawians politically.

These case studies assume the instrumental role defined by Stake (2000, p.437). Stake argues that an instrumental case study assists in increasing the understanding of a phenomenon. Such cases are purposefully selected not because they are interesting or striking but because they lend themselves to the extraction of generalisations in the understanding of a process. In this particular regard, the aim is to understand how media frame politics and public policy issues in Malawi and what factors influence the framing process. In this research study, the selected case studies can be seen as a means to



provide a better understanding of a wider collection of similar happenings in Malawi, present or in the future. Thus the context in which the framing process occurs is highly significant in this research study. As Yin (2003, 13) argues, case studies emphasise the context within which a specific issue or phenomenon develops.

## **1.5 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis consists of eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter discusses the literature that has informed the study. Specifically, it discusses frame theory and frame analysis. Further, it discusses specific issues related to editorial and parliamentary discourse. There is also a discussion of the state of newspapers in Malawi during each of the three case studies.

The third chapter discusses the methods used to collect, prepare, and analyse data. The chapter rationalises the use of qualitative textual analysis methods especially the early stages of the grounded theory approach and computer assisted qualitative data analysis methods. All this is linked together with the instrumental components of framing that help to analyse the data and project the frames within the corpora.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters present a comparative discussion of the frames detected in the three case studies. For each chapter, a comparative analysis of the frames detected in the newspapers against those detected in the parliamentary record is presented. Each chapter attempts to discuss the influences of the different framing arenas on each other, if any. The seventh chapter provides generalisations drawn from across the three case studies. The chapter further discusses the strength or the weaknesses of the various frame components on the emergent issue frames. Chapter eight concludes the study with a frame process model for the Malawian political

communication environment drawn from the findings of the case studies. It also discusses the implications of the study's findings for the press in Malawi.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a background to the issues that make this study imperative. The major impetus for this study lies in the opportunities afforded by the emergence of multiparty politics in Malawi in 1994. This, in turn, means that the role of the mass media in the country's governance had to be re-defined. This is especially true in view of the political contests that have been a feature of the nation's democratic experiment. The country's newspapers have contributed to the national discourse by providing coverage and commentary of these contests. In this respect, it is important to assess how the newspapers have mediated these contests.

However, considering that newspapers are owned by elements aligned to different political parties, their framing of political issues may only be reflective of those political parties' views. In order to establish whether or not this is the case, frames detected in newspapers will be compared to those detected in parliamentary discourse where these political parties are represented. As the study is spread over a period of ten years, it also provides opportunities to study the effects of newspapers' ownership and its alignment to political parties over the period. This is particularly important in view of the shifting nature of this alignment and changes in ownership over the years.

Apart from the above, the research breaks new ground in Malawi because it examines framing of political issues in post-elections periods in two different arenas. This is a departure from the norm followed by media researchers in Malawi of doing research on elections coverage. Further, this is likely the first frame analysis study of Malawian media as the literature search has revealed no such study in Malawi.

The next chapter examines the theoretical foundations and reviews the literature undergirding this study. As stated earlier, the study examines newspapers and parliamentary representation of political contests through the tool of frame theory analysis aided by reflections on the literature on the role of the media in democratic society.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This study is a comparative assessment of the framing of political issues in newspapers and parliament in a society undergoing transition from a dictatorship to a more egalitarian multiparty system of politics and governance. The aim is to understand the divergence or convergence of framing in both arenas with a view to establishing the influence of ownership and its alignment to centres of political power on newspaper framing of political communication. Further, the chapter will examine the literature on political communication in Malawi to identify the gaps which will be filled by this study. The chapter will also attempt to put into context the newspaper editorials and parliamentary speeches and how they have been used in this study.

#### **2.1 Frame Theory**

The study uses frame theory as the theoretical bedrock to the analysis of political discourse in Malawian newspapers. This section examines the relevant aspects of frame theory including key definitions and processes.

##### **2.1.1 Early Conceptualisation**

Erving Goffman is considered to be the father of frame theory analysis. Goffman (1959) argued that everyday life occurs in social settings that demand that humans should present and maintain a public persona. According to Goffman (1959) this social interaction occurs through the use of social frames. These social frames tell people

about each other. The social frames help in the creation of the public persona of an individual.

According to Goffman (1974) the frame:

. . . allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms. (p. 21).

Due to the complex nature of Goffman's (1974) discourse on frame theory analysis, early prognosis for the success of the theory was bleak. Reviewers (Davis, 1975; Gamson, 1975; Denzin and Keller, 1981) complained of the cumbersome nature of the text and cast doubt on the possibility of conceptualising frame theory. However, over the decades following Goffman, scholars from different traditions have commandeered the theory and adapted it for various fields of studies (Tuchman 1978, p.192; Gitlin 1980, p.6; Snow & Machalek, 1984, p.464; Snow, Rochford, Worden, Benford, 1986; Entman 1993, p.52; Lakoff, 2004). Thus, today's articulation of framing bears little resemblance to Goffman's original frame theory. The next section will attempt to examine the evolving definition of frames with particular emphasis on media studies.

### **2.1.2 Defining Frames**

Although it has been suggested that different concepts of frames might result in theoretical creativity (D'Angelo, 2002; p. 883), theoretical prudence demands the clarification of the framing concept. In his initial and widely quoted definition, Goffman (1974, p.10-11) defined frames in a around-about manner:

I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principals of organization which govern events . . . . and our subjective

involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify.” Goffman, 1974, p.10f).

It is safe to argue that at the most basic level, the above definition conceptualises frames as fundamental cognitive structures which guide human understanding and construction of reality. Thus frames provide the basic structure of reality that people become aware of and accept. The communicative process facilitates the adoption of frames.

Todd Gitlin has summarized frame elements most eloquently in his widely quoted (e.g., Miller, 1997, p.367; Miller and Riechert, 2001, p.115) elaboration of the frame concept:

Frames are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters . . . . persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual. (Gitlin 1980, p.6).

The challenge for frame theory analysts is not in defining or presenting examples of frames. Problems arise when scholars attempt to identify frames and how they are derived. Maher (2001) argues that this is because frames consist of implied rather than overt conjectures. Thus empirical extraction of frames has proved notoriously difficult for frame scholars.

Perhaps it is because of this difficulty that frame theory analysis scholars (especially in the mass media) have tended to view framing as being deliberately, actively and intentionally contrived and adopted. Certainly, Robert Entman’s (1993) often quoted definition seems to point to this deliberate manufacture of frames:

. . . to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation. (p. 52).

D'Angelo (2002, p.873) agrees with Entman that humans deliberately slant frames in order to influence others. In support of the above assertion, Reese (2001, p.7) argues that framing implies an active process of derivation. Consequently, he demands that the analyst “. . . should ask how much ‘framing’ is going on” (p. 13). Tankard (2001, p.97) raises the stakes higher when he argues that journalists at times deliberately propagate frames to deceive their audiences.

For Gitlin (1980), frames are important fundamental and indispensable pillars for both journalists and mass media consumers. Frames enable journalists to:

. . . process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognize it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences. Thus . . . frames are unavoidable, and journalism is organized to regulate their production. (p.7).

As Reese (2001) mentioned above, Gitlin demands that any scholar of journalism should ask the following questions:

What is the frame here? Why this frame and not another? What patterns are shared by the frames clamped over this event and the frames clamped over that one, by frames in different media in different places at different moments. And how does the news-reporting institution regulate these regularities? And then: What difference do the frames make for the larger world? (p. 7).

Asking such inquisitive questions precludes a trusting approach to media messages. It assumes, at least, a cautious, wary and guarded mind on the part of the scholar and media consumer – a realisation that frames are susceptible to manipulation. It also assumes that other elements outside the story being reported (including journalism practice) can play a hand in the framing of an issue. Further, perhaps more importantly, frames may have an effect on the consumers of media messages.

Frame analysis has proven useful in understanding what factors influence media coverage, what principles dominate public debate, and ultimately, what prevalent elements impact public policy. Frames can be studied “as a strategy of constructing and processing news discourse or as a characteristic of the discourse itself” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p.57). As Pan and Kosicki (1993) argue that the language comprising frames:

. . . hold(s) great power in setting the context for debate, defining issues under consideration, summoning a variety of mental representations, and providing the basic tools to discuss the issues at hand” (p. 70).

As a tool examining discourse, Pan and Kosicki (1993, p.70) note:

. . . framing analysis plays close attention to the systematic study of political language, the coin in the realm of political communication that is often ignored or only dealt with in a highly abstract manner.

For Entman and other scholars, the “frames” or political claims and counter-claims that appear in, and dominate the content of public discourse are the “imprint of power” (Entman, 1993, p.32).

The applicability of the frame theory analysis to news was first established by Tuchman (1978) who used the term “framing” to emphasize the role of the routine “procedures” of news work in the creation of news frames. A journalist’s own system of organization influences which elements are either included or excluded from a message.



Journalists select whom to quote, what to quote, and where to place the quotations in a story, thereby expressing opinion. Thus, when journalists frame a story, they deploy a structure to the narrative that helps the audience make sense of the events.

A central organizing idea for news context, frames supply content and suggest what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. According to Gamson and Modigliani (1987), facts alone have no intrinsic meaning, but become meaningful once embedded in a frame or storyline. Frames in the news emerge as the presence or absence of keywords, common phrases, images, and sources of information, as well as sentences that cluster to reinforce certain themes (Entman, 1993). Entman (2004) further clarified the definition of framing, based on its use in previous research. He argued that framing is “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” (p. 5).

Frames not only underscore the importance of select pieces of information through the inclusion of certain text elements and by their placement or repetition, but they also can be defined by what they leave out as well (Entman, 1993). Notably, frames are “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (Reese, 2001, p.11). In mass media, they can be organized and communicated verbally (e.g. radio, television), visually (i.e., television, newspaper), or in print (i.e. newspaper, the internet). Framing occurs at the policy-level, the media-level, and/or at the public level (Scheufele, 1999). At the media level, “frames may best be viewed as an abstract principle, tool, or schemata of interpretation that work through media texts to structure social meaning” (Reese, 2001, p.14).

Framing is not to be confused with the agenda-setting model (McComb & Shaw, 1972) in which news media suggests to the public what issues are salient. Frame analysis moves beyond agenda setting to consider not just what news organizations deem worthy of attention, but how problem selection, emphasis and definition helps some issues appear more salient than others.

### **2.1.3 Frame Typologies**

One difficulty with frame analysis is the varied nature of operational definitions. (D'Angelo, 2002; Entman, 1991, 1993; Vreese, 2002). This makes it difficult for frame researchers to develop a methodical research model for identifying frames in a corpus. In this respect, a variety of frame types have been identified within the field of frame theory analysis to assist in identifying frames for different purposes.

For example, Issue-specific frames are more geared toward specific topics and events. In this respect, they are time-bound and specific to particular event. They are difficult to generalise across different issues and time periods (Vreese, 2005). Generic frames on the other hand are not bound by current events or time limits. They apply in different topics and cultural milieu. Norris' (1995) study of US international news coverage before and after the Cold War categorised news into generic frames comprising of war, politics, human interest, disasters and economics. Unlike Generic Frames which are quite broad and fitting for a wide-range of findings, Issue-Specific Frames are quite narrow that some frame researchers (D'Angelo, 2002; Vreese, 2002) caution that they can be viewed as news topics.

However, using Issue-Specific Frames or Emergent Frames allows the researcher broad licence to examine specific and detailed issues and events in the relevant corpus (Vreese, 2005, p.55). In this respect, the researcher is given the ability to break open

text and separate the issues inherent in the text for categorisation into frames. Of course, this very strength is the subject of criticism from other frame theory analysts who argue that this makes it difficult to label the frame and calls into question the systematic foundation of frame theory analysis because it gives individual researchers the licence to develop their own scheme of naming frames (Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

On the other hand Generic Frames are noted for their ability to be applied broadly in varying events, corpora, and periods. Capella and Jamieson's (1997) work established a dichotomous system of identifying frame which provides a system of identifying Generic Frames. The two frame types (1) have highly identifiable conceptual characteristics, (2) derive from common journalistic practices, (3) are mutually exclusive, and (4) have distinct influences on audience perceptions of news and social issues at large. In this respect, Norris (1995) Generic Frames become particularly systematic with their capacity for wide application.

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) strengthened Generic Frames by labelling them as follows: conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality frames, and responsibility. This labelling and categorisation appears convenient for a number of reasons. First, there are similarities between the human interest frames focus on episodic stories with a human emotional angle. Second, the broad categorisation (conflict, economic consequences, morality, and responsibility frames) of Generic Themes makes it easy to fit issues into the appropriate category without inventing new ones. Third, Generic Frames enable a clear analysis of attribution of responsibility in news stories which, according to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000, p.96), is used by journalists to frame stories for easier interpretation by audiences. In short, attribution of responsibility enables the audience to know the cause of the problem inherent in the story.

In view of the preceding discussion, the strength of frame theory analysis largely resides in frames' ubiquity and their value in helping researchers to understand the organization of experience as Reese (2007, p.148) noted:

Framing's value, does not hinge on its potential as a unified research domain but . . . as a provocative model that bridges parts of the field that need to be in touch with each other: quantitative and qualitative, empirical and interpretive, psychological and sociological, and academic and professional.

While it appears attractive to follow the Generic Frames model, this study uses the Issues Specific or Emergent Frames model. This is mainly because the Generic Frames model, as successful as it is, will be too broad to apply to the Malawian situation where no frame analysis has ever emerged. Further, considering that the study will cover three different milieus over a period of ten years, it is prudent to apply Issue Specific Frames which will tease out the nuances inherent in each corpus from case study to case study.

#### **2.1.4 Framing in Political Communication Discourse**

No matter how one chooses to view them, there is general agreement among scholars that frames are used consciously or unconsciously as building blocks in the communication situation. With regards to political communication, a major breakthrough in the conceptualization of frames happened when Todd Gitlin connected frames to the concepts of ideology and cultural domination (Gitlin 1980, p.10, 257). When politicians are dealing with situations that promise either victory or defeat (as in elections or the passage of bills in parliament), politicians and media elites secure their power through the commandeering of "ideological space," by defining what is legitimate or illegitimate, and by "significantly limiting what is thought throughout

society” (Gitlin 1980, p.10; Durham 2001, p.126). In this particular regard, according to Gitlin (1980), opposing politicians struggle against each other to frame political messages, therefore, controlling the version of reality that the populace consume. Those political elites who manage to establish their version of reality in the education system, the mass media and in social movements effectively gain the power to control people’s thought processes (Gitlin 1980, p.11, 256 and 280).

Thus frames are deliberately created by political organizations or their agents to be used publicly, disseminated widely, and repeated often by speakers that are clearly affiliated with one political party or another (see Entman’s forward in Callaghan and Schnell 2005). They are created to influence and motivate voters in a particular way, and create specific subject positions. Enormous resources and considerable effort are expended by think tanks and political consultants to manufacture two competing versions of a politicized culture (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, p.6, Miller and Riechert 2001a, p.12, Lakoff 2004, p.15,27 and 105). The long term purpose of this dissemination and repetition effort is to make these frames become commonsensical (Lakoff 2004, p.xv, 115). Each party hopes that its frames will become Goffmanian frames in the sense that their framing of a particular issue will become taken-for granted cultural logic, and an indispensable part of the social context (Gitlin 1980, p.10).

### **2.1.5 Frame Theory and Power Relations**

Some scholars of frame theory have expressed concern about the neglect of the role of power and power relations in frame theory studies (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Vliegthart and van Zoonen, 2011). Thus factors such as national political and journalistic structures and cultures, differential power of social and political elites, ideological leanings of institutions and organisational processes profoundly affect the

way news media frame political issues (See Gitlin, 1980; Ryan, 1991; Tuchman, 1978; Entman, 2004).

Entman (1993, p. 53) notes that framing “. . . is the imprint of power” because they reveal “the identity of actors or interests that competed to dominate the text.” Carragee & Roef (2004, p.214) argue that: “. . . framing research have neglected the relationship between media frames and broader issues of political and social power. This neglect is a product of . . . the failure to examine framing contests within wider political and social contexts . . . .” Further, Carragee & Roef (2004, p214) suggest that, “. . . framing processes need to be examined within the contexts of the distribution of political and social power.” Vliegenthart & van Zoonen (2011) charged that frame theory scholarship has deviated from the necessary and prevalent trend of examining power relationship in other areas of media and communication. In this particular respect, Vliegenthart & Zoonen (2011) believe that frame theory will benefit from an examination of meso level factors which influence the crafting of frames such as “( the influence of market and target group features) or a micro level (source relations)” (p.107). In addition, Carragee and Roef (2004) note that: “The economic and cultural assets of elites provide significant resources for shaping journalistic frames.” (p.220).

At the audience level, Irving Goffman (1974) argued that for frames to be effective they must be rooted in culture. In particular, Vliegenthart & Zoonen (2011) argue that: “Production and reception are not only affected by individual differences, but also by social and cultural contexts, structural divisions and power constellations.” (p.111). Thus, frame scholars argue that frames should be drawn from stock phrases, metaphors, keywords and power dynamics which resonate with the audience.

It is, perhaps, in acknowledgement of these broader sociological, cultural and power relationships that media scholars who have attempted to use frame theory on

African media have coupled it with the political economy approach to the media and the hegemony theory. The ability of the political economy approach to deal with issues of funding and media ownership makes it particularly suited for coupling with frame theory.

This study attempts to address some of the sociological power relation concerns by examining framing at two levels, parliament and the press, and how incorporating the ideological positions of newspaper owners. In this respect, this study goes some way towards shedding some light on the question of why and how news content “promotes particular problem definitions, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p.5 ) instead of others.

By acknowledging power relations in the political and newspaper ownership in Malawi, this study is able to comprehensive survey the production of frames as they emerged from the ever-changing mix of political alignment among politicians and newspaper owners. In this respect, this study acknowledges Wolfsfeld (1997)’s first postulate in his political contest model. Wolfsfeld (1997, p.3) argues that:

. . . the political process is more likely to have an influence on the news media than the news media are on the political process. . . . because the news media are much more likely to react to political events than to initiate them . . . .

## **2.2 The Media and Democratic Society**

Frame theory is the bedrock of this study. However, as the literature on frame theory revealed, the contextual elements affecting the media need to be factored into the frame analysis of media text. The framing of political issues in society is affected by the role assigned to it by citizens, the state and ownership. In this study, frame theory as an

analytical tool is supported by other theories including theories that define the role of the media in democratic society.<sup>1</sup> In addition, as noted above, framing is only effective when frames become taken for granted cultural logic and part of the social context (Gitlin, 1980, p.10). This cannot happen until the social context in which the media operates and its role in that social context is defined. This section discusses the role of the media in democracy, and how the state, and forms of ownership tend to affect these roles.

### **2.2.1 Ownership and the Media's Role in Democratic Society**

While this study is not about the public sphere, its discussion of the media and parliamentary discourse in a democratising society make it imperative to discuss the role of the media in democracy. According to Hauser (1998, p.83), the public sphere is “a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment.” The public sphere can be seen as “. . . a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk . . .” (Nancy, 1990, p.56) and “. . . a realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed . . .” (Asen, 1999, p.115). While media scholars agree that an ideal public sphere would provide a good point of comparison and contrast against media, there is still considerable debate on the role of the media in a democracy (see Golding & Murdock, 2000; McChesney, 2000, Sen, 1996). This is

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<sup>1</sup> African media scholars (See Uche, 1991; Berger, 2007, p.21-22; Obonyo, 2007) have argued that media theory should depend on well-grounded theoretical and practical knowledge of the African social environment. Eko (2004) argues that “oppositional” elements in African political discourse enable media researchers to apply it on African news content. Coupled with other theories such the political economy and hegemony approach, frame theory has been successfully applied to the African media environment (See Chuma, 2007; Alozie, 2007; Jacobs & Johnson, 2007). This approach enables researchers to utilize the full repertoire of frame analysis tools including political history, culture, metaphors, stock phrases, keywords, and broader sociological, structural and ideological dynamics prevailing in particular countries on the African continent.



especially true with respect to the media's relationship to centres of political power, the state, capital, civil society and audiences. Further, the unresolved debate on the essentials of a media system that best serves the democratic public sphere makes it imperative to explore the key issues on the role of the media in democratising societies like Malawi.

Arguably the most critical role of the media in a democratic society is the watchdog role. As Sen (1996) argues, this role gives the media the task of surveillance over the state and its organs. In this respect, apart from critically analysing the day to day functions of the state, the media are supposed to expose abuses of power and acts of corruption. Thus, the watchdog role is elevated above all the other functions of the media.

Liberal pluralist scholars argue that the media can best function as a watchdog of society if it is located in a free-market set up. The features that could encourage the media to fully develop its potential as a watchdog include deregulation of the economic environment and autonomy from government and the state. Such scholars also place trust in journalists and media workers to perfectly discharge the watchdog role if there are left alone without interference from any quarter (see C. Edwin Baker, 2002). Simply put, as McChesney (2000) argues, the liberal free market perspective:

. . . envisages a flowering commercial marketplace of ideas, unencumbered by government censorship or regulation, which should generate the most stimulating democratic political culture possible (p.2).

The Marxist perspective of media scholarship has been critical of the watchdog role of the media (see Garnham, 1995; Boyd-Barrett, 1995; Mosco, 1996; McChesney, 2000). The Marxist perspective argues that media are mere pawns in ideological power games. Further, the media tends to advance the ideological ambitions of the dominant

and powerful in society. Both the liberal pluralist position and the Marxist perspective simply reflect the more general theories of both schools regarding the way society should be organised and shaped.

Even though viewed as subordinate to the watchdog role, the second and third roles of the media are more consonant with democratic society. These two roles place emphasis on the provision of information and giving voice to the heterogeneity of citizens' aspirations thus enabling them to participate meaningfully in democratic society. In order to function appropriately, democratic society needs media that can, as Boyd-Barrett and Newbold (1995, p.187) argue:

. . . generate discussion of issues of public concern in a way which does not favour partisan interests, whether these be the interests of particular parties, the interests of media bosses or media professionals.

But this is the ideal. Studies of news production processes and analyses of media content have consistently shown that media operations cannot be divorced from both their ownership, financing and organisational structures. These factors closely influence the range of voices and interpretative frameworks given expression in media content. And it is, by no means, all voices.

Meier (2002, p.300) argues that the most common concern among media scholars concerning media ownership is that owners have the ability to influence the content and form of media. This can be achieved through the kind of people they employ to fill key position and by making their media available to their preferred ideological groups. Indeed, Curran and Seaton (1997) found that the national press in the United Kingdom generally endorses the dominant ideological practices in society including support for capitalism. Other scholars (Bagdikian, 2000; McChesney, 2000; Herman, 1998) argue that the concern in the USA is more about the power of few media owners over media

content. The argument is that this power interferes with citizens democratic abilities to make informed choices. In short as Doyle (2002, p.13) argues:

The main perceived danger is that excessive concentration of media ownership can lead to over-representation of certain political viewpoints or values or certain forms of cultural outputs.

There is no doubt that ownership of media organisations has important implications for control. It can also be asserted that this control definitely impacts on media content and the professional conduct of media personnel. What is arguable is whether or not the owners have overriding determination on these two factors. It is not easy to state the source of influence for media content or to prove a causal relationship between media ownership and media performance. However, as Golding and Murdock (1991) and Murdock (1982) argue, owner influence is mitigated by elements of consumer-sovereignty, which partly dictate media performance and success on the market. It is also mitigated by the power and relative autonomy of editors and other personnel within individual media organisations.

However, the power of the media professionals is, in turn, constrained by the distribution of power in the broader field in which the media operate. Apart from the owners, and their social, political and economic interests, other centres of power such as the ruling elite, political parties and civil society place constraints on the power of the media professionals (Gallagher, 1982, p.170; Mak'ochieng, 1996, p.93). Indeed in the African context, Mano (2005) notes, concerning Zimbabwean journalists, that professional journalism can be so constrained by such factors as low-pay, victimisation and dismissal. These factors force journalists to conform to owners preferences. In this respect, Mano (2005, p.69) states:

Both the state controlled and privately-owned media presented journalists with constrained work environments. Independent investigative journalism was next to impossible. . . . journalism in the service of the public interest, is seriously undermined (p.69)

While the above is true, Gallagher (1982) argues that the power relations in the broader society are dynamic and fluid. This means that journalists are not going to be perpetually servile. From time to time, various media professionals will test the limits placed on them by other centres of power including the state. Thus, Gallagher (1982, p.170-171) argues that:

. . . mass communication is indeed bound with, and bounded by, the interests of the dominant institutions of society, but these interests are continually redefined through a process to which the media themselves contribute.

As argued above in this section, citizens and voters have need of access to a variety of political viewpoints (Picard, 2000, p.162). Democracy flourishes where citizens are exposed to a wide range of ideas, viewpoints and different forms of cultural expressions. The real threat of owners using their media outlets for political purposes as noted by Chimombo & Chimombo (1996) and Patel (2000) in Malawi appears to be at variance with democratic principles.

### **2.2.2 Competing Forms of 'Journalism'**

The discussion on the role of the media in a democracy cannot be complete without a discussion on competing forms of journalism in the southern African region. There are three forms of journalism that are manifest in the media in Malawi with the shifting alignment of political parties and media ownership. From time to time depending on the

ownership and that owner's alignment to a political party, a newspaper can practice any one of these form of journalism.

Chuma (2007, p.258) argues that these types of journalism are 'patriotic', 'oppositional' and 'independent nationalist'. Further, Chuma argues that the emergence of these three types of journalism in Zimbabwe during that country's 2000 election are a reflection of the dynamic connections between the press, ownership, civil society and the state. However, it is quite clear that more than civil society, ownership and its relationship to the centres of political power decide which form of journalism to adopt.

In relation to the emergence of patriotic journalism in Zimbabwe, Ranger (2005, 10) noted that ". . . this kind of journalism is narrow and divisive – a substitute for ideology and analysis". Further, Ranger (2005, p.8) notes that in this kind of journalism citizens are divided into patriots and traitors. Non-citizens are divided into supporters and imperialists. In addition, according to Chuma (2008) another feature of patriotic journalism is that it is used by those in power to delegitimize those who are critical or opposed to them especially during political contests such as elections. Usually, this form of journalism is practiced by the state controlled media and media whose intent is to act as mouthpiece of those in power. Another feature of patriotic journalism is one-sided sourcing of election stories and partisanship of editorial comments.

According to Chuma (2007, p.168) the 'opposition' form of journalism is a direct result of the dichotomised political environment which groups citizens into opposition and patriots. Opposition journalism rises in answer, or as a counter, to patriotic journalism. In this state of affairs, opposition journalism refuses to see any good in government. In fact, the welfare of the citizens is seen as synonymous with the opposition alone. The ruling elite, including the government and the ruling party, are delegitimized. Chuma (2007, p.168) also notes that this kind of journalism may emerge

as a response to the state's efforts to close down the democratic space. Such journalism is open to charges of political motivation. In such circumstances the state only responds by applying repressive and legal measures to curtail this kind of journalism.

According to Chuma (2007, p.169), the “independent nationalist” form of journalism is designed to serve the national interest. It attempts “. . . to provide a dispassionate, non-partisan approach . . .” to its coverage of national contests. The coverage is dynamic and nuanced. However, Chuma (2007, p.169) notes that shifts across these forms of journalism are to be expected especially when ownership changes.

With particular reference to Malawi, Chimombo & Chimombo (1996) propose two types of journalism operating in Malawi since 1992. Using a content analysis procedure, they demonstrated the shift made by the *Malawi News* from a form of patriotic journalism when it acted as mouthpiece of the government and the ruling party during the one party era to ‘opposition’ journalism when the MCP lost power in 1994. In this respect, Chimombo & Chimombo’s findings seem to suggest the presence of, at least, ‘opposition’ journalism in Malawi. Further, Chimombo & Chimombo (1996) coined the phrase ‘government journalism’ referring to the type of journalism prevalent in newspapers sponsored by or associated with government as a counterpoint to opposition journalism. This journalism is supposed to reflect government positions and generally support government. However, such newspapers are supposed to present issues in a manner reflective of national interest rather than blind support of the government or the ruling party. Chimombo & Chimombo’s conceptualisation of ‘government journalism’ appear to be somewhere between Chuma (2007) and Ranger (2005) conceptualisation of ‘patriotic’ journalism and ‘national interest’ journalism.

As noted in this section, ownership can play a strong hand in influencing the conduct of journalists. This was a factor that Mano (2005) noted in his study of

ownership and its influence on journalism in Zimbabwe. He observed that ownership can create conditions that undermine the professional practice of journalists. In this respect, due to difficult economic conditions, journalists find it difficult to move away from professionally unfavourable work environs especially if these environs provide a modicum of job security and economic benefits. Instead, they compromise professional standards for job security. As Mano (2005:68) notes:

Employees internalized the values of their employers. They cooperated rather than risk a fall out with the proprietor.”

In the same respect, Chuma (2007, p.169) concludes that the bifurcated media framing during times of political contests is as a result of the sharp divisions inherent among the elements that control the media. This polarisation is reflected in the media’s framing of political issues and contests. Thus, for Chuma (2007) the critical-rational debate which is supposed to be located in the media as sites of democratic discourse have been eroded by elements outside the media which profoundly affect the way the media operate. Such elements include ownership, civil society and the state.

### **2.3 The Malawian Democratic Experiment and the Media**

The previous section dealt with universal issues of ownership and the media’s role in democracy. Attempts were made in that section to link the discussion closer to the Malawian situation media environment by reviewing literature for other parts of Africa. This section attempts to more closely examine the context in which the Malawian media operate by describing its political environment and the challenges experienced in the process of democratisation. Then the section will examine broadly the media landscape in Malawi including ownership. This will be followed by a review of the literature on political communication.

### **2.3.1 Challenges to the Democratic Experiment**

The challenges facing the Malawian democratic experiment can only be understood within the context of the existing struggles for domination by various political parties in Malawi. This struggle was reflected in the hotly contested elections of 1999 and 2004. Further, parliament has proved to be another site of contest between the legislature and the executive following the 2004 election. These contests have deeply affected the political and economic life of ordinary Malawians. At the foundation of these contests, inside and outside parliament and government, are deep-seated challenges five of which are discussed in this section.

The first challenge is regionalism and the constantly shifting character of political alliances among political parties. This factor is linked very closely to regionalism as discussed above. Like many countries in Africa, in Malawi regional and ethnic identities have become political cleavages as they provide the means of political mobilization. Regional cleavages have proved strong enough to warrant political representation in the National Assembly. Malawian elections are characterised by pronounced divisions along regional lines.

The above problem is exacerbated by the lack of distinguishing political ideology among Malawi's political parties. The distinguishing feature of Malawi's political parties is not ideology. In fact, as Khaila and Chibwana (2005) note:

Now all political parties share the tenets of liberalism in both politics and the economy. Their differences cannot be pinpointed with a reference to substantially divergent values and objectives. Everybody is committed to multiparty democracy, respecting human rights and the market economy. (p.3).



Khaila and Chibwana (2005) noted that these shifting alliances are motivated by an inordinate lust for wealth. This leads to the desire to control economic resources. These alliances enable those who would otherwise not have such access to resources to come into the loop and exploit local resources. Driven by such greed, political party leaders at the top have not been exactly open and democratic when making decisions to enter or leave alliances. Such undemocratic practices have led to divisions and openly fought out schisms in the three main political parties resulting in fragmentation especially in the run up to the 2004 election and immediately after.

The second factor affecting the growth of democracy in Malawi is the poverty that is so endemic in Malawi. It is generally agreed among scholars (Posner, 1995; Tsoka, 2002; Khaila and Chibwana, 2005) that poverty poses a serious threat to Malawi's democracy. Low incomes and a high illiteracy rate, poor information and high HIV/AIDS prevalence create fertile grounds for self-serving politicians to exploit the people politically. Tsoka (2002) particularly notes that:

. . . most people are pre-occupied with keeping body and soul together; participation in politics is secondary in survival strategies. As President Muluzi, is often heard to say: 'People cannot eat democracy.' (p. 5).

The third factor affecting the consolidation of democracy is the continued weakness of institutions and structures of democratic governance. At the fore of these is the MEC's continued maladministration of elections. The outcome of both the 1999 and 2004 elections have been greatly disputed with both cases ending in the High Court for arbitration. In both elections, the MEC has been accused of maladministration and outright favouritism of the government and the UDF. This state of affair can cause voter apathy as citizens may begin to feel that their vote does not really count. The government has continued to interfere with other structures of governance such as the

Malawi Police Service which was co-opted to suppress citizens' dissent during the Open/Third Term debate between 2002 and 2003. The Anti-Corruption Bureau has been generally unable to successfully prosecute offenders unless it suits government to do so.

A fourth factor is the general intimidation and violence that characterise times of political contest. This is linked to the political elite's desire to amass more political power, perpetuate their stay in power and gain economic wealth. Newspapers in Malawi reported the intimidation campaigns mounted by the UDF's Young Democrats against supporters of the MCP in Lilongwe in the 1999 election. In the Northern Region campaigning was particularly vicious in the district of Karonga.

It is in these muddled waters of political ambitions and intrigue that the mass media and parliament must operate. These two institutions have to navigate these waters aware of the fact that there is now a plurality of voices in Malawi. Nothing is clear cut for the citizenry and the rights of the people to a broadened level of participation can be trampled upon by the political parties represented in parliament.

On the positive side, there has also been much interest in surveying the political culture of the Malawian citizens around the 1999 election. Erdmann, Patel, & Schweitzer (2004, p.6) argue that one of the most important ingredients of fully functioning democracy is a public "that is informed and who has the feeling that it can influence the political process and decisions through particular channels of accepted behaviour".

Summarizing the many interesting statistics of the surveys leaves an impression of a fairly robust democratic culture in Malawi. The public awareness of democracy is higher in Malawi (88%) than in any of the other countries surveyed: Botswana, Ghana, Namibia, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe (Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi 2004). Erdmann, Patel and Schweitzer (2004) document a keen interest in politics (around 70% of the

respondent are reported to be interested in politics) as well as an increase in political knowledge from before the election to after. Nearly 60% believe that their community exerts an influence on political representatives and more than two-thirds believe that they, as voters, can improve the future by choosing the right leaders (Erdmann, Patel & Schweitzer, 2004, p.10). Interestingly, the surveys also found the democratic culture seems to thrive just as well in more remote rural areas as in urban areas, indicating that democratization is not just an urban phenomenon in Malawi.

Another concern is that although only 10.6% of respondents in 2000 said that they had never been informed by radio, the number rose considerably to 42.9% with respect to newspapers. This drop in newspapers' readership is caused by the cost of buying a newspaper relative to earnings per month (Khaila and Mthinda, 2006, p.2). This could be a democratic problem because the only existing nation-wide radio stations in Malawi are controlled by the government. Chirwa and Patel (2003) found that the state-owned MBC has not given fair access or coverage to opposition parties.

A broad over-riding concern is the state of Malawi's economy. According to Williams (1978) the Malawian economy prospered in the 1970s with the assistance of foreign aid and investment and grew at an annual rate of 6 percent. This growth did not, however, spur broad-based economic development. According to the World Bank, in 2002, agriculture remained the basis of Malawi's economy, contributing 40 percent of GDP and 90 percent of rural employment, while tobacco, the main cash crop, accounted for more than two-thirds of exports. Malawi's limited natural-resource base, combined with poor physical and financial infrastructure, a slow-moving bureaucracy and rising crime, has made it less able to attract foreign investment. Thus, Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 159 out of 162 countries on the United

Nations' UNDP Human Development Index. Malawi's poverty headcount (percent below poverty line) was 66 percent in 1998 (World Bank).

Patel (2000) argues that there is willingness on the part of many journalists to disseminate information and offer the Malawian public alternative information. However, the media face a number of constraints such as the practical problems of sourcing newsprint, the costs of printing, the weak production infrastructure, unfavourable finance and tax arrangements, indifference or hostility to emerging media, lack of spare parts, supplies and advertising.

The above analysis presents a discussion on the broad political context in which the Malawian media operates. It provides an entry point for a discussion of the various aspects that differently affect the operation of the Malawian media in the milieu described above. Thus, the next part of this section concentrates on the construction of the media in Malawi.

### **2.3.2 Summary**

The factors discussed above are pervasive and affect the national life. Just as all other facets of life are affected, the media and its professionals are affected. It is these challenges that shape not only the production and content of media but also the motivations of media personnel. In this respect, the above discussion provides an entry point to a discussion of the literature on political discourse in the Malawian media.

## **2.4 The Media and Political Coverage in Malawi**

This study attempts to add to the body of knowledge on the media and political coverage in Malawi, and societies in transition in Africa. As will be noticed below, there is a dearth of such studies in Malawi. Just as the media have struggled to redefine

their role in a multiparty society, so have media scholars in Malawi struggled to examine, draw generalisations and theorise about the media in Malawi. This is mainly because the research agenda has been unfocussed and lacking in continuity. The research studies seem to be ad hoc and drawn on limited data. Further, lack of financial support and government indifference greatly hampers such research.

The literature on the media and political coverage in Malawi can be divided into four clusters. The first category is the general historical and polemical literature against the conduct of the MCP regime regarding the population in general and the media in particular. This literature is made up of historical studies cataloguing the MCP government's systematic abuse and suppression of the population and the media in particular. Such studies include (Chimombo & Chimombo, 1996, p.22; Chimombo, 1998, p.217-236; Lwanda, 2009, p.139; Chipangula 2000; Patel, 2000, p.158-164). This literature discusses the threat posed by the media to Dr. Banda and the MCP's quest for total domination, and more importantly, Dr. Banda's suppression of the media.

Further, there is discussion of the manner in which Dr. Banda took over the significant media outlets and turned them into mouthpieces of his MCP. The discussion of the brutal suppression of journalism and journalists including censorship and imprisonment is discussed within the context of the general disenfranchisement of the Malawian people pursued by Dr. Banda and his MCP. The same literature also discusses the narrow ownership of newspapers which was restricted to Dr. Banda and the MCP through the Blantyre Print and Publishing Company, and the restriction of the electronic media to the MBC. Of course, such a narrow role and tight control of the press meant that media discourse was supposed to mirror that of ruling elites, and serve the purpose of perpetuating their stay in power.

Reviewing this particular aspect of the press is not relevant to this study as it does not deal with that particular epoch of Malawi's history. However, it is important to mention the broad subject of this literature as noted in the paragraph above. This is necessary because it provides a contextual background from which to begin discussing the second set of scholarly literature on the media in Malawi. This second set of literature broadly deals with the performance of the media in general during the multiparty era starting from 1994. Some broad features of the literature include discussions on the broader political economy of the media including ownership, the general economic climate, professional journalism, the political climate and the legal framework in which the press operate in Malawi.

Perhaps, the most comprehensive of these studies is Diana Cammack's study on the state of the media in Malawi (2000). Cammack observed that even though there is freedom of expression in the country, the press continues to deal with legal and ownership issues that constrain its practice. Cammack (2000, p.4) notes that the ownership structure with its linkage to political parties is worrying because editorial policy can be easily influenced by party politics. Further, Cammack (2000, p.5) also observes that certain unpopular legislation including the Print Publications Bill require printers, editors and reporters to be named in the publications. This requirement has been selectively enforced on newspapers seen to be critical of the ruling elite.

Other pieces of legislation that continues to hamper press activities are the Censorship and Control of Entertainment Act, 1968 (Act 11 of 1968), the Official Secrets Act, and a set of other Public Security Regulations. According to the African Media Barometer (2006, p.6-7) these pieces of legislation have been applied against the mass media from time to time since 1994.

Within this strand of literature is the generally laudatory research that came in the wake of the transition from single party to multiparty democracy. Scholars such as Chimombo & Chimombo (1996, p.47-74) and Chimombo (1998, p.217-236) were filled with hope at the future of journalism. Drawing from a discourse analysis study and two content analysis studies, they concluded that journalism practice was evolving from the narrow parroting of powers-that-be in the single party system to an able contribution to the democratic debate:

These ‘new’ journalists have moved way beyond the rumours and allegations of their colleagues writing under the previous government. In fact, they are on the way to becoming expert investigative journalists in a democratic Malawi. . . . already, the MCP press in its role as opposition press is learning to write more ‘democratically. (Chimombo & Chimombo, 1996, p.59).

In her 1998 study, Moira Chimombo (1998, p.236) tempers this optimism by cataloguing some of the constraints on the media that are still in place. These, including censorship and ownership alliance with political forces, have been discussed above in this section.

The same set of literature also documents what Chiyamwaka (2009) has called the second loss of freedom which occurred between 1994 and 2004. This second loss of freedom occurred following the regeneration of freedom in the period between 1993 and 1994. Characteristic to this loss of freedom was the continued government stranglehold on the MBC and Television Malawi (TVM) as propaganda tools against political opposition and critics. This is apart from the selective use of legislation mentioned above. Cammack (2000) documents instances of press suppression during this period including acts of violence against the *Daily Times* and the *Malawi News*, two

newspapers perceived to be too critical to government. Further, Cammack (2000) and Patel (2000) note the government's removal of advertising from these newspapers and the *Chronicle* because of this perceived critical stance.

Another aspect of this set of literature is an attempt to establish impartiality and critical analysis of the political issues in the editorial policies of various newspapers in the country. Patel (2000, p.158-185), using a qualitative content analysis study, attempted to establish the independence of individual newspapers during the 1999 election. In the end, she determined that only the *Nation* could be termed as being editorially independent of its owner's political alignment.

The third set of literature covering the media and coverage of political issues relate to content and discourse analysis that focus on particular political problems. Usually the aim of these studies was to understand how a particular problem was covered. Chimombo & Chimombo (1996, p.155-180) concluded that in the transition period between 1992 and 1994 political cartoons had increasingly began to reflect the political debate in the democratic space and that representation of political debate through cartoons would continue to be a general feature of Malawian newspapers.

Chirambo (1998, p.195-216) studied discourse in cartoons and concluded that cartoons complement the press in its role of facilitating the democratic debate. He concluded that political cartoons in newspapers are akin to editorials contributing significantly to the culture of democracy. Thus, political discourse in newspaper cartoons was seen as an extension of the newspapers' democratic function and a manifestation of freedom of speech and expression. However, even this finding was tempered by the manifest political bias reflecting ownership alignment with political parties.



Chipangula (2004:23), in her comparative study of discourse in the single party era and the multiparty era, found a more diverse critical analysis of political issues in the multiparty era than in the single party era. Rubin (2008) examined the Malawian press discourse of the government's handling of the famine in 2002. He concluded that:

. . . Malawi could be characterized as a liberal democracy - albeit a poor democracy in monetary terms. Most democratic problems were related to a lack of resources rather than manipulation, coercion and violence. . . . citizens were enjoying the basic civil liberties and the political culture in Malawi seemed to thrive comparably well relative to other countries in the region. This also holds true with respect to media freedom which enjoyed a high degree of constitutional protection, and the press has been given room to diversify by a government that in general has kept an arm's length (p. 57).

The fourth cluster of studies in the literature on the media and coverage of political issues is related to quantitative, and a few qualitative, content analysis studies on the coverage of elections. Every election beginning with the 1994 to the 2009 elections have been examined in this manner by media scholars or other media professionals.

Findings in the literature generally argue that the state run MBC is generally biased in favour of the ruling party and the incumbent president (Patel, 2000, p.174-177; Neale, 2004, p.185; Manda, 2004, p.175-176; Chiyamwaka, 2009) found that media coverage of the 1999 election on the state run MBC was generally in favour of the ruling UDF and the incumbent President Bakili Muluzi. These scholars attribute this state of affairs to the desire by governments to control the most powerful media. Chiyamwaka (2009, p.6) quotes Tim Neale, Commonwealth of Nations advisor to the MEC Media Monitoring Unit, as saying:

Sadly, the public service broadcasters' chance to develop into a pillar of democracy was soon lost as the new government decided that it could not release this most powerful weapon for monopolizing access to and so influencing the people. Can it be that all parties in Malawi with an eye on a future position of power are loath to risk arriving one day as victors having, in opposition, voted this weapon out of their armoury?

Neale (2004, p.183) himself states that this desire to control the powerful state radio is “. . . like an original sin that appears to stain the character of all who achieve political power.”

With regards to the print media, findings in this strand of literature suggests the strong influence of ownership and its alignment to political parties in the 1994 and 1999 elections (see Chimombo & Chimombo, 1996; Patel, 2000; Manda, 2004, p.174-175; Neale, 2004, p.186). This aspect was particularly true of the 1994 election when there was a clearly partisan ownership and a lot more to gain or lose as these were the first multiparty election since 1964. However, by 1999, Patel (2000) had observed the *Nation* and the *Weekend Nation* were carrying coverage that was decidedly critical and unbiased. By the 2004 election, coverage in all the leading newspapers was critical and judged unbiased even though generally negative towards the ruling UDF and its presidential candidate Bingu wa Mutharika. Neale (2004, p.183 & 187) attempted to explain this evolution:

Newspapers with relatively small circulation, have been allowed comparative freedom of expression. They provide an escape valve for discontent in the urban areas without raising doubts in the minds of the majority of voters in rural areas. . . . their influence, while significant, is less than that of the electronic media.

In short, the government has not felt it necessary to totally control the press as it has done with the state broadcaster. To do so would be superfluous on the government's part. After all, its control of the state broadcasters gives it a powerful propaganda tool. Further, the critical analysis in the newspapers is desired to maintain the appearance of being tolerant to press freedom.

The literature on the media's coverage of politics in Malawi reveals the unstable environment in which the media operates. Like the society it serves, the media in Malawi has to deal with the negative legacy of 31 years of dictatorial rule and colonial rule before it. In part, this legacy means that the media, much in the same way as the society it serves, is defining itself and the function it should play in the democratic space. However, this process is subject to control by the state and other elements who seek to gain control over media due to its importance as a medium of information at times of political contests such as elections.

The literature's sparse and patchy state reveals gaps in the research on media and political coverage. This study seeks to fill at least three gaps by conducting an analysis of press text within the frame theory framework. First, this study moves away from the coverage of high intensity election campaign periods when political awareness is heightened in the country, which seems to be a feature of most of the studies covered here. It concentrates on the periods immediately following elections when winners have been decided. Such periods are marked by lesser political intensity and anticipation of things to come. Yet it is during these periods that politicians in decision-making positions make assessments of the past and attempt to shape an agenda for the future.

