

**A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE BORDER DISPUTE
BETWEEN THE LIVINGSTONIA AND NKHOMA
SYNODS OF THE CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRICA
PRESBYTERIAN (1956-2015- A1 & C1)**

By

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**A Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Humanities of the
University of KwaZulu-Natal**

Pietermaritzburg,

South Africa.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

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Professor Philippe Denis PhD (Supervisor)

Pietermaritzburg, 18 August 2016

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to understand the political, socio-cultural and ecclesiastical circumstances which explain why [ethnicity is a recurrent problem in](#) the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) [and why it](#) has reached a stalemate [\(B 3\)](#). To accomplish this, the study engages a combination of three theories developed by Antonio Gramsci, Horace M. Kallen and David J. Bosch, namely the Gramscian Hegemonic Theory, Cultural Pluralism Theory and Mission in Unity Theory, in that order. Methodologically, it relies on documentation, interviews and archival sources.

This thesis [provides a historical background to the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute. It also](#) has shown that after the transfer [of \(A1\)](#) the Kasungu Station to the Dutch Reformed Church Mission by the Livingstonia Mission the boundary between the two missions was the Dwangwa River in the Kasungu District and the Bua River in the Nkhotakota District, as agreed in 1923 and affirmed in 1958. However, the boundary was purposely disregarded for missiological and political reasons. This is why the study argues that the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute [is](#) not territorial, but rather it [is](#) political along ethnic lines. Ethnicity [is](#) employed by the elite and bourgeoisie who prey on the people's perceptions towards language, educational and economic discrepancies, as a tool for in-group mobilisation and counter-mobilisation. It [is](#) through the attempt to dominate the other ethnic groups and resist the domination resulted into the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods. Therefore, ethnicity represents dominance and resistance. This also explains why the border dispute reached a stalemate. Therefore, the study argues that the ethnic cleavages between the Chewa and non-Chewa, as presented in the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute, were not based on primordial motives, but rather it was consciously crafted for mobilisation by the elites and the bourgeoisie within the CCAP. It [is](#) a creation of the church leaders [with support of few church members](#). The church leaders showed more loyalty to their Synods than to Christianity and ecclesiastical unity. Their action is not only against the *missio Dei* but it is counterproductive to the nation-building. It is divisive and a betrayal to the Christian church's noble calling in the fragmented world. The thesis has also shown that if religious and ethnic identities overlap, most ordinary church members, unlike their leaders, show loyalty to Christianity as their common bond. In the light of the no-border resolution, the study asks whether there is one CCAP or many CCAPs, and whether the missiological approaches opted for by the two Synods are in tandem with the *missio Dei*. [\(B 3\)](#)

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[A 2,3,4; B 1](#)

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DEDICATION

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ABBREVIATION

AFORD – Alliance for Democracy

BSAC – British South Africa Company

CBFMN – Consultative Board of the Federated Missions in Nyasaland

CCAP – Church of Central Africa Presbyterian

CCAR – Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia

CCC – Christ Church in China

CLTC – Christian Lay Training Centre

CMS – Church Missionary Society

COI – Commission of Inquiry

DANO – District Administrative Native Ordinance

DCC – District Church Council

DPP – Democratic Progressive Party

DRC – Dutch Reformed Church

DRCM – Dutch Reformed Church Mission

ECS – Established Church of Scotland

FCS – Free Church of Scotland

FMC – Foreign Mission Committee

GMC – General Mission Committee

JTCC – Joint Theological College Committee

LMC – Livingstonia Mission Council

LMS – London Missionary Society

MCP – Malawi Congress Party
MMU – Ministers’ Mission Union
MNA – Malawi National Archives
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding
NAC – Nyasaland African Congress
N.C.O – Non-commissioned Officer (a rank in armed forces)
NGK – Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NLS – National Library of Scotland
NSTA – Nkhoma Synod Teachers’ Association
PAC – Public Affairs Committee
PCCA – Presbyterian Church of Central Africa
PCSA – Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
PCZ – Presbyterian Church of Zambia
P.E.A. – Presbyterian [Church] in East Africa
RC – Roman Catholic Church
RCZ – Reformed Church of Zambia
SLA – Synod of Livingstonia Archives
SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences
STA – Sub-Traditional Authority
St. – Stellenbosch
UCCAR – United Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia
UCZ – United Church of Zambia
UDF – United Democratic Front
UFCS – United Free Church of Scotland
UMCA – Universities’ Mission to Central Africa