Second, this study is more extensive than the previous content analysis studies because it draws from extensive data. As can be noted from the literature reviewed, none of them are a sustained textual analysis of a particular political contest. The studies

by Chipangula (2004), Chimombo & Chimombo (1996) and Chimombo (1998) are combined qualitative discourse and quantitative content analysis studies whose scope was either too broad (Chimombo & Chimombo, 1996) or the sample too small (Chipangula, 2004) to effectively apply the findings to the media in Malawi. This study attempts to fill that gap by employing frame theory analysis concentrated on three case studies spread over a ten year period since 1994. Further, it draws on three substantial datasets. In this way, this study will enable generalisations that cannot be confidently made from any of the studies reviewed here.

Third, this study will make conclusions on the actual content of political debate and how ownership may have influenced that debate. As can be noted from the studies revealed in this section, none of them, except maybe Chirambo's (1998) study on political discourse in cartoons, offer a sustained examination of the content of political debate. This study will not only examine the content of the political debate in newspaper editorials but it will also compare that content to parliamentary debate on the same issues.

## **2.5 Comparison of Editorials against Parliamentary Speeches**

The preceding sections have provided a discussion of frame theory as the bedrock of this study. Further, the chapter has examined the prevailing literature on political communication in Malawi. As this chapter comes to an end, it is important to examine the genre of political discourse from which the frames detected in this study are drawn. Specifically, this section examines newspaper editorials and parliamentary speeches as recorded in the *Hansard*, the official record of proceedings in the National Assembly, and attempts to establish the basis of comparison between the two.

### **2.5.1 Editorials and Opinion Columns**

Editorials are public, mass communicated types of opinion discourse that normally appear in a newspaper and are the “official” voice of a media outlet on matters of public importance. In Malawi, Op-ed articles usually represent the expressed opinion of a single individual approved by the editor and tend to follow the party line of the owners. Sometimes, an alternative voice different from the newspaper’s party line may appear.

According to van Dijk (1996), newspapers’ editorials and opinion discourse has influence over political opinion leaders including politicians, institutional and/or elite actors, and corporate executives. Thus, Greenberg (2000) argues that the influence of newspapers is only surpassed by that of primetime television. Greenberg (2000) further notes that:

. . . these opinions are often perceived by readers to be consistent with the viewpoints of the newspaper as an organizational entity equipped with the facts and information required for informed opinion formation, which are generally unavailable to the average newsreader.

News, on the other hand, is “. . . information about recent events that are of interest to a sufficiently large group, or that may affect the lives of a sufficiently large group” (Reah, 2002, p.4). Firmstone (2003, p.6) argues regarding news: “. . . newspapers select information from a range of alternatives and ‘package’ news content with meaning . . . .” On the other hand, editorials comment: “. . . represents a newspaper’s decision to select a specific issue on which the newspaper wishes to contribute an opinion . . . .” Editorials thus represent the ideological position of a newspaper even though the opinions expressed in the editorial are not necessarily those of the owner or owners.

Ideally, “hard” news is supposed to conform to high standards of fairness, balance and objectivity. In this respect, news is supposed to be free of personal bias and to separate fact from opinion. Further, the news is supposed to include opposing viewpoints (Ericson, Baranek, & Chan, 1987, p.105). However, the question of objectivity and balance is not at the core of what constitutes editorial and other opinion discourse. Opinion discourses evaluates political issues from a particular point of view, and apportions blame and responsibility to certain political actors. In the process, opinion discourse takes sides in the political debate. Opinion discourse can also be written with the aim of mobilising readers around a particular resonating ideological position which appeals to the ethical and emotional leanings of the readership (Fowler, p.208).

### **2.5.2 Parliament and Parliamentary Discourse**

Politicians have several opportunities to frame issues. Among such opportunities are press releases, scheduled media appearances such as press conferences and public rallies. Parliamentary speeches present members of parliament with another opportunity to frame issues. The decision to compare parliamentary data against newspapers data is based on two main aspects.

The first is methodological convenience. It is relatively easier to access parliamentary data in its fullness than in any of the other forms such as broadcasts, press conferences and public addresses. In this respect, the study compares archived parliamentary speeches recorded in the *Hansard* against archived editorials in newspapers which made data collection easier considering the time and financial constraints of the study. Second, it was easier to establish a comparable unit of analysis between parliamentary speeches as recorded in the *Hansard* and newspaper editorials.

In this respect, as will be noted in the following chapter, the paragraph was chosen as the unit of analysis for both newspapers and parliamentary speeches as recorded in the *Hansard*.

Since their establishment, parliaments have been a central arena for political discourse. According to Carl Friedrich (1967), parliament has a dual role:

. . . as representatives they integrate the community through periodic appeals, based upon a continuous process of education and propaganda; as a deliberative body they endeavor to solve concrete problems of communal activity – to do or not to do, that is the question (Friedrich, p.327).

Parliamentary discourse, therefore, carries within it an inherent tension: on the one hand, it is supposed to reflect different ideologies in society and allow them public expression. On the other hand, it is supposed to moderate between rival factions and to enable them to reach an acceptable level of dialogue, so that the parliament as an institution can fulfil its formal functions. As a central forum in the national political discourse, parliament, presents politicians with an enormous opportunity to frame issues in the face of opposing views.

Parliament is the medium par excellence by which political discourse reaches and influences the public, that is, via the media, including the televising of parliamentary debates. Political parties, as representatives of different sections of the population, defend or oppose draft bills proposed by the government, define policies and control their implementation. In doing so, these politicians oppose their political opponents and the government or, on the contrary, align themselves with other parties and the government. In short, they engage in adversarial and confrontational processes.

Although parliamentary debates represent an influential and authoritative genre of discourse, few studies on this subject were carried out before the late 1990s (see Carbó, 1992; Rojo and Van Dijk, 1997; Seidel, 1988, 1989; Van Dijk, 2000; Van der Valk, 2000; Wilson, 1990). Largely in agreement with Carbó (1992), a parliamentary debate can be defined as a highly structured institutional and political speech-event whose main declared goal is to produce legal and policy instruments for the benefit of the nation.

Van Dijk (1997, 2000) discusses the general structural, functional, and contextual properties of political discourse by focusing on parliamentary debates in particular, thus offering a specific framework of analysis. He argues that political discourse may primarily be defined and studied contextually in terms of the participating actors, their social function, goals, and the political institutions and cognitions involved. Van Dijk also points out that parliamentary discourse is so influential to the general political discourse that it profoundly affects political discourse in other political arenas including the mass media.

### **2.5.3 Issue Attention and Framing in Parliament and Media**

This study attempts to compare newspapers' framing of issues arising out of post-elections periods in Malawi against parliamentary framing in similar periods. To be able to systematically do so, the study needs to identify a measure that will work equally for both corpora. Identifying similarities and differences in these arenas can help in identifying such a measure. This study distinguishes between how often and how prominently an issue is presented and on which aspects of an issue a presentation will focus on. The former has to do with agenda-setting theory (See McComb and Shaw, 1972) while the latter has to do with frame theory analysis. In the comparative study of issues in the political arena and the media, scholars have used McComb and Shaw



(1972)'s agenda-setting theory instrumental as a heuristic tool. This is mainly because agenda-setting is quite amenable to the measurement of attention to issues (See Dearing and Rogers, 1996 for an overview).

While the concept of agenda-setting can be used to study political debates and compare various agendas (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Walgrave and Van Aelst, 2006), frame theory analysis has gained prominence as a tool for examining policy documents (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). Because of this, even though it is still hobbled by varied conceptualisation and measurement issues, frame theory analysis has been increasingly employed in examining the content of both media and parliamentary records (See De Vreese, 2005; Scheufele, 1999).

The study aims to examine the issues as they are presented in both parliament and newspapers. The interest is not in the parliamentary and newspapers agenda. The interest is in the manner the issues are presented in both arenas. In this respect, frame theory analysis appears to be the proper heuristic tool to use. As will be noted in the following chapter, this study will use Entman's (1993, p./2003, p.5)'s conceptualisation of frames as an analytical tool. This approach is suitable for analysing both newspapers and parliamentary records as it will provide a structured way of analysing the corpora through the specific examination of articles for problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations and treatment recommendations. Different issues are articulated in both the parliamentary and the media arena through the use of these frame components. Thus, theoretically a frame can exist of each possible combination of these components.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The main conceptual scaffolding in the study is frame theory analysis. Robert Entman's (1991/2004) definition of frames has been adopted for this study. More specifically, the study will apply the Issue-Specific Frame, otherwise known as the Emergent Frame, model to the analysis of the corpora in the study because of its ability to expose nuanced differences in the issues covered by the press during the periods under study.

The study attempted to locate the issues that could affect the emerging frames by discussing the role of the media in a democracy. In this respect, the issue of newspapers' ownership and its links to political parties was discussed. Further, the chapter also discussed the different models of journalism emerging in the African context in view of the ownership of media and its links to centres of political power. Since political culture and context is important to the interpretation of frames, the chapter also examined the political challenges facing the Malawian democracy experiment.

Further, the chapter attempted to place this study within the context of the media content analysis scholarship in Malawi. The chapter observed the dearth of such research in Malawi and noted that this is most likely the first frame theory study in the country. Further, it observed that this study most likely draws from the biggest sample in comparison to previous studies in that country. In this respect, the study will improve on the knowledge already available concerning media coverage of political issues in Malawi.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methods**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This is a frame analysis study of discourse text in two different arenas: parliament and newspapers. The research focuses on three case studies spanning three time periods during the first one hundred days following presidential and parliamentary elections in 1994, 1999, and 2004. The year 1994 has been chosen as the starting point because it is the year a new government first came to power since 1964 in Malawi representing the ultimate end of the MCP dictatorship in Malawi.

Second, the research compares and contrasts the frames detected in newspapers against those detected in the parliamentary discourse. Such a comparison will help to establish whether or not newspapers are facilitating a multifaceted debate in the political public space or just reflecting the political voices of their owners as they are represented in parliament. Thus, the four components that make up a frame (problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation) as explicated by Entman (1993, p.52/2003, p.5) acted as the ultimate guiding framework in detecting frames.

To address the research questions presented in chapter one, Section 1.3, this study will use the first stages of grounded theory which are Open Coding and Axial Coding as an analytical tool. This particular methodology of identifying frames has been used and is recommended for inductive qualitative frame analysis (See van Gorp, 2010; Nickels, 2007; van Goorp, 2001; Archetti, 2008; Roggeband and Vliegenthart, 2007; Vliegenthart and Roggeband, 2007). The study will detect frames through Open and

Axial Coding of each editorial and parliamentary speech based on the problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation offered in these articles. Due to the voluminous amount of data to be analysed, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis approach was devised.

### **3.1 Methodological Approach**

This part of the chapter will set out the general rationale of the techniques used in analyzing the data. This includes a discussion of the choice of the qualitative case study technique. Further, the section will also discuss the use of grounded theory as used in this study.

#### **3.1.1 Rationale for the Qualitative Case Study Approach**

In this research study, the case studies are located within three major political epochs and events which presented political actors in Malawi with an opportunity to frame issues from their points of view. The case studies are fully discussed in chapter one, Section 1.2.

Perhaps the overarching reason for choosing the case study approach in this study is that case studies are advantageous because, by their very nature, they act as explanatory research devices (Yin, 2003, p.6-8). The explanatory approach is used when the researcher wants to establish causal factors in a phenomenon. According to Yin and Moore (1988), analysis in this type of case study should match patterns of process in the observed phenomenon especially if the phenomenon is complex. They provide the researcher with an opportunity to observe phenomena holistically. As George and Bennet (2005, p.22) explain, this holistic approach can accrue two advantages which are appropriate for this study. First, conceptual validity is more readily achieved.

Contextual factors in case studies permit more feasible measurement of specific phenomena that are more difficult to determine in general social contexts. Second, case studies are very suitable for the study of contributory systems to specific phenomena. A case study enables the researcher to holistically observe phenomena or series of events and can provide a full picture since many sources of evidence are used.

This research study is about framing in two different arenas which contribute to the political discourse in Malawi. With three case studies spread over a long period of time, the study will be able to identify similarities and differences that may address the role of newspapers in mediating political issues in an emerging democracy.

The second reason why this study uses case studies is that even though case studies are small, time-bound and context specific (Hammersley, 1992, p.184), they enable the researcher to describe the cause and effect dynamics within a phenomena. This is especially true in multiple case studies situation like this study. In this respect, the case studies cannot be applied to the future where different contexts and other characteristics will be in play (Gall, Borg and Gall, 1996, p.22). According to Pyecha (1988), when the intent is to describe a phenomenon, the researcher should be looking to discover causes and effects patterns. Comparing and contrasting the discovered cause and effect will enable a description of the phenomenon under study.

In relation to the above, the intent of this study is to observe and note newspaper discourses on political issues that defined the period between 1994 and 2004 against parliamentary speeches on the same political phenomena and epoch. Further, the study aims to discover whether or not owners of newspapers exert influence in the way political issues are framed. By using three case studies, the researcher hopes to not only detect the frames but also to examine how contextual factors such as the owners'

political affiliation influence the nature of the frames. These case studies will enable an understanding of why and how events during these times played out the way they did.

This study uses multiple case studies. Several case studies drawn across different epochs enable a deeper understanding of phenomena due to the opportunities for comparison. Hallin and Mancini (2005) make the case that comparative analysis in social theory has two main functions. The first is to sensitize the researcher to variations and similarities in different contexts. In this manner, it enables the researcher to refine concepts drawn across different contexts. The second is that it helps the researcher to draw out generalisations of phenomena across similar contexts. A comparative research design is used in this study mainly to fulfil the second function. Multiple case studies strengthen a research study as George and Bennett (1997) argue:

... the method of studying two or more cases that resemble each other in every respect but one, thereby achieving or approximating the functional equivalent of an experiment which makes it possible to rely on experimental logic to draw causal inferences.’(p.1)

Given these circumstances, it was expected that the case studies would yield new findings that could aid in understanding the political communication arena in Malawi. As suggested by proponents of “naturalistic generalisation,” the responsibility is placed on the readers of the findings to determine whether the findings apply to their own situations (Gall, Borg and Gall 1996, pp. 578-9).

### **3.1.2 Grounded Theory Methods in the Analysis**

The study is located within frame theory analysis. The method used to detect frames in the study is derived from the early stages of grounded theory. The newspapers and parliamentary records text was qualitatively analysed within the theoretical composition

(problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation) of a text frame as defined by Entman (1993, p.52/2003, p.5). The early stages of grounded theory include Open Coding and Axial Coding. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.195), Open Coding is the:

Breaking of data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data. At the same time, one is qualifying those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions.

Axial Coding is “Crosscutting or relating concepts/categories to each other.”

The grounded theory approach, first developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is “a research strategy whose purpose is to generate theory from data” (Punch 1998, p. 55). A full grounded theory approach consists of a series of systematic procedures and techniques to enable the researcher “to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 24). It is so called because it is concerned with the “discovery of theory” from the data one has collected (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The major strategy used to achieve that “is to find a core category at a high level of abstraction” through a successive coding process of the collected data (Punch 1998, p. 205). The coding process consists of three stages, Open Coding, Axial Coding and Selective Coding, of which only the first two are used in this study. Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.195) noted that the difference between open coding and axial coding is artificial and for explanatory purposes only. Otherwise, the process of open coding and axial coding can be done simultaneously.

### **3.1.3 Frame Components Analysis**

This study falls within frame theory as an analytical tool. In this respect, Entman's (1993, p.52/2003, p.5) basic definition of frames was used as the guide to the analytical tool. The definition outlines framing as follows:

To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described (Entman 1993, p. 52, his emphasis).

Thus, proceeding from the above, it is clear that a radical analysis of text for frames must include applying the four elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation. Thus the four features which undergird frame analysis were applied as an analytical tool to the corpora of parliamentary discourse and newspaper editorials.

First, the 'problem definition' element directs the frame analyst to what the media and politicians observe as the problem which could translate into the trouble, the predicament, the difficult or even the challenge that has brought about the crisis. Consequently, this element involves issues like (a) the nature of the phenomenon or crisis – what it is all about, and (b) the person(s) concerned (Semetko & Valkenberg, 2000).

Second, 'the causal interpretation' element guides the frame analyst to what media and political actors refer to as the reasons or causal agents of the phenomenon or crisis. The news media not only report events, but also explain causes and make attributions. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found that the responsibility frame was predominant in news stories. They concluded that this was an indication of the importance and potential influence of political culture and context on the framing of issues in the news.



Journalists, through editorials, and parliamentarians, on the National Assembly floor, will provide a diagnosis of what they perceive to be the reasons of the phenomenon or crisis. They will not only diagnose the problem, but they also apportion blame or assign praise to those factors and persons identified as the cause.

Third, the ‘moral evaluation’ element leads the frame analyst to what media and political actors discern or believe to be social and ethical inferences of the phenomenon or crisis. This deals with issues of how negatively or positively people’s lives are impacted by the phenomenon or the problem. Gitlin (1980) argued that news discourses make moral evaluations through the use of symbols that carry specific attitudes and positions. Among such symbols are metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, visual images, and appeals to principle (Lee, Pan, Chan & So, 2001).

Fourth, the ‘treatment recommendation’ element steers the frame analyst to what media and political actors should do to solve the problem or the crisis. It may also involve the question of how the solution should be implemented (Semetko & Valkenberg, 2000).

### **3.1.4 The Use of QDA Miner and WordStat 4.0**

Due to the large amount of data being analysed in this largely qualitative study, the joint software for computer-assisted content analysis, QDA Miner and WordStat 4.0 was used. This programme enables researchers to code text under various labels. The QDA Miner allows the researcher qualitative open coding of textual data while WordStat enables the researcher to view the frequencies and percentages of the coded aspect of the data. This assists researchers to keep track of codes especially when an article contains codes to more than one aspect of the research project (Provalis Research, 1998). Further, QDA Miner software facilitates movement and quicker examination of

the voluminous text data. The three different case studies corpora were examined separately. The nature of the programme is that it enables the researcher to add categories to the analytical framework as these categories emerge in the data. This, in turn, facilitates open coding which is a basic cornerstone of this analysis. After coding is completed, the programme can then provide standard statistics for the completed coding task.

It is important to note that this study was not a linguistic study. In this respect, the software did not have to be primed to pickup keywords or any linguistic feature. Indeed, the main purpose of using the software was to take advantage of its ability to manage text and its ability to enable access of data for comparative purposes at the touch of a keyboard button. Further, the QDA Miner feature enabled the coders to code the same data on the same computer without being aware of each other's work.

Distinct from a tool of analysis, the other reason for using computer assisted analysis was the software's ability to manage and organise the voluminous amount of data. The software facilitated the electronic linking of data to show relationships and comparisons or contrasts among the data. Multiple positions could be highlighted using the linking facility of QDA Miner and WordStat to enable a micro-analysis to be undertaken on related data in the corpus. The data within the study was diverse. Any of the three case studies had texts from the three sets of newspapers and parliamentary speeches from several political parties. Thus, the linking facilities proved to be a useful way of relating different text to each other.

The other feature of QDA Miner and WordStat that proved useful for this study was the quick retrieval feature. The program enabled the researcher to efficiently locate particular data that were related in ways that were deemed relevant to the study. Both

coded and uncoded text could be retrieved within the program. Further, statistics could be generated from coded data.

The third feature which proved useful for this study was the software's ability to enable two or more coders to code the same data on the same computer without viewing each other's work. Further this feature enabled the software to calculate intercoder reliability.

For purposes of analysis with QDA Miner, each of the three case studies was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of all the newspaper editorials and the second part consisted of all the parliamentary speeches. This means that there were six cases which were submitted to QDA Miner for Open Coding separately (See Table 3.1 above).

As noted earlier on in chapter two, the frames detected in this study are not Generic Frames. Rather, they are Issue-Sensitive or Emergent Frames. In this respect, there was no *a priori* setting of frames as could have been the case if the intention was to detect generic frames. Therefore, the Open Coding stage involved the identification of substantive paragraphs within the text of the editorials and parliamentary speeches.

## **3.2. The Data**

### **3.2.1 Data Collection**

Between October 2007 and May 2008, the researcher spent time in Malawi collecting data for this study. All data could only be accessed in hard copy format as electronic copies were either unavailable or access was denied. Because the analysis was going to be accomplished through Computer-Assisted Data Analysis software, a method of scanning the data using a flatbed scanner and then using Optical Character Recognition

software to reconvert the data to electronic copies was devised. Between October 2007 and February 2008 the researcher collected and scanned Parliamentary speeches in the National Assembly Library in Lilongwe. During this time the researcher also collected other parliamentary speeches from the National Archives in Zomba and the University of Malawi Library at Chancellor College also in Zomba. All Parliamentary speeches were collected from the official parliamentary record – The *Hansard*, in which the speeches are recorded verbatim.

Between January and May 2008, the researcher collected and scanned news articles from the *Nation* and the *Weekend Nation* at the Nation Publications Ltd Library, and the Blantyre Newspapers Ltd Library for the *Daily Times* and the *Malawi News*. Some articles were sourced from the University of Malawi Library at Chancellor College in Zomba and the National Library in Lilongwe. From July 2008 to April 2009 the researcher reconverted the collected data to electronic copies. Each of the three different case studies had two sets of data. This comprised of a parliamentary corpus and a newspapers corpus. Consequently, this study has six different sets of data.

### **3.2.2 Editorials and Opinion Columns**

Table 3.1 below presents a profile of the newspapers data realized after the data collection process. All editorials, opinion pieces, and comments which appeared in the newspapers identified above within one hundred days of the announcement of the outcome of the elections in 1994, 1999 and 2004 were potentially targeted for inclusion into the sample. In this respect, the articles had to address political issues as they related to governance, national leadership, the conduct of the elections itself and how that affected the political climate in the country.

For the 1994 case study, the editorials were selected from 22 May to 30 August 1994. This represented the first one hundred days following the swearing in of new President Bakili Muluzi after the election of 14 May 1994. The editorials in the 1999 case study were collected from newspaper issues appearing between the 19 June 1999, when the winner of the presidential race was sworn in, and 30 September 1999. This amounted to the first one hundred days of Muluzi and the UDF's second term. The editorials in the 2004 case study were selected from newspaper issues appearing between 27 May 2004, the day following the swearing in of new President Bingu wa Mutharika and the start of a new UDF term, and 6 September 2004, which marked the end of the first one hundred days of Mutharika's administration.

**Table 3.1: Profile of the newspapers data**

NEWSPAPER	EDITORIAL	OPINION COLUMNS	TOTAL
<b>1994</b>			
<i>Daily Times</i>	16	16	32
<i>Malawi News</i>	15	3	18
<i>Nation</i>	18	12	30
<i>Chronicle</i>	6		6
Totals	55	31	86
<b>1999</b>			
<i>Daily Times</i>	8	2	10
<i>Malawi News</i>	12	1	13
<i>Nation</i>	5	11	16
<i>Weekend Nation</i>	1		1
<i>Chronicle</i>	5	6	11
Totals	31	20	51
<b>2004</b>			
<i>Daily Times</i>	13	1	14
<i>Malawi News</i>	10	7	17
<i>Nation</i>	4	1	5
<i>Weekend Nation</i>	6	9	15
<i>Chronicle</i>	10	8	18
Totals	43	26	69

### 3.2.3 Parliamentary Speeches

Only parliamentary speeches made on the National Assembly floor in contribution to a parliamentary motion and, or in response to the presidential opening speech were included. The president's speech delivered when opening the National Assembly tends to lay out the administration's agenda. In this respect, parliamentarians' speeches in contribution to the motion to accept, or amend, or reject the presidential speech tend to be rich in political opinion on the issues facing the nation especially after an election. MPs' speeches tend to broadly focus on issues of governance, national leadership, nationhood, and the general political climate in the country rather than focus on specifics such education or health.

All other forms of speeches made in parliament were not included in the data. These include presidential opening addresses, ministerial statements, ministerial responses during question time, budget statements, opposition leaders' responses to presidential speeches, and shadow ministers responses to budget statements and ministerial statements. Table 3.2 below provides a profile of the parliamentary speeches data collected for this study.

**Table 3.2: Profile of parliamentary speeches collected for the study**

<b>PARTY</b>	<b>AFORD</b>	<b>MCP</b>	<b>UDF</b>	<b>RP</b>	<b>MCODE</b>	<b>PPM</b>	<b>INDEP.</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>1994</b>	17	21	42					80
<b>1999</b>			15					15
<b>2004</b>	1	20	25	5	2	4	8	65
<b>TOTAL</b>	18	41	92	5	2	4	8	170

All parliamentary speeches appearing in the data was collected from the first meeting of parliament following the elections. In the 1994 case study, the first session of parliament was the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the National Assembly which had two sittings between 31 June 1994 and 31 November 1944. For the 1999 case study, the first session

of parliament was the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the National Assembly which was held between 4 July 1999 and 31 October 1999. In 2004, the first parliamentary session was the National Budget Session of 2004 which was held between 11 September 2004 and 15 October.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

#### **3.3.1 Unit of Analysis**

With regards newspaper editorials, the coding unit for this study was the paragraph. Conventions of newspaper journalism dictate that the paragraph has the smallest unit of meaning (Stein, Paterno, and Burnett, 2006). The sentence typically relies on the context of the paragraph for its meaning. Each paragraph was coded individually for a single dominant idea.

The paragraph was also used as the unit of analysis for parliamentary speeches. After discussion with six MPs' personal assistants who write speeches for their bosses (all of whom have worked as journalists before), it was determined that parliamentary speech writers in Malawi use the paragraph as a self containing unit of discourse with a particular point or idea to establish. In this respect, it was decided that the paragraph would be used as a unit of analysis. Further, the study followed in the footpath set by some studies on parliamentary speeches which use the paragraph as a unit of analysis (See Sporleder and Lapata, 2006).

#### **3.3.2 Open Coding**

Since the aim was to detect issue-sensitive or emergent frames rather than generic frames, during this stage the texts were analysed without the use of a predefined coding

instrument. The process identified different components of a frame as defined by Robert Entman (1993, p.52) these being problem definition, causal interpretation, and/or moral evaluation/treatment recommendation. Paragraphs within each editorial or parliamentary speech were compared and contrasted closely in order to identify these components that could aid a reader's understanding of the texts. The focus, in this particular regard, was on the narrative structure rather than the subject or topic of the parliamentary speech or editorial. As van Gorp (2010, p.94) argues:

Essentially, when one creates a story one is making choices. With regard to the news, framing is not about the core facts of a news event, but about what selections the journalist has made.

However, it was judged as prudent to construct a series of reflexive questions that could be used as constant point of reference and guide as the process of open coding continued. The following are the questions:

#### 1. Problem Definition

- a. What are the problems the new government will have to deal with?
- b. What were the problems with the previous government?
- c. Are there any problems in connection with the new government's rise to power?
- d. What is the perceived origin of problems facing the new government?
- e. What is the perceived scope of the problems facing the new government?

#### 2. Causal Interpretation

- a. What are the perceived reasons for the problems facing the new government?
- b. What or who are the causal agents of these problems?

#### 3. Moral Evaluation



- a. What are the perceived moral implications of the new government's mandate?
- b. What kind of moral evaluations are being used with regard both the previous and the new government?

#### 4. Treatment Recommendation

- a. What should the new government do about the identified problems or causal agents of these problems?
- b. How should the new government view its duties?

As the coding progressed a constant process of comparing and contrasting the paragraphs against previously coded paragraphs facilitated the crystallisation of already identified categories or suggested the identification of new categories altogether (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In this way paragraphs related to the same phenomenon were placed under appropriate theme groups. The list of theme groups grew, gradually changed and then consolidated towards the end of the process. Appendix II depicts the QDA Miner interface on a computer monitor and after open coding of an editorial. See Appendix III for an example of the open coding matrix of a newspaper article appearing in the *Malawi News* on 28-3 June 1994 entitled *Muluzi in a hurry?* The article is reproduced in full in Appendix IV.

### 3.3.3 Priming the Software for Open Coding

The first step in priming QDA Miner was to create a tree of nodes. The parent node comprised of the main themes identified during the Open Coding stage. The child nodes comprised of all the frame components that are central to this analysis (Problem Definition, Causal Interpretation, Moral Evaluation/Treatment Recommendation) as conceptualised by Entman (1993/2004). During the Open Coding stage, each coded

paragraph was assigned to an appropriate child node of the four child nodes. Thus, at the Open Coding stage, the tree had only one parent node and four child nodes (See Appendix II).

### **3.3.4 Axial Coding**

While the above step was performed by all the three coders, the Axial Coding stage was done by the researcher. This was mainly because the very nature of Axial Coding makes it extremely difficult for multiple coders to do. Whereas in the Open Coding stage, the focus was on an individual editorial or parliamentary speech, the Axial Coding stage calls for linking the paragraphs coded in Open Coding to overarching ideas in the corpora. Essentially, it was important for the researcher to do this alone because of the increasing level of abstraction required at this level of analysis.

Charmaz (2006, p.61) argues that Axial Coding:

. . . relates categories to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembles the data you have fractured during initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis.

Thus, paragraphs from multiple texts had to be arranged around “. . . ‘Axes’ of Meaning” (van Gorp, 2010, p.95). The similarities and differences in the paragraphs coded in Opening Coding were closely examined and analysed. Attempts were made to analyse the relationships among the different frame components for each theme group. During this process, the researcher turned to frame theory and the literature relevant to the categories established for interpretation. This is in line with van Gorp (2010, p.97)’s advise in frame detection at the Axial Coding stage that “. . . it is advisable to turn to the literature . . .” for interpretation of the emerging codes. In this respect, a wide range of

literature on culture, politics, leadership, and news values were consulted as will become evident when presenting the results in chapters four, five and six.

Throughout the process of Axial Coding, the appropriateness of paragraphs to each theme group in general and each individual frame component in particular was repeatedly tested by a process of inductive and deductive thinking. By this process, paragraphs that were deemed to have been inappropriately allocated a theme group or frame component were removed and moved to appropriate theme groups or frame component. This is in line with principles of grounded theory in qualitative research as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Charmaz (2006, p.39). This process served to crystallise and solidify both theme groups and frame components. After the crystallisation and solidifying of these theme groups and their frame components, the theme groups were labelled based on the dominating theme running through it. These groups became the frames.

This manner of categorising frame components has been used in other research studies including Nickels (2007), van Gorp (2001), and Roggeband and Vliegenthart (2008). In their study of framing of immigration in the Netherlands, Roggeband and Vliegenthart (2007) used the method in a deductive manner by setting predefined and operationalised frames before actually analysing their data qualitatively. The decision to approach the study from the framework of the four elements without restriction from the guiding questions reflects the inductive approach to framing analysis described by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) who recommend that frames should be drawn directly from the data content, without assuming the existence of any specific frame *a priori*.

### **3.3.5 Priming the Software for Axial Coding**

At the Axial Coding stage, which involves categorisation and relating categories to subcategories, the main themes of the coded paragraphs were categorised. In terms of priming the software, the researcher's main task was to add to the parent nodes of the tree. First, there was only one parent node, which did not have a label, to which the four child nodes were attached. As the process of Axial Coding progressed, the parent nodes increased as more theme groups were identified and coded paragraphs were moved under the emerging theme groups. As an example, Appendix II shows the tree of nodes which emerged after the Axial Coding process of the editorials in the 1994 case study.

### **3.4 Pilot Study**

After the research procedure was designed following the preparation of data, a pilot study was carried out on stratified random sample consisting of 33.3% of the newspapers' articles and parliamentary speeches from the three case studies. The aim of this pilot was to establish the weak points of the analysis protocol for strengthening. Further, the pilot aimed to test the coding protocol through an inter-coder reliability test.

#### **3.4.1 Reliability**

This study is a qualitative study of text from newspapers and parliamentary records. On this very basis, the study is open to criticism concerning issues of reliability and validity. According to Silverman (2008, p.282) in quantitative research reliability as to do with the extent a study procedure can be exactly replicated. However, due to the fact that qualitative research examines social phenomena whose context cannot be replicated because social reality is always in flux, it has always proved problematic for qualitative researchers to deal with issues of reliability in the same way that researchers who use quantitative methods do. This study has also struggled with these issues.

However, even though the above may be the case, this study has in-built reliability mechanisms that conform to rigorous standards of qualitative scientific research. According to Moisander and Valtonen (2006, p.23-27) one way qualitative researchers can ensure reliability is by making the research process ‘transparent’. This is achieved by clearly describing the data collection and data analysis process. Transparency is also achieved by clearly detailing the theoretical basis of the interpretation. This study has clearly adhered to this standard as the preceding paragraphs have clearly laid out the frame theory (problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation) basis of the analysis and the stages followed in the collection and analysis of the data.

The fact that data of this study are based on archived textual newspapers and parliamentary records adds to the reliability of the study. According to Silverman (2008, p.285) as long as textual data are not forged, they are more reliable than any other forms of data such as data gathered through observation. The newspaper issues and parliamentary records used in this study are available for any interested researchers at the relevant libraries in Malawi. These are the Lilongwe Branch National Library Service, University Library at Chancellor College in Zomba, the National Archives Library in Zomba, the National Assembly Library in Lilongwe, and the libraries of the Nation Publications Ltd, and the Blantyre Newspapers Ltd both in Blantyre. Further, the analysis of the data has been amply demonstrated by the provided example and screen graphic from the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software.

### **3.4.2 Open Coding Intercoder Reliability**

As noted earlier, a pilot study was undertaken to test the analysis procedure. The sample of this pilot test was collected from 33.33% of each of the six data sets described above.

Thus, out of the 82 newspaper editorials in the 1994 case study, 28 editorials were randomly selected for inclusion into the pilot data while out of the 80 parliamentary speeches, 27 were selected. From the 51 newspaper articles in the 1999 case study, a total of 17 editorials were randomly selected and entered into the pilot study while five parliamentary speeches were selected from the 15 parliamentary speeches from the same case study. Twenty-two editorials were selected from the 66 newspaper articles in the 2004 case study while 22 parliamentary speeches were selected from the 65 parliamentary speeches in the corpus.

These were open coded by the researcher and two other coders. As noted in the discussion on the software, QDA Miner and WordStat permit the same data to be coded by different coders on the same computer. In this case, the three coders took turns open coding the pilot study data and passing the computer around until every coder had finished the open coding stage.

The Holsti intercoder reliability test was applied for this study. The formula is  $C.R. = 2M/N1 + N2$ , where “M is the number of coding decisions on which the two judges are in agreement, and N1 and N2 refer to the number of coding decisions made by judges 1 and 2, respectively” (p. 140). In this pilot study there were three coders. Thus, the formula was adjusted accordingly to  $CR=3M/N1+N2+N3$ .

For the 1994 editorials corpus, the first coder (the researcher) made 72 coding decisions. The second coder made 65 decisions, and the third coder made 59 decisions. The three coders agreed on 56 coded paragraphs. The result from Holsti’s intercoder reliability test is 85.7% agreement. For the 1994 parliamentary speeches corpus, the researcher made 68 coding decisions while the other two coders made 59 and 54 coding decisions respectively. The three coders agreed on 44 coded paragraphs. The Holsti intercoder reliability test indicated 72.9% agreement.

For the 1994 editorial corpus, the aggregate of coded paragraphs was 169. The coders agreed on 46 paragraphs. The Holsti intercoder reliability test was 78.9%. With respect for the parliamentary pilot, the coders amassed 57 coded paragraphs. They agreed on 45 coded paragraphs. Thus, the pilot for this corpus registered at 78.9% .

The coders agreed on 52 coded paragraphs for the editorials corpus in the 2004 pilot study. They had an aggregate of 188 coded paragraphs. The intercoder reliability test was 82.9%. The parliamentary pilot for 2004 had an aggregate of 94 coded paragraphs among the three coders. They agreed on 28 coded paragraphs. Thus, the intercoder reliability test was 89.3% (See Appendix V).

### **3.5 Validity**

Hammersley (1990, p.57) defines validity as ‘. . . the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers’. According to Silverman (2008, p.289), the issue of validity originated in quantitative research. In this respect, it is difficult to apply the same measures of validity to a qualitative research study such as this one. However, three methods of validation proposed by qualitative researchers proved useful in this study.

#### **3.5.1 Tabulation and Reporting Style**

The first was use of simple tabulations in this study. Regarding such a method of validating qualitative research, Silverman (2008, p.301) argued:

Simple counting techniques, theoretically derived and ideally based on participants’ own categories, can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research. Instead of taking the researcher’s word for it, the reader has a chance to gain a

sense of the flavour of the data as a whole. In turn, researchers are able to test and to revise their generalizations, removing nagging doubts about the accuracy of their impressions about the data.

As will be noted throughout the presentation of the results in chapters four, five and six, the researcher has attempted to provide simple tabulations of the categories of coded paragraphs for each frame detected and to demonstrate the strength or weakness of a frame from these tabulations. This form of validation has been made even stronger in this study because all the possible editorials in the one hundred days period for all the three case studies were entered into analysis. Thus a comprehensive survey and analysis of the fullest possible data was made possible by this research design.

According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996, p.582) carefully selected direct quotations from the text under study are effective for clarifying “the emic perspective, that is, the meaning of the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants”. In this study, the researcher has endeavoured to provide appropriate quotations from the corpora in order to illustrate and establish the veracity of claims being made. Further, a reporting style in which the researcher’s voice does not intrude into the analytic narrative has been adopted. In addition, the reporting style in this thesis endeavours to provide a cross-arena analysis of the frames. This is to say that if similar frames have been identified in both the newspapers and the parliamentary arena, an attempt has been made to report the convergences and divergences between the two arenas. This is in line with Gall, Borg and Gall (1996, p.583)’s argument for a cross-case analysis focusing on concepts, themes and patterns across case studies. Further, the thesis attempts to provide thick description by giving contextual information about the state of the newspapers landscape and the National Assembly at the beginning of findings chapter.



### **3.5.2 Researcher Positioning and Peer Review**

According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996, p.20) reflexivity refers to the “focus on the researcher’s self as an integral constructor of the social reality being studied”. In this respect, the qualitative researcher must always be mindful of the biases and prejudices he may bring to the research study. In this respect, these include personal feelings and experiences that should not be permitted to cloud the analysis of the research findings.

With specific reference to the frame identification process, van Gorp (2010, p.93) argues that frame identification is a process achieved by the reconstruction of “the underlying, culturally embedded frames in a text. . .”. In this respect, frame analysis scholars have constantly debated over whether or not “the researcher should be a member of a cultural group” (p. 93) from which the text is being drawn.

In this study, the researcher is a member of the broader national group from which the text of this study is drawn. He was also a radio journalist in Malawi for some years. After leaving the journalism profession, the researcher has taught journalism and communication courses at the University of Malawi’s Bunda College of Agriculture. This makes him part of the cauldron that produced the editorial text used in this study. This is to say that the researcher is very much aware of the production processes of newspaper editorials. As a citizen of Malawi, he is also aware of the prevailing national political dynamics which influence parliamentary speeches in the National Assembly.

In view of the above, van Gorp (2010, p.93) urges frame theory analysis researchers “to maintain some distance from personal thinking patterns in order to grasp the striking and natural characteristics” (p.93) of the aspect under study. Van Gorp (2010) advises that ideally frame researchers should discuss their analysis and findings with others who will bring a different cultural perspective to the study.

As a safe-guard, Borg and Gall (1989, p.19-21) urge the researcher and those who use the research findings to examine “the weight of accumulated evidence”. Other qualitative researchers urge the researcher to broaden his/her perspective with those of others (Gadamer, 1975; Scott and Usher, 1996, p.21-22; van Gorp, 2010, p.93).

Other qualitative researchers propose a peer review process as another way of validating the qualitative research process. Brophy (2008, p.29) explain that this form of validation:

. . . involves exposing the narrative, or other evidence, to people with expertise to critique it. This is very similar to the process of ‘peer review’ which many academic journals use to distinguish submitted papers which are worth publishing from those which are not.

According to Johnson (1997), the qualitative researcher should submit his interpretation and conclusions to the scrutiny of professional peers. In this respect, the peers should be skeptical and challenge the researcher to provide solid evidence for his analysis and conclusions. The peers should also provide useful insights for adjusting the interpretations should any be needed.

In this study, especially at the axial coding level, the researcher submitted his scheme of categorisation of the coded paragraphs to two lecturers at the University of Malawi. One of these lecturers is in the Department of Media Studies at the Polytechnic in Blantyre and the other is in the Department of Language and Development Communication at Bunda College of Agriculture. Working together, the two colleagues basically agreed with the researcher in his categorisation of the coded paragraphs with a few suggestions on the labelling of the frames. The peer reviewers of this study sent back their comments suggesting some adjustments to the labelling of the frames and the merging of others (See Appendix VI).

### **3.6 Limitations of the Study**

Having discussed the stages used to analyse the data, it is appropriate to discuss the limitations inherent in the methods adopted for this study. The main weaknesses of this study's methodology lie in the contested nature of frame theory as a theory in mass communication and qualitative research methods as the technical tool used to analyse the data. Other limitations include the use of CAQDAS and the data size. Beginning with the limitations poised by frame measurement, this section will discuss these limitations and how they have been overcome in adapting this methodology for this study.

#### **3.6.1 Frame Measurement**

The strength of the study lies in its use of the definition of a frame to identify frames in the corpora. Entman (1993)'s widely accepted definition provides the framework of analysis by using the frame components. However, using frame theory to analyse political discourse comes with its own problems. "Frame analysis is no longer Goffman's frame analysis," writes Koenig (2004), arguing that frame analysis is now only loosely connected to Goffman's original conception. Koenig and others (Maher, 2001, p. 84) have suggested that the greatest difficulty in the analysis comes with the identification and measurement of frames because frames consist of tacit rather than overt conjectures. Goffman (1974) said that frames are not consciously manufactured but are unconsciously adopted in the course of communication. Snow and Benford (1988) call frames "conceptual scaffolding". So, if indeed frames are more conceptual than concrete, how then do we measure them?

In previous research, frames have typically been determined through content analysis conducted by researchers who manually code text for specific frames. For example, content was manually coded to find the frames in news coverage about the launch of the common European currency, the euro (de Vreese, Peter & Semetko, 2001), about gun ownership (Downs, 2002), about the Million Man March protest (Watkins, 2001), and about the war on terrorism in Afghanistan (Ryan, 2004), among many other studies. In other research, computer assisted hierarchical cluster analysis has been utilized to determine frames (Andsager & Powers, 1999; Cowart, 2003; Koella, 2001; Lind & Salo, 2002; Miller, Andsager, & Riechert, 1998; Riechert, 1996).

This thesis proceeds from the theoretical perspective that suggests that political communication can be commonly understood through frames. Such frames simplify, prioritize and structure the narrative flow of events (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1991; Gamson, 1975). By using the four frame components identified by Entman (2004) which are Problem Definition, Causal Interpretation, Moral Evaluation and Treatment Recommendation, the research has a guide that both drives the coding process and relatively prevents the pitfall of arbitrary allocation of codes to paragraphs. Further, the researcher felt confident in taking this way of analysis for frames because it has been proved as a reliable way of measuring frames. Several studies have used the four frame components for identifying frames in textual data (Nickels, 2007; van Gorp, 2001; and Roggeband and Vliegthart, 2008) as noted above.

### **3.6.2 Qualitative Study**

The study is a qualitative study of textual data. While the main benefits that come with this method have been discussed in the preceding sessions, there are some traditional criticisms against this method which may legitimately be levelled against this study.

These include the issue of objectivity. In this respect, the researcher clearly understood his position as the primary “measuring instrument” (Gall, Borg and Gall 1996, p. 554) and how that could affect the outcome of the study. In this regard, Strauss and Corbin (1990) stress the importance of theoretical sensitivity.

Theoretical sensitivity refers to the personal quality of the researcher in being able to see “subtleties of meaning of data” and the “ability to give meaning to data” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, pp. 41-42; pp. 76-95). The ability referred to may come from the researcher’s professional experience and knowledge. It can also come from the analytical process of “collecting and asking questions about the data, making comparisons, thinking about what you see, making hypotheses, developing small theoretical frameworks (mini-frameworks) about concepts and their relationships” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p. 43). As advised, the researcher in this study has periodically stepped back, asked questions of the data, maintained an attitude of scepticism, and followed the research procedure closely to ensure an objective outcome (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Where political-historical accuracy was demanded, the researcher drew on credible publications.

### **3.6.3 CAQDAS**

Another challenge to the study includes the use of CAQDAS. In a way, this challenge is linked to the above concern regarding the researcher and theoretical sensitive. Some scholars such as Kelle (2004) have argued that CAQDAS tends to alienate the researcher from the data. While this may be true, the use of CAQDAS in this research study was predicated on one major reason – the voluminous amount of data in this study.

The overarching reason is what Thompson (2002) identified as the mechanical ability of such software - the ability to manage, code and interpret large amounts of data. It would have been impossible to do a manual qualitative study with the data in the amounts used in this study. Yet such data was crucial for generalization at the end. As Gibbs, Frieze & Mangabeira (2002) argue the prerequisite of really effective qualitative analysis is efficient, consistent and systematic data management.

In manual qualitative data analysis, activities such as coding selected text, generating reports, finding key terms, and how they are used are quite time consuming, wearisome and error prone. Sadly, these are the activities that form the foundation of qualitative data analysis. Fortunately, it is these tasks that the computer can assist well with. Lewins and Silver (2007, p.8-11) assert, using CAQDAS enables the qualitative researcher to access all parts of her/his project immediately. All data is instantly accessible.

The argument for CAQDAS in this research should not overshadow the fact that the researcher is the intellectual force behind the coding and interpreting. The CAQDAS is only a tool in the hands of the researcher. When it is understood that at the heart of frame analysis is the ability to code and interpret textual data, then the primacy of the researcher over CAQDAS will be fully understood. As Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.310) note, although CAQDAS can be helpful to the researcher to manage and manipulate textual data, these programmes are not capable of actually analysing the data. Thus, it is the researcher's duty to categorize, grade and code the data.

The software helps to structure and maintain the categories, grades and codes as the researcher adds more and more information derived from the data to the categories, grades and codes. The task of interpreting and applying the codes remains strictly the researcher's. Thus, to all intents and purposes, the software does not divest the

researcher of the task of interpreting and coding. The researcher is the thinker driving the process of coding and analysis. It is this task, interpreting and coding, that lies at the heart of frame analysis. The software's primary advantage is in its efficiency: the ability to process large volumes of documents in a short time.

### **3.6.4 Data Size**

In considering the data in this research study, it is important to acknowledge that the purpose of qualitative research is to build on/up concepts/theory. While generalisation will emerge (especially from a comparative case study such as this one), generalisation from the case study to a larger population is not the main aim. The advantage of a case study approach lies in its potential “. . . to deal with the subtleties and intricacies of complex social situations . . .” and this potential, however, is best achieved by restricting the study to one or a few cases (Denscombe 1998, p. 35). Therefore, a potential weakness of case study is its purported representativeness of the larger population (Hammersley 1992). The decision about sample size also involves a trade-off between breadth and depth given the resource demands and the resources available.

This study dealt with the concerns of breadth and depth by employing three case studies rather than one. Further, each case study had a comparative element to reveal the different framing in both corpora. In addition, all the editorials and opinion columns in each case study and each newspaper were included in the data. The same applied to parliamentary speeches. Thus, the data was as comprehensive as it could be. By including the entire population possible and by spreading out the case studies over a ten years period, the research study attempted to deal with the question of ‘thick description’ without compromising on breadth.

Given the argument by Gall, Borg and Gall (1996, p.22) that in a research study based on case studies, any generalisation of findings should be based on ‘. . . a case-by-case basis’, this study examines only three cases over a ten years period. Therefore, its findings cannot be seen as representative of the Malawian democratic experience especially as the country continues to evolve socially, economically and politically. As Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996, p.585) argue with respect to research based on case studies, the readers of the findings in this study should use them for “. . . the cases with their own situations”.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

All these challenges and limitations notwithstanding, this study’s employment of the different methods including case studies, grounded theory methods and computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software discussed in this chapter was consistent with the theoretical and conceptual premises discussed in the preceding chapter. The study yielded significant results as the different succeeding chapters including the conclusion will show. The key research question namely how newspapers framed political issues in the chosen case studies as compared to parliamentary framing were fully and adequately addressed because of the methods applied in this study.

This chapter has located the study within the case study and frame theory framework. The intent and purpose is to examine the differences that emerge as a result of the framing of political issues in newspaper and parliament in an emerging democracy. The process of discussing these frames takes into account other exogenous factors such as political power, newspaper ownership and political alignment of the owner. This is the focus of this study. The next chapter discusses findings of the first case study.



## **Chapter Four**

### **1994 Post-Election Period: The Age of Partisan Framing**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of the 1994 post-election case study. The chapter begins by setting the context of the 1994 case study. This is achieved through a discussion of the newspapers' landscape in effect at that time in Malawi, and the political parties to which the newspapers were aligned. This will be followed by a brief section presenting an overview of the frames detected in both the newspapers' corpus and the parliamentary corpus for this case study.

Following this, the chapter will discuss two pairs of similar frames detected from the newspapers' and the parliamentary corpus. This will include an interpretation of the frames in relation to the political environment from which they emerged. Following this, there is a section discussing two dissimilar frames. One was detected in the newspapers corpus and the other in the parliamentary corpus. As with the first section, this will be followed by an interpretation of the frames.

Further, the chapter consists of sections discussing the general points of frame construction used in the press and by political actors in presenting the frames. The chapter also has a section discussing ownership and its influence on the journalism models emerging out of the 1994 case study. The findings presented in this case study are drawn from editorials appearing between 19<sup>th</sup> May 1994 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 1994. The parliamentary data is drawn from the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the National Assembly which met between 28<sup>th</sup> June 1994 and 30<sup>th</sup> November 1994.

#### 4.1 The Newspapers Landscape

While there were many newspapers on the market in 1994, four of these published consistently. Two of these were the *Malawi News* and the *Daily Times* both owned by the Blantyre Newspapers Ltd (BNL) as part of the late President Banda's business empire. In essence, the *Daily Times* and the *Malawi News* were propaganda sheets of the MCP (See Van Donge 2002).

The *Nation* is the first newspaper in the Nation Publications Limited (NPL) stable. It was also the only newspaper in the NPL stable in 1994. The proprietor of NPL is Aleke Banda. He was the UDF's First Deputy President and Muluzi's first Minister of Finance. Given its owner's political stand, the *Nation* sided with the pro-democracy movements prior to the 1994 elections.

The *Chronicle* was created in 1993 by Rob Jamieson. Jamieson was active in the pro-democracy movements prior to 1994. Given the owner's political position as a pro-democracy activist, the *Chronicle's* editorial position tended to side with the pro-democracy movements rather than the MCP.

Reversal of fortunes at the polls also meant a reversal of roles for most of the newspapers mentioned above. The *Malawi News* and the *Daily Times* which had been mouthpieces of the government and the MCP, became the new opposition newspapers. The *Nation* and the *Chronicle*, which had supported the opposition parties during the campaign period, began to lend their support to the new government and the ruling party.

Consequently, the newspapers operating in the immediate period following the 1994 elections can be roughly divided between the pro-government newspapers, prominent among them were the NPL newspapers, and the opposition newspapers,

prominent among them were the BNL newspapers. Cammack (2000) argues that this state of affairs contributed to a decline in the level of critical journalism in the country:

The ownership structure of the private print media . . . has been a worrying development for several reasons. Foremost it means that editorial policy is easily influenced by party politics, and that stories . . . are added or dropped according to political criteria instead of newsworthiness. . . . In such a situation robust debate, diversity of opinion and democracy suffer. (p. 4-5).

This partisan division within the press, which essentially reflected the political binaries existing in the country, proved to be important interpretative tools in analysing the emergent frames. In order to demonstrate the partisan division within the press in the 1994 post election period, the subsequent sections discuss frames in the newspapers and the National Assembly along the party-lines they supported.

## **4.2 Overview of the Frames**

There were four overarching frames within the corpora. Two of these related to the question of national unity following the 1994 elections. The other two examined governance issues in the wake of the introduction of multiparty politics in Malawi.

The 1994 newspapers' corpus consisted of 86 newspaper articles. The corpus yielded 199 coded paragraphs. Three frames emerged from these coded paragraphs. Of the 199 paragraphs, 122 were categorised as dealing with an emerging narrative that argued that the country needed to reconcile and unite following the polarising election campaign (See Table 4.1). These 122 paragraphs were coded out of 39 of the 86 articles in this corpus. This became the Unity Frame.

Of the 199 paragraphs coded in the newspapers corpus, 45 were categorised as primarily addressing the issue of leadership, and how this could impact on governance in the coming five years. These paragraphs represented 22.6% of the total 199 paragraphs. They were drawn from 22 articles representing 25.6% of the 86 in the newspapers corpus (See Table 4.1). The last frame in the newspapers corpus had 32 of the 199 paragraphs. These were coded from 25 of the 86 articles in the newspapers corpus. Similar to its counter-part in the parliamentary corpus, it was also labelled as the Governance Frame (See Table 4.1)

**Table 4.1: Newspaper Frames detected in the 1994 newspapers' corpus and their frame components breakdown.**

<b>Newspaper Frames</b>	<b>Articles</b>	<b>Frame Components</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>
<b>Unity Frame</b>			
BNL Newspapers	29 (32.5%)		
<i>Nation/Chronicle</i>	10 (11.6%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>39(44.1%)</b>		
		Problem Definition	43 (35.2%)
		Causal Interpretation	14 (11.5%)
		Moral Evaluation	32 (26.2%)
		Treatment Recommend.	33 (27%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>122 (100%)</b>
<b>Leadership Frame</b>			
BNL Newspapers	13 (15.1%)		
<i>Nation/Chronicle</i>	9 (10.5%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 (25.6%)</b>		
		Problem Definition	18 (40%)
		Causal Interpretation	9 (20%)
		Moral Evaluation	18 (40%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>45 (100%)</b>
<b>Governance Frame</b>			
BNL Newspapers	8 (9.3%)		
<i>Nation/Chronicle</i>	17 (19.7%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 (29.0%)</b>		
		Problem Definition	15 (46.9%)
		Causal Interpretation	6 (18.8%)
		Moral Evaluation	11 (34.4%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>32 (100%)</b>
	<b>86(100%)</b>		<b>199(100%)</b>

The parliamentary corpus consisted of 80 parliamentary speeches. From these speeches, 151 paragraphs were coded. These yielded three frames. Of these three, one was similar to the newspapers' Unity Frame mentioned above. It claimed 82 paragraphs of the 151 paragraphs coded out of 31 of the 80 speeches in this corpus (See Table 4.2). As with its counterpart in the newspapers corpus, this frame was also labelled as the Unity Frame.

**Table 4.2: Parliamentary Frames detected in the 1994 parliamentary corpus and their frame components breakdown.**

<b>Parliamentary Frames</b>	<b>Speeches</b>	<b>Frames Components</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>
<b>Unity Frame</b>			
MCP/AFORD Alliance	24 (30%)		
UDF	7 (8.8%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>31 (38.8%)</b>		
		Problem Definition	9 (10.9%)
		Causal Interpretation	43 (52.4%)
		Treatment Recommend.	30 (36.6%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>82 (100%)</b>
<b>Governance Frame</b>			
MCP/AFORD Alliance	9 (11.3%)		
UDF	26 (32.5%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>35 (43.8%)</b>		
		Problem Definition	14 (35.9%)
		Causal Interpretation	14 (35.9%)
		Moral Evaluation	11 (28.2%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>39 (100%)</b>
<b>Failed Govt. Frame</b>			
MCP/AFORD Alliance	5 (6.3%)		
UDF	9 (11.3%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>14 (17.6%)</b>		
		Prob.Def./Causal Inter.	17 (56.7%)
		Moral Evaluation	13 (43.3%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30 (100%)</b>
	<b>80 (100%)</b>		<b>151 (100%)</b>

The second largest frame in the National Assembly corpus was derived from 39 paragraphs of the 151 paragraphs which were categorised as primarily addressing the

issue of governance, and how this could impact on governance in the coming five years. Similar to the Governance Frame detected in the newspapers' corpus, this frame was also labelled as the Governance Frame (See Table 4.2). It was derived from 35 speeches coded from the 80 speeches in the parliamentary speeches corpus.

Of the 151 paragraphs coded in the parliamentary corpus, 30 paragraphs were categorised as mainly addressing the reasons why the MCP lost at the elections. These coded paragraphs were drawn from 14 speeches representing 17.5% of the 80 speeches in the parliamentary corpus. The UDF framed this as reflective of the people's rejection of a failing government (See Table 4.2). These paragraphs formed the Failed Government Frame. This frame was unique to the National Assembly corpus.

### **4.3 Overarching Frames**

As noted above, the newspapers' corpus has a Unity Frame which has a counterpart in the parliamentary corpus (See Tables 4.1 and 4.2). Further, the newspapers' corpus has a Governance Frame which is similar to a Governance Frame appearing in the parliamentary corpus (See Tables 4.1 and 4.2). This section discusses these four frames from both corpora. First, it will discuss the two Unity Frames and then it will discuss the two Governance Frames. In light of the ideological positions of the newspapers under study, the discussion is organised by the newspapers and their allied political parties. Thus, the BNL newspapers' construction of the frames will be discussed together with the MCP/AFORD alliance's construction of the same. The *Nation* and the *Chronicle*'s structuring of the frames will be discussed together with that of the UDF.

### 4.3.1 Unity Frames

The first part of this sub-section lays out the case for unity as presented by the BNL newspapers and the MCP/AFORD Alliance. The second part discusses the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*, and the UDF's response to the unity concerns raised by the BNL newspapers and the MCP/AFORD Alliance. It is worth noting that of the 39 articles from which the newspapers' Unity Frame was coded, 29 were published in the BNL newspapers while 10 were published in the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*.

#### 4.3.1.1 The BNL Newspapers and the MCP/AFORD Alliance

As noted earlier, the mainstay of the Unity Frames in both the National Assembly and the newspapers corpus was an assertion by the MCP/AFORD alliance that the advent of the Second Republic had caused regional fissures in the nation. Various, the MCP/AFORD alliance and their associated BNL newspapers claimed that the problem was either in the advent of multiparty politics or the just concluded elections. For the BNL newspapers, the main problem was to be found in the conduct of multiparty politics and its propensity to divide people politically. The writer of an editorial in the *Daily Times* (1994a) argued:

Although multipartyism is here to stay . . . it is not an ideology that is endemic to our society, because it has already divided us since we refer to the new regime as the UDF government, and not the Malawi government.

This argument was advanced 18 times making it the most coded argument in the newspapers corpus (See Table 4.3).

While this was the main argument in the BNL newspapers definition of the problem, there were other arguments which served not only to buttress the BNL newspapers' argument but also revealed the BNL newspapers' antipathy towards the new government and the ruling party. For example, five paragraphs out of the 36

paragraphs coded in the Problem Definition argued that the new government was seeking retribution against the leadership of the MCP. In this respect, the *Daily Times* (1994b, p.2) noted the following about the UDF government's conduct towards the MCP's Vice-President Gwanda Chakuamba:

. . . the Malawi Congress Party is apprehensive over the fate of its vice-presidential candidate Mr. Gwanda Chakuamba, who is now at the mercy of a seemingly partisan Electoral Commission . . . . One is persuaded to feel that Gwanda Chakuamba is being targeted, using democracy as a weapon . . . .

**Table 4.3: Unity Frame's Problem Definition by the BNL stable and the MCP/AFORD alliance**

<b>Problem Definitions</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Multiparty politics causes national division	BNL Newspapers	18 (58.1%)	16
The new president and government are equivocal about unity and are seeking retribution	BNL Newspapers	8 (25.8%)	8
The election outcome reflects regionalism	BNL Newspapers	5 (16.1%)	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>31 (100%)</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Problem Definitions</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
Electoral outcome has revealed disunity	MCP/AFORD Alliance	6 (66.7%)	6
UDF wants to marginalise the MCP	MCP/AFORD Alliance	3 (33.3%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>9 (100%)</b>	<b>9</b>

In the above aspect, there was agreement between the MCP/AFORD alliance and the BNL newspapers. There were three paragraphs coded from the parliamentary corpus arguing that the UDF-led government intended to isolate and marginalise the MCP from national politics and governance issues (See Table 4.3). Chipimpha Mughogho (1994, p.135) noted that: "If this nation is to be truly united let us not isolate the MCP as we are doing now!" O.I. Mkandawire (1994, p.130) argued:



Any leader governing a fragmented people as we are, is sitting on a time bomb. . . . That is why the MCP must not be marginalised as appears to be the case right now.

Another argument which the BNL newspapers advanced was a claim that the just ended general elections had divided the country. There were five paragraphs in the Problem Definition component coded to this aspect (See Table 4.3). The BNL newspapers' position was very similar to one taken by the MCP. In this respect, MCP/AFORD alliance MPs argued on the National Assembly floor that the elections had been particularly divisive and the nation needed to find ways of reuniting.

The BNL newspapers charged that the cause of the divisions in the country could also be traced to the continued vilification of the MCP evident in the rhetoric of the UDF leadership and the contents of the UDF related media. As one editorial writer (*Malawi News*, 1994a, p.2) argued: “. . . the UDF is attempting to turn the people against the MCP.” There were five paragraphs coded to this aspect of the Causal Interpretation component of this frame (See Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Unity Frame's Causal Interpretation in the BNL newspapers**

<b>Causal Interpretations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
The new government's vilification of the MCP	BNL newspapers	5 (100%)	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>5 (100%)</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Causal Interpretations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Lack of cooperation among the three parties	MCP/AFORD Alliance	16 (45.7%)	16
UDF is against unity	MCP/AFORD Alliance	16 (45.7%)	16
Malawians hate each other now	MCP/AFORD Alliance	3 (8.6%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>35 (100%)</b>	<b>35</b>

In identifying the UDF as the culprit, the BNL newspapers were in agreement with MCP/AFORD alliance MPs. In the parliamentary frame, the mainstay of the Causal Interpretation was an assertion that the UDF was against unity and reconciliation. That component of the frame consisted of the 16 paragraphs in the parliamentary Unity Frame (See Table 4.4).

The BNL newspapers dismissed the new leadership in Malawi as lacking in unifying qualities. This assertion accounted for 11 paragraphs coded to the moral evaluations component of the frame. This argument was supported by another assertion declaring that President Muluzi lacked the personal ability to unite the nation as evidenced by his equivocation on the question of national unity. Instead, the BNL newspapers argued that the UDF-led government seemed determined to exert revenge for no apparent reason. This was an assertion which the BNL newspapers raised four times in the moral evaluation components (See Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5: Unity Frame's Moral Evaluation in the BNL Newspapers**

<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Lack of unifying leadership	BNL Newspapers	11 (61.1%)	11
The President's equivocation on reconciliation	BNL Newspapers	4 (22.2%)	4
MCP/AFORD alliance as a unifying factor	BNL Newspapers	3 (16.7%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>18 (100%)</b>	<b>18</b>

In this respect Kantema (1994) noted, in the *Daily Times*:

The South Africans are currently drawing up legislation to pardon the past government's atrocities committed in the name of apartheid. And Malawi? An assailable sense of self righteousness where the ghost of many alleged atrocities are used as a weapon to rouse the people's

emotions negatively against any advances in the popularity ladder by MCP.

The newspapers saw in the MCP/AFORD alliance the embodiment of unity and contrasted this with the UDF's refusal to work with the MCP. On the other hand, the UDF leaders and their supporters were presented as bad winners with a chip on their shoulders and many scores to settle as the writer of an editorial in the *Malawi News* (1994a) noted.

Unlike UDF leaders, AFORD leaders have been very exemplary in their approach to national issues. Their supporters have been a realistic lot. We cannot say the same of some UDF supporters.

There were three paragraphs coded to this aspect of the component (See Table 4.5 above).

**Table 4.6: Unity Frame's Treatment Recommendations in the BNL Newspapers**

<b>Treatment Recommendations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Inter-party dialogue & cessation of inflammatory speeches	BNL Newspapers	14 (51.9%)	12
Recognizing unity and a government of national unity	BNL Newspapers	6 (22.2%)	5
Recognise the work done by Kamuzu Banda	BNL Newspapers	3 (11.1%)	3
Civic education and unifying cultural events	BNL Newspapers	4 (14.8%)	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>27 (100%)</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Treatment Recommendations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Inter-party dialogue & cessation of inflammatory speeches	MCP/AFORD Alliance	15 (50%)	15
MCP/AFORD alliance as unifying factor	MCP/AFORD Alliance	6 (20%)	6
Government of national unity	MCP/AFORD Alliance	4 (13.3%)	4
Political tolerance & reconciliation	MCP/AFORD Alliance	5 (16.7%)	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>30 (100)</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 4.6 above presents the BNL newspapers and the MCP/AFORD alliance treatment recommendations for this frame. The main treatment recommendation was to call for dialogue among the three parties represented in parliament and cessation of inflammatory speeches. This call claimed 14 paragraphs. There were other treatment recommendations. However, all of these tended to converge around this call for interparty dialog. These included calls for a government of national unity and educating the nation on the need for national unity. Others were more practical calling for unifying cultural events (See Table 4.6).

The BNL newspapers call for cessation of inflammatory speeches and inter-party dialogue reflected the position of the MCP/AFORD alliance in the National Assembly corpus. There were 15 paragraphs coded to this aspect of the treatment recommendations. The MCP/AFORD alliance was held up as an example of how cooperation among the three parties should be in six paragraphs. There were four paragraphs that called for a government of national unity comprising of all the three parties (See Table 4.6).

#### **4.3.1.2 The *Nation* and the *Chronicle* and the UDF**

The position of the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* was a bit more complex even though they had less to say about the matter of unity. While they acknowledged the problem of regionalism manifest in the voting patterns, they placed the blame elsewhere. They argued that the election and multiparty politics had simply exposed the deep divisions in the nation which the MCP government had ruthlessly concealed. This assertion was coded nine times in the newspapers corpus in particular in the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*'s editorials (See Table 4.7). In this respect, the two newspapers argued that the MCP was attempting to cover up the past by evoking national unity and

reconciliation. This aspect was coded thrice (See Table 4.7). In this respect Msisha (1994) argued that:

If people seek reconciliation and forgiveness they must confess to their evil deeds. They must give an account of their stewardship of the state when they were entrusted with this task.

**Table 4.7: Unity Frame’s Problem Definitions in the *Chronicle* and the *Nation***

<b>Problem Definitions</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Multiparty politics revealed inherent divisions	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	9 (75%)	9
Stifling the search for the truth in the name of unity	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (30%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>12 (100%)</b>	<b>12</b>

In the National Assembly, the UDF refused to acknowledge that there was a problem with unity. This is demonstrated by the lack of paragraphs coded from UDF MPs acknowledging this problem.

The two newspapers accused the opposition of being unwilling to accept their role as a responsible opposition. Instead, the newspapers accused the opposition of attempting to force the UDF into forming a government of national unity. There were three paragraphs coded to this aspect of the component. The other causal interpretation dismissed the issue of regional bias among the electorate. Instead, the *Nation* argued that parties did not field credible candidates who could win in the regions they lost. This argument was presented four times (See Table 4.8). Makwiti (1994, p.6) argued:

. . . the voter considered only the merit of the party leader and chose to ignore the merit of the local constituency representative.

In the few times the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* acknowledged that there was a problem with national unity, the two newspapers tended to blame the MCP for dividing the nation during its 31 years in power (See Table 4.8). There were two paragraphs

coded to this particular effect. In their moral evaluations, the newspapers blamed the MCP for failing to ably deal with national division. Instead the MCP was accused of deliberately fostering a policy which divided the nation. Nampuntha (1994) argued that the MCP:

. . . developed and perfected a culture in which a select few people were elected to prominent positions of power and wealth based primarily on ethnic and other tribal considerations . . . . a lot of people in the various regions became disenchanted, disillusioned and alienated that they no longer could trust the MCP.

Just like the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*, the UDF MPs in the National Assembly accused the opposition of attempting to force the UDF into a government of national unity. This aspect was coded five times in the parliamentary corpus (See Table 4.8). The UDF MPs argued that unity should not mean a government of national unity, as the UDF MP, Lemani (1994) argued: “Unity should not mean a government of national unity.”

**Table 4.8: Unity Frame’s Causal Interpretation in the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*, the UDF**

<b>Causal Interpretations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Failure to field credible candidates in lost regions	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (44.4%)	4
Opposition unwilling to accept defeat and role	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (33.3%)	3
MCP policies were divisive	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	2 (22.2%)	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>9 (100%)</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Causal Interpretations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Reconciliation does not mean a GNU	UDF	5 (62.5%)	5
Forgive but do not forget	UDF	3 (37.5%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>8 (100%)</b>	<b>8</b>

In their moral evaluations, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* refused to acknowledge that there was a unity problem. Instead, they attributed nefarious motives to the MCP's call for national unity. Basically, as in the problem definition and causal interpretation, they accused the MCP of attempting to draw attention away from its rule which had been characterised by human rights abuses. In this respect, the MCP itself was accused of moral failing by refusing to own up to its record of human rights abuse. The two newspapers did not see moral problems in people electing candidates from home stating that it was only natural for people to do so (Nampuntha, 1994, p.6; Makwiti, 1994, p.6) (See Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9: Unity Frame's Moral Evaluations in the *Nation* and the *Chronicle***

<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
The MCP is the cause of all this disunity	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	5 (35.7%)	5
There is no unity problem and calls for unity distract from truth searching	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	6 (42.8%)	6
Blood is thicker than water	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (21.4%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>14 (100%)</b>	<b>14</b>

The UDF MPs in the National Assembly did not offer any treatment recommendations at all. The *Nation* and the *Chronicle* simply argued (in six paragraphs appearing in 6 articles) that it was everyone's responsibility to ensure that the nation was united. The two newspapers were in agreement with the BNL newspapers that unifying cultural events would have the effects of bringing citizens together. When the UDF government decided not to celebrate Independence Day in 1994, an editorial writer in the *Nation* (1994a) observed:

. . . let us spend a little to have a few Chewas, Tumbukas, Lomwes, Senas, Ngonis and others dancing together at some agreed place to mark this important day. It will not alleviate poverty, but it will go some way towards enhancing the spirit of togetherness. And that is desperately needed in these days.

#### **4.3.2 Governance Frames**

The Governance Frame represents what may have been the UDF's attempt to define the nation's future. The parliamentary Governance Frame was drawn from 35 speeches representing 43.8% of the 80 speeches in the 1994 corpus (see Table 4.2 above). Of these 35 speeches, 26 were presented by UDF MPs while the nine were delivered by MCP/AFORD alliance MPs. The coded paragraphs in the newspapers Governance Frame were drawn from 25 newspaper articles representing 29% of the 86 articles in the 1994 newspapers corpus. Of the 25 articles 17 were presented by the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* while the remainder were presented by the BNL newspapers..

The frame drew heavily from the national collective memory to remind Malawians of their suffering under the MCP government. It also attempted to re-assure them of better days to come in terms of governance. The Sub-Section will begin by presenting the UDF, and the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*'s case for governance. This will be followed by the BNL newspapers and the MCP/AFORD alliance's response. Similar to the previous subsection, this section attempts to draw attention to the ideological positions of the newspapers and their similarities to the relevant political parties represented in parliament.

##### **4.3.2.1 The *Nation* and the *Chronicle*/The UDF**



In eight paragraphs (See Table 4.10), the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* sought to convince their readers that democracy could benefit the people (See Table 4.10). The two newspapers argued that the MCP's much vaunted order and security was imposed on the nation at the expense of freedom. Makwiti (1994) argued that: "The so-called peace, calm, law and order of the MCP was imposed at great human expense . . ." An editorial writer in the *Chronicle* (1994a) observed: "Someone ought to remind those pining for the old 'peace, calm, law and order' of the human rights abuses that accompanied it."

In this respect, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* were very much in agreement with the UDF MPs, who argued in 14 paragraphs, that dictatorship had brought misery and human rights abuses for the people of Malawi. Lemani (1994) observed:

In the name of law and order, many people became food for the crocodiles,  
others were thrown into detention camps and families torn apart.

**Table 4.10: Governance Frame's Problem Definition in the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*, and the UDF**

<b>Problem Definitions</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Democracy should benefit the people	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	8 (100%)	8
<b>Problem Definitions</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
The previous dictatorial regime had to be removed	UDF	14 (100%)	12

This way of defining the problem by the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*, and the UDF and the AFORD opened the way for identifying the pro-democracy activists as the causal agents for the new governance order. The Roman Catholic Bishops, who were seen as the leading local catalysts to the events leading to the referendum in 1993, were mentioned six times as causal agents. Chakufwa Chihana, the leader of AFORD, and Bakili Muluzi were mentioned four and two times respectively. The pressure groups were mentioned twice (See Table 4.11).

The *Nation* and the *Chronicle* identified the people of Malawi as the collective causal agent six times (See Table 4.11) as Mordechai Msisha (1994) writing in the *Nation* argued: “Malawians ushered in political pluralism in a concerted effort to do away with dictatorship.” Only once were the people of Malawi mentioned as the collective causal agents on the National Assembly floor.

**Table 4.11: Governance Frame’s Causal Interpretation in the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*, and UDF**

<b>Causal Interpretation</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
The people wanted democracy	<i>Nation/ Chronicle</i>	6 (100%)	6
<b>Causal Interpretations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
The Bishops and the pastoral letter	UDF/AFORD	6 (42.9%)	6
Pressure groups & their leaders	UDF/AFORD	8 (57.1%)	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>14 (100%)</b>	<b>14</b>

By way of moral evaluations, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* simply reminded the people that they were the custodians of democracy. In this respect, they were to guard it with vigilance as an editorial writer in the *Nation* (1994b) argued:

The democracy we all wanted is now here. It may have its teething problems, but there is every indication that our new leaders intend to rule according to the wishes of the people, and in any case the people are in no mood to let things return to the old ways.

This charge was made five times (See Table 4.12). While the two newspapers entrusted the people with the duty of safeguarding democracy, the UDF and AFORD MPs only made that charge once. Instead, the MPs used a series of intersecting arguments that all coalesced into a single theme of service to the people. This was mentioned four and two times respectively. However, the mainstay of the moral evaluation thrust was a call for political tolerance which was mentioned five times (See Table 4.12). Kamangazi Chambalo (1994) observed:

Tribalism, regionalism and favouritism are destructive to democratic practices. These are also signals of ignorance of democracy on the part of the person practising such discriminatory practices. . . . we will not allow this fear to be instilled in the minds of Malawians again.

In this respect, the position of the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* and the UDF in parliament coalesced on the desirability of democracy in Malawi. This happened even though the newspapers tended to view democracy from the people's point of view while the parliamentarians viewed in terms of service to the people.

**Table 4.12: Governance Frame's Moral Evaluation in the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*, and the UDF**

<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Malawians should guard democracy with vigilance	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	5 (100%)	5
<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
Freedom and political tolerance	UDF/AFORD	5 (45.5%)	5
The new government and parliament will serve the people	UDF/AFORD	6 (54.5%)	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>11 (100%)</b>	<b>11</b>

#### **4.3.2.2 The BNL Newspapers and MCP**

The Governance Frame exposed the MCP's ambivalent position regarding multiparty politics in Malawi. In this task, the MCP was aided by their mouthpieces - the BNL newspapers. Seven times, in six articles, the BNL newspapers charged that multiparty politics was divisive. Three times the newspapers complained that it was a system that was alien to the Malawian people, and three times the newspapers called for the people to be educated about democracy (See Table 4.13). Two days after the election, one editorial writer in the *Daily Times* (1994c) noted:

Results of the presidential and parliamentary general elections show a great deal about how strongly people of this country feel about a president's area of origin.

Not surprisingly, even though the MCP was happy to use the BNL newspapers to express their reservation about the new system of governance, they did not express any such reservations on the National Assembly floor. To do so would have been to go against an obviously popular system of governance chosen in a national referendum and solidified during the 17<sup>th</sup> May elections.

**Table 4.13: Governance Frame as presented by the BNL Newspapers**

<b>Problem Definitions</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Multiparty politics is alien and divisive	BNL Newspapers	7 (46.7%)	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>7 (100%)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Democracy is being used to oppress past leaders	BNL Newspapers	3 (50%)	3
Educate the masses about democracy	BNL Newspapers	3 (50%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>6 (100%)</b>	<b>6</b>

The BNL newspapers raised negative moral evaluations about the manner of politics in the country (See Table 4.13). The newspapers charged that the new leaders were using democracy to oppress the leaders of the MCP. Three times, the BNL newspapers cited examples of inquiries into the previous regime, firing of civil servants who were perceived to be sympathetic to the MCP, the confiscation of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda's property, by-elections called in MCP constituencies and harsh anti-MCP rhetoric in the state broadcast media (See Table 4.13). The writer of an editorial in the *Daily Times* (1994d) noted:

Even though the UDF-led government speaks the language of democracy and respecting Kamuzu, we know that they do not intend to do this. They have continued to harass the former president and to disrupt MCP rallies.

Perhaps rooted in the increasing violence directed at MCP rallies in the Southern Region, three times the BNL newspapers called on the government to educate the people about the true nature of democracy (See Table 4.13). The BNL newspapers argued that even the MCP had the right of free speech and expression. The writer of an editorial in the *Daily Times* (1994d) noted:

It is the government's job to take over and educate its people on what the new Malawi is all about and what else is contained in its democratic package . . .

The preceding discussion demonstrates the newspapers and the political parties' commitment to democracy. While the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* with the UDF were clearly enthused about the new political dispensation in Malawi, the BNL newspapers and the MCP were, at least, ambivalent of the benefits that could be accrued by such a system. This is evident in the complaints they expressed about the new system. This, in turn, demonstrates the editorial alignment of the newspapers to different political parties and their ideological positions in the post-elections period.

#### **4.3.3 Discussion of the Overarching Frames**

This sub-section discusses the framing tools used by newspapers and MPs in constructing the frames presented above. These tools include magnifying some frames at the expense of others, de-emphasizing other frames to reduce their importance among newspaper readers, and increasing the consonance of some frames by priming them through cultural values and news values such as personification.

#### 4.3.3.1 Magnification

Entman (2004, p.30) notes that:

The *sine qua non* of successful framing is magnitude – magnifying those elements of the depicted reality that favour one side’s position, making them salient, while at the same time shrinking those elements that might be used to construct a counterframe.

In determining magnitude, Entman (2004) argues that the amount of material presented plays a major role. By sheer volume of material, a frame can be magnified in such a way that it penetrates the consciousness of a disinterested public.

In the case of the 1994 post-election period, there is no doubt that the Unity Frames in the newspapers corpus and the parliamentary corpus were the dominant frames. In the newspapers corpus, of the 199 paragraphs coded, 122 were coded to the Unity Frame. This represents 61.3% of the 199 paragraphs. Of these 122 coded paragraphs, 81 (66.4%) were drawn from 29 articles published in the BNL newspapers. These 29 articles represent 74.4% of the 39 articles contributing to the Unity Frame (See Table 4.1).

Of the 151 coded paragraphs in the parliamentary corpus, 82 (54%) were coded to the Unity Frame. Of these 82 coded paragraphs, 71 (86.6%) were contributions from MCP MPs drawn from 24 speeches being 77.4% of all the 31 speeches contributing to this frame (See Table 4.2). Clearly, these figures demonstrate the interest shown in the issue of unity by the MCP/AFORD alliance and the BNL newspapers. As noted above, the editorial position of the BNL newspapers reflected the ideological position of the MCP/AFORD alliance on national unity. All of these paragraphs negatively portrayed the advent of the new democratic dispensation, the just ended elections, the ruling party

and its leadership as being responsible for national disunity. In the parliamentary Unity Frame, the MCP/AFORD alliance dominated leaving the ruling party's MPs to struggle in order to impose the UDF's definition of national unity in a multiparty democracy.

On the other hand, the contribution of the *Chronicle* and the *Nation*, and the UDF to the Unity Frames were quite low. For the newspapers corpus, there were 21 paragraphs (17.2% of the 122 paragraphs coded). These were contained in 10 articles representing 25.6% of the 39 articles contributing to the newspapers Unity Frame. The UDF had eight paragraphs (9.8% of the total 82) from seven speeches (22.6% of the 31) contributing to this frame. These figures may indicate the UDF's, and the *Chronicle* and the *Nation*'s disinterest in the national unity issue. They may also indicate a real failure on the part of these newspapers and the UDF to impose their definition of national unity on the newspaper reading public.

#### **4.3.3.2 De-emphasis**

If the desire of the MCP and the BNL newspapers was to magnify and raise the Unity Frames in both corpora, then they must have desired to de-emphasize the Governance Frames. As Entman (2004, p. 31) notes, framing is not only about magnifying a desired frame but it is also about reducing the salience of the rival frame. By this principle, an important frame can be rendered useless by receiving little or unnoticeable coverage in the media.

The Governance Frames were very negative towards the just ended MCP rule. However, its importance was diminished in the MCP controlled press (See Table 4.1). Compared to the Unity Frame in the newspapers corpus which had 122 paragraphs (41.2% of the 199 coded paragraphs), and the Leadership Frame which had 45 (22.6%), the Governance Frame had only 39 (16.1%) paragraphs coded to it. Of the 86 articles in

the 1994 newspapers corpus, the Governance Frame had 25 (29.1% of 86) while the Unity Frame had 39 (45.3% of 86) (See Table 4.1). The main reason for this diminution is because the BNL newspapers basically chose to de-emphasize governance. In the parliamentary corpus, the MCP/AFORD alliance chose to ignore it altogether.

The *Chronicle* and the *Nation* had a combined 19 coded paragraphs (59.4% of 32) in 17 articles (68% of 25). The BNL newspapers had 13 paragraphs (40.6%) in eight articles (9.3% of 25) (See Table 4.1). A superficial observation may not reveal much difference in the way the two sets of newspapers covered this issue. But when considering that both *Chronicle* and the *Nation* were weekly newspapers with limited circulation and that the BNL stable had a daily newspaper and a weekly newspaper, it becomes clear that the BNL newspapers played down the importance of governance issues. Of course, as already noted in the preceding discussion, the reason was that governance was being discussed in a manner that was highly negative to the MCP's regime. When the BNL newspapers offered comments on the Governance Frame, it was always with a view to depreciating the benefits of multiparty politics and expressing its alien nature to the Malawian situation.

#### **4.3.3.3 Factors Affecting Magnification and De-emphasis**

An important issue in the question of magnification and de-emphasis is what factors were at play in these processes. One factor relates to the BNL newspapers' market share compared to the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* which were just appearing on the newspapers market. The BNL newspapers enjoyed considerable marketing advantages including access to all cities and major towns. Further, at this time, the BNL newspapers were the only newspapers with their own printing facilities.



In contrast, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* did not have the advantage of strong financial backing enjoyed by the BNL newspapers. The *Chronicle* was a weekly for the rest of its life. In 1994, the *Nation* published twice a week. The combined effect of this state of affairs is that in terms of circulation, the BNL stable dominated the newspapers market with higher circulation.

The question of numbers also played a major part in the parliamentary framing. The MCP/AFORD alliance had 91 seats in the 177 seats National Assembly in 1994 compared to the UDF 84 seats. Using their superiority in numbers, the alliance had elected the Speaker and his two deputies from amongst their own. This gave them considerable power in setting the agenda and controlling the debate in the National Assembly. Further, assuming that the AFORD MPs sympathised with some anti-MCP frames, they could not very well have promoted these because they were in a parliamentary alliance with the MCP. Thus the AFORD MPs moderated criticism of the MCP and diminished the prominence of the Governance Frame and the Failed Government Frame discussed in the section below.

#### **4.3.3.4 Priming - Culturally Resonant Framing**

In order for a frame to resonate with the public, it needs to be rooted in the culture of the people. Goffman (1981, p.63) notes that: “Frames are a central part of a culture and are institutionalized in various ways”. Snow and Benford (1988, p. 210) observe that culturally resonant frames provide “narrative fidelity”.

In the case of the African media, what is “culture”? Bourgault (1995) suggests that some of the cultural values that inform journalistic norms in the African media include group orientation over individual orientation, continuity, harmony and balance, which “require the individual to negotiate personal needs into the framework of the group”

Bourgault (1995, p.4-5). All the frames in this case study demonstrate how the presenting newspapers and Members of Parliament attempted to make them relevant to the Malawian people by drawing on the traditional cultural values and the new political culture with its democratic values.

The MCP/AFORD alliance MPs in parliament were able to draw on cultural values of community harmony in crafting the Unity Frame in the National Assembly. The UDF was clearly presented as the party against unity for rejecting the AFORD's overtures for unity before the election and for refusing to work with the MCP after the elections. The AFORD MP, Chipimpha Mughogho (1994) noted:

. . . do not forget that there was one time we preached the word of nation building. . . . what did we get in the end? Tribalism, regionalism and what have you.

According to the quote above, the AFORD (represented by "we") was clearly presented as having had the foresight to warn the other parties of impending division. More importantly, the MP draws attention to the search for unity which his party began long before the elections. Thus, the AFORD MPs were able to both acknowledge the problem of unity and apportion blame to the UDF for the problem.

In essence, the BNL newspapers crafting of the Unity Frame and the Leadership Frame reveal those issues that are counter to Malawian societal values of communality rather than individualism and competition. According to the BNL newspapers, these values were operational during the one party era but were shattered by the outcome of the general election. One editorial writer in the *Daily Times* (1994a, p.2) noted:

Malawians were one nation . . . We have walked, talked, ate, quarrelled, and worked like members of one big family. . . . But can we sincerely say

the same of today's change? What is it that will now make us feel closer?

A new face in power or the accessibility of hitherto forbidden enviable?

According to the writer of the above article, not only had national unity been shattered, there was now nothing else within Malawian societal values and norms that could hold this nation together. This way of framing unity was a feature of the BNL newspapers as evidenced by the 18 coded paragraphs in the 14 of the 29 articles drawn from the BNL newspapers discussing national unity (See Table 4.3).

The culturally embedded priming in this case study reveals the struggle to define, craft and appropriate the new governance system in a manner that suited Malawians. The competition and individual rights embodied in the new system were seen as being at variance with the community values prevalent in Malawian society. With 31 paragraphs coded to it, the BNL newspapers contributed 13 paragraphs that were mainly complaints against democracy and its non-compliance with Malawian societal values. One editorial writer noted:

What this means is that the entire issue of human rights is alien to an unsophisticated non-industrialised developing country like Malawi. Only certain parts of that package will be adopted in as far as they establish immediate relevance to living styles of peoples of this country (*Daily Times*, 1994d, p.2).

Another editorial writer in the same newspaper noted:

Political scholars are already predicting that it will take at least ten years before Malawians begin to feel comfortable with the multiparty system of government they have chosen (*Daily Times*, 1994e, p.2).

The real critical question is whether or not Malawian society, on whose values the BNL newspapers based their framing, was listening. After all, these were the same

citizens who had repudiated the single party system in the 16<sup>th</sup> June 1993 referendum and the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1994 elections.

Thus, one would expect the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* were on more solid ground in their framing of the Governance Frame. With 18 of the 31 paragraphs in the frame, these two newspapers drew on the prevailing egalitarian political values which included respect for human rights and the consent of the governed. One editorial writer in the *Nation* noted that the new president had come to power, not on the strength of his personality, rather on the “crest of human rights and the wishes of the people.” (1994a, p.4). Indeed, the removal of the MCP from power was presented as a change of governing ideology by the people from authoritarianism to democracy as Msisha (1994, p.8) argued in the *Nation*: “Malawians ushered in political pluralism in a concerted effort to do away with dictatorship.”

This type of framing was reflected in the parliamentary corpus where the UDF MPs with support from the AFORD MPs drove the Governance Frame. They extolled the virtues of democracy and its focus on the dignity of the individual, as Erwin Maluwa (1994) argued on the National Assembly floor:

. . . today men, women, children . . . are walking, talking, going about their business without fear whatsoever (applause).

In short, the BNL newspapers and the MCP drew on traditional African values of community over the individual to frame multiparty politics as unsuitable for Malawi. On the other hand, the *Nation* and *Chronicle* and the UDF drew on the new prevailing culture of openness and human rights to show how the multiparty era presented Malawians with better options.

#### **4.3.4 Summary**

The foregoing section discussed the Unity Frames and the Governance Frames as detected in the newspapers corpus and the parliamentary corpus. Further, the section observed how the newspapers mirrored relevant political parties to which their owners were affiliated. The MCP/AFORD alliance and the BNL newspapers constructed the Unity Frame by offering a narrative that presented the lack of unity as a clear and present danger to the nation. Further, they primed their frames by drawing on communal values that under-gird traditional society in Malawi. The BNL newspapers' established market position meant that the Unity Frame was magnified for newspaper readers. The majority numbers achieved by the MCP/AFORD alliance in parliament meant that they were able to magnify the same frame in the National Assembly.

The UDF, and the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* found it difficult to magnify their preferred frame, the Governance Frame. It was de-emphasized due to lack of numbers in parliament, and on the newspapers market because of the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*'s inferior circulation numbers on the newspapers market. It was a frame that drew on the new but prevailing values of democracy, openness and human rights.

#### **4.4 Two Frames Unique to Each Corpus**

The preceding sections have highlighted two types of frames that are common across the newspapers/parliamentary corpora. The following discussion will focus on two frames that are distinctive to the newspapers corpus and the parliamentary corpus respectively. These are the Leadership Frame in the newspapers corpus and the Failed Government Frame in the parliamentary corpus (See Tables 4.1 and 4.2). The analysis of the two frames will be done on an individual basis because they are distinct from each other in nature apart from appearing in different corpora. The subsequent subsections discuss two frames. One was unique to the newspapers corpus, and the other

was unique to the parliamentary corpus. Further, the sub-sections will attempt to interpretatively discuss the frames in light of the framing instruments used such as priming through culture and news values.

#### **4.4.1 Leadership Frame**

The frame had 17 paragraphs as problem definitions. It had nine paragraphs in causal interpretations and 18 in moral evaluations (See Table 4.1). Of these, only 14 were coded from the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*. In discussing this frame, the sub-section begins with the BNL newspapers case for leadership. Following this, the sub-section will present the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*'s perspective on the same issue.

##### **4.4.1.1 The Leadership Frame in the BNL Newspapers**

In defining the problem with leadership in the new Malawi, the BNL newspapers used nine paragraphs to generally describe the new president and his team as inexperienced (See Table 4.14). Further, the BNL newspapers used another nine paragraphs to describe the new leaders as exhibiting this inexperience through their hastily announced and implemented directives as an editorial writer in the *Daily Times* (1994f) argued:

The track record for the UDF-led government so far reveals that earlier decisions were made in haste and efforts to repair the damage without being seen to retreat has resulted in exposing lack of experience.

In addition, the *Daily Times* (1994g, p.2) labelled the new president's style of leadership as lacking in direction and confused:

President Bakili Muluzi is already raising eyebrows because of the style he is colouring the UDF government with, whose predominant feature at the moment is government by directives which are quite confusing at times.

Further to that, the president himself was labelled as immature and lacking tact and ability needed to lead the nation. The BNL newspapers used three paragraphs to describe the new leaders as pretentious and pompous (See Table 4.14).

**Table 4.14: Leadership Frame: BNL Newspapers Leadership Frame**

	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
<b>Problem Definition</b>			
The news leaders are hasty and equivocal	BNL Newspapers	9 (50%)	7
The new leaders are inexperienced, pompous, and lead by directives	BNL Newspapers	9 (50%)	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>18 (100%)</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Causal Interpretation</b>			
The new leaders lied their way into power	BNL Newspapers	6 (66.7%)	5
The new leaders lack confidence in their victory	BNL Newspapers	3 (33.3%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>9 (100%)</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Moral Evaluation</b>			
The President is divisive and unethical	BNL Newspapers	4 (100%)	4

Proceeding from the above problem definition, the BNL newspapers logically identified the new leadership as the main causal agents. The newspapers argued that the new leaders had made false promises in order to ascend to power. This charge was the mainstay of the causal interpretation with six paragraphs of the nine in the Causal Interpretation component (See Table 4.14). Now that they were in power, they were unable to deliver and the people were suffering the consequences of such lies as the *Malawi News* (1994b, p.2) noted about the UDF's promise to provide smallholder farmers with free fertilisers:

. . . they promised farmers . . . free fertilisers. Come the growing season, the UDF government failed to honour its promise. And yet, the UDF was aware that it was telling a lie.