UPC – United Presbyterian Church

UPCSA – Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa

WARC – World of Reformed Churches

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Motivation to the Study

This study seeks to [explain](#) why [ethnicity in a recurrent problem in \(B 0](#) the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) [and why it](#) has reached a stalemate [B 5](#). The crux of the matter was that the two Synods made different claims what was the boundary between them after the transfer of the Kasungu Station from the Livingstonia Mission to the Dutch Reformed (DRCM) in 1924. The Synod of Livingstonia claimed that the Dwangwa and Bua Rivers were its southern boundary in Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts between the Nkhoma Synod and itself (in figure 1.1). Similarly, the Nkhoma Synod made a claim that the Milenje Stream and the Dwangwa River as its northerly boundary in the Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts between the Synod of Livingstonia and itself (in figure 6.7). Since the emergency of this border dispute in 1956, there has been no lasting solution to the problem. The Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute has been debated along ethnic lines. It is embedded in the history of the two Synods and Malawi as a nation. Considering how this border dispute has been debated, this thesis argues that the border dispute was not territorial, but rather it was political. As the study will show, ethnicity displays dominance and resistance.

Various studies on ethnicity in Malawi, particularly between the Chewa of the Central Region and ethnic groups in northern Malawi, have highlighted that colonial administration policies, missionaries' language manipulation¹, the group experience of some Malawians who suffered under the despotic rule of Dr Banda², and demographic size contributed to the ethnic cleavages.³

¹ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi" in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, London: University of California Press, 1989, 169-173, 179, W.C. Chirwa, "Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience, 1992-1996" in *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*, edited by Kings M. Phiri and Kenneth R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998, 52-69; B. Mkandawire, "Ethnicity, Language and Cultural Violence: Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda's Malawi, 1964-1994," in *The Society of Malawi Journal*, 63: 1, 2010, pp 23-42.

² D. Kaspin, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Malawi's Democratic Transition," in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 33: 4, 1995, 616.

³ D.N. Posner, "The Political Saliency of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," in *American Political Science Review*, 98: 4, 2004, 531.

However, the question of what happens when religious and ethnic identities overlap has not been adequately addressed. It is against this background that this study asks why ethnicity is a recurrent problem in the border dispute between the Synod of Livingstonia and the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), and why the border dispute [is still unresolved \(B5\)](#). This study seeks to understand the political, socio-cultural and religious circumstances which explain why ethnicity is a recurrent problem in the border dispute of the two Synods, why the border dispute [is an outstanding issue in the CCAP \(B 6\)](#). [While the study discusses ethnicities as they manifested, understood and defined by the CCAP, its focus will be on the history of the CCAP border dispute, and how these ethnicities have been exposed as a result of border dispute debates \(B 01\)](#). This study focuses on the period from 1875 to date [although the border dispute began in 1956 \(A 9\)](#). The year 1875 has been chosen because it was when the first Christian mission was permanently established in the region of Lake Nyasa. The topic under investigation is part of the studies that discuss how ethnic preferences shape ecclesiastical and political debates in Africa in [\(A11\)](#) light of the politics of inclusion and exclusion. This thesis will be read using the lens of the three theories, namely, the Gramscian Hegemonic Theory, Cultural Pluralism, as popularised by Horace Kallen, and Unity in Mission, as espoused by David Bosch. This chapter provides an overview of the study, and raises the main questions to be interrogated in the subject under investigation. This chapter also discusses the research design, the theoretical framework, as well as the significance, and it ends with the thesis chapter outline.