In the moral evaluation component, the BNL newspapers used four paragraphs to declare that Muluzi and his team were divisive and unethical. Muluzi was portrayed as lacking in national appeal and uninterested in achieving the same (See Table 4.14). The writer of an editorial in the *Daily Times* (1994h, p.2) argued:

. . . the concept of power is being defined as the state president's accountable only to his party and its supporters. The question of his national figure is cosmetic, and so are those vows to uphold the interests of every citizen regardless of which party he belongs to. Then whose president is he?

#### 4.4.1.2 The Leadership Frame in the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*

As noted above, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* only offered 14 paragraphs in this frame. All of them can be viewed as counter-arguments against the BNL newspapers negative assessment of the country's new leaders. In eight paragraphs, the two newspapers lauded the new president and his team as democratic (See Table 4.15). Further, in six paragraphs, the *Nation* was convinced that the new president and his team were humble and popular.

**Table 4.15: Leadership Frame in the *Nation* and the *Chronicle***

<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
The President and his team are democratic	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	8 (44.4%)	7
The new president is humble and popular	<i>Nation</i> and <i>Chronicle</i>	6 (33.3%)	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>14 (100%)</b>	<b>13</b>

Commenting on the new president's inaugural speech the writer of an editorial in the *Nation* (1994b, p.4) noted:



President Bakili Muluzi, who rides on a tidal wave of populism, has begun his presidency on a refreshing note. . . . Mr. Muluzi also issued his directive to commute all death sentences to life imprisonment, but knew how far his presidential prerogative goes . . . .

Thus, the *Chronicle* and the *Nation* took a distinctly different position from the one taken by the BNL newspapers on the new leadership in Malawi. While the BNL newspapers tended to denigrate the new leadership, the *Chronicle* and the *Nation* viewed them as the right leaders for the country. In this respect, these newspapers tended to build up the image of the leaders in their editorials.

#### **4.4.2 Failed Government Frame**

Due to overlaps inherent in both defining the problem and the contributory agents of the problems, the problem definition and causal interpretation components are combined. Further, the frame lacked in treatment recommendations. The frame had 30 paragraphs drawn from 30 speeches coded to it. Of these, 17 were coded in the Problem Definition/Causal Interpretation component. The remaining 13 were coded to the moral evaluation component (See Table 4.2).

##### **4.3.2.1 Failed Government Frame by the UDF and AFORD**

This frame, whose problem definitions and causal interpretations are presented in Table 4.16, was mainly presented by the UDF MPs. This frame, which assessed the state of the country in economic and social development terms, had to look backwards in order to make that assessment. The frame reveals unrestrained criticism of the MCP regime.

**Table 4.16: Failed Government Frame's problem definitions and causal interpretations**

<b>Prob. Definitions/Causal Interpret.</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
The MCP failed	UDF	6 (35.3%)	6
The MCP did not care for the people's needs	UDF/AFORD	5 (29.4%)	5
The MCP development agenda favoured one region	UDF/AFORD	6 (35.3%)	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>17 (100%)</b>	<b>17</b>

The narrative made a simple declaration that the MCP government had failed to develop the country in all areas of life (See Table 4.16). Joseph Kubwalo (1994, p.190) of the UDF argued: "The people have been neglected for 30 years . . . People have suffered enough." The AFORD MP Shawa (1994) noted: ". . . I have not seen any development all the time when the MCP government was in power." The UDF MP Kamangadazi Chambalo (1994, p.155) declared:

We have no accessible roads, no health centres, no sufficient food, no water supplies, no plots allocation to people, recreation centres are not there, no markets and many other facilities are lacking.

In short, the MCP regime was viewed as lacking in any form of positive achievement that could have bettered the lives of the citizens. In contrast, the UDF committed itself to working for the betterment of the people. As will be noted by examining Table 4.18 below, the UDF's moral evaluations were simple extensions of the problem definitions in Table 4.16. In this respect it serves no purpose to explain them again.

#### **4.4.2.2 MCP's Response to the Failed Government Frame**

By its very nature parliamentary debate permitted the MCP to offer counter-arguments to the UDF onslaught. The MCP MPs, supported by some of their AFORD colleagues

advanced the argument that the MCP government had notable successes in some aspects of national development, and had failed in some as governments all over the world are prone (See Table 4.17). In this respect, the MPs listed infrastructure developments that had taken place during the party's rule. The MCP MP, Kalolo (1994) argued:

In this regard, I find it hard to believe that for all the 31 years that the MCP was in power, it did nothing in terms of development. This is what can be termed as terminological inexactitude. (Laughter) Because, Mr. First Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are many projects which the former government did and fulfilled to the envy of the donor community.

The AFORD MP Melvin Moyo (1994) noted:

. . . I would like to say the MCP had a share of its failures and successes. Therefore, our colleagues in the government must remember that they too will have a share of failures and successes (Interjection: Hear! Hear! Hear!).

**Table 4.17: Failed Government Frame moral evaluations**

<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
The MCP was selfish and cared to develop one region	UDF/AFORD	8 (61.5%)	8
The MCP had successes and failures	AFORD/MCP	5 (38.5%)	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>13 (100%)</b>	<b>13</b>

Surprisingly, for a frame that dealt with failures of the previous regime in the past 31 years, there were no treatment recommendation paragraphs. National development has to do with the deployment of national resources. It is surprising that the UDF MPs failed to provide an explanation of how they would deploy these resources now that they were in power. It is even more surprising that the MCP/AFORD alliance did not

challenge the UDF to explain how Malawi's meagre resources could be channelled for national development.

#### **4.4.3 Discussion of the Leadership Frame and the Failed Government Frame**

The following section will discuss the framing tools used to construct the Leadership Frame in the newspapers and the Failed Government Frame in the parliamentary corpus. These tools included the news value of personification in the Leadership Frame, and reducing the salience of the Failed Government Frame.

##### **4.4.1.1 News Values in the Newspapers Frames**

A frame that reveals the strong influence of personification is the Leadership Frame. As noted above, it was presented by the BNL newspapers. It focused on the leadership of the new ruling elite, mainly President Bakili Muluzi, describing them negatively as unfit to rule the nation.

Denis McQuail (2010) lists personification as one of the major news values of the western media. By this news value, events that can be discussed in terms of the actions of individual actors are more likely to be reported than those that are the outcome of abstract social forces. In this respect, it was relatively easy for the BNL newspapers to portray Muluzi as the reason for the disunity, lack of security and deteriorating economic conditions. The origin of these conditions may have been complex to explain to the readers but it was relatively easy as Gans (1979) argues to link them to a person – in this case, Bakili Muluzi, as the president.

A concern about personification in the highly partisan press in Africa is what Bourgault (1997) describes as an odd mix of polemics and adulation for leaders. The

polemics masquerade as critical journalism and the adulation simply reflects the servile position and sycophancy of the press.

The above fact was clear in the BNL newspapers' harsh criticism of the UDF-led government. President Muluzi did not receive any positive coverage at all in the editorials and opinion articles. His coverage in the BNL newspapers was overwhelming negative with 24 editorial pieces and opinion articles portraying him negatively. Only two portrayed him in neutral light.

#### **4.3.1.2 De-emphasis**

Reducing salience, as a frame construction tool is revealed in the Failed Government Frame as in the Governance Frames above. Unlike the Governance Frame, the Failed Government Frame had no purpose other than to highlight the MCP's failings. The UDF MPs chose to look backward, using collective memory selectively, to highlight the failures of the MCP. They harshly criticised the MCP's governance and development record while arguing that they would do better.

The Failed Government Frame was a victim of the AFORD's ambiguous position in the post-election period. While the AFORD MPs were not happy with the manner the MCP had governed the country in the past 31 years, their criticism was tempered by the fact that the AFORD was now in an alliance with the MCP. Thus few AFORD MPs chose to side with the UDF on this frame. This had the effect of lowering the volume of contributions to the frame.

Further, the MCP/AFORD alliance applied the framing technique of subverting the impact of unfavourable or contradictory information (See Entman, 2004). In this respect, some AFORD/MCP MPs disagreed with the UDF that the MCP's reign over

the country was a total failure. They argued that the MCP had some successes and some failures as noted above (Section 4.4.2.2).

Thus the MCP/AFORD allied warned the UDF against exaggerating the failure of the MCP as some day its own record would also fall under observation. Further, by citing specific examples of infrastructure development across the country, the MCP was able to blunt the critical tone of UDF MPs. In the end, frame was not pervasive enough in terms of numbers to raise its status on the hierarchy of frames in this study. Further, the frame's very arguments were blunted by opposition.

#### **4.4.2 Summary**

The Leadership Frame was unique to the newspapers corpus. It was a frame predicated on the negative personification of the new ruling elite. The BNL newspapers presented these leaders as inexperienced to deal with the complex problems facing the nation and to unify it. On the other hand, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*, counter-argued that the new leaders were humble and in tune with the people. This frame was magnified by the BNL newspapers due to their large circulation.

The Failed Government Frame was unique to the parliamentary corpus. The frame was offered by the UDF MPs. It attempted to provide a description of the dire situation Malawians lived in during the single party era. It labelled the MCP's rule as a total failure. This frame suffered due to reduced salience and subversion because of the lesser numbers of the UDF in the National Assembly and due to effective counter-arguments from the MCP/AFORD alliance.

### **4.5 Frame Construction Features across all Frames**

The section discusses two general frame construction features exhibited across all the six frames. The first relates to the primacy of Problem Definitions and Moral Evaluations in the frames. The second aspects relates to partisan cues from elite political actors which journalists used in their frame construction.

#### **4.5.1 The Problem Definition/Moral Evaluation Equilibrium**

This case study revealed the primacy of problem definitions in the framing process. Across all frames in the newspapers corpus, Problem Definition components had the most paragraphs coded to them. This means that of the 199 paragraphs coded in the newspapers corpus in the 1994 post-elections case study, 76 were coded to the Problem Definition components.

While there was undisputed primacy in the Problem Definition component in the newspapers corpus, this was not the case in the parliamentary corpus. The Problem Definition component superseded all components in only one frame, the Governance Frame. In the Unity Frame and the Failed Government Frame, the Moral Evaluation components superseded all the other frames. In the Governance Frame, the Causal Interpretation component superseded all frames. However, overall, the Moral Evaluation components had 67 paragraphs out of the 151 paragraphs in the parliamentary corpus.

Cobb & Coughlin (1998, p.418) argue that the process of defining a problem is central to the framing of issues. That is perhaps the reason why the Problem Definition components dominated in the newspapers corpus. In an open debate, it is normal to define the problem and locate the causal agents inherent in an issue before providing treatment recommendation (Primm & Clark, 1996). Where issues are divisive or demand policy initiatives, those groups that are able to articulate the problem in a

manner that resonates with the majority will find easier it to offer treatment recommendations and to greatly influence the outcome of a debate. With respect to editorial writers, adding their political voice to the definition of the problem would enable them to offer their solutions to the country's problems in addition to the many solutions being offered by various political entities in the country

As noted above, the parliamentary Moral Evaluation components were dominant among the frame components across all frames. Moral judgements drew on political values and cultural values of communality, service to society and preservation of human dignity.

The parliamentary discourse drew on the national collective memory and condemnation of human rights abuses under the MCP. Further, positive moral evaluations were also based on the celebration of the democratic values with their inherent benefits for the nation. Moral evaluation also took the form of corrective prescriptive statements regarding safeguarding democracy and providing equal opportunities for all Malawians regardless of region or tribe. This is in agreement with Carrier and Miller (1998) who argue that moral generalisations help to steer decision-makers in correcting perceived wrongs using political and financial means.

#### **4.5.2 Newspapers' Political Alignment and the Public Sphere**

This sub-section discusses the influence of the political binaries existing in the country on the discourse in newspapers. The sub-section examines how the BNL newspapers were influenced by cues from leaders of the MCP/AFORD alliance while the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* were influenced by cues from UDF leaders. In the end, both newspapers and parliament became communicative fora of two opposing political forces.



#### **4.5.2.1 Opposition Journalism in the BNL Newspapers**

Using the Unity Frames in the parliamentary corpus and the newspapers corpus as an example, it is clear that the question of unity, as it appeared in the BNL newspapers, was driven by the MCP/AFORD alliance. For example, Gwanda Chakuamba, the Vice-President of the MCP, expressed concern regarding this issue in May less than 36 hours after former President Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda conceded defeat. The president of the AFORD, Chakufwa Chihana, also spoke of his concern regarding the issue the very next day. The BNL newspapers then took up the mantra of the “threat to national security”, (Nyekanyeka, 1994, p.1) repeating the phrase in 11 different editorials and columns.

The parliamentary Unity Frame draws its problem definition from nine paragraphs. Three of these paragraphs argue that the outcome of the 1994 elections revealed the divisions and disunity of the nation. The equivalent editorials frame has the same argument coded five times. In the causal interpretation component of the frame in parliament, the MCP/AFORD alliance identified the UDF as being responsible for disrupting unity efforts in the country.

Further, the MCP/AFORD alliance chided the UDF and President Bakili Muluzi for being unable or unwilling to unify the nation as is desired for leaders. This aspect appeared 16 times in the parliamentary corpus. It was an aspect echoed by the BNL newspapers 11 times. The BNL newspapers repeated the charge 19 times in various forms.

#### **4.5.2.2 The *Nation* and the *Chronicle*: Government Journalism**

In framing governance and the new democratic era, The *Nation* and the *Chronicle* took their cue from the ruling UDF. The basic argument of the UDF in the National

Assembly concerning governance and democracy was that the Malawians wanted democracy and that democracy is supposed to benefit the people. The first reference to the MCP being totally self-serving to the extent of wilfully failing to serve the nation was made in parliament on 5 July 1994 by the Minister of Defence, Joseph Kubwalo (1994).

This argument was repeated by the *Nation* three days later on 8 July 1994 in an opinion piece. The *Nation* then repeated this argument in five subsequent editorials. The *Chronicle* repeated Kubwalo's statements in their editorial on 9 July 1994 and repeated it in three subsequent editorials.

In responding to the Leadership Frame, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* also took their cue from the UDF. They argued that, contrary to the MCP and the BNL charge that Muluzi and his government were divisive and inexperienced, Muluzi and his government were humble, popular and democratic. The first reference to this aspect was made by President Muluzi during a press conference:

My government has come into office by popular support; we will stay humble as we have always been and we will lead by democratic principles (Moya, 1994, p.1).

This aspect of the frame was repeated faithfully in 14 different editorials and opinion pieces by the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*.

#### **4.5.2.3 Elite Communicative Space**

Proceeding from the above, the frames identified in this chapter are an articulation of elite positions on the issues of political contestation, the process of democratisation and definition of nationhood in Malawi. The political elite in both the ruling party and the

opposition parties sought to impose these positions on the public sphere through the mediation of the newspapers under their control.

By systematically parroting the MCP/AFORD lines on the issue of unity and condemning the ruling UDF at every turn, the *Daily Times* and the *Malawi News* mediated the MCP/AFORD alliance's version of disunity and image of a nation on the brink of self-destruction on the public sphere. The newspapers consistently criticised the government and the ruling party for refusing to work with the MCP in a government of national unity.

On the other hand, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* permitted themselves to act as the new government and the ruling UDF's cheerleaders. The two newspapers closely reflected the position of the ruling elite especially in the moral evaluations in the Governance and the Leadership Frames. By systematically excoriating the MCP, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* were simply drinking from the same trough as the ruling elite who were prone to dismiss the opposition concerns ". . . as the ravings of rejected politicians intent on getting back into power through the back door." (Tukula, 1994).

Drawing from the above, the press in Malawi remained institutional partners of the different political parties in the country. This is reflected in the editorial content of the newspapers which, if not altogether derived from political party rhetoric, closely mirrored the same. Such lack of journalistic objectivity could have only been detrimental to the public sphere. It also reflected the bifurcated and belligerent nature of politics at that time.

#### **4.5.3 Summary**

For optimistic critics such as Chimombo and Chimombo (1996) and Ross (1996), this period heralded a vibrant era of press freedom and rediscovery for its role. Yet the

evidence presented in this chapter indicates that the press in Malawi was largely unable to break free from the suffocating stranglehold of its owners and their alignment to political parties. Despite the promise held by the ushering in of the Second Republic, the press mediated the political issues of the day by reflecting the same political biases of their owners and these owners political alignment. This, in turn, constrained the ability of the press to provide the nation with sites for critical-rational debate for citizens.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The first research question in this study relates to the frames used by both newspapers and parliament to frame the post-elections period in 1994. In this respect, six frames were identified in the newspapers and the parliamentary corpora in the 1994 post elections period. These are the Unity Frame, the Governance Frame and the Leadership Frame in the newspapers corpus. The parliamentary corpus had the Unity Frame, the Governance Frame and the Failed Government Frame. The chapter discussed the Unity Frames and the Governance Frames together revealing how both corpora reflected the political binaries that existed at that time pitting the ruling UDF against the MCP/AFORD alliance. Both sides were backed by sympathetic newspapers with the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* revealing partiality for the UDF's position, and the BNL newspapers revealing partiality for the MCP/AFORD alliance.

Both sides also attempted to use frame construction devices that could have made their frames resonant. These frame tools drew on cultural values and news values. Further, the narratives in the frames revealed strong presences of problem definitions and moral evaluations. However, the frames revealed worryingly low levels of treatment recommendations to identified problems.

The second research question in this study relates to the influence of owners and their political alignment in the construction of frames in the newspapers. In this regard, the chapter has demonstrated that the press in Malawi, in the wake of the 1994 elections, remained captive to their owners' political alignment. The newspapers understudy closely reflected the framing of the relevant political parties in their own framing. There was a clear divide between those newspapers which supported the agenda of the new government and those supporting the agenda of the opposition. Further, the dominance of elite cues in newspapers' editorials reveals the dominance of elite discourse in democratic deliberation. Clearly, the political binaries reflected in the frames restricted the quality of debate and constrained those who contributed to it.

## **Chapter Five**

### **1999 Post-Elections Period: Continuing Partisan Framing**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of the 1999 post elections case study. It is divided into two substantive sections. The first section will each discuss the frames detected in the newspapers corpus. This will include an interpretation of the frames in relation to the political environment from which they emerged. The second section will discuss frames detected in the parliamentary corpus. As with the first section, this will be followed by an interpretative discussion of the frames.

Unlike the previous case study which had clear parallels between the two framing arenas, this case study did not have such parallel frames. This was because the opposition were boycotting the opening of parliament. Because of this, the UDF MPs were able to frame issues in a self-congratulatory manner which avoided the real issues facing the nation. In the newspapers, however, the framing tended to be influenced by the events surrounding the outcome of the elections. In this respect, there was clear contestation of the problem definitions in the three frames detected in the newspapers.

As with the previous case study, it is important to understand the newspapers landscape in effect at that time in Malawi. Thus, before presenting the substantive sections, the chapter will discuss the newspapers and their relation to political parties. The next section argues that newspaper owners and their connections to political parties allowed the existing political divisions in the country to be reflected in the political commentary in the newspapers under study.

## 5.1 The Newspapers Landscape

There were a few major changes on the newspapers scene. Between 1998 and 1999, the owner of the *Chronicle*, Rob Jamieson, became more intensely involved with the international human rights organisation ARTICLE 19 (See Cammack, 2000). In this respect, he became quite critical of the UDF government's record on free speech and freedom of the press in the build up to the 1999 election which was characterised by violence between the ruling UDF and the MCP/AFORD alliance. This, in turn, seemed to affect the *Chronicle*'s editorial stand which seemed to be more and more at odds with the UDF. Consequently, the *Chronicle*'s framing in the 1999 post-election case study tended to be similar to that of the BNL newspapers rather than the NPL newspapers. This change in editorial policy at the *Chronicle* definitely irked the UDF government because it decided not to advertise in the newspaper depriving the *Chronicle* of a huge percentage of advertising revenue (See Cammack, 2000).

At the NPL newspapers, the *Nation* had since become a daily newspaper and the *Weekend Nation*, publishing on Saturday, had been added to the stable. Aleke Banda, the owner of the NPL, remained a senior cabinet minister in the UDF government. Even though Aleke Banda remained closely tied to the UDF, media scholars in Malawi (Patel, 2000; Chimombo & Chimombo, 1996) observed that the NPL stable news coverage of political affairs tended to be balanced and fair to all sides of the debate (See chapter two). However, this chapter will argue, based on the evidenced uncovered, that the NPL stable continued to provide favourable editorial commentary to the UDF.

Ownership at the BNL stable was in legal limbo. Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, the owner, had since passed away. His will was being disputed by his family, and the issue was in arbitration in the High Court, and then, the Supreme Court. John Tembo, the Vice-President of the MCP, continued to act as Chairman of the board. Thus, even

though the question of ownership was awaiting adjudication, the MCP continued to manage the BNL newspapers. This chapter will argue that the BNL stable continued with its anti-UDF editorial position.

## 5.2 Editorial Frames

The newspapers corpus in the 1999 case study had 51 articles. Of these 13, were drawn from the NPL newspapers. Thirty were drawn from the BNL newspapers and the remaining eight were drawn from the *Chronicle*. Coding in the newspaper editorials corpus resulted in 145 paragraphs coded. Further categorisation resulted in three frames. The first of these was the Unity Frame. This frame had 59 coded paragraphs representing 40.7% of the 145 coded paragraphs. The frame was drawn from 21 articles out of the 51 in the corpus representing 41.2% of the total articles. Just as in the previous case study, the Unity Frame emerged out of the manifest regional and tribal preferences of the voters. The emergence of this frame was further fuelled by the violence that rocked Malawi in the first week following the announcement of the elections results (See Table 5.1).

The second frame was the Electoral Process Frame. It had 51 of the 145 paragraphs in the newspapers corpus representing 35.2% of the coded paragraphs. These paragraphs were drawn from 18 articles out of the 51 in the corpus representing 35.3%. The Electoral Process Frame was derived from the perceived mismanagement of the election by the MEC. The frame tended to discuss this mismanagement and how it would affect democracy and governance in the country (See Table 5.1). This frame was mainly driven by the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle*. The NPL newspapers only provided counter-arguments which basically rejected the premise of the frame that the UDF and the MEC had colluded to mismanage the election.



**Table 5.1: Summary of Editorial Frames in the 1999 post-elections case study**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Articles</b>	<b>Frame Components</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>
<b>Unity Frame</b>			
BNL Newspapers/ <i>Chronicle</i>	14 (27.5%)		
NPL Newspapers	7 (13.7%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>21(41.2%)</b>		
		Problem Definition	18 (30.5%)
		Causal Interpretation	3 (5.1%)
		Moral Eval./Treat. Rec.	38 (64.4%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>59 (100%)</b>
<b>Electoral Process Frame</b>			
BNL Newspapers/ <i>Chronicle</i>	12 (23.5%)		
NPL Newspapers	6 (11.7%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>18 (35.2%)</b>		
		Problem Definition	20 (39.2%)
		Causal Interpretation	8 (15.7%)
		Moral Evaluation	9 (17.6%)
		Treatment Rec.	14 (27.5%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>51 (100%)</b>
<b>Consequences Frame</b>			
BNL Newspapers/ <i>Chronicle</i>	<b>12 (23.5%)</b>		
		Problem Definition	16 (45.7%)
		Moral Evaluation	15 (42.8%)
		Treatment Rec.	11 (31.4%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>35 (100%)</b>
	<b>51 (100%)</b>		<b>145</b>

The third frame was the Consequences Frame which was drawn from 12 articles representing 23.5% of the 51 articles in the corpus. Thirty-five paragraphs were coded from these 12 articles representing 24.1% of all the 145 coded paragraphs in this corpus. The Consequences Frame was mainly driven by the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle*. It tended to be negative towards the re-elected UDF government and its leadership. The following sub-sections discuss these frames in full (See Table 5.1). This will include a descriptive discussion of the frames individually. This will then be

followed by an interpretative discussion of the framing tools revealed by the frames within the context of the 1999 post election.

### **5.2.1 Unity Frame**

In the sense that it derived from the regional voting patterns manifest in the election outcome, this frame was similar to the two detected in the 1994 case study (See Table 4.1). However, the violence that erupted soon after the announcement of the election results was also one of the main driving forces of this frame.

The frame was drawn from 59 paragraphs coded from 21 articles representing 41.2% of all 51 articles in the newspapers corpus. Of these 21, 14 were drawn from the BNL stable and the *Chronicle*. The 59 paragraphs represented 40.9% of the 145 coded paragraphs in the case study. The problem definition component of the frame had 18 coded paragraphs representing 30.5% of the 59 paragraphs coded in this frame. Of these 59, 31 were from the 14 BNL/*Chronicle* newspapers while 28 were drawn from the seven articles in the NPL newspapers. The causal interpretation component had three paragraphs (5.1%) of these 59 paragraphs. Due to overlaps, the moral evaluations and the treatment recommendations components were combined with a total of 38 paragraphs representing 64.4% of the 59 paragraphs.

#### **5.2.1.1 The BNL Newspapers and the *Chronicle***

Ten of the paragraphs in the problem definition component were coded from the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicles*. The BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* located the problem in two aspects. First, in six paragraphs, the newspapers argued that the manifest regional voting patterns indicated a continuing problem of regionalism in the country

(See Table 5.2). As the editorial writer in the *Chronicle* (1999a, p.1) noted: “. . . the elections have revealed just how divided we are as a nation.”

Second, in four paragraphs, the editorial writers believed that the violence would do irreparable damage to national unity (See Table 5.2). This, in turn, was seen as a potential spark point for civil war as an editorial writer in the *Malawi News* (1999a, p.2) noted: “This violence is the manifestation of the animosity which some Malawians feel for other Malawians from different regions and ethnic groups.”

In constructing the causal interpretation, the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* identified the inflammatory speeches by divisive politicians as the main cause (See Table 5.2). The people were blindly following their preferred political leaders and translating this inflammatory rhetoric into action by attacking their political enemies. One editorial writer noted: “Politicians continue to say inciting things and divide the country further.” (*Chronicle*, 1999a, p.1).

**Table 5.2: The Unity Frame in the BNL Newspapers and the *Chronicle***

<b>Problem Definition</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Violence will destroy the national unity	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (12.9%)	4
Elections reflect regionalism and tribalism	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	6 (19.4%)	5
<b>Causal Interpretation</b>			
Inflammatory speeches by divisive leaders	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (9.7%)	3
<b>Moral Eval./Treat. Rec.</b>			
Government of National Unity	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	6 (19.4%)	5
The national leadership is divisive	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (12.9%)	3
National dialogue	BNL / <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (12.9%)	4
Unifying leaders	BNL / <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (12.9%)	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>31 (100%)</b>	<b>28</b>

For the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle*, moral evaluations and treatment recommendations were aimed at politicians in general regardless of their affiliation. The

newspapers used a series of intersecting arguments which coalesced into one call for positive action from the politicians especially the leaders of the three parties represented in parliament, the UDF, the AFORD, and the MCP.

The BNL newspapers made six calls for national dialogue. The *Chronicle* joined in this call, informing its readers that the UDF victory was not exactly fair, therefore the least the UDF could do was to form a government of national unity with the MCP/AFORD alliance.

Among other solutions, in four paragraphs, the newspapers called on all political players in the country to find ways of starting national dialogue. The leaders of civil society especially the Church were urged to fill the unifying void which the political leaders were unable to fill due to their partisan interests (*Chronicle*, 1999b, p.1).

#### **5.2.1.2 The NPL Newspapers**

The NPL newspapers agreed with the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* that there was a problem of unity. However, rather than locate the problem in the national leadership in general, the NPL stable reflected their partiality for the UDF by exonerating the UDF of the problem. Instead, in eight paragraphs of their problem definition (see Table 5.3), the NPL stable laid the problem at the door of the opposition. The opposition were presented as bad losers who were unwilling to accept defeat and their role as a responsible opposition. In this respect, as causal agents, Mwafongo (1999, p.8) argued in his column that: “These party leaders . . . deliberately incite hatred amongst their followers.”

The main narrative in the moral evaluation component called on the citizens and the political leaders in particular to be tolerant of each other (See Table 5.3). In a democratic society like Malawi, political tolerance was to be exercised without fail

otherwise the country would degenerate into civil strife as Mwafongo (1999, p.8) argued that: “What we need is love and tolerance. Violence and arrogance will not help us to build Malawi”.

In six paragraphs, the NPL newspapers also labelled the opposition as bad losers who could not accept defeat even when the contest had been declared free by international poll monitors like the Commonwealth Observer Group and the African Union observers (See Table 5.3). The opposition were to accept defeat gracefully and take up their duties as an opposition with due seriousness. As one editorial writer in the *Nation* (22, June, 1999, p.4) argued:

. . . the alliance did not come out clearly about accepting the results of the elections. . . . The only thing under the circumstances is for our leaders to bear their loss with grace and the winners to celebrate their victory with dignity.

**Table 5.3: The Unity Frame in the NPL newspapers**

<b>Problem Definition</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Opposition unwilling to accept defeat	NPL	8 (44.4%)	7
<b>Moral Eval/Treatment Rec.</b>			
Political tolerance	NPL	9 (23.7%)	7
The opposition are bad losers	NPL	6 (15.8%)	6
Reject violence and punish all perpetrators	NPL	5 (13.2%)	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>28 (100%)</b>	<b>25</b>

### **5.2.2 Electoral Process Frame**

The frame has a total of 51 paragraphs coded to it from 18 articles. Twelve of these articles were in the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* while 6 were in the NPL newspapers. The Problem Definition component has 20 paragraphs of which six were common to all the newspapers. The Causal Interpretation had eight paragraphs while the

Moral Evaluation component had nine paragraphs. The Treatment Recommendation component had 14 paragraphs (See Table 5.1).

It is worth noting that all newspapers expressed dissatisfaction with the MEC's handling of the election. However, there was a clear divide in the framing of the electoral process with the BNL stable and the *Chronicle* arguing that the MEC and the UDF had colluded to, not only mismanage the election, but also defraud the opposition of victory. On the other hand, while the NPL stable agreed that the election had been mismanaged, they latched on to the declaration by the international observers that the election even though not fair had been generally free.

#### **5.2.2.1 BNL Newspapers and *Chronicle***

The main arguments in this component were encapsulated in six paragraphs that zeroed in on the incompetence of the MEC in administering the elections (See Table 5.4). The BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* listed issues such as the voter registration exercise that disenfranchised people in the Central Region and the Northern Region, the UDF's monopoly on the MBC and the suspect tallying of ballot papers. Jamieson (1999, p.3) noted concerning the whole electoral process:

It was a close race – whose results were made more unacceptable because of the anomalies and inconsistencies throughout. No wonder there is a challenge in court right now. That is as it should be.

There were six other paragraphs dealing generally with the legal and constitutional problems associated with the outcome of the election results (See Table 5.4). The constitution itself was found lacking as it does not provide for a second round of voting in the event of a winner failing to achieve 51% of the cast votes. Namingha (1999, p.3) questioned the legitimacy of Muluze's presidency:

Malawi today stands a confused nation. It is not clear whether or not Muluzi's presidency is constitutional because he did not attain the majority status as per the supreme law of the land, the Constitution.

**Table 5.4: Electoral Process Frame in the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle***

<b>Problem Definition</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Article</b>
MEC's mismanagement of the election	All Newspapers	6 (50%)	6
High Court's ruling on the election outcome	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (25%)	3
'First past the post' is the problem	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (25%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>12 (100%)</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Causal Interpretation</b>			
The MEC & election monitoring	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	5 (62.5%)	5
The President/UDF are ungracious winners	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (37.5%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>8 (100%)</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Moral Evaluation</b>			
The MEC lack knowledge of the extent of its powers	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (33.3%)	3
The Judiciary is confused	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (33.3%)	3
The President/UDF are ungracious winners	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (33.3%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>9 (100%)</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Treatment Recommend.</b>			
The High Court must decide	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (40%)	4
Replace the MEC	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (30%)	3
Non-partisan statesmen should rise mediate	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (30%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>10 (100%)</b>	<b>10</b>

By way of causal interpretations, in five paragraphs, the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicles* blamed the MEC for mismanaging the elections. As one editorial writer argued:

If the leadership is chosen by God and there was no deception, how come the Electoral Commission is refusing to open the records for inspection by interested parties. (*Malawi News*, 1999b, p.2).

Another editorial writer in the same newspaper argued:

The polls were rigged and the Electoral Commission was furnished with the evidence but it decided to ignore all that and went ahead to declare Bakili Muluzi as the winner. (*Malawi News*, 1999d, p.2).

Thus, the MEC was portrayed as either incompetent to run elections or as having colluded with the UDF to defraud the electorate (See Table 5.4). The other aspect in this component related to President Muluzi and his UDF's manner of celebrating their victory. The newspapers, especially the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle*, branded him as ungracious in his ill-gotten victory in three paragraphs (See Table 5.4), criticising the timing of a presidential rally to celebrate his victory (*Chronicle*, 1999c, p.1).

By way of moral evaluations, in three paragraphs, the newspapers branded the MEC as lacking knowledge in the legal framework that enabled it to function even though its chairman was a justice of the High Court (*Malawi News*, 1999d, p.2). In another three paragraphs, the judiciary was branded as confused in relation to some of its rulings on the complaints regarding the election and for swearing Bakili Muluzi when, in fact, the election outcomes were being disputed (*Malawi News*, 1999d, p.2; Namingha, 1999, p.3) (See Table 5.4).

Even as they expressed their dissatisfaction with the behaviour of the Judiciary, in treatment recommendations, the newspapers called on the opposition leaders to await arbitration from the High Court (See Table 5.4), as the *Malawi News* (1999d, p.2; 1999e, p.2) noted, the rule of law and good governance were at stake. More practically, in three paragraphs, the newspapers called for the firing of the MEC (*Daily Times*, 1999a, p.2). While awaiting arbitration, the newspapers called on non-partisan statesmen to mediate in order to stop the violence as the writer of an editorial in the *Chronicle* noted:



Who can speak a good word in season so that we defuse this untenable and nation destroying impasse? Come on, democrats, identify yourselves.

(1999c, p.1)

#### **5.2.2.2 The NPL Newspapers' response**

The NPL newspapers' contribution to the Electoral Process Frame was to side with the victorious UDF while at the same time excoriating the opposition parties for refusing to accept the outcome of the election. However, as noted earlier, the NPL stable joined the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* in condemning the MEC's handling of the election. The following discussion is based on six articles published in the NPL newspapers which yielded 12 coded paragraphs (See Table 5.1 and Table 5.5).

In eight paragraphs, the NPL newspapers criticised those who had been defeated in the election for rejecting electoral outcomes (See Table 5.5). Of course, this assumption was anchored in the belief that the election, even though mismanaged, were generally a representation of the electorate's wishes. The *Nation* charged that the opposition leaders were simply following the example of many African politicians who refuse to accept defeat at the polls. As Norman Phiri (1999, p.8) writing in the *Nation* noted: "Africa's history is full of opposition leaders, who after refusing to accept poll results, resorted to fighting".

Proceeding from their problem definition, in four paragraphs, the newspapers identified the opposition leaders as bad losers and primarily responsible for the violence in the wake of the elections (Phiri, N. 1999, p.8). The newspapers charged that by refusing to accept the outcome the opposition leaders were fuelling the anger of their supporters resulting in the violence as D.D. Phiri (1999, p.8) argued in his column in the *Nation*:

As for the MCP/AFORD activists and their top leaders, the results were apparently more than disappointing – they were infuriating. Even as I write this line some parts of the country are seething with their rage.

It was this same narrative which dominated the NPL stable's moral evaluation of the frame (See Table 5.5).

**Table 5.5: The Electoral Process Frame in the NPL newspapers**

<b>Problem Definition</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Opposition unwilling to accept election outcome	NPL	8 (66.7%)	6
<b>Moral Evaluation</b>			
The opposition are bad losers are fuelling the violence	NPL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (33.3%)	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>12 (100%)</b>	<b>10</b>

### 5.2.3 Consequences Frame

The Consequences Frame discussed the negative consequences of the outcomes of the 1999 elections on the citizenry. The narrative surrounding this frame revolved around the perceived incompetence of the UDF-led government and how that would affect the livelihoods of citizens. Observations in this frame included the negative consequences on the economic and political life as well as the perceived regional and tribal well-spring of the UDF's development policy for the country. In total, 35 paragraphs were coded to this frame representing 24.1% of the 145 coded paragraphs in the case study in the newspapers' corpus made up of 51 articles. The 35 coded paragraphs for this frame were drawn from 12 article representing 23.5% of the 51 article in the newspapers' corpus in this case study (See Table 5.1).

The Problem Definition and the Causal Interpretation component of this frame have been combined due to over-laps and lack of clearly distinguishable differences. This combined component has 16 paragraphs of the 35 in the frame (See Table 5.6). Another distinguishing feature of this frame is that the NPL stable chose not to comment on this

**Table 5.6: The Consequences Frame in the newspapers corpus**

<b>Problem Definition</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Retributive firing of civil servants by an arrogant government	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	5 (38.5%)	4
Escalation of violence	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (30.8%)	4
Regionalism in development programmes	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (30.8%)	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>13 (100%)</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Moral Evaluation</b>			
The role of nonpartisan statesmen	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (30.8%)	4
The government has poor economic priorities	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	3 (23.1%)	3
Govt. and parliament should serve all citizens	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	6 (46.2%)	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>13 (100%)</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Treatment Recommendation</b>			
Training of parliamentarians & a strong opposition	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	4 (44.4%)	4
Relevant economic priorities & better advisers	BNL/ <i>Chronicle</i>	5 (55.5%)	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>9 (100%)</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Frame Total</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>

The newspapers used a series of intersecting arguments which coalesced into one theme that blamed most of the country's woes on the re-election of the UDF government. One major complaint of the newspapers was that the UDF was removing civil servants from the civil service who did not show loyalty to it as a party in retribution. For example, in five paragraphs, the newspapers alleged that the restructuring of government departments leading to retrenchment of some civil servants

which followed the election was politically motivated as the *Malawi News* (1999f, p.2) noted:

But some of the entrenched workers have complained that they believe their early retirements have been politically motivated. They claim that a good number of those retired are allegedly sympathisers of the opposition.

In four paragraphs, the newspapers blamed the re-election of the UDF for the escalating lawlessness which led to violence, armed robberies and home invasions on the UDF's laxity in law enforcement (*Malawi News*, 1999g, p.2). The newspapers anticipated price hikes and more misery for the nation (*Chronicle*, 1999e, p.1; Somanje, 1999a, p.6) (See Table 5.6). In another four paragraphs, the newspapers alleged that the UDF would continue with a regionally selective development agenda for the next five years as the *Daily Times* (1999b, p.2) argued:

The past five year legacy under the UDF has been characterised by selective development mainly in constituencies where there have been UDF MPs.

Another consequence of the UDF victory was what editorial writers perceived as the emergence of a sub-standard parliament (See Table 5.6). In six paragraphs in the moral evaluation component, the newspapers described the new parliamentarians as childish and prone to insulting one another as Somanje (1999b, p.6): observed:

They (MPs) must be made to know that they were elected to parliament to discuss development issues affecting their areas, and not to advance ideals of their respective political parties.

By way of moral evaluations, in six coded paragraphs, the newspaper called on the government to serve all citizens equally without discriminating against those who do not sympathise with the UDF (See Table 5.6).

As treatment recommendations, the newspapers advised the president to set better economic priorities for the nation (*Chronicle*, 1999e, p.1). The newspapers called on the Speaker of the National Assembly to train MPs on their duties (Somanje, 1999b, p.6). A further treatment recommendation was for the opposition to take their role seriously and to act to check government excesses (*Daily Times* (1999b, p.2) (See Table 5.6).

#### **5.2.4 Discussion**

The following section of the chapter will attempt to interpretively analyse the frames described above. It will examine the intrinsic aspects of the frames that may have given rise to the frames. In this respect, issues such as cultural dissonance, resonant construction of the problem definition and causal interpretation, and news values will be closely examined to observe how they influenced the emergent frames discussed above. Further, as an overview of the emergent frames in their totality, the discussion will also examine the magnitude factor in these frames.

##### **5.2.4.1 Cultural Dissonance in the Unity Frame**

The contested nature of problem definitions and causal attributions in the Unity Frames meant that a clear-cut moral evaluations/treatment recommendation narrative could not emerge from the corpus. In the end, the treatment recommendations and moral evaluations consisted of what appeared to be ambiguous and uncoordinated calls for national dialogue and political tolerance. Journalists found it difficult to authoritatively place blame for the post-election violence on any specific organisation or individual.

What problem definitions and causal attributions shaped the rest of the Unity Frame and made it so amorphous? The answer may be located in the cultural dissonance presented by the frame itself. As noted in the previous chapter, the question of unity is

rooted in traditional community values. In this respect, the individual is supposed to negotiate personal needs within the framework of community needs (Nussbaum, 2003, p.2; Bourgault, 1995, p.4-5). Unfortunately, in the context of the 1999 elections, the obvious problem could only be located in the electorate who had chosen to vote along regional and ethnic lines and had chosen violence as a means to express their frustration with the electoral process. This presented problems for editorial writers since that could shift the blame away from the easy villains - the politicians. One editorial writer noted:

Malawians need to understand their responsibilities to their community. Committing violence against other Malawians goes against our values as a nation. What is worrying is that the regionalism that has only been spoken about as a mere threat to national unity by word of mouth, is now becoming a reality. (*Malawi News*, 1999a, p.2).

Another writer in the *Chronicle* (1999b, p.1) noted:

Malawians, we are a peaceful community. We should not succumb to frustration and violence. Stop harming your neighbours. Let us seek redress through the proper channels.

The newspapers turned to the relevant age-old villains for blame attribution. For example, instead of blaming the nation for failing to observe its own values, the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* placed the blame on the UDF leadership, blaming them for lacking in unifying abilities (See Table 5.2) as one editorial (*Chronicle*, 1999a, p.1) noted:

There are politicians who preach unity but they practice the contrary. Politicians continue to say inciting things and divide the country further. Malawi is one country and one people. Boundaries were made by our colonisers which continue to hound us. The issue is not improved when a

leader who has been declared a winner in an election then proceeds to lambast the loser to the point where, once again animosity becomes the order of the day.

The writer of an editorial in the *Daily Times* (1999c, p.2) noted: “The UDF leaders are arrogant, and regard themselves as leaders of the UDF alone rather than the nation.”

The NPL newspapers blamed the opposition leaders for encouraging the violence by refusing to accept the outcome of the elections (See Table 5.2). Such a way of viewing the problem could have led the NPL stable to argue that there was no unity problem in Malawi. The problem was with opposition politicians who refused to accept the outcome of the elections (See Table 5.2).

In the end, the Unity Frame’s problem definition and causal attribution failed to resonate with the traditional Malawian values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values which ensure a happy and quality community life. The very people (citizens) who were supposed to put into practice these values had disregarded them. The consequence was that subsequent frame components such as the moral evaluations and treatment recommendation were basically an agglomeration of half-hearted calls for national unity and dialogue, and condemnation of politicians. This did not address the larger problem of the electorate’s preference of candidates from home. Further, it served to highlight the partisan nature of Malawi’s press and its reflection of the political divisions existing in the country.

#### **5.2.4.2 Resonant Problem Definition and Causal Attribution**

The Electoral Process Frame was suffused with morally judgemental words and images that arose directly and inevitably from the problem definition and causal analysis. Once the BNL stable and the *Chronicle* had identified the MEC as having intentionally

mismanaged the election in order to give the UDF victory, the journey along the pathway to emotional and negative moral judgements was determined. In the end, as Entman (2004, p.32-33) argues, in cases such as the Electoral Process Frame, “problem definition, cause, and moral evaluation are completely intertwined and feasible remedies virtually predetermined.”

The problem definitions and causal attributions in the Electoral Processes Frame were clear-cut. The BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* clearly located these problem definitions and the causal interpretations in the MEC, and to a certain extent, the UDF. Jamieson (1999) argued: “. . . the problem associated with these elections can all be traced to an incompetent MEC.” Somanje (1999a, p.4) noted: “. . . the MEC need to admit that these elections were poorly managed.” The *Daily Times* (1999d, p.2) simply noted: “. . . the MEC have messed up these elections big time.”

Even the NPL stable which tended to side with the UDF agreed with the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* that the MEC had to shoulder some, if not most of the blame, for mismanaging the election as Thomas Mwafongo (1999, p.8) noted:

The Electoral Commission is itself to blame for any dissatisfaction expressed by the contenders in the process because it paid little attention if not none at all to issues which had a bearing of the law.

It ought to be noted that the NPL stable attempted to subvert this framing of the problem definition by shifting the blame on to opposition politicians for refusing to accept the results of the elections at the same time blaming the MEC for mismanaging the elections. Further, the NPL newspapers subversion included downgrading the MEC’s responsibility from malicious and intentional, as the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* charged, to a case of mere incompetence. As Entman (2004, p.42) argues one way of diminishing the salience of issues presented in a frame is to subvert that



information with contradictory information. However, the NPL stable's subversion had to contend with the fact that the opposition leaders were not refusing to accept the outcome of a free and fair election. They were rejecting the outcome of an election that had been declared free but not fair by international observers.

The problem definition and causal attribution opened the way to moral evaluations and treatment recommendations that attempted to show how the MEC's mismanagement was designed to give the UDF an unfair advantage in the elections as an editorial writer in the *Malawi News* (1999g, p.2) noted:

Right from the registration exercise to the polling day everything was characterised by fraud designed to tilt the results in favour of the United Democratic Front. Even the national radio joined the bandwagon.

The *Chronicle* (1999b, p.1) noted: "It (the electoral process) was all designed to give the UDF an unfair advantage." Of course, the treatment recommendations were even more straightforward calling for the removal of the MEC especially its chairman, Justice James Kalaile (*Daily Times*, 1999d, p.1).

In sum through problem definition and causal attribution, the editorial writers were able to shape moral evaluation and treatment recommendations in the Electoral Process Frame in a manner that was more resonant and powerful for the readers than they were able to do with the Unity Frame. The problem definitions and causal attributions enabled them to key into habitual moral democratic values of fairness in electoral contests in order to enable a proper winner to emerge. Further, by associating it with the incompetent MEC, the newspapers were able to disassociate the values of democracy from the UDF.

#### **5.2.4.3 Magnitude and Emphasis**

From a purely numbers point of view, the Unity Frame was the dominant frame in the newspapers corpus in this case study (See Table 5.1). As the largest frame in this case study, the Unity Frame has the numbers to make it the dominant frame. However, the foregoing discussion on dissonance in the Unity Frame raises questions as to whether or not this was the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle*'s preferred frame in the 1999 post-election period. Certainly, there are no indications that the MCP/AFORD alliance (the BNL newspapers' owners) intended to make national unity an issue in the post-election period as they had done in the 1994 case study.

However, the manifest regional voting patterns and the furious but mercifully short outbursts of violence which characterised the post-election period seemed to have thrust the question of unity onto the newspapers' editorial agenda. Thus the news values of negativity and conflict coupled with the suffering of citizens uprooted by the violence and burning mosques and churches seem to have played a deciding hand in this respect. In the end the violence was sustained enough and at a large enough scale to raise the Unity Frame in terms of amount of coverage above the other two frames.

The crafting of the Electoral Process Frame seems to suggest that this may have been the preferred frame of the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* in the post-election period. This is evident in the emphasis of the commentaries. Entman (1993) suggests that one framing tool used by journalists is selective emphasis – what is emphasized and what is de-emphasized. Unlike the motley arrangement of the Unity Frame, the construction of the Electoral Process Frame suggests a more concerted arrangement around three main strands.

First, all the newspapers including the NPL newspapers, which tended to side with the ruling UDF, agreed that the MEC had mismanaged the elections. Second, there was expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of a constitutional provision for a run off in the

event of a minority winner emerging out of a tight election like the 1999 presidential election. Third, even though there was dissatisfaction with some of the High Court's rulings, the newspapers agreed that the judiciary was the right institution to give the nation direction.

All of these arguments coalesced into one theme which unambiguously condemned the MEC for mismanaging the electoral process and accused it for conspiring with the UDF to defraud the Malawian people of duly elected leadership. Further, in crafting this frame in this manner, the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* sought to use the technique of value disassociation in order to demonstrate that both the MEC and the UDF did not cherish the democratic values of freedom of choice and fairness in democratic elections. As Nelson, Wittmer and Shortle (2010, p.13) note regarding value disassociation, “. . . communicators must convince the public that their opponents do not hold legitimate claims to a cherished value.” Indeed, the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* argued that the President Muluzi and his UDF were ungracious winners in their ill-gotten victory as an editorial writer in the *Chronicle* (1999a) noted:

They proceeded to hold a victory rally even before the results were known. At that rally they lambasted and berated their challengers with words that were not edifying nor conducive to peace and harmony. Even at the speedily conducted inauguration, threatening words were used. . . .

This is hardly the type of statements that one expects from a head of state, never mind that his position is disputed.

All of these arguments were consistently presented at every stage of the frame component starting from the problem definition to the treatment recommendation. The end result was a frame which was effectively emphatic about the MEC's incompetence and the fraudulent nature of the UDF's victory. This discussion has noted that the NPL

newspapers attempted to subvert the core of this frame by apportioning some of the blame to opposition leaders who were contesting the outcome of the elections even though this subversion was negated by the overwhelming consistence of the BNL newspapers and *Chronicle*'s arguments.

#### **5.2.4.4 Human Interest and Empathy**

Just as the Electoral Process Frame, the Consequences Frame exhibits careful construction. The fact that it is only six paragraphs less than the Electoral Process Frame may indicate that this too was the preferred frame of the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle*. The NPL stable did not contribute to this frame. This is not surprising considering that the frame was highly critical of the UDF and anticipated hardship for the citizens as an unfortunate outcome of the UDF's return to power.

The frame was a collection of manifest problems in the post-election period which the newspapers traced back to the UDF. These problems were properly and neatly attributed to the UDF-led government. The problem definition and causal attributions permitted the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* to negatively evaluate the government from an ethical point of value.

Even more important it permitted the newspapers to portray the ordinary citizens as the ultimate victims. For example, the escalation of violence, home invasions and robberies in urban neighbourhoods was presented as an outcome of the UDF's laxity on matters of security whose main victims would be the citizens. The rise in the prices of essential commodities would only hurt the ordinary citizens as well. Further, some citizens living in constituencies whose MPs were not UDF could not look forward to development due to the UDF's ". . . selective development mainly in constituencies where there have been UDF members of parliament." (*Daily Times*, 1999e, p.2) In

addition, the UDF was reported to be “. . . firing civil servants who did not show enough support during the campaign period.” (Undani, 1999, p.6).

The human interest aspect of this frame especially regarding the security aspects and the economic aspects including loss of livelihood must have made this frame particularly relevant to the newspapers’ readers. Research in western media indicates the importance of ‘consequences’ (including economic consequences) either as a news value or as a generic frame in the presentation of news. Further, such research suggests that news about politics and the economy is often framed in terms of *conflict* or in terms of the *economic consequences* of events, issues, and policies (see Gamson, 1992; Graber, 1988; McManus, 1994; Neuman, Just, Crigler, 1992). Semetko & Valkenberg (2000) According to Neuman, Just, Crigler, 1992, p.63) news producers often use the consequence frame to make an issue relevant to their audience (Gamson, 1992).

It is worth noting that the most of the studies cited in the above paragraph used the Consequences Frame or the Economic Frame as generic frames rather than issue specific or emergent frames as used in this study. However, the power of the frame is still the same. The real consequences of economic hardship, lack of personal security and the loss of jobs were highly relevant issues that were intended to key into the empathetic aspect of the readers. Thus, this frame placed a human suffering aspect to the UDF victory encouraging empathy with those who were and would be victims.

#### **5.2.4.5 Summary**

In framing the post-elections period in 1999, the newspapers revealed the political binaries that characterised the political context in Malawi. The BNL newspapers’ commentaries continued to reveal a strong anti-UDF and anti-government slant. In this respect, they were joined by the *Chronicle*. Contrary to the conclusion which other

media scholars reached (Chimombo & Chimombo, 1996; Patel, 2000), the interpretive analysis has revealed that far from being objective and balanced, the NPL newspapers remained closely affiliated with the UDF in their political commentary on the issues facing the nation in the 1999 post-election period. The analysis also revealed how framing tools such as culture, emphasis and news values played a leading role in crafting the frames. These tools were used to create resonance for these frames among the newspaper reading public.

### 5.3 Parliamentary Frames

The corpus in the National Assembly was small. This was mainly because the opposition were boycotting parliament. Further, proceedings of the National Assembly were halted after the first day to negotiate a return for the boycotting MPs. When the National Assembly re-opened it was in 2000, making those sessions ineligible for inclusion in this study.

**Table 5.7: Summary of parliamentary frames in the 1999 case study**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Speeches</b>	<b>Frame Components</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>
<b>Extended Mandate Frame</b>			
UDF	11 (73.3%)		
		Causal Interpretation	14 (66.7%)
		Moral Evaluation	7 (33.3%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>21 (100%)</b>
<b>Leadership Frame</b>			
UDF	4 (26.7%)		
		Causal Interpretation	5 (55.6%)
		Moral Evaluation	4 (44.4%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>9 (100%)</b>
	15 (100%)		30

Reflecting the small size of the corpus, only 30 paragraphs were coded from 15 parliamentary speeches. These were categorised into two frames. The first was the Extended Mandate Frame which had 21 of these 30 paragraphs coded from 11 speeches.

The second was the Leadership Frame which had 9 of these 30 paragraphs which were coded from 4 speeches (See Table 5.7 above). The following sub-sections will discuss these frames in full.

### **5.3.1 Extended Mandate Frame**

The Extended Mandate Frame revealed the one-sided nature of the debate in the National Assembly in which the opposition were not represented. In this respect, the frame lacked a problem definition and treatment recommendation. In this sense, the frame was self-congratulatory on the part of the UDF in which the UDF MPs identified their party as the causal agent of their victory and took the opportunity to praise their party for bringing liberty to Malawi.

The causal interpretation component consisted of eight of the 21 coded paragraphs representing 57.1% appearing in eight speeches. The UDF MPs reasoned that their victory at the polls was based on the success of their first five years in power during which they brought development to Malawi (See Table 5.8). In six paragraphs drawn from six speeches, they contrasted the UDF's first years against that of the MCP's 31 years in government arguing that they had done more for the country in five years than the MCP had done in 31 years. With respect to the above Kaliati (1999, p.57) observed:

The past five years of His Excellency's democratic rule has seen wonderful development taking place throughout the country . . . for the past 31 years of MCP rule such development was not possible.

In this respect, the UDF credited their victory directly to the electorate's appreciation of these developments.

In the Moral Evaluation component, in seven coded paragraphs drawn from seven different speeches, the UDF MPs argued that the people had acquired a taste for liberty

and freedom (See Table 5.8) (Jangiya (1999, p.44). It was, therefore, unlikely that they would return the MCP to power.

**Table 5.8: The Extended Mandate Frame**

<b>Causal Interpretation</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
UDF has brought development	UDF MPs	8 (57.1%)	8
MCP government was dictatorial and failed	UDF MPs	6 (42.9%)	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>14 (100%)</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Moral Evaluation</b>			
Malawians have liberty now	UDF MPs	7 (100%)	7
<b>Frame Total</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>

### 5.3.2 Leadership Frame

The Leadership Frame consisted of the remaining nine coded paragraphs drawn from the remaining 4 speeches in the parliamentary corpus. The difference between the Leadership Frame and the Extended Mandate Frame is that the former tended to praise the UDF in general while the later particularly praised President Muluzi. In the Causal Interpretation Muluzi was praised for effectively ensuring that the UDF manifesto of 1994 was implemented in the first five years of the UDF's term (See Table 5.9). This resulted in success at the polls as Dafter (1999, p.70) argued:

His Excellency the President deserves winning due to various development projects he has initiated in this country.

**Table 5.9: The Leadership Frame**

<b>Causal Interpretation</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
Muluzi was an effective leader	UDF MPs	5 (100%)	4
<b>Moral Evaluation</b>			
Muluzi is a good God-chosen leader	UDF MPs	4 (100%)	4
<b>Frame Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>



The first Moral Evaluation arguments ascribed goodness to Muluzi. The second drew on religious overtones implying divine intervention in Muluzi's ascendancy to power and gaining a second term in office (See Table 5.9). He was praised for saving Malawi from a "satanic", (Dossi, 1999, p.62) situation. He was labelled as a ". . . God fearing person", and the UDF MPs were ". . . grateful to God for keeping him alive and well to lead this nation." (Makhumula, 1999, p.71).

### **5.3.3 Discussion**

The following subsection will provide a discussion of the frames described above. The discussion will reveal the role of democratic values in the construction of the frames. It will also examine the use of metaphors especially biblical metaphors in making these frames resonant.

#### **5.3.3.1 Democratic Values**

The framing in the National Assembly tended to use democratic values for resonance. The Extended Mandate Frame, for example, was constructed on only 21 paragraphs. However, these paragraphs were heavily suffused with references to democratic values. The UDF MPs argued that their party had brought development and liberty to Malawi: "The country has witnessed prosperity and economic growth in the past five years." ". . . the government's fiscal performance has been applauded by well known organisations like the IMF" (Kaphuka, 1999, p.52). They contrasted what the UDF had done against the MCP's 31 years of power which ended in 1994 as one MP said: ". . . the poor in Malawi were as poor, if not poorer in 1993, as they were in 1963." (Sonke, 1999, p.66). By so doing, they declared that the MCP was dictatorial as one MP noted: ". . . the 31 years of MCP in government had been years of hardship in Malawi . . ." (Jangiya, 1999,

p.50). Another noted: “. . . during the one party system under late Dr. Kamuzu Banda, many people were food for crocodiles.” (Kaliati, 1999, p.58). All of these three strands coalesced into a simple but emphatic appropriation of democratic values by the UDF.

The UDF MPs’ claim to exclusive rights over democratic values is reflective of value ownership (Nelson, Wittmer and Shortle, 2010, p. 14). The UDF MPs attempted to boost the esteem of the party laying exclusive claim to the values of democracy while denouncing the UDF’s rivals, the MCP, as lacking in these values. To exclusively claim these rights was, not only to dispossess the other parties of them, but it was to claim that the UDF was the only party capable of governing the democratic people of Malawi. Of course such a framing in the post-election period and the National Assembly was only possible because there was no one to challenge the UDF. An opposition in parliament could have easily referred to the just ended election, which had been declared free but not fair, as an example of how the UDF could not claim exclusive rights to the values of democracy.

### **5.3.3.2 Metaphors and Religion**

Aside from the above appropriation of democratic values, the UDF MPs also constructed the Leadership Frame using resonant religious metaphors. Malawians are deeply religious. Over 80% claim to be devout Christians and 13% claim to be devout Muslims (See Khaila and Chibwana, 2005). Thus, it is not surprising that the UDF MPs sought to present their leader, President Bakili Muluzi, in religiously resonant language. Such moral evaluations for the UDF leader rose out of a causal attribution that presented Muluzi as the effective leader who had guided the UDF towards successful implementation of its manifesto since 1994. Dafter (1999, p.68) noted: “. . . the President deserves winning due to various development projects he has done in this

country.” In that respect Muluzi was portrayed as a good leader who was “. . . chosen by God” as Makhumula (1999, p.71) declared on the National Assembly floor. Consequently, the MPs as Mathanda (1994, p.73) noted: “. . . thank the living God for again accepting Dr. Bakili Muluzi to lead this nation for another five years.”

This type of religious frame construction in the National Assembly was not accidental. It deliberately keyed into the religious beliefs which are held so dear by Malawians. It was a reflection of the role and influence of religion - an important identifiable cultural attribute - in Malawi’s Second Republic. Further, it suggests that religion potentially offers an ideologically and sociologically rich context for national identity formation in the Second Republic. As Damon (1993) and Erikson (1968) note, people strive to make sense of the world and to assert their place in it and religion intentionally offers beliefs, moral codes and values from which a people build belief system. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) point to three types of resources that are instrumental in explaining people’s political behavior: money (resources), civic skills (church-based and nonchurch training) that such institutions provide their members, and social ties. The UDF MPs used religion to tap into the reservoir of these beliefs, worldview, and values of religious traditions – especially Christianity and Islam, to provide an ideological context in which Malawians could connect with the re-elected President Muluzi.

Apart from the above, evoking the name of God and turning to religion may have served a second purpose. With the opposition challenging the victory in the High Court, the UDF MPs may have felt the need to reach out to religion to offer a sense of legitimacy to their victory as Thengo Maloya (1999, p.100) argued: “. . . the Bible calls on every believer to pray for their leaders because every authority comes from God.” Consequently, believers who did not think that Muluzi and his UDF deserved to be in

power were obliged to submit to their authority because the ultimate authority – God – had given Muluzi and his UDF their authority.

### **5.3.3.3 Summary**

The framing in the National Assembly was very self-congratulatory on the part of the UDF because the opposition, who would have challenged such frame construction, were boycotting parliament in protest at the conduct of the election. Thus, the two frames which emerged in the parliamentary corpus presented a rosy picture of the nation under the UDF. The frames drew heavily on religion and democratic values. Not only did the UDF claim exclusive rights over democratic values, they also reinforced that by portraying their victory at the polls as God-given.

## **5.4 1999: Continuing Partisan Journalism**

The following section attempts to put into context the type of journalism model followed by the different newspapers. Further, it attempts to demonstrate how the owners of the newspapers may have influenced the adoption of these models of journalism.

### **5.4.1 BNL Newspapers and the *Chronicle*: Defiant Opposition Journalism**

The Electoral Process Frame and the Consequences Frame were particularly critical of the government and the ruling. As noted earlier on, the Electoral Process Frame was highly critical of the roles played by the UDF and the MEC in the electoral mess revealed during both the campaign period and the immediate aftermath of the election. An examination of these frames reflects the extent at which the BNL newspapers spoke for the opposition.

For example, the first media report calling for the removal of the MEC was in a *Daily Times* (1999f) story quoting the MCP President Gwanda Chakuamba. The story appeared just 24 hours after the results of the elections were declared on 19 June. In that story, Chakuamba called for the removal of MEC chairman, James Kalaile and his commissioners calling the outcome “. . . a fraud and daylight theft.” (p.1). According to the analysis in the foregoing sections, this was a charge that was to be repeated by the BNL newspapers at least fourteen times over the period under study in varying forms (See Table 5.4). From this examination, it is clear that these newspapers were certainly sympathetic to the opposition. They tended to see things through the same glasses as the MCP and AFORD.

The same applies to the Consequences Frame. The reference to the retributive firing of government employees was first made by Heatherwick Ntaba, the Publicity Secretary of the MCP, in which Ntaba charged that government was firing some senior civil servants for not being loyal to the ruling party. The remarks appeared in a news story in the *Daily Times* (1999i). The next day, the *Malawi News* (1999f) editorial carried references to that accusation alleging retribution against civil servants who refused to lend a helping hand to the UDF during the campaign period. This was a charge that was repeated at least five times by the BNL newspapers as evidenced in the discussion on frames in chapter five, Section 5.1 (See also Table 5.6).

The *Chronicle* was also fierce in its criticism of the government and the UDF with journalism that attempted to give the appearance of national interest. However, the manner in which the newspaper tended to consistently criticise the UDF and the government puts the *Chronicle* firmly in the opposition camp. For example, the harsh criticism of the government's economic performance by the *Chronicle* did not provide

any solutions to the problem except to proclaim that ordinary Malawians were to blame for voting for the UDF.

The stance taken by the BNL newspapers against the UDF must be viewed in the context of the stable's ownership. It is only to be expected that the BNL newspapers would be highly partial to the MCP's political position and biased against the UDF. It should, therefore, be of no surprise that the BNL newspapers took this obviously biased position.

#### **5.4.2 The NPL Newspapers: Government Journalism**

The analysis in the preceding sections reveals the NPL newspapers' continuing association with the UDF. The NPL stable's consistent criticism of the opposition and unquestioning siding with the UDF and the government clearly places it in the government journalism model.

The NPL stable's stance in the Unity Frame is an important place to begin in ascertaining the above assertion. In that frame, the NPL newspapers consistently named the opposition leaders for being responsible for the post election violence. The newspapers consistently called on the opposition leaders to accept the outcome of an obviously flawed electoral process. In fact, the owner of the NPL newspapers, Aleke Banda (1999a & 1999b), gave his newspapers the lead in one of his articles published in two parts on 4 July and 11 July. In those articles, Banda urged the opposition to take the example of the late Kamuzu Banda who had accepted the outcome of the 1994 without question. For the next weeks, the editorial writers at the *Nation* took this up and repeated the accusation 14 times in different editorials and opinion pieces. In this manner, the NPL newspapers placed the burden of ending the violence on the opposition (See Table 5.3).

However, the NPL newspapers did not offer pro-government/UDF frames except to offer counterarguments against the MCP/AFORD alliance's and the BNL stable's framing. The newspapers did not show much interest in commenting on the curtailed National Assembly session either. In essence, the newspapers seemed to have taken a slight disinterest in the political happenings of the post-election period except to rebut the opposition political position. Ephraim Munthali, the Lilongwe Bureau Sub-Editor noted in an interview:

It was not a stand-offish position as you put it. . . . The opposition politicians were not engaging the government on the issues . . . and AKB (Aleke Kadonaphani Banda), to give him credit does not interfere with what we do (Mchakulu, 2004, p.18).

In other words, the NPL had nothing to tell the nation because the politicians were not discussing the real issues. Of course, the question of Aleke Banda not interfering in the editorial direction may have been overstated as demonstrated in the foregoing paragraphs.

### **5.4.3 Summary**

This chapter has proved that the NPL newspapers continued to tilt towards the UDF and the government. Indeed, Patel (2000) observed that the NPL newspapers made noticeable shifts away from neutrality when it came to covering the UDF by providing the party and the government favourable editorial commentary based on highly speculative narratives. The BNL newspapers remained beholden to the MCP even in the face of pressure from the government and the UDF. Thus, the same uncritical parroting of the MCP position observed in the 1994 post-election period for the BNL newspapers remained true in the 1999 post-election period.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Regarding the first research question, the findings in the 1999 case study reveal five frames. Three of these were detected in the newspapers corpus. These are the Unity Frame, the Electoral Process Frame and the Consequences Frame. All of the frames are rooted in the political context created by the outcome of the elections. The Unity Frame arose out of manifest voting patterns which revealed the citizens' preference of candidates with similar regional and ethnic roots. The Electoral Process Frame emerged out of editorial writers' dissatisfaction with the management of the elections. The Consequences Frame offered predictions of suffering which citizens would face as a result of the UDF's disputed victory at the polls.

Reflecting the uncontested nature of parliamentary debate, the frames in the parliamentary corpus were self-congratulatory on the part of the UDF. The Extended Mandate Frame was presented as approval from the electorate for the first five years of UDF rule. The Leadership Frame simply portrayed Muluzi as an efficient and divinely appointed leader.

Regarding interpretation, the frames in the newspapers corpus drew strongly on cultural values even though the Unity Frame revealed dissonance with traditional cultural values. The frames also drew on news values such as negativity and conflict in the Unity and the Consequences Frames. In essence, both the Extended Mandate Frame and the Leadership Frame reflected the UDF's claim to exclusive ownership of democratic values.

It is worth noting here that the two corpora produced frames that were incomparable across the corpora. The frames in the parliamentary corpus were unashamedly self-congratulatory and almost irrelevant to the experience of Malawian citizens. They failed to provide an agenda for national advancement. Apart from being



self-congratulatory, they simply exposed the unyielding nature of Malawian politics when the UDF MPs still found it necessary to excoriate the vanquished MCP who had lost power in 1994. On the other hand, the newspapers frames revealed a nation struggling with real issues arising out of a flawed election process including ethnically motivated violence and a deteriorating economy.

With reference to the second research question, newspapers' ownership continued to play a deciding role in the framing of issues. The BNL newspapers continued their anti-UDF/government framing reflective of the MCP position. The *Chronicle's* framing was also reflected in the owner's dissatisfaction with the UDF and the government in matters of governance. On the other hand, the NPL newspapers framed issues in favour or in defence of the UDF. Aleke Banda's position as First Deputy President of the UDF and senior cabinet minister may have had much to do with this editorial position.

## Chapter Six

### 2004 Post-Election Period: National Interest Journalism?

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the frames detected in the parliamentary corpus and the newspapers corpus during the 2004 post-election period. There were six frames detected in this case study. There were two overarching frames emerging in both corpora. Each corpus had one frame that was unique to it.

This chapter also presents evidence suggesting that the reconfigurations in the parliamentary set up enabled the emergence of more critical frames in the parliamentary corpus. The frames reflected more open discussion on the previous government's fiscal and economic management record. Further, the parliamentary frames reflected a willingness to closely examine the new president's governance and economic agenda. This was achieved mainly because more political parties had acquired parliamentary seats in the 2004 general election apart from the three parties (UDF, MCP and AFORD) which had dominated parliament starting from 1994.

Another factor in this case study was the resonant post election agenda set by the new president. This agenda included fighting corruption and fiscal malfeasance in government. This resonance opened up opportunities for more analytical editorial commentary and parliamentary speeches than experienced in 1994 and 1999.

This chapter will also argue that change of owners at the BNL newspapers, and change of the proprietor's political alignment at the NPL newspapers affected the frames and discourse emerging in the press. While the new president's agenda resonated with the new parliament and the press, the absence of political interests on the part of the newspapers' owners meant that more critical, and less sycophant frames emerged.

The following section of the chapter will discuss the reconfiguration of the National Assembly and how such changes influenced parliamentary debate and the frames which emerged. It will also discuss the changes in ownership at the BNL newspapers and the changes in owner's political alignment at the NPL newspapers. Section 6.3 will provide a description of the overarching frames and the framing devices that worked to produce those frames. It will also discuss the factors that affected the emergence of these frames. Section 6.4 will provide a description of the frames that are unique to each corpus and the relevant framing devices. It will also discuss the framing tools used to shape these frames. Section 6.5 will argue, from the evidence presented in this chapter that journalists were freer than in previous case studies to frame issues based on the national interest.

## **6.1 Reconfigured Parliament and Press**

This section provides a brief background to the factors that led to changes in the framing influences in both corpora. This includes the emergency of new political parties and independent MPs in the National Assembly. It also includes the changes of ownership at the BNL newspapers, changes in the owner's political alignment at the NPL newspapers.

### **6.1.1 Political Landscape in 2004**

The framing in the parliamentary corpus was greatly influenced by the changes on the political landscape in the country. Whereas the UDF, the MCP and the AFORD had been the only parties represented in the National Assembly after the 1994 and 1999 elections, the 2004 National Assembly consisted of several new political parties. Among these new parties was the Republican Party (RP) led by former MCP president

Gwanda Chakuamba, which had 15 seats. Another new party was the People's Progressive Movement (PPM) led by Aleke Banda (proprietor of the NPL newspapers) which won 6 seats in parliament. The Movement for Genuine Democracy (MGODE), an AFORD splinter group, won three seats. Two other new parties, the People's Transformation Party (PETRA) and the Congress for National Unity (CONU) won one seat each. Further, the number of Independent MPs rose from four in the 1999 parliament to 40 in the 2004 elections.

The presence of the new parties and the rise of the independents represented losses for the UDF, the MCP and the AFORD who had been the perennial power brokers since 1994. The UDF MPs were reduced from 99 in the 1999 parliament to 49 in the 2004 parliament. The MCP MPs were reduced from 66 in the 1999 parliament to 57 in the 2004 parliament. The AFORD suffered the greatest loss of the three major parties with a reduction from 29 in the 1999 parliament to only six in the 2004 parliament. Even though the MCP suffered such reductions, this reconfiguration of the National Assembly meant that it emerged as the majority party. It was also able to consolidate this by re-aligning with the new parties.

### **6.1.2 The Newspapers Landscape in 2004**

There had been one major change in the ownership of newspapers. The extended family of the late Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda had reached an out of court agreement with the other beneficiaries of the late dictator's will. In essence, the family trust gained control of Blantyre Print and Publishing Company and all its subsidiaries including the Blantyre Newspapers Ltd. The family also severed all political ties. This, in turn, meant that after many years of affiliation with the MCP and three years of seeming UDF control, the BNL newspapers were at last independent.

Apart from the change of political affiliation at the BNL newspapers, the NPL newspapers also went through changes in political affiliation. In the run-up to the 2004 elections, the NPL's proprietor, Aleke Banda, left the UDF and formed his own political party, the People's Progressive Movement (PPM). He was the running mate of the Mgwirizano Coalition's presidential candidate in the 2004 election. Shortly after the election, he retired from politics. Basically, this meant that ties the UDF enjoyed with the NPL newspapers were severed. However, the NPL stable continued to enjoy a reputation of being fair and balanced among media scholars (See Neale, 2004; and Manda, 2004).

Ownership at the *Chronicle* did not change. Rob Jamieson was not associated with any political party during the run-up to the 2004 election or immediately after. However, his stance as an activist in matters of freedom of expression and freedom of the press put him at odds with the ruling UDF. The run up to the 2004 elections was characterised by systematic violence against the opposition, the press and civil society. This violence was largely perpetrated by the youth wing of the UDF, known as the Young Democrats (See Muula & Chanika, 2004 for a fuller discussion). It was only to be expected that the *Chronicle* would carry a strong anti-UDF editorial line.

Thus, in the run-up to the May 2004 elections, all the newspapers in this study were relatively free of political influence in varying degrees. While the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* appeared totally free of political influence, the NPL newspapers may have felt some pressure to be kind to the Mgwirizano Coalition. After all, the proprietor, Aleke Banda, was the Coalition's running mate.

## **6.2 Overview of the Frames**

In total, there were 75 articles in the newspapers corpus which yielded 224 coded paragraphs. The Leadership Frame claimed 111 paragraphs of these 224 representing 49.6% of the total coded paragraphs. Further, these 111 paragraphs were drawn from 34 articles representing 45.3% of the total 75 articles in the corpus. This makes the Leadership Frame the largest single frame in the newspapers corpus (See Table 6.1). The parliamentary corpus had a similar frame also labelled as the Leadership Frame.

**Table 6.1: Summary of newspaper editorial frames in the 2004 case study**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Articles</b>	<b>Frame Components</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>
<b>Leadership Frames</b>			
BNL Newspapers	15 (20.0%)		
NPL Newspapers	10 (13.3%)		
<i>Chronicle</i>	9 (12.0%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>34 (45.3%)</b>		
		Problem Definition	21 (18.9%)
		Causal Interpretation	24 (21.6%)
		Moral Evaluation	35 (31.5%)
		Treatment Rec.	31 (27.9%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>111 (100%)</b>
<b>Challenges Frames</b>			
BNL Newspapers	11 (14.7%)		
NPL Newspapers	10 (13.3%)		
<i>Chronicle</i>	9 (12.0%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 (40.0%)</b>		
		Prob. Def./Causal Inter.	18 (23.4%)
		Moral Evaluations	28 (36.4%)
		Treatment Rec.	31 (40.2%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>77 (100%)</b>
<b>Electoral Process Frames</b>	<b>Articles</b>		
BNL Newspapers	5 (6.7%)		
NPL Newspapers	3 (4.0%)		
<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (4.0%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 (14.7%)</b>		
		Prob.Def./Causal Inter.	18 (50%)
		Moral Eval./Treat. Rec.	18 (50%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>36 (100%)</b>
	<b>75 (100%)</b>		<b>224</b>

The newspapers' Challenges Frame claimed 77 coded paragraphs of the 224 in the newspapers corpus representing 34.4% of the total coded paragraphs. These were drawn from 30 articles representing 40% of the total 75 articles in the corpus. These figures make the Challenges Frame second largest frame in the newspapers corpus behind the Leadership Frame (See Table 6.1). The parliamentary corpus had a similar frame also labelled as the Challenges Frame.

**Table 6.2: Summary of parliamentary frames in the 2004 parliamentary corpus**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Speeches</b>	<b>Frame Components</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>
<b>Leadership Frame</b>			
UDF/AFORD	6 (9.1%)		
MCP	5 (7.6%)		
Mgwirizano	3 (4.5%)		
Independents	2 (3.0%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 (24.2%)</b>		
		Moral Evaluation	31 (100%)
<b>Challenges Frame</b>			
UDF/AFORD	11 (16.7%)		
MCP	8 (12.1%)		
Mgwirizano	4 (6.1%)		
Independents	3 (4.5%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>26 (39.4%)</b>		
		Prob. Def./Causal Inter.	6 (12%)
		Moral Evaluation	5 (10%)
		Treatment Rec.	39 (78%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>
<b>Failed Government Frame</b>			
UDF/AFORD	9 (13.6%)		
MCP	8 (12.1%)		
Mgwirizano	4 (6.1%)		
Independents	3 (4.5%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 (36.3%)</b>		
		Prob.Def./Causal Inter.	10 (23.8%)
		Moral Evaluation	32 (76.2%)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>42 (100%)</b>
	<b>66 (100%)</b>		<b>123</b>

The last frame in the newspapers' corpus was the Electoral Process Frame which claimed 36 paragraphs representing 16.1% of the total 224 coded paragraphs in the newspapers corpus. This frame was drawn from 11 articles representing 14.7% of the 75 in this corpus (See Table 6.1).

The parliamentary corpus in 2004 case study had 123 coded paragraphs from 66 speeches. The Leadership Frame was comprised of 31 coded paragraphs representing 25.2% of the 123 coded paragraphs drawn from 16 speeches. The 16 speeches represented 24.2% of the 66 speeches in the 2004 parliamentary corpus. These figures make the Leadership Frame in the parliamentary corpus the second largest (See Table 6.2 above).

The Challenges Frame in the parliamentary corpus claimed 50 of the 123 coded paragraphs in the corpus representing 40.7%. These were drawn from 26 of the total 66 speeches in the corpus representing 39.4%. These figures make the parliamentary Challenges Frame the largest frame in the parliamentary corpus ahead of the Leadership Frame (See Table 6.2).

The Failed Government Frame in the parliamentary corpus had 24 of the 123 coded paragraphs in the parliamentary corpus representing 34.1%. These were drawn from 24 of the total 66 speeches in the corpus representing 36.3% (See Table 6.2).

### **6.3 Overarching Frames**

There were two types of frames overarching both corpora (See Tables 6.1 and 6.2). The first pair was the Leadership Frames which were basically assessments of the leadership provided by the new president, Bingu wa Mutharika. In addition, the Leadership Frames tended to look forward with hope in anticipation of things to come based on Mutharika's stated agenda. In contrast to Mutharika, who was positively



framed, his party, the UDF and former president Bakili Muluzi, received negative portrayal because of what was perceived as their negative influence on the new president.

The second pair of overarching frames was the Challenges Frames. Both frames tended to focus on the challenges facing the new government of President Mutharika. Issues of corruption and fiscal management took centre stage. This is especially true in light of Mutharika's stated anti-corruption drive.

### **6.3.1 Leadership Frame**

The obvious difference between the Leadership Frame in the editorials corpus and the Leadership Frame in the parliamentary corpus relates to the fact that the parliamentary frame only had a moral evaluation component. In this respect, the parliamentary Leadership Frame was mainly laudatory of the new president, Bingu wa Mutharika, and condemnatory of the former president and his administration. However, the editorial Leadership Frame was more analytic of the issues surrounding the new president and the political dynamics at work between the new president and his party, the UDF.

In the newspapers corpus, the Leadership Frame had 21 coded paragraphs in its problem definition out of 111 representing 18.9% of coded paragraphs in the frame coded from the 34 articles in the frame. The causal interpretation component consisted of 24 (21.6%) coded paragraphs. There were 35 coded paragraphs representing 31.5% of the total coded paragraphs to the frame. The treatment recommendation of the frame had 31 (27.9%) of the total coded paragraphs to the frame (See Table 6.1).

The main problem definition stemmed from a widespread perception that the former president, Bakili Muluzi, was still ruling the country by proxy. A number of factors led to this perception. First, Bakili Muluzi was the Chairman of the UDF, the

highest rank in the UDF National Executive Committee. Second, Mutharika was not even in the UDF National Executive Committee which signified his lack of influence in party policy. Third, Mutharika had been personally chosen by Muluzi to be the UDF's presidential candidate in the 2004 election. In this respect, the editorial writers surmised that Mutharika would be a mere proxy of Muluzi.

**Table 6.3: Problem definitions in the newspapers' Leadership Frame**

<b>Problem Definition</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Muluzi wants to control Mutharika	BNL	5 (45.4%)	5
	NPL	4 (36.4%)	4
	<i>Chronicle</i>	2 (18.2%)	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11 (100%)</b>	<b>11</b>
Mutharika must avoid Muluzi's mistakes	BNL	3 (37.5%)	3
	NPL	3 (37.5%)	3
	<i>Chronicle</i>	2 (25%)	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8 (100%)</b>	<b>8</b>

Thus, the main concern for newspaper editorials was that the new president would not be able to govern from his own accord. Rather, he could have to take dictates from his party and the former president as Mwase (2004, p.3) noted in the *Chronicle*: "Mutharika's new cabinet includes a good number of ministers from the previous government which shows that Muluzi is still pulling some strings." Another editorial writer noted in the *Nation* (2004a, p4): "We can't help the feeling that Muluzi is manipulating the affairs of government." In the *Malawi News* (2004a, p2.), an editorial writer noted: "The word 'consult' should not mean dependence on Muluzi." Thus, all the newspapers were united in expressing sentiments that the former president was being permitted to manipulate state affairs. This concern was expressed in 11 editorials (See Table 6.3) across all the newspapers under study from the 34 articles contributing to the frame. Linked to the above were concerns that by taking orders from Muluzi, President Mutharika was simply going to repeat the same mistakes which Muluzi had

committed in the course of his presidency. This aspect of the problem definition was repeated nine times across all the newspapers (See Table 6.3 above).

The newspapers cited two main causal interpretations in this frame. First, as it became clear that the new president was following an agenda that was quite unpopular in the ruling UDF, a rift between the new president and the ruling party became evident. The newspapers accused the UDF and former president, Bakili Muluzi, of attempting to undermine the new president and his popular agenda as one editorial writer urged Mutharika: “. . . to avoid making the same mistakes made by the former president whose record of achievement is subject to challenge.” (*Chronicle*, 2004a, p.1). The newspapers advanced this argument 14 times across all newspapers under study in 34 articles (See Table 6.4). Second, the newspapers blamed the former president and his government for being incompetent resulting in the crisis in leadership. This argument was advanced 10 times across all the newspapers in the 34 articles contributing to the frame (See Table 6.4).

**Table 6.4: Causal Interpretations in the newspapers’ Leadership Frame**

<b>Causal Interpretations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Muluzi and the UDF undermining Mutharika	BNL	5 (20.8%)	5
	<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (12.5%)	3
	NPL	6 (25%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14 (58.3%)</b>	<b>12</b>
The Muluzi administration was incompetent	BNL	3 (12.5%)	3
	<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (12.5%)	3
	NPL	4 (16.7%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10 (52.7%)</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>24 (100%)</b>	

There were 34 paragraphs advanced in the Moral Evaluation component of the frame in the newspapers (See Table 6.5). The main thrust was that Mutharika was competent as a president and deserved better support than he was receiving from his

ruling UDF party. There were 13 paragraphs coded across all newspapers under study supporting this argument (See Table 6.5). The new president was praised for appointing civil servants on the strength of their abilities. The new president's economic and development agenda received support from the newspapers. Jika Nkolokosa (2004) noted: ". . . almost everyone has been full of praise for the new president since his inauguration." Steve Nhlane (2004) argued concerning the president's inaugural speech: "He is likely to win hearts and minds of many if he does not follow in the footsteps of his predecessor."

**Table 6.5: Moral Evaluations in the Leadership Frames**

<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Mutharika is competent	BNL	4 (11.4%)	4
	<i>Chronicle</i>	5 (14.3%)	5
	NPL	4 (11.4%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13 (37.1%)</b>	<b>13</b>
The Muluza administration was inept	BNL	3 (8.6%)	3
	<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (8.6%)	3
	NPL	4 (11.4%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10 (28.6%)</b>	<b>10</b>
The UDF must let Mutharika govern his way	BNL	5 (14.3%)	4
	<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (8.6%)	3
	NPL	4 (11.4%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12 (34.3%)</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>35 (100%)</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
Visionary leader	UDF	4 (12.9%)	4
	MCP	3 (9.7%)	3
	PPM	3 (9.7%)	3
	RP	3 (9.7%)	3
	Independent	4 (12.9%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17 (54.8%)</b>	<b>17</b>
God-given and humble leader	UDF	3 (9.7%)	3
Capable leader	UDF	4 (12.9%)	4
	MCP	3 (9.7%)	3
	RP	4 (12.9%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14 (45.2%)</b>	<b>14</b>
		<b>31 (100%)</b>	<b>31</b>

The second aspect of this component reveals the newspapers' evaluation of Muluzi's administration in light of all the things the Mutharika administration was doing right. In this respect, Muluzi and his administration were branded as incompetent and corrupt in 10 paragraphs (See Table 6.5). Those who served in it were reported to have grown rich out of corrupt acts as the *Malawi News* (2004b) argued: "All those people who were in Muluzi's administration are now filthy rich . . . ." Another aspect of the moral evaluations component (12) noted that the UDF ought to let the new president govern the country his own way without applying undue pressure on him (See Table 6.5).

The newspapers' moral evaluation of the new president and his government was closely mirrored in the parliamentary corpus. The parliamentarians were full of praise for the new president while expressing reservations concerning the influence of the UDF on the new president. The MPs from all the parties represented in the National Assembly described President Mutharika as a visionary leader as the independent MP Clement Khembo (2004, p.16) noted: ". . . allow me to congratulate His Excellency the President, Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika for his vision." This description accounted for 17 paragraphs of the 31 coded in the parliamentary corpus for this frame. Another 14 paragraphs described him as a capable leader as Nancy Tembo (2004, p.57) of the MCP noted: "Certainly, he has demonstrated that he is competent and capable". He was also described as a God-given humble leader in three paragraphs as Nthenda (2004, p.8) the UDF MP noted: ". . . Dr. Mutharika is a God given leader." (See Table 6.5).

By way of treatment recommendation in this frame, in fourteen paragraphs, the newspapers called on the president to govern better than his predecessor had done (See

Table 6.6). For example, Rob Jamieson (2004a) urged the new president to undo the damage done by his predecessor and to restore political rights:

Is Malawi on the right track, at long last? I think so, especially if Mutharika reverses the damage that his predecessor has created for us all . . . .

The *Daily Times* (2004a) urged the new president to avoiding the desire to plunder the economy for his personal good as his predecessor had done. The *Weekend Nation* (2004a) urged the new president to rise above partisan interests, and to appoint to his cabinet people who were capable rather than to reward those who helped him during the campaign.

**Table 6.6: Treatment Recommendation in the newspapers' Leadership Frame**

<b>Treatment Recommendations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Mutharika must govern better than the previous	BNL	7 (22.6%)	6
	<i>Chronicle</i>	4 (12.9%)	4
	NPL	3 (9.7%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14 (45.2%)</b>	<b>14</b>
Mutharika must wean himself from Muluzi	BNL	4 (12.9%)	4
	<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (9.7%)	3
	NPL	3 (9.7%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10 (32.3%)</b>	<b>10</b>
Mutharik must strengthen anti-corruption institutions	<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (9.7%)	3
	NPL	4 (12.9%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 (22.6%)</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>31 (100%)</b>	<b>31</b>

In 10 coded paragraphs, the second recommendation from the newspapers was for the president to distance himself from the former president Bakili Muluzi (See Table 6.6). In this respect, Rob Jamieson (2004b) observed in his column in the *Chronicle* that: “Mutharika must de-link himself from the UDF national chair Bakili Muluzi and

the party and cut his own swathe.” It was a process that Nsapato (2004a) observed was already taking place: “It would seem he is severing the umbilical cord . . . with the UDF.” In this respect, the UDF and the former president were cast in the role of the dark alter ego of the new administration which had to be removed for the good of the people.

The last aspect in this component dealt with the question of corruption. The newspapers painted a picture of corruption as rife in the country (See Table 6.6). The president’s economic agenda, no matter how good, could not succeed as long as the corruption tolerated under the previous administration continued to prevail. Consequently, the newspapers not only viewed with approval the president’s fight against corruption, but they urged him to dedicate himself more to that cause and to strengthen anti-corruption institutions. They also asked him to prosecute those accused of corruption as the *Daily Times* (2004b) urged:

We should be grateful to President Bingu wa Mutharika if he were to push these investigations to their logical end and let those who cheated the nation make amends.

Clearly, from initial distrust of the new president, all newspapers including the BNL stable, the NPL stable and the *Chronicle* had developed admiration of the new president by the end of his third month in office. The same was reflected in the Leadership Frame detected from the National Assembly corpus. The perceived antagonism emanating from the UDF and former president Bakili Muluzi against Mutharika only fuelled calls for the new president to distance himself from them.

### **6.3.2 Challenges Frames**

The Challenges Frames in the newspapers corpus closely mirrored the Challenges Frame in the parliamentary corpus. The Challenges Frame in the newspapers corpus

was drawn from 30 articles representing 40% of the 75 articles in the corpus. Due to overlaps, problem definitions and causal interpretations were combined to form one component with 18 coded paragraphs representing 23.4% of the coded paragraphs in this frame. The moral evaluations component consisted of 28 (36.4%) coded paragraphs while the treatment recommendation component consisted of 31 (40.2%) of the 77. As in the Leadership Frame, the newspapers were in general editorial agreement about the challenges facing the nation. This is why all the positions of the newspapers are discussed together.

The parliamentary Challenges Frame was drawn from 26 of the 66 speeches in the corpus representing 40% from which 50 paragraphs were coded. The problem definition component had six coded paragraphs representing 12% of the 50 while the moral evaluation component had 5 (10%) of the 50 coded paragraphs.

In the newspapers corpus, the problem definition was dominated by an analysis that focused on corruption as the main reason for economic decline during the first ten years of the Second Republic under the UDF and Bakili Muluzi. In nine coded paragraphs, the newspapers charged that corruption was endemic in the country and extended corruption to include fraud, nepotism and favouritism accusing the government of former president Bakili Muluzi of practicing all this (See Table 6.7). The writer of an editorial in the *Malawi News* (2004b, p.2) observed:

. . . we applaud the steps so far taken by President Bingu wa Mutharika to stamp out corruption and bring to book anyone who at some point was involved in the unfortunate act.

Of the 18 paragraphs in the problem definition, another nine linked lack of fiscal discipline and incompetent government to corruption as core problems with the outgoing administration of Muluzi (See Table 6.7). The newspapers were more



nuanced pinpointing problem areas such as declining education standards and inefficiency in the civil service which also included lack of fiscal discipline. For example, the *Daily Times* (2004b, p.2) blamed the former government for lack of accountability in its financial dealings: “It would appear that dishonesty was readily rewarded . . .” This accusation was extended to the previous parliament which was described as lacking the will to hold the UDF government accountable (*Malawi News*, 2004c, p.2). The *Daily Times* (2004c, p.2) argued:

Muluzi’s lavish behaviour of throwing out handouts to people who have done no work at all killed the spirit of hardwork that Dr. Kamuzu Banda inculcated in Malawians.

**Table 6.7: Problem Definitions in the Challenges Frames**

<b>Problem Definitions</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Endemic corruption	BNL	4 (22.2%)	4
	<i>Chronicle</i>	2 (11.1%)	2
	NPL	3 (16.7%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9 (50%)</b>	<b>9</b>
Lack of fiscal discipline due to incompetent government	<i>Chronicle</i>	2 (11.1%)	2
	NPL	2 (11.1%)	2
	BNL	3 (16.7%)	3
	<i>Chronicle</i>	2 (11.1%)	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9 (50%)</b>	<b>9</b>
		<b>18 (100%)</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Problem Definitions</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
Deteriorating government services	MCP	3 (12.5%)	3
	MGOE	3 (12.5%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6 (25%)</b>	<b>6</b>
		<b>6 (100%)</b>	<b>6</b>

In this respect, the newspapers observation was in accord with observations made in the National Assembly. All six problem definitions in the National Assembly focused on the problem of deteriorating government services due to a corrupt and incompetent government since the UDF took over in 1994 (See Table 6.7). In the parliamentary

corpus, the MPs accused the former UDF government of letting government services deteriorate including health services as the MCP MP, Zaipa (2004, p.30) observed: “. . . our health services are in shambles . . .” The Republican Party MP, Nkhwazi (2004, p.37) argued that education standards had deteriorated: “Education standards in our country have really gone down.” The MCP MP, Chilunjika (2004) argued: “I think what was poor in the past 10 years was the leader, the government and its leadership (Noise).”

**Table 6.8: Moral Evaluations in the Challenges Frame**

<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
The government must be accountable	BNL	2 (7.1%)	2
The government must be competent	BNL	2 (7.1%)	2
	NPL	2 (7.1%)	2
	<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (10.7%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9 (32%)</b>	<b>9</b>
The government must consult	NPL	3 (10.8%)	3
	BNL	3 (10.8%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6 (21.4%)</b>	<b>6</b>
The nation wants the government to succeed	BNL	2 (7.1%)	2
	NPL	3 (10.9%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5 (17.8%)</b>	<b>5</b>
The government must fight corruption	<i>Chronicle</i>	4 (14.2%)	4
	NPL	4 (14.2%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8 (28.4%)</b>	<b>8</b>
Total		<b>28 (100%)</b>	
<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
Acknowledge Kamuzu/Muluzi's achievements	MCP	3 (60%)	3
	UDF	2 (40%)	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5 (100%)</b>	<b>5</b>

The moral evaluations and treatment recommendations for this frame in both the parliamentary corpus and the newspapers corpus focused on improving the efficiency and accountability of government. Further, both corpora focused on fighting corruption as a treatment recommendation for recovering the economy (See Table 6.8 above).

**Table 6.9: Treatment Recommendations in the Challenges Frame**

<b>Treatment Recommendations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
Investigate corruption	BNL	3 (9.7%)	3
	<i>Chronicle</i>	2 (6.5%)	2
	NPL	2 (6.5%)	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 (22.7%)</b>	<b>7</b>
Parliament must hold government accountable	BNL	3 (9.7%)	3
	NPL	4 (12.9%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 (22.6%)</b>	<b>7</b>
Competent appointments	BNL	3 (9.7%)	3
	NPL	3 (9.7%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6 (19.4%)</b>	<b>6</b>
The govt. must exercise financial prudence	BNL	4 (12.9%)	4
	<i>Chronicle</i>	4 (12.9%)	3
	NPL	3 (9.7%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11 (35.5%)</b>	<b>11</b>
		<b>31(100%)</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Treatment Recommendations</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speech</b>
Commercial farming and farm inputs subsidies	MCP	3 (7.7%)	3
	PPM	4 (10.3%)	4
	RP	3 (7.7%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10 (25.7%)</b>	<b>10</b>
Fiscal discipline & improve economic management	Independent	4 (10.3%)	4
	MCP	3 (7.7%)	3
	MGOE	4 (10.3%)	3
	PPM	3 (7.7%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14 (36%)</b>	<b>14</b>
Fight against corruption	Independent	5 (12.8%)	4
	PPM	3 (7.7%)	3
	MGOE	3 (7.7%)	3
	RP	4 (10.3%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15 (38.5%)</b>	<b>14</b>
		<b>39 (100%)</b>	<b>38</b>

In the newspapers corpus, of the 28 coded paragraphs coded to the moral evaluation component, nine focused on improving the competence of government and twenty focused on increasing accountability in government. Eight focused on fighting corruption.

There were 31 and 39 coded paragraphs in the newspapers and parliamentary Challenges Frames respectively. In the parliamentary frame, 14 paragraphs focused on the need for fiscal discipline. Fifteen paragraphs focused on fighting corruption as Justin Malewezi (2004a, p.8), former Vice-President under Muluzi, who was now an MP argued: “We have to arrest this corruption which has cost us K17 billion kwacha, a third of the national budget.” Other recommendations were more practical with calls for improvement in economic management, commercial farming and provision of farm inputs subsidies and rural microcredit schemes (See Table 6.9).

### **6.3.3 Discussion**

This section will examine the factors affecting the emergence of the frames exposed above. In the case of the Leadership Frames, multiple factors were at work including news values and metaphors. However, Mutharika’s crafting of his economic agenda for the nation played a huge role in the favourable framing of his leadership abilities among the press and in the National Assembly. The Challenges Frames were also influenced by Mutharika’s resonant economic agenda and news values.

#### **6.3.3.1 News value in the Leadership Frame**

What explains the dominance of the Leadership? A combination of factors rooted in the journalistic news values of continuity, conflict and personalisation served to ensure that the question of leadership remained high on the agenda of the press in the newspapers corpus.

The first reason can be located in continuity as a news value. By this news value, according to Galtung & Ruge (1965) a story that is already in the news gathers a kind of inertia. This is partly because the media organizations are already in place to report the story, and partly because previous reportage may have made the story more accessible

to the public (making it less ambiguous) (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). As Manda (2004) and Neale (2004) noted, Bingu wa Mutharika, as a presidential candidate for the UDF had received enormous coverage. However, that coverage tended to be negative. This was a fact which members of the press acknowledged in the post-election period. For example, Alfred Ntonga, the editor of the *Nation*, in an interview with Manda (2004) argued that the press gave Mutharika negative coverage because they wanted to find out who the real Mutharika was. The fact that former President Bakili Muluzi tended to dominate the UDF campaign rallies relegating Mutharika to a few minutes on the microphone only exacerbated the belief that Mutharika was a proxy. After the election, the press continued to focus its spotlight on Mutharika in an attempt to ascertain whether or not Mutharika was really a lackey of the former president.

Further, the evident rift between Mutharika, on the one hand, and Muluzi and the UDF, on the other, ensured that the press stayed focused on the issue of leadership. The drama surrounding Mutharika's continued exposure of the Muluzi administration's fiscal indiscipline ensured continued coverage of both Mutharika and Muluzi. This rift between Mutharika and Muluzi was couched in terms of a leadership wrangle in which the former president was portrayed as attempting to impose his will on the new president. Thus, even as Mutharika was receiving positive assessments from the press regarding his stance against corruption the same newspapers were warning that Muluzi was: "the fly in the ointment", and the "spanner in the works" for Mutharika which would limit his potential to succeed (Mwase, 2004, p.3).

The second reason for the emergence of the Leadership Frame as a dominant frame can be traced to Mutharika's crafting of his post-elections agenda and how the press presented this as a demonstration of Mutharika's abilities. Further, Muluzi's inability to deal with corruption and the ailing economy when he was president was also presented

as a demonstration of his limited abilities. By design or by accident, the new president's definition of his post-election agenda so resonated with the press and the parliament that any other frame (favourable or unfavourable towards the new government) was immediately subordinated to the Leadership Frame. Mutharika's stated agenda was generally presented as having long term positive effects for the nation. This ensured that the press, in its continuing coverage of Mutharika, would revise its assessment of the new president from negative coverage to more positive coverage.

A news story becomes of interest when a person – one well known to the audience - is involved, and thus a focal point is created where interest and identification can be pinned. Bennett (2008) claims that even though the more complicated aspects of a story (such as corruption and leadership wrangles) are more "important", journalists tend to focus on the people involved in the issue instead. Accordingly, personalising news stories enables an issue to be easily dramatised and made interesting in the scope of a short story

The multifaceted nature of the issues surrounding Mutharika's reform agenda were easily encapsulated in the context of leadership. In short, Muluzi and his administration had proven to be incapable of dealing with the country's economic problems while Mutharika and his team were presented as the "the bright new lights of the Mutharika administration . . ." who were "adamant in their exposure of the financial mismanagement of the previous government." (*Daily Times*, 2004c, p.2). Thus, as Steve Nhlane (2004) argued concerning Mutharika: "He is likely to win hearts and minds of many if he does not follow in the footsteps of his predecessor (Muluzi)." In the end, the dramatic leadership wrangle served the purpose of contrasting the Muluzi administration against the incoming Mutharika administration. Muluzi was presented as

not only unable to deal with the complex issues facing the nation but as standing in the way of the Mutharika administration.

The third reason behind the rise of the Leadership Frame can be located beyond continuity and personalisation to conflict which is arguably a more superficial and easier packaging of the news than continuity and personalisation. Mutharika's packaging of his post-elections agenda put him on a collision course with his party, in general, and Muluzi, in particular, who remained the leader of the UDF. The arrest of high ranking UDF ex-cabinet ministers and members on corruption charges exposed the ideological fissures within the UDF. The conflict between Mutharika and his party was defined as a struggle between the national interest and the party interest as the writer of an editorial in the *Weekend Nation* (2004b, p.4) observed:

Given there are two forces on him, namely the general public who want him to serve the larger good, and his party which might always be on his neck to pressure him to serve its interest and thereby mislead him, Bingu must know one thing: that history will judge him for decisions that serve non-partisan interests.

Thus, as the new president's attempt to implement his own economic and political agenda for the country unfolded, his isolation from his own party became more and more apparent. It was made all the more interesting as it revealed the serious fissures in the ruling UDF. Indeed, before the year was over, Mutharika had left the UDF to form his own party.

Such a state of affairs proved fertile for the journalistic framing of a conflict between the previous president and the new president. This was conflict at the highest level of politics in Malawi. As such, according to the news values that guide news selection (Eilders 2006, p.8), this disagreement between Mutharika and his party boss

could only have received salience and drawn much attention from the press. The Malawian press fell into the trap of oversimplification of conflict by classifying this conflict into the two extremes of good or bad, inferior or superior.

### **6.3.3.2 Metaphors as Framing Tools in the Leadership Frame**

Apart from earning him political capital with the press, Mutharika's crafting of his economic agenda also earned him capital with opposition MPs. His favourable standing with the National Assembly was evident among all MPs from all political parties who contributed to the debate in the National Assembly. This is evident in the nature of the Leadership Frame which emerged from the parliamentary corpus. It did not have problem definitions or causal attributions. It was simply suffused with positive moral evaluations of the new president. This description of the new president drew on culturally resonant metaphors and exemplar which portrayed Mutharika as the right leader at a time of economic crisis.

The leading metaphor or exemplar was of Mutharika as a visionary. There were seventeen coded instances in sixteen different speeches in which he was described as a visionary by MPs from across the political parties represented in the National Assembly (See Table 6.5). Malenga (2004, p.1) noted: “. . . I would like to applaud the State President for his visionary economic leadership . . .” Chathunya (2004, p.39) also argued: “. . . we don't need a Barometer to measure Dr Bingu Wa Mutharika, he is a man of vision, fountain of Hope . . .”

Berson, Shamir, Avolio & Popper (2001, p.53-54) argue that exemplary or outstanding leaders are typically described by their followers as being inspirational and visionary and that charismatic/transformational leadership appears to take vision as a given in terms of being a component leader that motivates people to higher levels of



effort and performance. Further, visions can distinguish the new direction to be pursued from the old and mobilize people to action for the future (Gailbraith & Lawler, 1993). It is, therefore, not surprising that in attempting to close the chapter on the UDF reign since 1994, which was now generally seen as a disaster, the MPs lauded Mutharika's agenda as appropriate for Malawi while ascribing vision and foresight to him.

In contrast, the former administration of President Bakili Muluzi was labelled as arrogant and lacking in vision. For example, regarding the last five years of UDF rule, Aleke Banda (2004, p.26) observed: "We became arrogant, we were not serious. We forgot that we were here to serve the people of Malawi. We lost our vision." The MCP MP, George Zulu (2004) noted of the UDF administration under Muluzi: "Arrogant, stubborn, deaf and without vision is the only way I can describe the last UDF administration (Noise!)"

Another metaphor or exemplar was of Mutharika as a God-given leader. As noted above, UDF MPs portrayed him as such three times on the National Assembly floor as Nthenda (2004, p.8) noted: "Malawians are appreciating that Dr. Mutharika is a God given leader for this country. (Applause)"

The divine right to leadership conferred by this metaphor served the purpose of reassuring Malawians that Mutharika would rule within the acceptable norms of a religious people. Considering the contested nature of his presidency, this claim to divine appointment served the purpose of not only legitimating a president who came to power with only 35.1% of the votes cast, but also validating whatever policies he intended to put into effect. The fact that Mutharika was proving popular, at least with the press and the National Assembly, meant that this claim to God-given leadership went unchallenged.

Moral evaluations which drew on biblical exemplar and metaphor were also applied when describing the abilities of the former UDF administration led by Bakili Muluzi. For example, John Tembo (2004), the president of the MCP noted on the National Assembly floor:

Mr. Second Deputy Speaker, Sir, forgive me for making this statement.

But sometimes I shudder to imagine what Malawi would be like if the last administration was the first administration in 1964. It would be like the biblical sandy foundation.

This kind of narrative, which placed divine appointment on Mutharika's presidency, was not limited to the National Assembly. Even the press used that narrative in approval of the new president's economic agenda. The new president was dubbed, with reference to the Bible, as "the stone which the builders rejected but later became a corner stone." (Nsapato, 2004a, p.4). This was a clear reference to the press and civil society's initial negative attitude towards Mutharika.

Another reason why Mutharika, as a politician, was so acceptable to the opposition, especially the MCP, was his own stated willingness to give credit to the late former president, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda. It was, by design or default, a clever political move because it created goodwill for Mutharika among MCP MPs. Most of these MCP MPs came from the Central Region where the late dictator was still deeply respected. The MCP MPs credited Mutharika with fairness which Nancy Tembo (2004, p.55) called "Umunthu". The metaphor or exemplar of "Umunthu" is the local variation of the general concept of "Ubuntu" prevalent in Southern Africa. The general concept is the basis of African communal cultural life. According to Nussbaum (2003, p.2), it expresses:

. . . our interconnectedness, our common humanity and the responsibility to each other that deeply flows from our deeply felt connection . . . . and capacity in African culture to express companion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining community with justice and mutual caring.

By this concept of “Umunthu”, Nancy Tembo, bestowed on Mutharika the complete attributes of human goodness that identified him not only with the larger community he would govern. Obviously, one of the reasons of using this concept may have been to demonstrate what may have been a perception of the MCP that failure by the UDF to credit the late Dr. Banda with some modicum of success was uncultured and unfair. In short, the National Assembly looked forward to better leadership rooted in vision, divine guidance and a concern for others.

#### **6.3.3.3 Defining Election Mandates and its Effect on the Challenges Frames**

The frame was similar to the Consequences Frame in the 1999 case study. However, there was one major difference between the two. The Consequences Frame of 1999 tended to look forward without any hope of remedies for the economic woes the country was facing. On the other hand, the Challenges Frames of 2004 tended to outline the economic problems facing the nation while expressing hope in the new president’s ability to solve these problems. This hope was, of course, based on the new president’s stated agenda.

The Challenges Frame’s problem definition was particularly framed to resonate with ordinary working Malawians in the urban areas. It drew attentions to basic issues affecting citizens’ ordinary life such as the loss of public finances through corruption, fiscal indiscipline across all levels of government, high taxes and incompetent

government. All these are issues which the ordinary citizens could relate to. By framing the problem definition in this manner, the newspapers' editorial writers were able to ". . . put a human face and emotional angle . . ." to the challenges facing the nation as Semetko and Valkenburg, (2000, p.95) argue regarding framing issues from a human interest point of view.

While the problem definition was intended to resonate with the citizens, it could also have elicited the powerful action of influencing ". . . a rational decision or judgment to carefully evaluate organizational responsibility . . ." as Cho and Gower (2006, p.5) argued. The use of such human interest attributes to frame the problem definition leads to a more negative attitude towards the crisis and usually leads to negative attitudes towards the perceived causal agents of the problem (Cho and Gower, 2006). In this respect, such a strongly resonant problem definition led to sharply focused causal attributions that placed blame for Malawi's economic woes on former president Bakili Muluzi's and his government's ". . . lax and negligent . . ." (*Daily Times*, 2004d, p.2) fiscal policies, permitting cabinet ministers and senior civil servants to ". . . indulge in rampant corruption . . ." (*Daily Times*, 2004e, p.2) and a weak parliament that simply ". . . rubber stamped . . ." Muluzi's unsound fiscal programmes.

Clearly, these challenges were framed in the context of the economic consequences of many years of fiscal indiscipline and poor economic management. According to Neuman, Just, & Crigler (1992) to cover an event in this manner draws attention to the widespread impact of the issue on society in general and the individual. This, in turn, raises the importance of the issue, which is why the economic consequences angle is widely used in the media. By design or accident, Mutharika's crafting of the challenges facing the nation and their origins and the press's framing of these challenges gave rise

to the Challenges Frame and its attendant condemnation of the previous regime and hope for the future in the new president's supposed abilities to deal with these issues.

#### **6.3.4 Summary**

In the absence of partisan pressure on the press, the frames in the newspapers were mainly shaped by the universal news values that influence press coverage. The continuity of covering a president whose campaign period had been blighted by negative coverage presented the press with an opportunity to assess Mutharika, not just as a presidential candidate, but also as president. In this respect, reflecting the lack of partisan pressure on the press, the editorial writers were able to progressively re-assess the president from negative framing to positive. Further, the obvious conflict between Mutharika and his party provided a conflict angle which usually ensures coverage in the press. In addition, it was easy to encapsulate the complex issues surrounding Mutharika's economic agenda and his conflict with his party into a discussion of the person of the new president and his party boss, Bakili Muluzi.

Mutharika's crafting of his economic agenda so resonated with the press and the National Assembly that he was able to draw positive moral assessments. A powerful framing tool in the National Assembly was the dependency on biblical metaphor and culturally resonant exemplar to positively describe Mutharika's administration and to negatively describe the former administration led by Bakili Muluzi. Mutharika's economic agenda drew positive framing, as can be noted in the Challenges Frames, because it focused on the human interest aspect of such challenges to the nation. In this respect, the new president attributed all these challenges to an incompetent and corrupt previous administration. Consequently, the negative framing aimed at the UDF and

former president Bakili Muluzi were simply a logical outcome of the causal attribution of these challenges.

## **6.4 Other Frames**

The Electoral Process Frame was unique to the newspapers corpus just as the Rejected Government Frame was unique to the parliamentary corpus. The Electoral Process Frame was mainly a complaint against the MEC's management of the election which brought President Mutharika to power. In this respect, this frame was similar to the Electoral Process Frame in the 1999 case study. However, the complaints in the 2004 frame were not as strident as in the 1999 case study.

Due to overlaps, the Electoral Process Frame combined the problem descriptions and causal attributions to form one combined component. Further, the moral evaluations and the solutions were combined into one component as well. The combined Problem Definition and Causal Interpretation component consisted of 18 paragraphs out of the 36 coded to this frame. The combined Moral Evaluation/Treatment Recommendation component had 18 of these 36 paragraphs. The frame was drawn from 11 articles out of the 69 in the corpus (See Table 6.2).

The Failed Government Frame consisted of coded paragraphs in this corpus that advanced reasons for the reduction of the UDF's MPs in the National Assembly. The frame was mainly advanced by the new majority party, the MCP, who argued that the electorate had basically rejected the UDF government by effectively reducing its MPs in parliamentary. Further, the frame was intended to impeach the legitimacy of President Mutharika's authority because he had been carried into office by just 35.1% of the votes cast in the 2004 election.

The frame had 42 paragraphs coded to it drawn from 24 of the 65 speeches in this corpus. It had two components. Due to overlaps in the problem definitions and causal attributions, one component combining all of these was formed. There were no treatment recommendations as the frame, by its very nature, did not lend itself amenable for treatment recommendations. Of the 42 paragraphs in the frame, 10 were coded to the combined problem definition/causal interpretation component. The remaining 22 were coded to the moral evaluation component (See Table 6.2). This is to be expected as the frame was mainly accusatory and condemnatory against the previous UDF government.

#### **6.4.1 Electoral Process Frame**

The MEC's mismanagement of the elections was the central narrative in this component. The newspapers charged that the MEC had again, as in 1999, mismanaged the election. There were 11 paragraphs coded to this aspect of the problem definition/causal interpretation (See Table 6.10). In fact, the newspapers accused the MEC of absolute incompetence. The *Malawi News* (2004d, p.2) noted disparagingly of the MEC: “. . . it was as if all along the Electoral Commission did not know about the polls.” The newspapers accused the MEC of not only mismanaging the elections but also complicity in defrauding the opposition.

The ‘first past the post’ issue was also a significant part of the narrative on the problem in this frame. There were seven paragraphs coded to this aspect of the problem definition (See Table 6.10). In short, the Constitution and the conduct of the elections were blamed for the emergence of a minority government in the country. McDonald Bamusi (2004, p.6) argued that Malawi was an “exceptional case where the minority rule the majority” among nations which practice democracy.

This problem inherent in the Constitution was portrayed as responsible for the emergence of a president elected by a minority of the voters. The problem was seen as a mockery to democratic principles. In this respect, Malawi was portrayed as unique among nations that practice democracy.

**Table 6.10: Problem Definitions and Causal Interpretations in the Electoral Process Frame**

<b>Prob. Definitions/Causal Interp.</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Articles</b>
The MEC mismanaged the elections	BNL	4 (22.2%)	4
	<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (16.7%)	3
	NPL	4 (22.2%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11 (61.1%)</b>	<b>11</b>
'First past the post' is the problem	BNL	3 (16.7%)	3
	NPL	4 (22.2%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 (38.9%)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>18 (100%)</b>	<b>18</b>

As noted in the preceding discussion, the main thrust of this frame was the incompetence of the MEC leading to the mismanagement of the elections. The moral evaluations in the frame confirmed this labelling of the MEC as both incompetent and unethical in 11 coded paragraphs in the 11 speeches making up this frame (See Table 6.11). The writer of the *Backbencher* column in the *Weekend Nation* (2004) declared:

I'm not competent to determine if the Electoral Commission acted within the law but what I can determine for sure is that I have permanently lost confidence in it. Can they all go home, please?

In the same spirit, Nhlane (2004, p.8) declared:

It will be a big relief to the nation if the commission resigned out of its own volition for the mess it has caused. The only reason for its existence is to account for its mess.

Apart from calling for the removal of the MEC, the newspapers also called for a review of the constitution and the laws governing elections in seven coded paragraphs



in the 11 speeches (See Table 6.11). This was in view of the ‘first past the post problem’ and the incompetence of the MEC. In particular reference to the ‘first past the post problem’, the *Weekend Nation* (2004c, p.4) made the observation that:

. . . if the minority continue to rule the nation in the name of democracy,  
the nation would be on the way to dictatorship.

**Table 6.11: Moral Eval/Treatment Recommendation in Electoral Process Frame**

<b>Moral Eval/Treatment Rec.</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Speeches</b>
The electoral process must be reviewed	BNL	3 (16.7%)	3
	NPL	4 (22.2%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 (38.9%)</b>	<b>7</b>
The MEC is incompetent & unethical and it must be replaced	BNL	5 (27.8%)	5
	<i>Chronicle</i>	3 (16.7%)	3
	NPL	3 (16.7%)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11 (61.2%)</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>18 (100%)</b>	<b>18</b>

#### **6.4.2 Failed Government**

This frame was very negative towards the previous UDF government led by Bakili Muluzi. This frame had a combined problem definition/causal interpretation components. It was advanced by the opposition parliamentarians led by the MCP. Its appearance was facilitated by the emergence of the MCP as the largest single party in parliament which gave it quite some leverage in parliamentary debate. This state of affairs was further aided by the weakened position of the UDF in the National Assembly. Further, since the frame dealt with the previous government’s running of the country, there were no treatment recommendations emerging from the corpus. In addition, President Mutharika’s sustained attack on corruption and revelations of fiscal

indiscipline in the previous government meant that the UDF MPs could no longer deny that their previous government was fiscally incompetent, if not, altogether corrupt.

The problem definition of this frame was combined with the causal interpretation due to overlaps (See Table 6.12). The combined component had 10 coded paragraphs representing 23.8% of the coded paragraphs in this frame drawn from 24 speeches.

**Table 6.12: Problem definitions and Causal interpretations in the Failed Government Frame**

<b>Problem Def./Causal Interp.</b>	<b>Parties</b>	<b>Paragraphs (n=10)</b>	<b>Out of 24 speeches</b>
Last government had no vision & was inefficient	MCP	3 (30%)	3
	PPM	4 (40%)	4
	RP	3 (30%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>10 (100%)</b>	<b>10</b>

The problem definition simply charged that the previous government lacked vision in the running of the country. This, in turn, resulted in an inefficient government as the MCP and the other opposition parties charged (See Table 6.12). John Tembo (2004, p.11), the MCP's President and Leader of the Opposition, remarked: "The problem was there was no vision at all." As a result of this lack of vision, the UDF was deemed to have failed as projects did not effectively meet the people's needs.

The central narrative in the moral evaluation component consisted of a series of disparaging assessments on the UDF government for the past 10 years. These paragraphs basically portrayed the previous UDF as inefficient. There were 14 paragraphs coded to this aspect of the frame (See Table 6.13). Some of the assessment drew directly from those discussed in the Problem Definition above.

Such assessments included remarks on the previous government's lack of efficiency and accountability in government business linking such lack of accountability

to arrogance. There were 13 such paragraphs. More notably, the PPM MP, Aleke Banda (2004, p.26) and formerly senior cabinet minister in the UDF government alluded to such inefficiencies, lack of accountability and arrogance: “We squandered the opportunities that were presented to us in 1999. We became arrogant.”

**Table 6.13: Moral Evaluations in the Failed Government Frame**

<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	<b>Parties</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>speeches</b>
The previous govt. was corrupt and arrogant	MCP	6 (18.8%)	6
	RP	3 (9.4%)	3
	PPM	4 (12.5%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13 (40.7%)</b>	<b>13</b>
The previous government was inefficient	MGOE	3 (9.4%)	3
	MCP	4 (12.5%)	4
	RP	3 (9.4%)	3
	Independents	4 (12.5%)	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14 (43.8%)</b>	<b>14</b>
The previous govt. lacked fiscal discipline	MCP	5 (15.6%)	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>32 (100%)</b>	<b>27</b>

Further, the MCP MPs in particular, argued that the only reason why there was a semblance of order in the country in 2004 was because of the foundation the MCP had laid between 1964 and 1994. MCP MP, L.J.C. Chilunjika (2004, p. 9), argued: “I think what was poor in the past 10 years was the leader, the government and its leadership.”

#### **6.4.3 Discussion**

This section discusses the factors which led to the emergence of the Electoral Processes Frame in the newspapers’ corpus and the Failed Government Frame in the parliamentary corpus. As with the overarching frames, news values played a major hand in the emergency of the Electoral Process Frame, and in the parliamentary Failed

Government Frame, Mutharika's crafting of his economic agenda for the nation was quite influential.

#### **6.4.3.1 The Effects of News Values on the Electoral Processes Frame**

The Electoral Frame in the newspapers corpus arises out of the continuing coverage of the elections. It was natural for the press to make transition from covering the election campaign to covering the conduct of the elections following the generally unsatisfactory manner in which the elections had been managed.

It makes sense that the press continued with its analysis of the elections outcome. In this respect, the emergence of the Electoral Process Frame was greatly dependent on the news value of continuity.

Unfortunately, the Electoral Process Frame found even more momentum in the controversial nature of the outcome and even more so in the controversial management of the election by the MEC. In the end, the post-mortem took longer than it should have taken had the election been well management.

In this respect, the Electoral Process Frame's emergence was supported by two more news values – negativity and conflict. As Galtung and Ruge (1965) argued bad news is more newsworthy than good news and the drama of conflict has the same effect. With respect to conflict and negativity, the resulting legal wrangling regarding the legitimacy of Mutharika's presidency and the brief riots (resulting in loss of life including that of an 11 years old girl) following the announcement ensured that the management of the electoral process remained firmly in the press's sights.

#### **6.4.3.2 Defining Election Mandates and its Effect on the Failed Government Frame**

Political actors recognize that the explanations offered for the outcome have an important impact on the victorious party's ability to convince the public that it has received a mandate, thus allowing it to pursue its policy agenda more successfully (Gold, 1992; Hale, 1993; King & Schudson, 1995). It is unclear whether or not Mutharika deliberately set out to define his election mandate the way he did. However, his crafting of his mandate was clearly resonant with both the media and the opposition MPs. Thus, the Failed Government Frame in the National Assembly owes its emergence to Mutharika's resonant crafting of his government's agenda.

As noted earlier on, the new president generated political capital for himself through this resonant crafting of his agenda. However, this skilful crafting of his agenda tended to put the previous government and his own party under a negative spotlight. For example, in presenting the challenges facing the nation, the origins of these challenges could not be traced anywhere else but to the previous government. The continued exposure of fiscal indiscipline, economic mismanagement and the perceived regionalism and nepotism in the placement of high ranking civil servants placed the previous administration led by Bakili Muluzi in bad light both in the press and the National Assembly.

However, it was in the National Assembly where negative evaluations about Muluzi and his regime appeared in the Failed Government Frame. The majority of the MPs in the National Assembly were not UDF and did not owe the UDF loyalty. Further, the MCP, who had borne the brunt of UDF contempt in the past ten years, had become the majority party in the National Assembly. This state of affairs created conditions that made it possible for Mutharika's assertion of corruption in the previous government to fall on receptive ground and to flourish leading to negative assessment of the UDF's record.

In addition, several former high ranking cabinet ministers who had left the UDF were in the National Assembly representing other parties or as independents. These included Justin Malewezi, who was Muluzi's Vice-President, and Aleke Banda (proprietor of the NPL newspapers), who had served in several prominent cabinet post under Muluzi. These former cabinet members supported Mutharika's assertion that there had been widespread fiscal indiscipline and economic mismanagement in the past ten years. For example, Malewezi (2004b, p.42) noted that the economy had been plundered through ". . . over-expenditure and extra budgetary activities, waste, fraud and corruption . . ." with the macro-economic situation wrecked by ". . . a large fiscal deficit and an alarmingly huge domestic debt . . . at K54 billion." Aleke Banda (2004, p.26) observed, concerning Muluzi's administration of which he was part: ". . . . We built up catastrophic levels of domestic debt . . . ." Coming directly from high-ranking members of Muluzi's administration, these charges corroborated Mutharika assertions of rampant corruption, fiscal indiscipline and economic mismanagement levelled against the previous government. They also made it difficult for the UDF MPs to reject these charges.

#### **6.4.3.3 Summary**

As with the Leadership Frame in the press, continuity, conflict and negativity played an important role in the emergence of the Electoral Process Frame. With the press corps already attuned to the election, it was just normal to provide a post-mortem for the just ended election. However, the evident discrepancies in the management of the electoral process, the disputed nature of the presidential outcome coupled with the rioting that followed the announcement ensured that the press could continue to cover the issue for an extended period.

The Failed Government Frame was strongly shaped by Mutharika's crafting of his economic agenda. By its very nature, the agenda exposed economic mismanagement, fiscal indiscipline and corruption which had blighted the previous administration. These exposures provided fuel for MPs from other parties to provide negative evaluations of the previous ten years under UDF rule. The UDF's diminished numbers in the National Assembly meant that they could not subvert or de-emphasize this frame while the combined opposition majority ensured the negative moral evaluations against the UDF's previous administration could continue.

## **6.5 2004: An “Aberration” or a “Taste of Things to Come”?**

This section draws instances from the data to illustrate how the press had moved away from reflecting the narrow partisan framing of political parties which was evident in the 1994 and 1999 elections. The government journalism and opposition journalism models which characterised the press in 1994 and 1999 seemed to have given way to journalism in the national interest. The section will also argue that, in some ways, the press' framing of issues contributed to the frames which emerged from the parliamentary corpus.

### **6.5.1 An Unfettered Press**

The 2004 election marked a watershed for electoral reporting among the leading Malawian newspapers. Observers of the elections praised the newspapers for mediating the election in a manner that was balanced as opposed to the biased coverage of the MBC. Even though most election observers noted a general negative thrust against the UDF presidential candidate and eventual winner, Bingu wa Mutharika, they praised the newspapers for being fair, critical and analytical in covering the position of each

contesting party (See Commonwealth Observer Group, 2004, p.40; Rakner and Svasand, 2006, p.7; Khembo & Mcheka, 2004, p.45)

This assessment by the election observers was something media scholars of the 2004 election noted as well. Neale (2004, p.184) noted that even though the main newspapers tended to be negative against Bingu wa Mutharika and the UDF, they were reasonably fair to all parties and presidential candidates. Manda (2004, p.174) noted that newspapers “covered the election of 2004 in the interest of the Malawian people.” Manda also noted that the UDF and Mutharika received more negative coverage than the other parties even though it was unlikely to have negatively affected the party’s chances.

Going into the post-election period, could readers of the newspapers understudy expect the same fair coverage? This study has noted that the newspapers framing of Mutharika and his government was generally negative as the nation entered the post-election period. A general examination of the Leadership Frame reveals how the newspapers progressively revised the negative coverage to positive assessment while vilifying the UDF for attempting to influence the president. The Challenges Frame continued this negative tone against the UDF, branding outgoing president Muluzi and his administration as incompetent and corrupt compared to the new president who was cleaning up things.

### **6.5.2 Influence on Parliamentary Frames**

Unlike in the 1999 and 1994 case studies in which the parliamentary or political discourse influenced newspapers frames, the 2004 case study established a reverse trend. There is evidence suggesting that the MPs may have taken a cue from the newspapers commentary.



For example, one of the main strands in the Moral Evaluation component of the Leadership Frame in the parliamentary corpus is a declaration that Mutharika was a competent leader (See Table 6.5). The first mention of Mutharika's competence appeared in an editorial in the *Weekend Nation* (2004c, p.2) on 26 June in which the writer noted that: "Mutharika is proving to be a competent leader who has the interests of the Malawian people at heart." (p.2). In the National Assembly, the first mention of this aspect was by the Leader of Government Business in the House, Dr. Ken Lipenga (2004, p.50), on 31 August when he quoted this editorial on the National Assembly floor verbatim as evidence of the news media's endorsement of the new president. Following this, MPs on both sides of the aisle described Mutharika as competent and capable six times (See Table 6.5).

Another example of the news media taking first instance in framing an issue has to do with the issue of corruption (See Table 6.6). On 16 June 2004, Khunga (2004, p.6) argued in his column:

. . . corruption is rife in the country. Even the civil service have taken to this practice. The UDF did nothing to put an end to this evil practice. (p. 2)

On 2 September, in the National Assembly, the spokesman of the PPM, Mark Katsonga Phiri (2004, p.51), in his response to President Mutharika's opening address quoted this editorial verbatim. This was the first mention of the endemic nature of corruption in the civil service and how the UDF-led government had failed to stop it in the past ten years (See Table 6.7). While they were able to influence parliament in this way, the newspapers appeared unprepared to take any cues from parliament.

### **6.5.3 Journalism in the National Interest**

Change in ownership at the BNL newspapers and change in the proprietor's political alignment at the NPL newspapers and the *Chronicle* prepared conditions for an unshackled press commentary on the state of politics in Malawi. These conditions were not created by accident. The worsening economic conditions meant that the UDF would no longer claim to have improved the lot of the Malawian people (See Muula and Chanika, 2004 for a fuller discussion). Chinsinga (2003) observed that the undemocratic manner with which Mutharika came to lead the UDF also created dissatisfaction leading to an exodus that included the NPL newspapers owner, Aleke Banda, and former Vice-President Justin Malewezi. With Banda's departure the UDF lost the support of the NPL stable in the newspapers arena.

Further, the violent manner with which the UDF had conducted itself from 1998 to the 2004 election turned many civil society activists, including Robert Jamieson, against it. This also meant that the UDF lost the support of the *Chronicle*. In addition, the predatory nature of the state gave courageous civil society, especially the Church, the opportunity to articulate the undemocratic manner with which the UDF was running the country. In short, there was a re-alignment of relations between owners, the press, and sections of civil society. This meant that civil society which usually finds itself shut out from access to the media (Waisbord, 2009) suddenly found that the press had opened up as a result of ownership changes and re-alignments and that the press was now fertile ground for the civil society cause.

All this meant that the dichotomised nature of debating political issues facing Malawi was no longer possible. Any media house attempting to continue along that path did that at the risk of appearing shallow and irrelevant. Alfred Ntonga, the editor of the *Nation* noted regarding the press's negative coverage of the UDF and Mutharika:

Admittedly, we were critical to Bingu . . . because we wanted to find out who exactly the man, who had been imposed on the UDF and was being marketed as a prudent economist, was. The country was in a mess and the UDF was at the helm (Manda, 2004, p.75).

In short, a more critical and analytical approach to press reportage became possible, and was necessary. The political parties could no longer take the newspapers for granted. As Khaila and Mthinda (2006) note the mood of the people had changed as political and cultural life was largely defined by an attempt to break with the UDF and Bakili Muluzi (See also Muula and Chanika, 2004).

The benefits for the newspaper consuming citizens are evident from the positive assessment of the scholars and election observers cited above. As Yadgar (2010, p.162) argues a wide perspective is necessary in order to trace and determine the implications of critical moments and events in a nation's political culture. Starting from a negative critique of the new administration, the press were able to use their freedom to widen their view of the nation beyond the narrow partisan scope and political binaries observed in the 1994 and 1999 case studies. This enabled the press to progressively assess and re-assess Mutharika and his administration in 2004 from a negative coverage to a positive one.

The existence of a civil society and of democratic rule is dependent upon the people's ability to engage in a genuine discussion in a vital public sphere (Koopmans, 2004, p.369). At the very heart of a genuinely vital public sphere is the news media as mediators. The news media are supposed to provide free access to different and competing views, disseminate them in the free market of ideas, and be at the service of political deliberation. As revealed by the critical-analytical nature of the emerging newspaper frames in chapter six, the press in Malawi came close to providing that

service to newspapers consumers. As *Daily Times* journalist Richard Chide put it: “Some may say 2004 was an aberration, but it may really be a taste of things to come if the owners decide to let us do our job.” (Mchakulu, 2004, p.7).

#### **6.5.4 Summary**

Even though between 1999 and 2004, the state had turned violent and predatory against its own citizens including the press, changes in ownership and owners political alignment presented journalists at the newspapers under study an opportunity to adopt commentary on political issues, if not in the national interest, then at least in a way that revealed critical assessment and aversion to the previous regime. Even though the newspapers rhetoric reflected that of the opposition in parliament, the fact that newspapers such as the NPL newspapers took a hard line in their assessment of the previous UDF regime which they had supported in two post election periods in 1994 and 1999 reveals that the influence of the owner on the newspapers’ framing had relaxed.

This can also be noted regarding the BNL newspapers which concentrated on providing a critical and analytical commentary on Mutharika’s agenda. It is inconceivable, drawing from the evidence in chapter four and chapter five, that MCP-owned BNL newspapers could have provided such a favourable commentary for a UDF president and his government as they did with Mutharika in 2004. The change of ownership at the BNL newspapers and the political re-alignment of ownership at the NPL stable may have had a strong hand in this. Even though the similar frame sets emerged from both the parliamentary and newspapers corpora, and even though they were articulated in much the same way, the fact that they appeared universally in all the

newspapers maybe an indication of a lack of partisan pressure on the part of editorial writers.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

The first research question in this study relates to the frames used by both newspapers and parliament to frame the post-elections period in 2004. In this respect, six frames were identified in the newspapers and the parliamentary corpora. These are the Leadership Frame, the Challenges Frame and the Electoral Process Frame in the newspapers corpus. The parliamentary corpus had the Leadership Frame, the Challenges Frame and the Failed Government Frame. The chapter discussed the Leadership Frames and the Challenges Frames together revealing how both corpora reflected the influence of President Mutharika's crafting of his economic agenda and its effects on these frames.

Unlike in the previous two case studies in which newspapers reflected the political binaries existing in the country, this case study revealed a more measured framing of the issues reflected in all the frames. This chapter has also argued that this state of affairs was largely influenced by President Mutharika's crafting of his economic agenda. The agenda resonated strongly with both the press and MPs. In this respect, the new president was able to earn himself political capital which translated into favourable framing in both arenas.

Beyond the new president's crafting of his agenda was the new found freedom of the press. The BNL newspapers' new owners who had no political connections and the NPL newspapers' owner's changed political alignment meant that the press had a chance to frame issues without political influence. In this respect, rather than political pressure, news values proved to be an important tool in crafting the frames that emerged in the newspapers corpus. The use of metaphors and exemplar proved to be an

important framing device in the National Assembly. Further, in both corpora, the narratives in the frames revealed the strong presences of moral evaluations. These can only be traced back to the negative portrayal of the MEC and the UDF in all the frames. Of course, this was as a result of Mutharika's crafting of his agenda which exposed weaknesses in the previous UDF administration led by Muluzi.

The second research question in this study relates to the influence of owners and their political alignment in the construction of frames in the newspapers. In this regard, the chapter has demonstrated that the press in Malawi in the wake of the 2004 elections experienced freedom due to changes in ownership at the BNL newspapers and changes of owner's political alliance at the NPL newspapers. The frames in the newspapers were similar across all the newspapers. This can only be explained by lack of political influence at the BNL newspapers and, at least, opinions different from the UDF at the NPL newspapers. Nevertheless, the support for Mutharika's agenda reflected across all the newspapers reveals that the political parties' lost influence with the newspapers in the 1994 post election period.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Comparisons and Generalisations**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

This chapter attempts to draw comparisons and generalisations across the case studies regarding the frames detected in this study. The chapter will draw on the findings in the preceding three chapters in making these comparisons. Further, the chapter demonstrates the contribution made by the various frame components, in particular the problem definition components and the moral evaluation components in shaping the nature of these frames.

The chapter will also argue that the frames owe much to the partisan nature of political discourse in Malawi especially during the 1994 and 1999 case studies. It will also argue that even though the frames in the 2004 case study were mostly negative in tone, this was mainly due to the general state of the country including a deteriorating economy, the opening up of democratic space and the emergence of several credible political parties who added their opinions to the political discourse.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section will collate the frames detected across all the case studies noting their features. It will also provide a brief discussion of the influence of owners as the case studies evolved. The second section will discuss the influence of the frame components.

#### **7.1 Emergent or Issue-Specific Frames**

The frames identified in this thesis are issue-specific or emergent frames rather than generic frames. As de Vreese (2010, p.188) argues issue-specific frames pertain to specific topics or news events, whereas generic frames are broadly applicable to a range

of different news topics, some even over time and potentially, in different cultural contexts. In total, the study revealed 17 frames across the case studies (See Table 7.1). These frames dealt with eight different types of issues which included issues of national unity, national leadership, governance, economic consequences and the challenges emerging out of certain electoral outcomes, and the management of electoral processes. There was an almost even distribution of the frames between the parliamentary corpora and the newspapers' corpora across all studies. The 1994 and the 2004 case studies had three frames each in the newspapers and the parliamentary corpus. The 1999 case study had three frames in the newspapers' corpus and two in the parliamentary corpus.

Issue-specific or emergent frames permitted this study to focus specifically on the contextual factors affecting the selection, organisation and elaboration of the issues in Malawi's national political discourse. However, as de Vreese, Peter, and Semetko (2001, p.108) point out, issue specific frames cause considerable difficulties in comparison, generalisation and use as a base of theory building. In this respect, the generalisations emerging from the findings in this study can be achieved through categorising the frames emergent across the case studies and attempting to understand the conditions that led to the emergence of these frames. Consequently, the emergent frames can be grouped into three. In the process of discussing these groups of frames, the chapter will present the generalisations arising out of the case studies presented in the foregoing chapters of this thesis.

### **7.1.1 Overarching Frames: A Note on Converging Frames**

Table 7.1 presents all the frames detected in this study across all the case studies and all corpora. The first group of frames can be categorised as overarching frames. Except for the 1999 case study, the case studies tended to feature overarching frames that were



detected in both the newspapers corpus and the parliamentary corpus. For example, the 1994 case study had Unity Frames and the Governance Frames which appeared in both the newspapers' corpus and the parliamentary corpus. The 2004 case study had the Challenges Frames which appeared in the newspapers corpus and the parliamentary corpus (See Table 7.1).

Overarching frames reveal the salient issues in the particular case studies in which they appear. For example, the question of national unity was particularly relevant in 1994 because of the regional voting trends manifest in the elections outcome. Emerging from a dictatorial era in which the authorities painted a picture of a united nation, free from ethnic and regional divisions, the outcome of the election was a jarring reality check for Malawians at the inception of the Second Republic. It caused enough concern to warrant discussion in both the newspapers and the National Assembly.

Apart from national unity, the question of governance was salient enough to warrant discussion in both the newspapers and the parliament in 1994. The country was just changing over from a dictatorship to a multiparty system of politics. In this respect, it is only to be expected that a stock taking of the previous regime and the anticipated benefits of a new political dispensation would be discussed in both arenas. The emergence of the Challenges Frames in both the newspapers corpus and the National Assembly corpus in the 2004 case study is a reflection of the economic challenges and their salience to the nation at that time. In this respect, the human interest aspect of the frame served to increase the salience of the issue in both arenas.

A principle or generalisation that emerges out of this group of frames is that some issues are going to be salient enough to command sustained interest from the press and parliament simultaneously. This is especially true when some political parties decide to

**Table 7.1: Collated comparison of emergent frames across case studies**

<b>1994 CASE STUDY</b>		<b>1999 CASE STUDY</b>		<b>2004 CASE STUDY</b>	
<b>NEWSPAPERS</b>	<b>PARLIAMENTARY</b>	<b>NEWSPAPERS</b>	<b>PARLIAMENTARY</b>	<b>NEWSPAPERS</b>	<b>PARLIAMENTARY</b>
Unity	Unity	Unity		Challenges	Challenges
Governance	Governance	Electoral Process	Extended Mandate	Electoral Process	Failed Government
Leadership	Failed Government	Consequences	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership

adopt that issue as a cause for whatever reason and to push it strongly as the MCP/AFORD alliance decided they would do with the question of national unity in 1994.

### **7.1.2 Case Study Specific Frames: A Note on Diverging Frames**

Another principle or generalisation that emerges out of the frames detected is that as elections are held regularly, the post-elections periods will exhibit different concerns and conditions which, in turn, will influence emergent frames. The different concerns and conditions will be either common across different milieu as will be demonstrated in the following section, or they will be specific to particular epochs of the political history of the country.

This is demonstrated by the second group consisting of frames which were specific to particular case studies. For example, the Consequences Frame of 1999 is special to the 1999 newspapers corpus. The Extended Mandated Frame is also special to the 1999 parliamentary corpus (See Table 7.1).

The Extended Mandate Frame emerged out of a political situation that should be considered aberrant to a normal political context. As noted in chapter five, the opposition were boycotting parliament as a protest at what they considered electoral fraud. In this respect, the framing in the parliamentary arena, was rather one sided without the opposition to challenge and present counter frames. In a normal political setting, the opposition would be in parliament challenging such a highly biased frame.

The Consequences Frame is an opposition newspapers driven frame. As noted in chapter five, it simply drew attention to the challenges, real or otherwise, that could arise as a consequence of the UDF's victory in the presidential race. The frame could

only emerge out of partisan newspapers such as BNL newspapers which focussed on the negatives of their political rivals.

### **7.1.3 Recurring Frames**

The next generalisation is a corollary to the above. Given certain conditions and depending on the owners and/or those owners alignment to centres of political power, some frames can recur from time to time. Basically, this principle or generalisation is based on the fact that some conditions are similar across post election milieu. Because of that, some frames which are similar to others across different post election periods will emerge.

The frames discussed in this group are labelled as recurring frames because they tended to appear in more than one case study. The most recurring frame was the Leadership Frame which was detected four times in all the three case studies. The Unity Frame appeared three times in two different case studies. The Electoral Process Frame appeared in the newspapers corpora of the 1999 and 2004 case studies. The last recurring frame is the Failed Government Frame which appeared in the parliamentary corpora of the 1994 and 2004 case studies (See Table 7.1).

The explanations for these recurrences vary from frame to frame and case study to case study. For example, the manifest regional polarisations evident in the 1994 and 1999 case studies can be the real reasons why the Unity Frame appeared in both case studies. The violence which was a feature of the 1999 post election period only ensured that there was an added urgency to it. However, similar conditions existed in the 2004 case study. There was regional polarisation as a result of the citizens voting patterns just as in the 1994 and 1999 case studies. Further, just as in the 1999 case study, the election had been mismanaged and the announcement was followed by rioting in the largest

commercial city of Blantyre for a few hours. However, in the 2004 case study the Unity Frame did not emerge in both corpora.

In this respect, a more credible explanation may be found in the agenda of the political parties and the status of the press. As already noted, in the context of the 1994 case study, it was the agenda of the MCP/AFORD alliance to force the UDF into a government of national unity on the basis of a threat to national unity, real or perceived. Further, the BNL newspapers were essentially mouthpieces of the MCP. In this respect they carried the agenda of the MCP which included hyping up the issue of national unity. In the 1999 case study, the violence accompanying the announcement of the electoral outcome left the press without much choice but to extensively examine Malawi's national cohesion. In 2004, it would appear that all the parties were united in agreeing with Mutharika's post election agenda to deal with corruption, fiscal malfeasance and resurrect the ailing economy. This unity of purpose seemed to overshadow the question of national unity. Besides, any angst left over from the election outcome was expressed by the press through the Electoral Process Frame.

The recurrence of the Leadership Frame is easier to explain than the Unity Frame. In the newspapers corpora, the Leadership Frame first appeared in 1994 and recurred in 2004. Both case studies marked the change over from one president to another. It is, thus, only fair that a close examination of the leadership status in the country could have been encouraged. In both 1994 and 2004, the press tended to look backward at the departing president negatively while looking forward to the new president with hope. The same can be noted for the 2004 Leadership Frame in the National Assembly. The 1999 parliamentary Leadership Frame was nothing more than hero worship on the part of the UDF in the absence of the opposition in parliament. It offers no other significant lesson for political communication in Malawi except to highlight the fact that in

situations where the content of political communication is unchallenged, it may end up being nothing more than hero worship.

The Electoral Process Frame emerged in the 1999 and 2004 case studies in the newspapers corpora. The main reasons why it did not appear in the parliamentary corpus were legal reasons. The opposition, in both case studies, were appealing against the outcome of both elections in the High Court. Thus, they were not permitted to comment on the same on the National Assembly floor. However, considering the institutional partnership of the MCP and the BNL newspapers, the opposition parties were able to put across their views on the issue in the *Daily Times* and the *Malawi News*. In the 2004 case study, the Electoral Process Frame was more sustained and significant because of the press's newfound freedom. Thus, the press was able to be more clinical (and brutal) in its assessment of the MEC and the UDF's role in the mismanagement of the election.

Partisan motives lie behind the emergence of the two Failed Government Frames in the 1994 and 2004 parliamentary corpora. The first was to diminish the achievements of an outgoing administration in favour of a new administration. The second was the promise of better days with the incoming administration. The 1994 frame was advanced by the UDF MPs and it painted a negative picture of the MCP's 31 years in power. However, in 2004 the UDF would suffer the same punish which they meted out on the MCP when the party's ten years of power was negatively assessed in the 2004 post election period.

Frames were really no more or less likely to be recurrent in newspaper versus parliamentary discourses. Newspapers and parliament mirrored each other often, though not always in the frames that characterised their discourses. In 1994, the reason for this may be found in the partisan nature of ownership. The BNL newspapers' articulation of

the Unity Frame, in particular, reflected strongly the MCP/AFORD alliance's articulation in parliament including incessant calls for a government of national unity. On the other hand, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* reflected the UDF's position which was to deny any unity problems or when such problems were acknowledged to apportion the blame to the MCP. In 1999, the answer can definitely be found in the one-sided nature of parliamentary discourse. With the MCP/AFORD alliance boycotting parliament, the UDF were left to craft issues without challenge. In 2004, the ownership at the NPL stable had changed political colours removing the burden of supporting the UDF from the editorial writers. At the BNL newspapers, the change of ownership also removed the burden of supporting the MCP. Thus, even though there were similar frames across the corpora, the lack of support for any particular party in all the three sets of newspapers reveal that the press had acquired a larger degree of freedom compared to 1994 and 1999.

#### **7.1.4 Links to Generic Frames**

The fourth principle to be observed regarding the frames detected in this study is their link to generic frames. As noted earlier in this chapter, the frames discovered in this study are emergent or issue-specific frames. However, as de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko (2001) argue that emergent frames such as these may lead to the discovery of generic frames from the corpus. The study has been able to establish the general framework of generic frames in some of the emergent frames. For example, the Consequences Frame of the 1999 case study emphasized the negative economic consequences to be expected for re-electing the UDF back into power. The Challenges Frames of the 2004 case studies also emphasized the negative economic consequences of the many years of fiscal indiscipline and economic mismanagement while looking forward with hope at

the new administration's economic policy. These frames easily fall within the generic category of the Economic Frame identified by Neuman, Just, & Crigler (1992, p.74-75) which presents issues in terms of the consequences it will have on individuals, groups, institutions, country and region.

Another example of a generic frame present in the general framework of some of the emergent frame was the Conflict Frame which was also identified by Neuman, Just, & Crigler (1992, p.74-75). The Conflict Frame presents issues in terms of conflict among individuals or groups. The Unity Frame of 1999 and the Electoral Process Frames of 1999 and 2004 respectively emerged out of inherent conflict resulting from the outcome of the elections. The Leadership Frame of 2004 also had strong conflict overtones as it focused on the disagreement between the new president and his party president. The violence accompanying the outcome of the 1999 elections ensured a conflict element that drove the framing of the frame. Political conflict was also at the root of the Electoral Process Frames of 1999 and 2004.

The generic Human Impact Frame which was also suggested by Neuman, Just, & Crigler (1992, p.74-75) was also the framework of the Governance Frames 1994. This generic frame is supposed to bring a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an issue. The two emergent frames emphasized human suffering under the late Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda and the MCP and promised observance of human rights and human dignity under the new political dispensation. All of these were expected to positively impact the ordinary citizen.

The generic Morality Frame which was also suggested de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko (2001, p.96) was the general framework for the Failed Government Frames of 1994 and 1999 and all the four Leadership Frames detected in 1994, 1999, and 2004. This generic frame places issues within the context of religious tenets or moral



prescriptions. The Failed Government Frame of 1994 condemned as immoral the oppression of Malawians under the MCP. The Failed Government Frame of 2004 condemned Muluzi's UDF government for failure to deal with corruption, fiscal indiscipline and economic mismanagement as a moral failure. Morality Frame overtones are strong in the Leadership Frames. They ascribe divine appointment on the new presidents. In some cases such as the 1999 parliamentary frame and the 2004 frames, only the moral evaluation components emerged from the corpora.

### **7.1.5 Ownership and Emergent Frames**

The fifth principle deals with the influence of ownership on emergent frames. The study has established the influence (or lack of it) of ownership over the emergent frames in these case studies. Changes in ownership and owners' political alignment accounted for the marked differences in framing observed between the 1994 and 1999 case studies, on the one hand, and the 2004 case studies, on the other. There were other subtle changes from the 1994 case study to the 1999 case study which reflected on changes in ownership's political re-alignment as in the case of the *Chronicle*.

This study is set within the context of a country changing over from an authoritarian system of governance to a more egalitarian one. The multiplicity of political voices and regular elections became the main distinguishing feature between the new system and the old one. In the new system, the press became part of a larger political and economic environment shared by other political players as Sparrow (2006, p.146) argued. Among these players were other media organisations, and politicians. The press in Malawi found itself unable to properly define its role and position within this context due to ownership's links to fractions of political power. As such in 1994 and 1999, the press in Malawi very much reflected the position observed by many

media scholars that journalists learn what sort of news matches or exceeds their bosses' expectations and prepare media content with this in mind (Sparrow, 1999, pp. 107-108; Mano, 2005).

In this respect, the owners of the Malawian press had partisan interests and fostered those interests in the press. The press became extensions of the political parties with whom their owners were associated. Thus, in the 1994 and 1999 case studies, the BNL newspapers and the NPL newspapers reflected the preferred position of the MCP and the UDF respectively due to their connections to these parties. Unlike the BNL newspapers and the NPL newspapers' position, the *Chronicle* was only very loosely connected to the UDF on the basis of shared democratic principles in 1994. Thus, the *Chronicle* provided generally favourable coverage for the UDF government in the 1994 post elections period. However, in the 1999 post elections period, the *Chronicle's* owner, Rob Jamieson, was clearly unhappy with the record of the UDF (Cammack, 2000). The *Chronicle* experienced a re-alignment of the owner's political affiliation which was also reflected in the negative coverage which the *Chronicle* gave the UDF. The 2004 case study marked the highest level of freedom enjoyed by the Malawian press since 1964. The BNL newspapers had new ownership that was not interested in politics. The NPL newspapers' owners had politically re-aligned freeing the newspapers from at least supporting the UDF. The result was a more nuanced critical form of journalism that focused on the national interest than the narrow partisan views of the political parties.

## **7.2 The Influence of Frame Components**

Apart from the above generalisation, a sixth principle that can be drawn from the case studies is the centrality of problem definitions and moral evaluations in Malawian

political communication. In detecting frames in the corpora, this study used Robert Entman's (1993, p.52; 2004, p.5) definition of frames which ascribes four components to a frame. These are Problem Definitions, Causal Interpretations, Moral Evaluations and Treatment Recommendations. Through open coding, coded paragraphs were placed under these various frame components before a central theme was identified which became the frame. The following discussion will examine the key roles played by problem definitions and moral evaluations in Malawian political discourse. However, it is before doing so it is important to note the significance of each frame component.

In the 1994 case study, 76 paragraphs were coded to the Problem Definition components of the editorials corpus while 23 were coded in the parliamentary corpus (See Table 7.4). A Chi Square test revealed a significant difference between the two corpora regarding paragraphs coded to the problem definition components (Chi Square = 16.669, 2df,  $p=0.000$ ). In the same case study, there were 14 paragraphs coded to the Causal Interpretation components of the parliamentary corpus compared to 29 coded to the editorials corpus (See Table 7.4). A Chi Square test revealed a significant difference between the two corpora (Chi Square = 23.872, 2df,  $p=0.000$ ). The Moral Evaluation components also revealed a significant difference between the two corpora. There were 67 paragraphs coded to the parliamentary corpora compared to 61 in the editorials corpus (See Tables 7.4) (Chi Square = 32.403, 3df,  $p=0.000$ ). The Treatment Recommendations components in the editorials corpus had 33 paragraphs compared to 30 paragraphs in the parliamentary corpus (See Table 7.4). The Chi Square test revealed a significant difference (Chi Square = 63, 3df,  $p=0.000$ ).

In the 1999 case study, Causal Interpretation components had 19 paragraphs coded from the parliamentary corpus while the editorials corpus had 26 paragraphs (See Table 7.4). The Chi Square Test revealed a significant difference (Chi Square = 34.873, 3 df,

**Table 7.2: Newspapers frame components across all case studies**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>PD</b>	<b>CI</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>TR</b>	<b>PD/CI</b>	<b>ME/TR</b>	<b>Total</b>
Unity (1994)	43	14	32	33			122
Governance (1994)	15	6	11				32
Leadership (1994)	18	9	18				45
<b>Totals</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>33</b>			<b>199</b>
Unity (1999)	18	3	38				59
Electoral Process (1999)	20	8	9	14			51
Consequences Frame (1999)	16	15	11				42
<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>14</b>			<b>152</b>
Leadership (2004)	21	24	35	31			111
Challenges Frame (2004)	18		28	31			77
Electoral Process (2004)					18	18	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Totals Across Case Studies</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>575</b>

**Table 7.3: Parliamentary frame components across the case studies**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>PD</b>	<b>CI</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>TR</b>	<b>PD/CI</b>	<b>ME/TR</b>	<b>Total</b>
Unity (1994)	9		43	30			82
Governance (1994)	14	14	11				39
Failed Government (1994)			13		17		30
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>		<b>151</b>
Extended Mandate (1999)		14	7				21
Leadership (1999)		5	4				9
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>				<b>30</b>
Leadership (2004)			31				31
Challenges (2004)			5	39	6		50
Failed Government (2004)			32		10		42
<b>Total</b>			<b>68</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>123</b>
<b>Totals Across Case Studies</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>33</b>		<b>304</b>

$p=0.000$ ). In the same case study, there were 11 paragraphs coded to the Moral Evaluation components from the parliamentary corpus while there 58 paragraphs coded from the editorials corpus (See Table 7.4). The Chi Square test revealed a significant difference between the corpora (Chi Square = 69, 4df,  $p=0.000$ ).

In the 2004 case study, the Moral Evaluations component had 63 paragraphs coded from the editorials corpus while there were 63 Moral Evaluation components coded from the parliamentary corpus (See Table 7.4). The Chi Square test revealed a significant difference (Chi Square = 131, 4df,  $p=0.000$ ).

The study has demonstrated the influential role played by problem definitions and moral evaluations in the political discourse and frame construction in Malawi. This was reflected across all case studies in the newspapers corpus. Overall, these two components of a frame were, at least, the most significant in all the case studies in the newspapers corpora (See Table 7.2). In the parliamentary corpora, the Moral Evaluation components dominated the National Assembly discourse (See Table 7.3).

### **7.2.1 Problem Definition/Moral Evaluation Equilibrium**

As Table 7.2 reveals, the 1994 case study newspapers corpus revealed the primacy of the problem definitions in the framing process. In the parliamentary corpus of 1994, the Moral Evaluation components had the highest number of paragraphs coded to them even though each frame had different dominant components. The Moral Evaluations components owe their dominance to the Unity Frame which had 43 of the 67 paragraphs coded to the Moral Evaluation components (See Table 7.3). While problem definitions proved to be dominant in the 1994 newspapers corpus, the moral evaluations dominated the 1999 newspapers corpus (See Table 7.2). However, as can be understood from Table

**Table 7.4: Chi Square Test differences of combined frame components between newspaper editorials and parliamentary speeches**

	<b>Paragraphs of Newspaper Editorials</b>	<b>Paragraphs of Parliamentary Speeches</b>	<b>Differences by Chi Square tests</b>
	<b>1994</b>	<b>1994</b>	
<b>Problem Definitions</b>	76	23	$X^2=16.669$ , 2df, $p=0.000$
<b>Causal Interpretations</b>	29	14	$X^2=23.872$ , 2df, $p=0.000$
<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	61	67	$X^2=32.403$ , 3df, $p=0.000$
<b>Treatment Recommendations</b>	30	33	$X^2=63.000$ , 3df, $p=0.000$
	<b>1999</b>	<b>1999</b>	
<b>Causal Interpretations</b>	26	19	$X^2=34.873$ , 2df, $p=0.000$
<b>Moral Evaluations</b>	58	11	$X^2=69.000$ , 4df, $p=0.000$
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2004</b>	
<b>Moral Evaluation</b>	63	68	$X^2=131.00$ , 4df, $p=0.000$

7.2, this presents a slightly skewed view of the reality. Most of the Moral Evaluation paragraphs were located in the Unity Frame which had 43 of these 76 paragraphs.

Perhaps the reason why the Problem Definition components dominated in the newspapers corpus is Cobb and Coughlin's (1998, p.418) argument that the process of defining a problem is central to the discussion of issues. In an open debate, it is normal to define the problem and locate the causal agents inherent in an issue before providing treatment recommendation. Groups that are able to articulate the problem in a manner that resonates with the majority will find it easier to offer treatment recommendations and to greatly influence the outcome of a debate. With respect to the post-elections editorial coverage, adding their political voice to the definition of the problem would enable newspapers to offer their solutions to the country's problems in addition to the many solutions being offered by various political entities in the country.

As revealed by the parallel nature of frames in both the newspaper and parliamentary corpus in 1994, the issues discussed in the National Assembly also featured highly in the newspapers. An examination of frame presenters discussed in chapters four, five and six above has also revealed the certainty of parallel framing between the newspaper corpus and the parliamentary corpus. This is especially true in view of the fact that the BNL newspapers were owned by the MCP and were basically mouthpieces of that party. The *Nation* and the *Chronicle* had been opposition newspapers prior to the elections. With the UDF's victory in the polls they switched positions with the BNL newspapers.

In parliament, moral evaluation components were dominant among the frame components across all frames in 1994. The parliamentary discourse on moral judgements drew on political values and cultural values of service to humanity and preservation of human dignity. In this respect, the whole discourse on moral evaluations



was rooted in this aspect of morality. This is in agreement with Carrier and Miller (1998) who argue that moral generalisations help to steer decision-makers in correcting perceived wrongs using political and financial means. Heyman (2000, p.636) also argues that:

Morality perhaps defies cross-cultural definition, but some elements appear to be widespread. It involves evaluative paragraphs about people and conditions in the world . . . . Finally, bound with evaluation, morality motivates prescriptive impulses. If something is wrong, one ought somehow to rectify the immorality.

Consequently, both sides of the National Assembly floor tended to accuse each other of varying moral failings which would in the end be detrimental to the nation. For example, the UDF parliamentary discourse took the form of deriving moral examples from the national collective memory including vivid descriptions of human suffering under the MCP rule since 1964 and the celebration of the democratic era with its inherent benefits for the nation. Further, moral evaluation took the form of corrective statements regarding safeguarding democracy and providing equal opportunities for all Malawians regardless of region or ethnic origin.

On the other hand, the MCP/AFORD alliance emphasized the perceived regionalism, unity and reconciliation issues arising in the aftermath of the elections. While the polls had clearly given the UDF a mandate to govern the country, the aforementioned issues (regionalism, unity and reconciliation), were strongly emphasized by the MCP/AFORD alliance. The obvious intention was to raise questions about the UDF's desire to govern on its own, in the process forcing it to form a government of national unity with the MCP/AFORD alliance.

The Unity Frame of 1999 in the newspapers' corpus also exhibits the domineering position of moral judgements among editorial writers. The newspapers accused politicians of lacking in the will to unite the divided nation. The UDF, in particular, was portrayed as uninterested in unity and cooperation. Considering that the violence raging in the aftermath of the elections was the closest Malawi had come to civil war, it is not surprising that moral evaluations were high in the newspapers corpus. Another source of the moral evaluations was the Electoral Process Frame in 1999. It was generally agreed across all newspapers that the MEC had failed in their all-important function of delivering a free and fair election. Of necessity, the newspapers provided commentary that condemned, in moral terms, the conduct of the MEC.

In the parliamentary corpus of 1999, with the opposition absent to offer any counter-arguments and counter-frames, the UDF MPs were self-congratulatory. It is no surprise that no problem definitions emerged. The moral evaluations which emerged were either self-praising or condemned the MCP for human rights violations and incompetence during the MCP's rule which ended in 1994 (See Table 7.2).

Of course in discussing the 1999 parliamentary corpus, the moral evaluations discussed above were linked to positive causal attributions which praised Muluzi and the UDF (See Table 7.2). It is worth noting that the parliamentary corpus of 1999 is the only corpus in which causal interpretations emerged with the most paragraphs. As noted above, the causal attributions in both frames in the corpus were positive towards the UDF. They basically subscribed to the tendency identified by Arkin & Shepperd (1990) to take responsibility for success and denying responsibility for failures.

Further, in the 1999 parliamentary corpus, by identifying their party as responsible for resolving the economic and governance problems that Malawians were facing as a result of the MCP's rule up to 1994, the UDF MPs confirmed Iyengar's (1987, p.829)

argument that framing in political communication plays an important role in shaping the public's understanding of who is responsible for causing or resolving a social problem. Further, the UDF MPs causal attribution process confirmed Bradbury and Fincham (1990) argument that during times of conflict, there is a tendency to attribute blame to others. As noted in this paragraph, the UDF MPs effectively apportioned blame on the MCP for all of Malawi's problems while praising their party for straightening up things.

### **7.2.2 Narrow Problem Definitions Facilitating Moral Evaluations**

In the 2004 case study, the Moral Evaluation components in the newspapers corpus had the largest amount of paragraphs coded to them. However, the treatment recommendation components had five paragraphs less of the moral evaluations. This state of affairs can be attributed to the Electoral Process Frame which had the combined problem definition/causal interpretation component and the moral evaluation/treatment recommendation component which effectively eliminated the emergence of separate problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation components (See Table 7.2).

The distribution of paragraphs across components presents an interpretive challenge. It is important to note that while different frames advanced different problem definitions, there was no discursive tension or disagreement about the core of the problems facing Malawi as a nation in 2004. All newspapers identified inefficiency by the previous government led by Dr. Bakili Muluzi, fiscal indiscipline and corruption as the dominant problem the nation and the new president and his government needed to deal with. In essence, such a fairly uncontested definition of the problem also meant that the treatment recommendations across the frame would be narrow. Since Dr. Muluzi and his government were no longer in power and because a new government promising

efficiency and fiscal discipline was already in power, it is only logical that the Moral Evaluation component was overloaded with condemnatory statements against the previous government, and praise for the new government. The Leadership Frame and the Challenges Frames in 2004 newspapers corpus are replete with moral evaluations praising the new leadership for its agenda for the nation and condemning the previous government and the UDF for corruption, inefficiency and attempting to manipulate the new president.

The dominance of the Moral Evaluation components in the parliamentary corpus may point to a really serious problem in the National Assembly. It could indicate that there is a dearth in debating of the issues especially at the problem definition level. Since parliamentarians lack the ability to analyse problems, narrow and unimaginative problem definitions are accepted. This, in turn, leads to the more serious problem of narrow or even lacking treatment recommendations in solving those problems. Another factor that could be at play here is the influence of party discipline. It is possible that the political parties in parliament impose narrow problem definitions on their MPs, taking away not only the freedom to think creatively, but also the freedom to depart from party policy as Loizides (2009) argued concerning parliamentary framing of issues in some democratic systems with particular respect of Turkey. Loizides (2009) notes that the results are narrow problem definitions, highly emotive causal interpretations and moral evaluations, and unimaginative treatment recommendations are applied to pressing national issues.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

The chapter has demonstrated the similarities and differences in the frames, frame components and the conditions which gave rise to the emergent frames. In doing so, the

study established generalisations which may apply to future frame analysis in Malawi. The chapter has also demonstrated that some issues are salient enough to command interest in both parliament and the National Assembly regardless of partisan agenda. The political climate prevailing in a post election period will set the conditions for which frames will emerge and how they will emerge. Some conditions may be replicated across milieu enabling some frames to recur.

The chapter also demonstrated that even though the frames detected in this study are emergent or issue-specific frames, they can be linked to generic frames. Thus frames displayed frameworks of generic frames such as the Conflict Frame, the Economic Consequences and the Human Impact Frame. Most of the emergent frames were quite negative in nature. This fact reveals the partisan nature of frames especially during the first two case studies.

In accordance with most frame studies, the chapter has demonstrated that problem definitions are central to the framing process. It also established that in both the Malawian press and the National Assembly moral evaluations are a critical part of the discourse. Of course, moral evaluations are both judgemental and prescriptive and they are a logical outcome of how a problem is defined.

The study also explains the convergence and divergence of frames across corpora and case studies. A partisan agenda which called for parliamentarians of one party to speak with one voice and the co-option of relevant newspapers was identified as one of the reasons for converging frames. When compelling national interests and nationally resonant post election agendas were presented, convergent frames tended to emerge from both corpora.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion

#### 8.0 Introduction

The research study was organised around two main research questions. The first was to compare and contrast the emergent or issue framing of political issues between newspapers and parliament. The second was to find out how ownership of newspapers and its alignment to political parties would affect the framing of political issues across three case studies spread out over a period of ten years. The investigation compared the way three sets of newspapers differentially performed in their commentary on the political issues in three post election periods against parliamentary framing in the same periods. The underlying aim was find out whether or not the newspapers' commentary on political issues would mirror framing of the political parties to which the newspapers owners were aligned as they were represented in parliament.

Framing suggests that news media plays an important role in making certain public issues more salient than others while also providing a specific news angle that characterises those events (Entman, 1993, 2004; Gitlin, 1980; Iyengar, 1991; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996 and Tuchman, 1978). In this respect, the study has sought to address the extent to which press ownership is pivotal to framing of a post election period, and whether or not the press's role in a society undergoing democratisation is enhanced or hindered by its owners and those owners alignment to political parties.

The four components of a frame as conceptualised by Robert Entman (1993) were central to the analysis of the data as frames were being detected in the corpora. By comparing press framing against parliamentary framing, the study sought to expose the convergence and divergence of framing in both corpora. In doing so, the study sought to

understand how the press have mediated the democratic debate in the emerging public space in Malawi. The study also demonstrated these similarities and differences, and how alignment of ownership to politics influenced the emergence of these frames.

The general thrust of this chapter is that the frames emerging in the two arenas are a reflection of ownership interests and the shifting political interests of these owners. This is especially true for the first two case studies. Largely due to these elements of ownership and their political alignment, the press in Malawi since 1994 have been visible sites of contests between opposing political interests usually pitting the state against the opposition. Further, the chapter argues that this state of affairs has given rise to two types of journalism: “government” journalism and “opposition”. These were highly visible during the first two case studies. By the time of the third case study, a third type of journalism had begun to emerge. This is the “national interest” journalism.

Further, the chapter will examine the implications of the findings on the press’s role in a democratising society such as Malawi. It will examine the challenges in journalism as a profession which could make the profession vulnerable to political pressure. It will also discuss proposals that could free the press from the clutches and vagaries of ownership and its alliance with political parties.

## **8.1 Review of the Main Findings**

The newspapers under study framed the post-election periods in ways which were largely consistent with their owners’ political alignment. The study has demonstrated that the coverage falls into three categories of “government”, “opposition” and “national interest” journalism. These forms of journalism are noted in chapter two of this thesis. By comparing the press’s framing against that of the National Assembly, the study has been able to demonstrate that these categories represented contending centres of power

in Malawi's political arena especially in the 1994 and the 1999 case studies. However, the emergence of the "national interest" model seems to suggest that the press gained a larger degree of freedom in 2004 than it had in 1994 and 1999.

### **8.1.1 Government Journalism**

Newspapers whose owners were associated with the ruling UDF were the key proponents of government journalism as conceptualised by Chimombo and Chimombo (1996) (See chapter three of this thesis). Aspects of this journalism model were evident in the *Chronicle* and the NPL newspapers in the 1994 case study. They were also evident in the NPL newspapers during the 1999 case study. In the 1999 case study, the *Chronicle* had taken a decidedly opposition journalism model.

The *Nation* and the *Chronicle*'s counter-framing on the issue of national unity in the 1999 case study closely resembled that of the UDF MPs in the National Assembly. The *Nation* and the *Chronicle* took the same position taken by the UDF MPs which argued that if there was a problem with national unity, it was because the MCP had peppered over these differences and had not dealt with them effectively when the party was in power. Basically, the position was to blame the MCP for lack of national unity. Similarly, in framing the Governance Frame in 1999, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* basically took the same position taken by the UDF which accused the MCP of being dictatorial and lacking in basic democratic values. In the Leadership Frame, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* portrayed the new ruling elite as being beyond reproach while portraying the opposition leadership especially the MCP as being beyond redemption. This position reflected the UDF MPs position regarding the opposition leadership which they expressed through the Failed Government Frame.



Thus, in 1994, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* did not find any good in the opposition for as long as they continued to oppose the UDF. The framing made it clear that the only way the opposition could find legitimacy was through agreeing to a large extent with the UDF's agenda for the country. In that way the two newspapers lent themselves to the UDF course without critically analysing the opposite view.

In the 1999 case study, the NPL newspapers continued to take a government journalism position. However, the newspapers were less strident in this respect than they had been in the 1994 case study. Even though less strident, the theme remained the same. The newspapers basically blamed the opposition for the election violence. The newspapers accused the opposition for lacking in political tolerance labelling them as bad losers. In the Electoral Process Frame, the NPL newspapers conceded that the election had been mismanaged but they still urged the opposition to accept the outcome of the elections. In the Consequences Frame, the one frame that attempted to analyse what Malawians could expect after the return to power of the UDF, the NPL newspapers had nothing to say and did not offer any analysis of the economic challenges facing Malawi since the UDF took over in 1994.

In essence, the frames emerging out of the *Nation* and the *Chronicle*'s corpus, reflect strong leanings towards the ruling the UDF elites. As chapter four and chapter five have demonstrated, the NPL newspapers seemed to have taken their lead from the ruling party politicians. This was also true for the *Chronicle* regarding the 1994 post election period. The influence of the owners in this respect cannot be ignored. The owner of the *Nation*, Aleke Banda, was the First Deputy President of the UDF and a senior cabinet minister in the UDF government. In the UDF hierarchy, he was the second highest ranked UDF official after its president, Bakili Muluzi. Therefore, it is not surprising that the *Nation*, in this case study, used the "government" journalism

model to frame national issues. The same can be noted of the *Chronicle*. Rob Jamieson had been a pro-democracy activist between 1992 and 1994. He had links with the pro-democracy movements before they became political parties. After the election of 1994, it is only to be expected that for some time, the *Chronicle* continued to see things through the prism of the UDF.

### **8.1.2 Opposition Journalism**

The “opposition” model of journalism, as conceptualised by Chimombo and Chimombo (1996) and Chuma (2007) (see chapter 3), was extensively employed by the MCP controlled BNL newspapers in the 1994 and 1999 case studies. In the 1999 case study, the *Chronicle* had changed editorial policy shifting from “government” to “opposition” model. The position of the “opposition” form of journalism closely mirrored that of the MCP MPs in the National Assembly.

For example, in the framing of the Unity Frame in 1999, the BNL newspapers took a position that basically blamed the ideology of multiparty politics and the UDF for lack of national unity. This was the exact position expressed by the MCP/AFORD alliance MPs in the National Assembly. In the Leadership Frame, the BNL newspapers blamed the UDF’s leadership for lacking in unify abilities and attempting to marginalise the MCP in national politics. In essence, the ruling UDF was blamed for everything that was wrong with the country. The future of the nation was located away from the UDF. In fact, the BNL newspapers argued that only the opposition could take Malawi to a better future.

In 1999, the *Chronicle* joined the BNL newspapers in using opposition journalism as a way of framing national political issues. The Unity Frame basically blamed the UDF for failing to act in a unifying manner. It blamed the UDF leadership for using

divisive rhetoric when celebrating their victory in the 1999 election. The Electoral Process Frame was even harsher in its criticism of the UDF. The newspapers accused the UDF of conspiring with the MEC to defraud Malawians at the polls. In essence, the *Chronicle* and the BNL newspapers found the UDF guilty for causing all the problems in the post election period. Further, the newspapers accused the UDF of lacking a plan to solve these problems. Indeed, as in the 1994 case study, the future of the nation was seen to be with the opposition while the UDF was portrayed as simply interested in staying in power even at the expense of democracy.

In short, as chapter four and five has demonstrated, these newspapers took their cues from the opposition leaders both inside and outside parliament. The ownership factor cannot be dismissed at all here. The BNL newspapers belonged to Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, president of the MCP. Further, the board at the controlling company, the Blantyre Print and Publishing Company Ltd, was chaired by John Tembo who was the Treasurer-General of the MCP. It is not surprising that in 1994 and 1999 the BNL newspapers could adopt the “opposition” journalism model. Rob Jamieson’s disillusionment with the UDF’s record on freedom of expression seems to have driven the *Chronicle* towards a more opposition form of editorial line. As Cammack (2000) notes, Jamieson was clearly at odds with the UDF by the time of the 1999 elections.

### **8.1.3 “National interest” Journalism**

The third category of the press was the “national interest” journalism, as observed in the 2004 case study across all the newspapers and conceptualised by Chuma (2007) and Chimombo and Chimombo (1996) (See chapter 3). The model of journalism attempted to analyse national issues beyond the mirror opposites of the “opposition” and “government” journalism models. Even though, the newspapers generally supported the

new ruling elite, especially the new president, this was only done through a progressive revision taken against the candidacy of new President Bingu wa Mutharika. In fact, support for Mutharika was only given as the new president's economic agenda took shape.

The success of the "national interest" journalism model in 2004 can be explained in terms of the loss of influence of political parties over the newspapers. In other words, ownership of newspapers had either given up its political interests or ownership that had no political interests had taken over. In the case of the NPL newspapers, Aleke Banda had left the UDF. At the BNL newspapers, the family of the late Dr. Banda had taken over, severing all political ties with the MCP. The *Chronicle's* adoption of the "national interest" model reflects Rob Jamieson's disillusionment with the UDF's record on human rights and freedom of expression.

In 2004 therefore, the newspapers under study enjoyed relative editorial independence from political influence. This, in turn, permitted the newspapers to look back objectively at the UDF's record, to progressively examine the emergence of Mutharika as the UDF's presidential candidate and to critically assess Mutharika's economic agenda as observed in the Leadership Frame of that case study. All of this could not have been possible under the political economy milieu presented by the 1994 and 1999 case studies.

Journalism in the national interest was reflected by the frames that emerged from the newspapers corpus in 2004. The Challenges Frame in the 2004 case study was a candid analysis of the economic challenges facing the nation in the face of deteriorating economic conditions. The human impact aspect of the frame focused the issue on national suffering rather than narrow partisan interests. The Leadership Frame examined the emergence of Mutharika while progressively revising its assessment of the new

president. The Electoral Process Frame remained harshly critical of the UDF and the MEC for poorly managing the elections that brought Mutharika to power.

Another feature of “national interest” journalism was the fact that the press seemed to have greatly influenced the National Assembly. As noted in chapter six, the MPs extensively quoted the newspapers’ editorials in presenting their arguments on the National Assembly floor. This was unlike in the previous case studies when the editorial writers tended to follow the lead of relevant politicians.

That the “national interest” model emerged at a time when the owners of these newspapers had either politically re-aligned or there had been change of ownership is not to be dismissed. With the proprietor having left the UDF, the NPL newspapers did not seem have any reason to continue to tow the UDF’s party-line. The same thing can be noted for the new owners at the BNL newspapers. The new proprietors at the BNL signalled their intent to sever ties with the MCP by removing the board which was chaired by John Tembo.

## **8.2 Reflections on Theoretical Implications: A Framing Model**

What then does the study tell us about the process of framing in Malawi? What are the decisive and fundamental factors which ensure the production of the emergent frames detected in this study? How do these factors interact or connect to each in order to produce these frames? Is there a system that can be constructed by observing these factors at work? The study has revealed that the field of political communication in Malawi is dominated by six major factors. The interaction of these factors with each other, as demonstrated in Appendix VII, affects the way political issues are framed in the press.

### **8.2.1 The State and National Culture**

Arguably, the most important aspect of the framing model in this study is the state/national culture government aspect (See Appendix VII). As Archetti (2006, p. 32) argues in her multi-national frame theory study of 9/11, the state acts as “a background for both political and media fields.” The state defines the rules in which political actors and the press interact to set the emergent frames. Indeed, as Eko (2004, p.123) argues regarding frame theory in Africa, and as Chuma (2007) found out in his framing study of political transitions in Zimbabwe, conditions imposed by the state can greatly constrain the press from adequately serving the public sphere.

In this study, a case in point is the background to the 1999 case study, and thereafter the run-up of the 2004 elections, when the UDF government turned predatory and thuggish by deploying party cadre and the state security apparatus against political opponents including the press, civil society and opposition politicians (See Muula & Chanika, 2004; Khaila and Mthinda, 2006). In this study, the emergent frames in the 1994 and 1999 case study reflects conditions created by the state/government which permitted the press and the National Assembly to operate freely. However, the very same conditions created by the state prevented important advertising funds from reaching newspapers perceived to be hostile to the UDF-led regime.

In 2004, President Mutharika’s definition of his government post election agenda was very much centred on the state rather than his political party. The state/government’s immediate movements to implement this agenda including anti-corruption arrests and prosecutions and implementation of economic measures created a reality on the ground that could not be ignored especially by the newly emancipated press.

The state is also important in the framing model in Malawi because the media are still in formative stages. The laws governing the media are still being shaped. The government's input and willingness to implement press friendly laws in the process creating a friendly environment is important. Further, the condition of the greater political economy in which the press operates is largely decided by state. As noted earlier, the state provides important advertising revenue to the press. The government's willingness to continue doing so is limited by the state of the economy as Chuma (2007) found out in the Zimbabwean situation.

The study has established the powerful effect of culture on the emergent frames. The narrative aspect of the frame is particularly affected. For example, in all the three case studies, both parliamentarians and the newspaper editorial writers drew heavily on cultural values. These values may have been political values as in the case of the prevailing ideology of democracy or they may have been traditional values as in the case of the national unity frames. As Nelson, Wittmer and Shortle (2010) argue, democratic values are particularly relevant in framing because those are resonant with people's yearning for freedom.

The use of metaphors drawn from religion and traditional culture also testifies to the importance of culture in the framing model in Malawi. The use of these metaphors and exemplar structure the frame narratives around culturally embedded aspects of Malawian society such as religion and the importance of the common good. As Entman (2004) notes, a frame resonates when it draws on the habitual schemas of society.

### **8.2.2 Real Events**

Aside from the above, framing arises out of reportage or commentary on real world events. These real events arise out of the broader political economy of the state and

national life. The events in the real world arise out of, and are controlled by political and economic factors prevailing in the larger environment (Vliegthart and Roggeband, 2007, p.299). Debates in various forums and public opinion formation do not take place in a vacuum. All kinds of larger societal developments are relevant and are likely to affect debates and public opinion. These should be taken into account to get a complete picture of the debate as D'Angelo (2002, p.882) argues “. . . news stories purveyor issues and events based on realities that the framing process has to some extent created.” Norris, Kern and Just (2003, p.294) also identify real world events as key in the framing process.

In the case of this study, the events following the 1994, 1999 and 2004 elections are the keys (See Appendix VII). For example, in 1994, the nation was preoccupied with attempting to answer the questions raised by the regional preferences exhibited by the voters at the polls. Further, Malawians were just coming to grips with the change of government and governance system. Learning the new system and issues of unity were at the fore. In the 1999 case study, the violence following the election, the poorly managed election and the economic challenges facing the nation were the issues which drew the attention of framers.

In the 2004 case study, the standoff between new President Bingu wa Mutharika on the one hand, and his party and former president Bakili Muluzi preoccupied the nation. Other issues included the state of the economy and the mismanaged election.

### **8.2.3 Political Parties**

The power of political parties over the editorial writers flows through the owners. Political parties have influence over the owners because they enable the owners to access important political positions (See Appendix VII). The UDF lost an allied owner



when Rob Jamieson changed the *Chronicle*'s editorial line to one that advocated for more human rights. However, the most important example is Aleke Banda, who was the proprietor of the NPL newspapers. Obviously, he owed his position as a senior cabinet minister to his membership in the UDF. When he became disillusioned by the UDF, the UDF's influence with the NPL newspapers was lost. The MCP lost its influence over the BNL newspapers when ownership passed on to the late dictator's family. The motive for severing ties with the MCP was not known. What is true is that none of the members of the late dictator's family were prominent in any political party including the MCP. Obviously, there was little to be gained by continuing to align with the MCP. The above is in line with what other media scholars (Patel, 2000, Chimombo and Chimombo, 1996 and Chipangula, 2000) observed about the press and political parties in Malawi that newspaper appeared to be established with propaganda purposes ahead of profit or serving the public sphere.

Beyond the above, the study has established the role played by political parties in the actual contents of frames. The study has noted the close similarities between the frames emerging from the National Assembly to those emerging out of relevant newspapers. In particular, the 1994 case study noted the servile nature with which the newspaper editorial writers mimicked the rhetoric of politicians. As Wagner (2010, p.142) argues, in the framing of issues, ". . . political parties provide citizens the opportunity to choose between competing values." Thus, this study found that political parties often defined the issues at stake in the framing contest, especially in 1994 and 1999. In 2004, in particular, Mutharika's resonant framing of his economic agenda influenced framing in such a way that newspapers were compelled to lead a discussion on the challenges of a deteriorating economy and the leadership wrangles dominating the political scene.

#### **8.2.4 Press Owners**

After political parties, the press owners hold the most power considering that they can coerce the editorial writers to frame in a particular way (See Appendix VII). In this respect, the shifting political alignment and changes in ownership examined in this study also directly or indirectly influenced the framing of political issues in the case studies. Press owners are able to influence the editorial writers as the study has revealed.

Even though the press owners were unable to influence the nature of politics or events in their own political parties or parties with whom they were aligned, they were quite able to control the editorial writers. Breed (1999) argued that through the process of professional socialisation journalists become aware of what is expected of them by the press owners. In the African situation, Mano (2005) notes the powerful influence of owners over professional journalists in both economic and professional terms.

#### **8.2.5 The National Assembly**

The importance of the National Assembly in the framing process shifted over the three case studies. It was a major component of the framing process in the 1994 case study when the editorial writers took cues from the MPs on the National Assembly floor. Thus, it acted as a conduit of frames from the political parties to the editorial writers (See Appendix VII).

However, in the 1999 case study, the role of the National Assembly diminished somewhat as editorial writers (both “government” and “opposition” models) refused to take any cues from the MPs. Further, the opposition boycott of parliament reduced its status as a debate forum. Thus, its relevance in the framing conduit was greatly reduced.

In the 2004 post election period, the status of the press overtook that of the National Assembly as MPs took cues from press. The MPs used editorial frames to confirm their own positions on the critical issues of leadership and the challenges to the economy.

In his study of frames on the Turkish parliament, Loizides (2009, p.282) argues that studying frames in a democratically elected parliament is important because it reflects the power dynamics among all the key political players in a country. Further, Loizides (2009) argues that parliamentary framing will most certainly reflect the official views of ruling elites and opposition figures since political parties expect their MPs to reflect the official party position. MPs, in turn, usually adhere to the party position because they depend on the party for re-election.

### **8.2.6 Journalistic Culture**

Three aspects of journalistic cultures seem to have played a significant role in the emergent frames in the three case studies. The first had to do with objectivity and fairness. Even though editorial and opinion discourse are reflective of an ideological position adopted by the editorial board of a particular newspaper, such discourse is supposed to be rooted in solid reporting, hard facts and truth. The commentary on the post-election periods reflected the economic and political interests of the newspaper owners which in turn resulted in the superficial treatment of facts. This, in turn, blurred the possibility of discussing the key issues in a more thorough, more objective and fuller perspective of the prevalent national concerns.

Further, on the same issue of objectivity and fairness, the professional outlook of journalists was shaped by the factors that had affected the growth of journalism in the single party era. Among them was the lack of professional training resulting in a press

corps that did not have deep ethical understanding or commitment to the ethics of journalism (See Appendix VII). Coupled with the power of politically connected owners, this lack of understanding of the journalism ethics resulted in a highly mercenary press corps willing to sell its services to the highest bidder (Cammack, 2000; Patel, 2000; Chimombo and Chimombo, 1996).

The second, aspect of journalistic culture which shaped the emergent frames has to do with the mix of individual journalists, newspaper ownership and political alignment. In short, the symbiotic relationship between politicians, newspaper owners and journalist tended to place partisanship at the heart of the journalism culture prevailing in Malawi between 1994 and 1999. As noted in a previous section of this chapter, the overriding concern of civil society and political activists in 1994 was to rid the country of the single party system. Thus, between 1992 and 1993 the emerging independent press lent itself wholeheartedly to the cause of multiparty politics. The journalistic culture emerging after the 1994 elections was one that divided the press corps between the main forces - those who had campaigned for multiparty politics and those who had been employed in the state/party information apparatus before 1994. This, in turn, reflected the political binaries prevalent in the country. The result was that sharply divided framing emerged out of the framing process.

The third aspect, which is drawn from western aspects of journalism culture, is a sense of greater good. In 1994 and 1999, this aspect seemed to have been markedly lacking among Malawi's journalists as journalists willingly or otherwise served the partisan interests of their patron politicians. This resulted in the clearly partisan framing in those post-election periods. However, the 2004 case study has revealed an analysis of the facts and a willingness to evaluate political issues in the national interest. Thus the advocacy journalism which was prevalent in 1994 and 1999 gave way to more critical

and analytical national interest journalism. While in 1994 and 1999 journalists were willing to voice fragmented truth and stridently present them, in 2004 they were more prepared to commit to contextualisation and depth. It is clear that in this respect, ownership played a deciding role in changing the journalistic culture by freeing journalists of their obligation to politicians.

In short, as some frame theory scholars (Entman, 2004, p.11; Brown, 2010, p.46) have argued professional journalistic culture shapes the relation between the media and political actors. This, in turn, shapes the content of emergent frames. Clearly, the closeness of Malawi's press to centres of political power resulted in sharply divided frames reflecting existing political binaries, especially during the 1994 and 1999 post election period. Thus, as Malawian journalism evolves, it is hoped that a greater sense of objectivity and fairness rooted in sound ethics will emerge. Further, as will be noted in a subsequent section, a more diversified ownership of newspapers without political affiliation will enable a more objective press to emerge. One can also hope that deepening awareness of their ethical responsibility to the Malawian people added to the "national interest" journalism emerging out of the 2004 post-election period.

### **8.3 Framing Tools**

This study took place within the broader milieu of Malawi's Second Republic which is characterised by multiparty politics and regular general elections every five years. Regarding Frame theory and its use in Africa, the Cameroonian scholar Eko (2004) argues that it is difficult for researchers to use the theory in Sub-Saharan Africa the way it is used in the West because the media in most countries in that region are not free. However, Eko (2004, p.126-127) points out that in repressive societies framing takes place within the context of "defiant, combat, oppositional or guerrilla" journalism

whose aim is to assert the press's "right to frame without government interference" and "to work towards government downfall if it represses newspapers and jails journalists".

Malawi's nascent democratic culture may not measure up to the democratic standards of the West. However, the main features of a democratic culture exist which include multiple political parties, regular elections for executive leaders and legislative representatives, and a free press even though it is subject to the influence of its owners and their political alignments. Proceeding from the above, this section examines those tools within the national political culture, the traditional culture and the journalistic culture that gave rise to the frames detected in the case studies.

### **8.3.1 Values**

This study notes the use of values in Malawian political communication. Politicians have become reliant on public communication in the hope of shaping the outcomes of political contests. The 1994 and 1999 case studies have revealed how the political elite in Malawi tend to use both democratic and traditional cultural values to frame their messages. The division of political actors into the ruling party and the opposition parties represented a normal aspect of democracy. However, the presence of the MCP and its association with previous human rights abuses, tended to raise the question of which party or parties could be best identified with democratic values which include personal liberty and the consent of the governed.

The moral evaluations in the 1994 and the 1999 case studies are replete with claims to these values by the political parties. As Nelson, Wittmer and Shortle (2010, p.14) note, there are four strategic goals that undergird moral judgment rhetoric. These are value association, value disassociation, value enhancement, and value diminishment. Two of these apply appropriately here.

The first is value association which “. . . communicators use to convince the public that their side of the debate holds the most legitimate claim to a cherished value” (Nelson, Wittmer and Shortle, 2010, p.14). In the 1999 and 1994 case studies, the UDF parliamentarians sort to associate themselves with democratic values as can be noted in the abundance of such paragraphs in which they spoke of having restored freedom and political tolerance in the country. They also emphasized the fact that their government would serve the Malawian people rather than expect the Malawian people to be servile to the government. They urged the opposition parties in the National Assembly, in particular the AFORD, to join them in serving the people and to safeguarding democracy.

The second strategic goal which Nelson, Wittmer and Shortle (2010, p.14) mention is value disassociation. In their moral judgements in the 1994 and 1999 case studies, the UDF parliamentarians argued that the MCP could not claim to be democratic in view of how it had treated the people during its 31 years of dictatorial rule. The UDF, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* sought to label the MCP as the party of dictatorship, human rights abuses, and regionalism. This is in contrast to the earlier stated values with which they (UDF) would govern the country.

Similarly, the MCP/AFORD alliance sought to associate themselves with the democratic value of the common good which also drew on the traditional Malawian value of togetherness. This is clearly demonstrated through both the BNL newspapers and the alliance’s MPs framing emphasis on the issue of national unity. By the same token, they attempted to demonstrate how the UDF could not be associated with this value of the common good and national unity. In doing this, the alliance argued that the UDF was the obstacle to national unity through its insistence on governing without the MCP.

Other deeply contested democratic values included justice and popular sovereignty. The newspapers corpus in 1999 and 2004 bitterly protested the MEC's mismanagement of the elections claiming it was an infringement on the people's right to choose their leaders. In 2004 in particular, the press expressed unhappiness with the judiciary's conduct regarding the opposition's complaint on the management of the elections. In this respect, the UDF and the MEC were identified as particularly lacking in fairness which is a central aspect of democracy.

Clearly, the press and the National Assembly placed democratic and traditional values at the heart of their frames. This is something that Marcinkowski (2006) argued is common in the framing of political communication. Marcinkowski (2006, p.387) argued that the press and parliaments in democratic nations tend to view themselves as guardians of democratic values.

### **8.3.2 Metaphors and Cultural Resonance**

The framing of leadership in both parliamentary and newspapers corpora revealed the use of metaphors as frame tools. The framing of leadership in both parliamentary and newspaper corpora and across case studies revealed extensive use of these. Thus, new presidents (Muluzi and Mutharika) were described in metaphors that enhanced their statue as democratic and competent leaders.

However, outgoing presidents and their administrations suffered through the use of metaphors as well in the press and the National Assembly. In the case of the late Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, metaphors were used that described him as authoritarian and uninterested in the welfare of the people in 1994. The press and the National Assembly used metaphors that described Dr. Muluzi and his administration as incompetent and corrupt.



Perhaps one of the most striking things about the use of these metaphors is that most were biblical metaphors. This added a religious element to the framing process especially in the National Assembly. As religion is a significant aspect of the culture prevalent in Malawi, it is not surprising that framers drew on religion to add resonance to their frames. Frame scholars (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p.100; Snow & Benford, 1988, p.210; Entman, 2004, p.14-17; Goffman, 1974) are in agreement that frames must be culturally relevant to have a chance of success. Chong and Druckman (2007, p.100) note that frames must “. . . resonate with cultural narrations, stories, myths and folk tales that are part and parcel of one’s cultural heritage.” Entman (2004, p.6) argues that frames which use these aspects are: “. . . *noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged*” for maximum influence.

The frames were primed to resonate with not only the cultural societal values of Malawians but also the new political culture prevailing in Malawi. Having done away with the single party system of politics, politicians of all shades were anxious to avoid being associated with the excesses of that era. Expressing support for individual human rights and openness in government became culturally fashionable from a political culture point of view.

#### **8.4 Bias and Political Binaries**

The study has also revealed the bifurcated nature of political discourse in Malawi especially during the 1994 and 1999 case studies. All the frames in 1994 and 1999 were presented by a political party or allied political parties with the aim of negatively portraying a rival political party. These political binaries were reflected in the relevant newspapers. Entman (2010, p. 334) argues that bias takes three forms. The first is distortion which falsifies reality. The second is content bias which takes the form of

favouring one side in political coverage. The third is decision-making bias in which the journalists' motivations and mindsets allegedly produce the biased conduct – in short, the journalistic culture. This section will attempt to demonstrate that the latter two are manifest in the frames detected in the corpora of this study. In doing this, this section will explore how agenda-setting and framing interlinked in the framing process deliberately set in motion by political actors and the press.

With respect to content bias, the press used agenda-building and agenda cutting to present the political position of their owners. First, the press consistently and without question built up the position of their relevant owners. Second, the press sort to undercut the rival political position by refusing to give it any mention. Considering that there were two basic political positions, ruling party/opposition, the appearance of two irreconcilable positions was starkly reflected in the press.

The frames detected in the various corpora revealed culling of a few elements of the perceived reality existing in Malawi in 1994, 1999 and 2004. For example, the Unity Frame in 1994 and 1999, the BNL newspapers reduced political reality to a nation on the brink of chaos and ultimate fission. By the Governance Frames, the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* emphasized a new governance system that would take the nation forward and ultimately liberate the potential of the individual citizen. Through these frames, newspaper editorial writers sought to shape and alter the public sphere's interpretations of political reality and preference through the priming of national unity and governance.

As Krosnick and Kinder (1990) and Pan and Kosicki (1997) argued, intended or not, the effect of this kind of priming of political reality would be to influence the public sphere's evaluation of political actors especially government leadership on just the two issues of the quality of national leadership and governance. That is, these frames introduced or raise the salience or apparent importance of these ideas, activating the

target audience to think, feel and decide in a particular way as frame scholars argue (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2002; Price, Twesbury & Power, 1997). By consistently following the party-line, the press set a partisan agenda that reflected the political binaries existing in the national political discourse in 1994 and 1999. The MCP/AFORD alliance used the BNL newspaper to set forth its agenda for the nation while the *Nation* and the *Chronicle* were happy to carry the UDF agenda in the name of democratising the nation.

Just as the press permitted itself to prime rival political agendas and to reflect the political binaries dominating the national political discourse in 1994 and 1999, the press also undercut the rival agenda. Wober (2002) has argued that media framing of issues and events can be interpreted through the prism of what he calls 'agenda-cutting'. He defines the term as:

. . . a name for a variety of ways and instances in which a topic or an actual or potentially significant news story either finds itself low on the news agenda, or even out of it; in some ways it may be present, but with a negative rather than neutral or perhaps deservedly positive tone (p.64).

Agenda-cutting is the corollary of priming, where the media foreground particular issues as the most newsworthy ones deserving a place on the public agenda (Severin & Tankard, 1992; McCombs & Shaw, 1995).

The press's framing of political issues starting from 1994 was characterised by both agenda-setting (as noted in the preceding paragraphs) and agenda-cutting processes. The framing of the post election periods through both "government" and "oppositional" journalism was informed by the existing binaries which were integral to the political discourse in Malawi at the time. On the one hand, this discourse attributed

the agency of democracy and a quality national future to the ruling UDF while drawing on the national collective memory regarding human rights abuse and bad governance perpetrated by the opposition MCP to diminish the standing of the MCP and its agenda in the national political discourse. On the other hand, the discourse featured by the “opposition” press consisted of a narrative that presented the opposition parties as the answer to government’s and the ruling UDF’s excesses. The future of the nation was identified with these opposition parties away from the ruling UDF.

The state of affairs described above could only have negative influences on the newspaper readership in Malawi. Media in the public sphere model, according to Croteau & Hoynes (2001), should be characterized by diversity, innovation, substance and independence. In order to meet these criteria, the media content should be independent from corporate and governmental interests. Government and ownership should not limit the range of perspectives presented on political issues. According to McCullagh (2002) mass media messages should address the different interests of audiences. By restricting their commentaries to the dichotomous lines defined by ownership and their alignment to political parties, the press in Malawi failed to meet this criterion in 1994 and 1999.

## **8.5 Reflections on the Implications of the Findings**

This section examines implications of the study’s findings on the development of a truly democratic public sphere in Malawi. The newspapers landscape prevailing in 2004 made it possible for the press to provide commentary on political issues in the national interest. However, there is no guarantee that things will continue to be favourable. First, the section sets into context the fragile nature of the newspapers landscape as it prevailed in 2004. Second, the section will discuss a model that could bring stability for

an objective press working in the national interest. Third, the section will discuss issues within professional journalism which can prevent exploitation of the press by fractions of capital and political power.

### **8.5.1 The Newspapers Landscape in a State of Flux**

The findings of this study have implications on the future of the press in Malawi. In 1992, when the MCP government lifted restrictions prior to the change in 1994, the country underwent a negotiated process of political change. The main players in this negotiated settlement were the then MCP government, the pressure groups (who were, in theory, civil society but in reality political parties in-waiting), and the church. Unfortunately, journalists were embedded with the pressure groups. Consequently, when the settlement was being negotiated, the media were content to let the pressure groups represent them at the negotiating table. The assumption was that there was enough goodwill in the intentions of the pressure groups to take care of the interests of the media.

This, however, was a mistaken assumption because after 1994, the new leaders treated the public state owned media in the very same way the MCP had done. The state hegemony on the state radio station tightened (See Linje Manyozo, 2004). Since most of the newspapers which started between 1992 and 1994 were owned by opposition politicians, journalists found that after 1994 they had not really gained any freedom. As Chiyamwaka (2009) argues the press lost its freedom for the second time immediately after 1994. The period of freedom had lasted less than two years.

The press has itself to blame for this second loss of freedom. It trusted the opposition politicians too much between 1992 and 1994. It was a trust which the new ruling elite prominently betrayed especially with regards the MBC (See Manyozo, 2004

for a detailed discussion). The media failed to push for a definitive media position that could enable it to function as a democratising force in Malawi's Second Republic when the transition to democratic rule was being negotiated. The over-riding desire to get rid of the MCP regime justified its unprofessional and unquestioning trust of the opposition politicians before 1994. The fear of a return of the MCP justified the "government" journalism model observed in this study which was a feature of the NPL newspapers before the 2004 case study.

As this study has demonstrated, the politicians grip on the press, eased somewhat before 2004. However, this was mainly due to factors exogenous to the press. For example, Rob Jamieson's, activist position with ARTICLE 19 ensured that the *Chronicle's* position was going to be adversarial towards the predatory and violent tendencies adopted by the UDF after 1998 in the run up to the 1999 election and the UDF's second term in power. The BNL newspapers were only freed from the clutches of the MCP by the Chayamba family's challenge of the late Dr. Hasting Kamuzu Banda's will. Without the challenge, the BNL newspapers would have remained mere mouthpieces of the MCP. Aleke Banda's departure from the UDF opened up opportunities for freedom for the NPL newspapers. However, his departure had nothing to do with press freedom. It had everything to do with his dissatisfaction with the lack of transparency in the UDF's leadership succession process. The NPL newspapers' liberation from UDF influence was a mere by-product of Aleke Banda's dissociation with the UDF.

Evidence suggests that things are taking a turn for the worse. The *Chronicle* has gone into oblivion and is no longer on the market. Since 2009, the government of President Bingu wa Mutharika has withheld advertisements from the NPL newspapers depriving them of essential revenue. As 2010 came to a close, things were again in legal

limbo at the BNL newspapers. On 8 November 2010, the High Court ruled that the late Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda's will is valid. This, in turn, will definitely mean that Cecilia Kadzamira, confidante of the late dictator, will gain more leverage at the BNL newspapers (Mwanza, 2010; Wezzi, 2010). Kadzamira is a niece to John Tembo, the current president of the MCP. John Tembo was the Chairman of the Board at the Blantyre Print and Publishing at the height of the BNL newspapers' practice of "opposition" journalism. The High Court ruling could open the door for the MCP to regain control of the BNL newspapers.

Extensive press freedom is ensured in the Malawian constitution. The constitution not only contains articles for freedom of expression and for freedom of the press but also – as one of the few countries in Africa – an article with an explicit provision guaranteeing access to government held information (Cooney 2001). It would appear that the legal framework for the press to operate freely is in place.

How can the press in Malawi take advantage of the existing legal framework to work freely in the national interest? Is there a way the press corps can ensure that they continue to provide quality commentary and coverage for newspaper readership in Malawi? How can partisan interests be kept out of newspaper coverage and commentary? Is there a model of press operations that can be implemented in Malawi?

### **8.5.2 Ethics and Good Professional Conduct**

Both statutory and voluntary mechanisms exist. However, both appear to have some structural problems that prevent them from functioning properly. The statutory mechanisms are dominated by the state while the voluntary mechanisms are weak.

Ever since 1994, there have been some attempts to formerly regulate and enforce ethical practice among members of the press in Malawi. Most of these efforts have

floundered due to financial constraints and lack of properly qualified personnel to run them. The Journalists Association of Malawi (JAMA) and the Media Council of Malawi (MCM) are good examples of these efforts. By 2007, it appeared as though the MCM had shaken off its leadership problem. It was providing leadership among journalists through the publication of best practice reports, media monitoring for inaccuracy and imbalance and handling complaints from the public about the press.

The statutory mechanisms have been enthusiastically enforced by government against those newspapers that are seen as anti-government. These statutory mechanisms include the arrest and prosecution of journalists who are accused of contravening the law in one way or the other. It also includes the denial of registration of new newspapers whose owners are deemed to be linked to the opposition (See Cammack, 2000 for a fuller discussion). Aside from the statutory mechanisms, the government has also made full use civil law suits against newspapers on flimsy charges of defamation. The resulting long trials have bankrupted some newspapers and have burdened some newspapers with heavy fines.

It is not wholly clear what kind of effective interventions could be initiated beyond raising journalists' awareness of their ethical responsibilities. The excessively partisan and politicized nature of Malawian newspapers' ownership results in violations of ethics of accuracy and fairness. Ultimately, therefore, the solution lies in two major reforms. The first is removing excessive bias from newspaper content. The other is providing audiences with more choices.

Malawi needs a media watchdog organization that is run by journalists. Organisation such as the MCM, the JAMA and the MISA should ensure that Malawi's constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, opinion and information are extended and maintained against assaults by government. As noted earlier, the MCM and the MISA, in particular, have been active in monitoring professional conduct by journalists. However, these



organizations often face cash constraints as a result they fail to attract high caliber management at their secretariats. The support of donors and outside media institutions will be vital and can perhaps quicken the process.

These organizations should continue to monitor the professional standards of journalism through analysis of media content. They should regularly report their findings to the public through newsletters. Further, the organizations should form strong links with other human rights and democracy promotion civil society. The organizations should also organize training for journalists in reporting, and ethical and professional standards.

Removing bias from newspaper content means that journalists have to be aware of their ethical responsibility of providing their audiences with balanced, critical, and analytical commentary, and full news coverage. Only when journalists are driven by such a strong sense of duty to their audiences will they be able to resist the call to sell their services to the highest bidder without due consideration of their audience. The professional code of conduct which was adopted by the MCM and JAMA must be fully observed by journalists and the MCM must further strengthen its abilities to censure journalists who contravene the code.

It also means that journalists must take unionization seriously to enable them to bargain with newspapers' owners when they feel that owners are forcing them to compromise professional standards. Therefore, organizations such as the MCM, the JAMA, the Electronic Media Workers Union and the local MISA chapter, NAMISA, should form stronger bonds with their individual members and take active interest in the professional constraints faced by journalists daily.

Providing audiences with wider choices will mean putting in place legislation that enables a wide ownership of newspapers. It could also include making capital available for a new breed of owners apart from those that are already in newspaper ownership especially those not connected to political parties. Such a diversified newspaper market

would enable newspaper readers to compare coverage and realize which newspapers are more credible and beneficial for democratic growth.

### **8.5.3 Respect for the Law and Freedom of Expression**

Another way of doing away with such biased framing as exposed in this study is for those who deal with the press to fully respect the country's laws, especially the Constitution which provides for a free press and freedom of speech and expression. Ever so often law enforcement officers and government officials have not fully respected these provisions. Journalists have been victims of illegal actions by these officials including imprisonment. In some cases, government has withheld advertisement from some newspapers as a form of punishment for being critical. The case of the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* between 1998 and 2000 is a good example. The NPL newspapers have faced similar action since 2009. Further, the government has been reluctant to bring to parliament the proposed Freedom of Access to Information bill which would permit free access to public records. President Bingu wa Mutharika also signed into law an amendment of Section 46 of the Penal Code which permits a cabinet Minister to argue for the ban of a publication despite receiving requests from the United Nations urging him not to do so as this amendment contravenes Section 36 of the Constitution on freedom of the press<sup>i</sup>.

According to Berger (2007, p.152), these failures to fully comply with the law may lead to cynicism on the part of some journalists:

. . . the resulting journalism also feels unconstrained to respect the law, the consequent coverage further fuels governmental intolerance – and the use by authorities of laws – including non-media laws, to clamp down (p.152).

Thus, the government must lead by example by abiding by the law in order to avoid the development of opportunistic and cavalier approaches to the law by journalists.

As Berger (2007) notes, the challenge is to change deeply entrenched non-transparent and control-oriented political and journalistic cultures into more open tolerant ones. The following section attempts to present some recommendations that could alleviate the conditions that lead to such lop-sided framing of important political issues.

Journalists, press regulators, and owners in Malawi need to understand the role of the press in a democracy. Further, they need to understand better the law and the provisions of the law regarding the press. In this respect, journalism training programs in Malawi have an important role. Journalists and media practitioners who are already in the field need to share comparative information including standards for professional practice, media policies and law. Thus, relevant bodies such as the MCM, JAMA, and the local chapter of the MISA would be important agencies. Such information could be disseminated through professional seminars and regular publications. The Malawi Chapter of MISA holds annual award ceremonies which recognize professionalism in journalism. Apart from encouraging competition among journalists, this encourages the development of a professional spirit.

The public and the press need to be acutely aware of the constitutional provision for a free press inherent in Malawi's Constitution. Further, the public and the press must be made aware of the international conventions on press freedom which the government has voluntarily signed. Some of these include Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa. An increased

awareness of these provisions will empower the press against political pressure and encourage it to act responsibly in the public interest.

Further, the public need to be made aware of the Journalist's Professional Code of Conduct and the fact that the MCM has a Complaints Committee which handles issues of accuracy and truthfulness (or lack of these). If the public are aware of this, journalists will be less tempted to cut corners with accuracy and truthfulness.

#### **8.5.4 Diversification of Newspapers**

An ideal media model for Malawi should be motivated by the need to create a public sphere that is not vulnerable to state or market constraints. Thompson (1995, p.241) argued that in order to create a:

. . . media that is neither part of the state or dependent on the market it is necessary to regulate market processes in such a way that diversity and pluralism are not undermined by the concentration of economic and symbolic power.

For Thompson (1995, p.241) the "regulated pluralism" he is suggesting here:

. . . takes seriously the traditional liberal emphasis on freedom of expression and on the importance of sustaining media institutions which are independent of state power.

On the other hand, the same principle:

. . . also recognises that the market left to itself will not necessarily secure the conditions of freedom of expression and promote diversity and pluralism in the sphere of communication. (p.241).

This study has demonstrated the narrow partisan framing inherent in the Malawian press especially during the 1994 and 1999 case studies. One way of mitigating for this

problem is diversification of media ownership. The country needs truly independent newspapers are needed to provide readers with a wide range of opinions and critical analyses of events and public figures. The process of diversification of Malawian newspapers could benefit from some action from both government and the private sector.

The government could encourage diversification by resisting the urge to prevent advertising in some newspapers. The government has withdrawn advertising from some newspapers as a form of punishment for being too critical against the government. The case of the BNL newspapers and the *Chronicle* in the period between 1998 and 2002 is illustrative as is the case of the NPL newspaper between 2008 and 2011.

Further, the government could encourage advertising by removing tax on advertising. This, in turn, will make advertising cheaper and encourage advertiser. In the process, the advertising base will be extended for the benefit of newspapers. The government should also eliminate or reduce duty charged on the importation of newsprint. The import duty is something which newspapers pass on to the reader. Eliminating it will bring the cost of the newspaper down and encourage more readership.

Chiyamwaka (2009) notes that media run by professional journalists in Malawi has proved to be balanced and accurate and taking care to provide critical and analytical assessments of the political issues in the country. One way of encouraging professional journalists to venture into the newspaper business is provide them with the necessary financial and management skills needed to run businesses. In this respect, the journalism training programmes in the country have a major role to play.

## **8.6 Areas for Further Research**

This study was preoccupied with attempting to detect frames in newspaper editorials and the National Assembly of Malawi and comparing those frames to establish the influence of press owners and their alignment, or lack of such alignment, to

centres of political power. If a newspaper was owned by a politician would that newspaper favour the political position of its owner's party? Would the party's political position, as reflected in parliament, be reflected in the newspaper and be identified as the newspaper's position? Do the interconnections among newspaper owners, political parties and professional journalists reflect in the editorials appearing in Malawi's press? What do the answers to all these questions reveal about the press and the way it serves democracy in Malawi?

The above questions informed the process of this study in three case studies spread out over a period of ten years. It was not possible to be exhaustive in the context of a single, limited study. In this respect, this study, in the process of answering the above questions, has revealed other areas that need to be examined in order to throw more light on the answers arrived at in this study. This could be in the context of continuing efforts to examine and find answers to the questions bedevilling the media in Malawi in its reportage and commentary of political issues in crucial milieu such as during post election periods.

Perhaps the main area for the continued research of press content and frame theory in the Malawi political communication context is to examine news items. Since this study only concentrated on newspaper editorials and compared their frames against frames emerging out of parliamentary speeches, a logical next step would be to examine newspapers' news items especially front-page articles. This kind of study, applying frame theory, would be more nuanced in the frames detected. It could be able to show journalists sources and the main actors in the news. In this respect, that kind of study would go beyond the political position of the newspapers and their owners. It would reveal the total reporting practice of a newspaper.

Another area requiring further research is a study on the professional journalistic culture of Malawian press journalists. This study has exposed the vagaries of the relationship between the press owners and centres of political power. Yet it has also revealed the centrality of journalism practice in the broad context of political communication. What the study has not done is to examine the way professional journalists will operate in the context of these unstable shifting relationships between press owners and political parties. Further, the journalism profession continues to change all over the world, affected by economic, political and technological developments. The same is true for Malawi. It is, therefore, important to examine the influence of owners' motivation, the commercial imperatives, and the role of the internet in Malawian journalism.

It is also important to examine the twin processes of 'casualisation' and 'juniorisation' of newsrooms among other factors which affect the journalism profession. Due to the legacy of the single party system when journalists were distrusted, there was no incentive to start journalism or media courses in the country's institutions of higher learning. When the media sector was liberalised in 1992, it was flooded by untrained journalists whose main motive was to help opposition politicians get rid of the single party system. As the years have passed since 1992, several media or journalism courses have been developed among various institutions of higher learning in the country. It would be important to find out how these have impacted on the political communication situation and the framing of issues. It could also address issues related to the in-fighting that has plagued journalists' unionisation and the adoption of professional journalism codes (See Cammack, 2000).

Related to all the above would be the need to closely research issues of appropriate funding models for a press system that can best serve the public sphere and help to

transform Malawian democratic institutions towards a better democracy. The informal broadcast system now in place needs to be examined in its totality to learn lessons that can be applied to the press.

## 8.7 Conclusion

During the different milieu of the three case studies covered by this study, the relationship between journalism, newspaper owners and political parties dictated the way the press frames issues of political importance. Emerging out of a single party system of governance, the 1994 case study observed that the press was highly polarised with newspapers being allied either with the new ruling party or with the opposition. In this manner, the position of the newspapers on these political issues was highly reflective of relevant political parties' positions as revealed in parliamentary speeches. The 1999 case study revealed the continuing influence of owners on their newspapers with newspapers continuing to frame issues along party lines. There was a reversal in the manner of framing in 2004 with MPs taking cues from the editorial writers. All this can be traced to the changes in ownership and owners political re-alignment.

The above state of affairs resulted in three forms of journalism in Malawi. The newspapers which basically supported the opposition political position exhibited the "opposition" model of journalism observed by some scholars of the African press such as Chuma (2006). The newspapers supporting the ruling elite exhibited the "government" model of journalism observed by Malawian media scholars (Chimombo & Chimombo, 1996). These two types of journalism exhibited the political binaries existing during the milieu of the 1994 and the 1999 case studies. However, freed from the burden of following political party-lines, all the newspapers exhibited an analytical position that refused to take cues from politicians but actually gave MPs in the National



Assembly cues. This type of journalism was labelled as the “national interest” model in accordance with Chuma (2007) conceptualisation.

The study also observed the power of national culture and political culture in the interpretation of the emergent frames. The interpretation drew on strong references to metaphors and religion giving credence to the principle prevalent in frame theory that in order to be resonant a frame ought to resonate with the culture.

This study has also argued that in order to nurture a vibrant press that serves the interests of the newspapers reading public, changes have to be put in place at the levels of media policy and practice. The press corps must develop an acceptable level of ethics that reflects its function in the national interest. Further, the ownership of the press must diversify with more owners who do not have political connections and interest. Issues of partisan interest in press ownership must be properly discussed and defined.

**APPENDIX I****BRIEF HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF MALAWI'S POLITICAL HISTORY  
SINCE 1963**

- 1963 - Malawi (whose colonial name was Nyasaland) attains self-Government status under Great Britain, with MCP as the majority party and Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda as Prime Minister. By this act, Nyasaland is removed from the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (comprising of Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia. This also spells the end of the Federation.
- 1964 - Malawi gains independence from Great Britain with Dr. Banda as prime minister and the MCP ruling party. This marks the beginning of a political era characterised by systematic human rights abuses and consolidation of Dr. Banda and the MCP's dictatorial rule.
- 1966 - Malawi becomes a republic and de facto one party state with Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda as President and the MCP as the ruling party.
- 1970 - Malawi adopts a new constitution which makes the country a single party state under the MCP and Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda as Life President.
- 1992 - The Catholic Bishops in Malawi issue their Lenten Letter which calls for political freedom in Malawi. This marks the beginning of open opposition to Dr. Banda and the MCP's rule in Malawi. Under both diplomatic pressure and emboldened internal opposition, Dr. Banda agrees to a referendum in which the people of Malawi would decide on whether or not they want a multiparty political system.
- 1993 - The referendum outcome is in favour of a multiparty political system.

1994 - The first multiparty elections are held in the country since 1964. Bakili Muluzi of the UDF is elected president. The UDF emerge with majority seats in parliaments but not enough to rule effectively. By September, the UDF persuades the AFORD to leave the MCP/AFORD opposition alliance to enter into a coalition government.

1997 - Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda passes away.

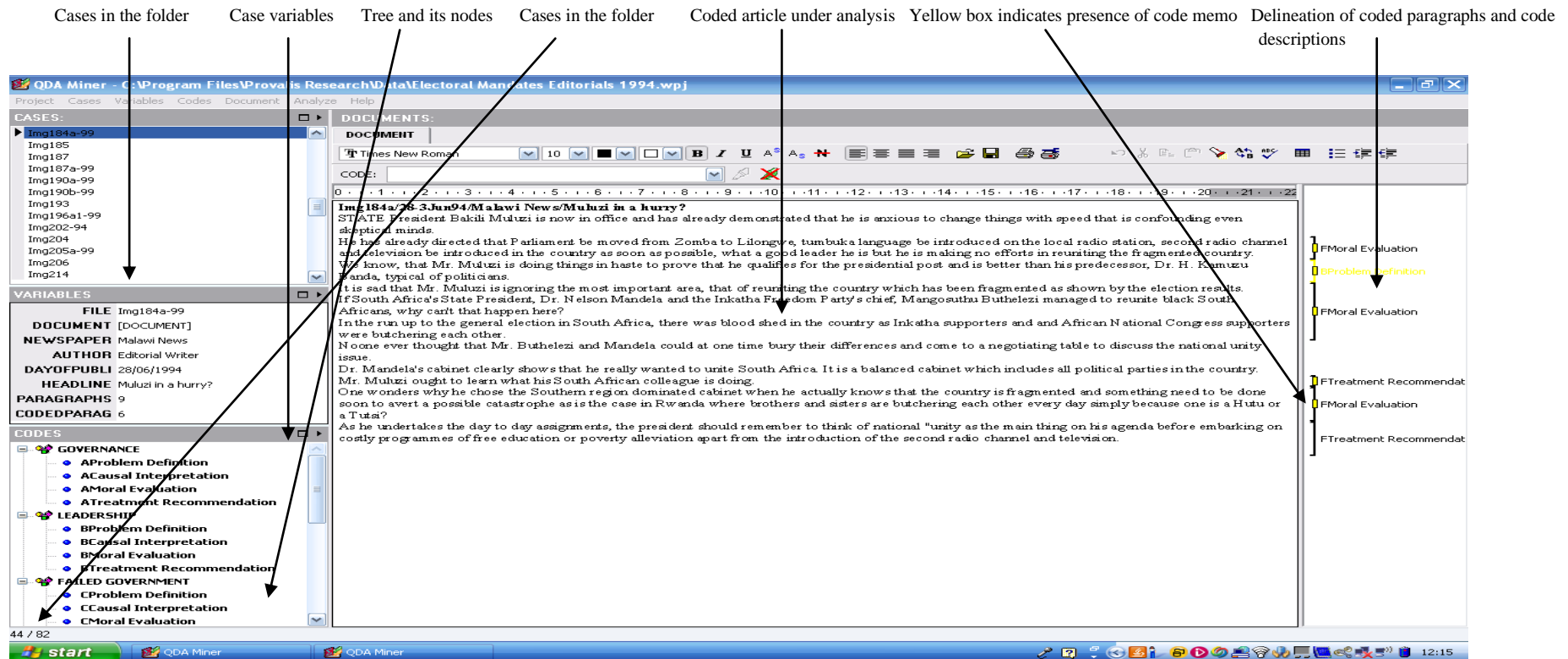
1999 - Bakili Muluzi and the UDF win a narrow and disputed victory in Malawi's second democratic elections. Violence erupts in the Northern and Southern Regions of the country.

2002 - The UDF attempt to change constitution to enable Dr. Bakili Muluzi to run for a third term. The move is defeated in parliament and finally abandoned after it becomes clear that the changes would be rejected in subsequent sittings of parliament. Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika becomes the UDF's presidential candidate for the 2004 elections.

2004 – Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika wins a narrow victory in the presidential elections becoming Malawi's third president. However, the UDF loses its majority status in parliament. In September 2004, the UDF becomes an opposition party as Mutharika leaves the party to form his own party.

## APPENDIX II

# QDA MINER INTERFACE ON COMPUTER MONITOR AFTER OPEN CODING OF AN EDITORIAL APPEARING IN THE MALAWI NEWS OF 28<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1994 ENTITLED “MULUZI IN A HURRY”



### APPENDIX III

#### OPEN CODING FOR A NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL AN EDITORIAL APPEARING IN THE *MALAWI NEWS* OF 28<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1994 ENTITLED “MULUZI IN A HURRY”

SOURCE TEXT	COMPONENT	REASONING ON CODING MEMO	ISSUE
He has already directed that Parliament be moved from Zomba to Lilongwe, tumbuka language be introduced on the local radio station, second radio channel and television be introduced in the country as soon as possible, what a good leader he is but he is making no efforts in reuniting the fragmented country.	Causal Interpretation	Accuses the presidential of focusing on the wrong issues instead of ‘reuniting’ the nation. By using the word ‘reuniting’, the MN seems to take the view that there was unity before fragmentation. The MN assumes that such unity was shattered by the new dispensation.	Leadership
We know, that Mr. Muluzi is doing things in haste to prove that he qualifies for the presidential post and is better than his predecessor, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda, typical of politicians.	Problem Definition	Muluzi want to prove that he is better than Kamuzu. In doing so, he is ignoring the impact his directions will have on the people.	Leadership
It is sad that Mr. Muluzi is ignoring the most important area, that of reuniting the country which has been fragmented as shown by the election results. . . . Dr. Mandela's cabinet clearly shows that he really wanted to unite South Africa. It is a balanced cabinet which includes all political parties in the country.	Moral Evaluation	The MN is advocating for a national unity drawing on the South African example. The president is ignoring examples from close by nations. He should be working with all political parties. His government should be all inclusive taking the example of South Africa.	Leadership
Mr. Muluzi ought to learn what his South African colleague is doing.	Treatment Recommendation	The MN is advocating for a government of national unity drawing on the South African example	Leadership
One wonders why he chose the Southern region dominated cabinet when he actually knows that the country is fragmented and something need to be done soon to avert a possible catastrophe as is the case in Rwanda where brothers and sisters are butchering each other every day simply because one is a Hutu or a Tutsi?	Moral Evaluation	The MN assesses the president as being unwise by having his cabinet southern dominated rather than more balanced based on all the three regions.	Leadership
. . . the president should remember to think of national unity as the main thing on his agenda before embarking on costly programmes . . .	Treatment Recommendation		Leadership

## APPENDIX IV

NEWSPAPER CLIP OF AN EDITORIAL APPEARING IN THE *MALAWI NEWS*  
OF 28<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1994 ENTITLED "MULUZI IN A HURRY"

**COMMENT**

## Muluzi in a hurry?

STATE President Bakili Muluzi is now in office and has already demonstrated that he is anxious to change things with speed that is confounding even skeptical minds.

He has already directed that Parliament be moved from Zomba to Lilongwe, tumbuka language be introduced on the local radio station, second radio channel and television be introduced in the country as soon as possible, what a good leader he is but he is making no efforts in reuniting the fragmented country.

We know, that Mr. Muluzi is doing things in haste to prove that he qualifies for the presidential post and is better than his predecessor, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda, typical of politicians.

It is sad that Mr. Muluzi is ignoring the most important area, that of reuniting the country which has been fragmented as shown by the election results.

If South Africa's State President, Dr. Nelson Mandela and the Inkatha Freedom Party's chief, Mangosuthu Buthelezi managed to reunite black South Africans, why can't that happen here?

In the run up to the general election in South Africa, there was blood shed in the country as Inkatha supporters and African National Congress supporters were butchering each other.


Noone ever thought that Mr. Buthelezi and Mandela could at one time bury their differences and come to a negotiating table to discuss the national unity issue.

Dr. Mandela's cabinet clearly shows that he really wanted to unite South Africa. It is a balanced cabinet which includes all political parties in the country.

Mr. Muluzi ought to learn what his South African colleague is doing.

One wonders why he chose the Southern region dominated cabinet when he actually knows that the country is fragmented and something need to be done soon to avert a possible catastrophe as is the case in Rwanda where brothers and sisters are butchering each other every day simply because one is a Hutu or a Tutsi?

As he undertakes the day to day assignments, the president should remember to think of national "unity as the main thing on his agenda before embarking on costly programmes of free education or poverty alleviation apart from the introduction of the second radio channel and television.



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## APPENDIX V

## PILOT STUDY HOLSTI INTERCODER RELIABILITY CALCULATIONS

**EDITORIALS 1994**

Researcher = 72  
 Coder 1 = 65  
 Coder 2 = 59  
 Aggregate = 196  
 Agreement =  $56 \times 3 = 168$   
 Reliability =  $168/196 = 0.857$

**PARLIAMENTARY 1994**

Researcher = 68  
 Coder 1 = 59  
 Coder 2 = 54  
 Aggregate = 181  
 Agreement =  $44 \times 3 = 132$   
 Reliability =  $132/181 = 0.729$

**EDITORIALS 1999**

Researcher = 61  
 Coder 1 = 58  
 Coder 2 = 50  
 Aggregate = 169  
 Agreement =  $46 \times 3 = 138$   
 Reliability =  $138/169 = 0.816$

**PARLIAMENTARY 1999**

Researcher = 24  
 Coder 1 = 18  
 Coder 2 = 15  
 Aggregate = 57  
 Agreement =  $15 \times 3 = 45$   
 Reliability =  $45/57 = 0.789$

**EDITORIAL 2004**

Researcher = 68  
 Coder 1 = 63  
 Coder 2 = 57  
 Aggregate = 188  
 Agreement =  $52 \times 3 = 156$   
 Reliability =  $188/156 = 0.829$

**PARLIAMENTARY 2004**

Researcher = 34  
 Coder 1 = 31  
 Coder 2 = 29  
 Aggregate = 94  
 Agreement =  $28 \times 3 = 84$   
 Reliability =  $84/94 = 0.893$

## **APPENDIX VI**

### **PEER REVIEW FEEDBACK OF THE AXIAL CODING STAGE**

11 August 2009

Japhet,

Find below our review of your coding scheme.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

### **FIRST CASE STUDY**

#### **UNITY AND RECONCILIATION**

This is the only category in which we differed. So, I have written down our thoughts separately:

[REDACTED] I thought that the theme group was appropriately named. The majority of the coded statements are drawn from the MN and DT. Your memos embedded with the some of the statements indicate that this seems to be an agenda of the MCP and the AFORD. I have critically examined these coded statements and I have found that any discussion of reconciliation is usually linked to unity. Unity, on the other hand, is appearing in some cases without discussion of reconciliation. Perhaps, you should consider labelling this category just UNITY.

[REDACTED] I have no problem with leaving it the way it is. I believe that it makes it possible to widen and thicken you discussion of this category. Of course, to achieve this you will have to provide adequate contextual information.

#### **REGIONALISM**

After the above it is only logical to move on to this theme group. Apart from being the smallest category we have both struggled to understand how different it is from UNITY. Could you enlighten us? Otherwise, we think that the issues of regionalism are inherent to UNITY. REGIONALISM is the smallest category. You would benefit greatly by merging it with UNITY.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND IDEOLOGY**

We both think that the coded statements under this theme group do not address the question of ideology. We agreed that ideology has to do with principles. The theme group is primarily about governance. True, the dichotomy of good governance and bad governance is reflected in this discussion of good/bad governance. But ultimately this is about governance not ideology. We both attended your presentation last year at the research conference. As everyone noted your paper was not about ideology. Ideology has never been an issue in Malawi since 1993. What has been an issue is governance. In short, we suggest



that you change the labelling of that theme group. Our suggestion is that you simply call it Governance.

### **PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP AND PERSONALITY**

We have a slightly different problem here: The labelling for this theme group seems to suggest that there is discussion is about the president, his leadership style and his personality. That is only true to a certain extent. In fact, after discussion we are agreed that for the most part this theme group is about the president's style of leadership rather than his personality. Of course, they are some coded statements that discuss his personality but those are invariably linked to his style of leadership. So, it is prudent to simply call this theme group, Leadership. In that way you can discuss issues related to leadership and how his personality influences his style of leadership.

### **REJECTED GOVERNMENT or FAILED GOVERNMENT**

We note your struggle with the same here. We have also grappled with that question a lot. But having examined the statements grouped under this category we are convinced that the better of the two terms is FAILED GOVERNMENT. If you examine the coded statements place under this category closely you get an understanding that people have rejected the government because it has failed. Not the other way around. Why don't you just call it FAILED GOVERNMENT?

## **SECOND CASE STUDY**

### **PARLIAMENTARY CATEGORIES**

You have two parliamentary categories composed on 31 coded statements all coming out of the same party. We can understand your dilemma here. We can understand the reason why you want to remove the parliament aspect in this case study. But we also strongly think that these categorises reveal something about political communication in Malawi and its delusional and propagandistic nature. We are sure that it can be supported sufficiently by your analytical procedure and should be included. We do not know much about your theoretical base. But for the sake of faithfulness to your original study aims we believe you need to address these categories. It is also a central concept in qualitative research that researchers should always be looking out for 'deviant' cases to add credibility to their research. Maybe there is an opportunity here. We don't know how but there has got to be something you can do about this.

### **NEWSPAPER CATEGORIES**

#### **MANDATE RENEWAL FOR SUCCESSFUL GOVERNMENT**

We had no problems with the codes placed under this category. Just think again about the label. It is not pithy enough.

#### **OUTCOME'S NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES and OUTCOME'S POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES**

There are some studies done in Europe about frame theory. [REDACTED] read a paper by Semetko et al (2003) when we came to this part of your code book scheme. They called something similar the Economic Consequences Frame. We understood quickly from a news values point of view - Human Impact. The coded statements in these two categories can easily be brought together under a single category if you look careful at this news value and this generic frame.

### **ELECTIONS AFTERMATH**

There is a disconnect between what is in this category and the label. The statements in there are all about the opposition's frustration with the electoral process. Calling it ELECTIONS AFTERMATH makes it sound like the category is about the events after the elections in general not the management of the electoral process in particular. We suggest you change that labelling.

### **THIRD CASE STUDY**

Some of what we stated in the foregoing apply to some of the categories in this case study. These include OUTCOME'S NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES and OUTCOME'S POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES, MANDATE RENEWAL FOR SUCCESSFUL GOVERNMENT, REJECTED GOVERNMENT or FAILED GOVERNMENT and ELECTIONS AFTERMATH.

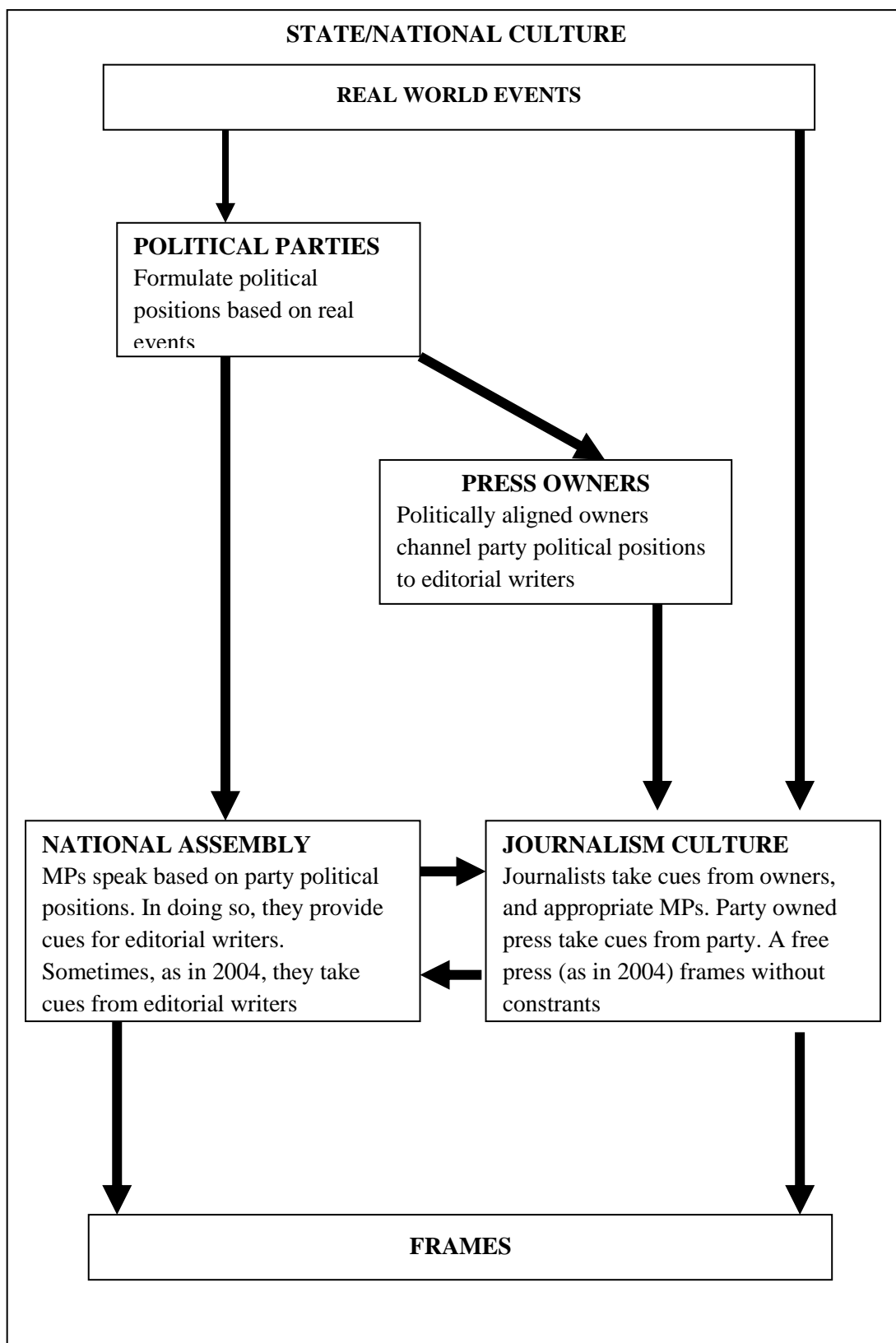
It is interesting that your treatment of the Leadership, Unity and Governance categories in this case study confirm most of recommendations in our suggestions for the first case study. May be that is the bane of qualitative researchers - constant comparison and merging and re-merging of categories.

Best wishes!

[REDACTED]

## APPENDIX VII

## A MODEL FOR FRAMING POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN MALAWI



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