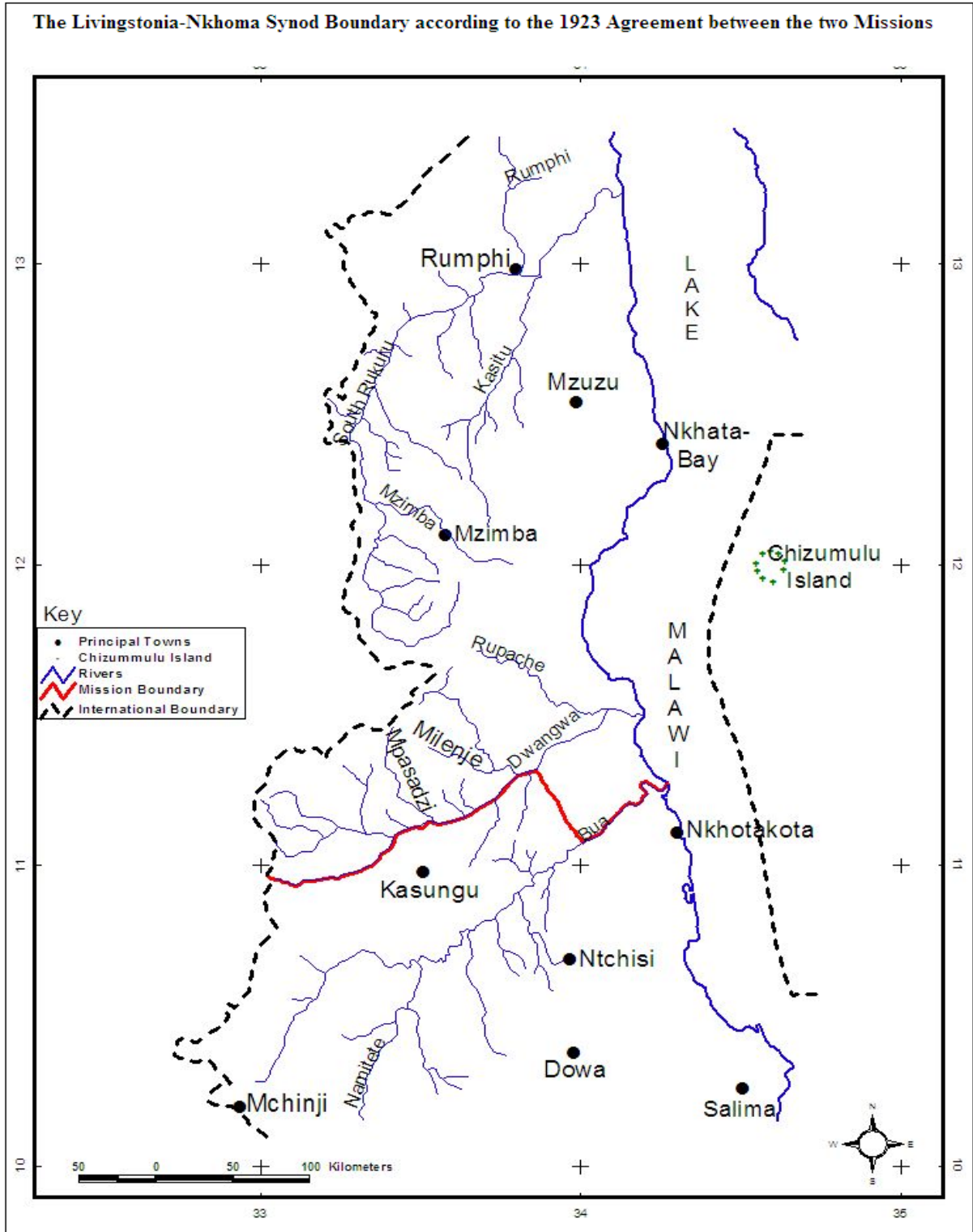


Figure 1.1 Map showing the first boundary between the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM following the meeting of 1923 between two missions

1.1.1 Brief historical background to the border dispute

This section gives a brief introduction to history of the CCAP border dispute. To begin with, the CCAP was formed in 1924, following the amalgamation of the Blantyre Mission of the Established Church of Scotland and the Livingstonia Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland. In 1926, the Nkhoma Dutch Reformed Church Mission joined the CCAP after a long discussion with the Livingstonia missionaries, especially Robert Laws. The Kasungu Station [\(B 12\)](#) of the Livingstonia Mission was handed over to the DRCM in order to persuade the DRCM to join the CCAP.⁴ By 1926, the three missions, despite having different backgrounds of origin and traditions, formed one united Church, the CCAP. It is the transfer of Kasungu Station that is crucial to the understanding of the border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods.

In church circles and in the academia, it is alleged that the transfer of the Kasungu Station was based on ethnicity, and that the boundary between the two missions was ambiguously established. It is also said that the use of language in worship services in the Synod of Livingstonia's congregations in the north of the Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts between the late 1960s and the mid-1970s, contributed to the border dispute.⁵ However, the question of whether the boundary was established after the transfer is not properly documented in the literature.

Some scholars have linked the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute to the creation of the regional boundaries in 1921 by the colonial administration, in which the country was divided into three administrative regions (they were then called provinces): the Southern Region, the Central Region and the Northern Region. On this basis, most studies have concluded that ethnicity, regionalism and religion in Malawi are coterminous.⁶ This assumption is historically incorrect because these studies do not take in consideration the fact that the 1921 regional boundary was altered three times. Secondly, they mistake the 1946 regional boundary for the 1921 provincial boundary, which are two different entities. Furthermore, they assume that the CCAP Synods'

⁴ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi: The Study of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962*, Th.D. diss., University of Stellenbosch, 1980, 271.

⁵ CCAP General Assembly, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Border Dispute between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma," Lilongwe Office, 2006, 10; W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church During the First Years of Autonomy: An Ecclesiological Study," Th.D. diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2005, 250; H.F.C. Zgambo, "Conflict within the Church: A theological Approach to Conflict Resolution with special reference to the Boundary Dispute between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods in Malawi," MTh Thesis, University of Fort Hare, 2011, 39.

⁶ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi" 152.

boundaries were identical to the regional borders,⁷ yet they are not. This does not underestimate the Synods' influence in each of the political regions, but points out to the fact that the common understanding of the region's geography is misleading.

The Blantyre Synod had most congregations in the Southern Region and some congregations in the Central Region, particularly the Ntcheu District. Similarly, the Nkhoma Synod had most congregations in the Central Region and some congregations in the Southern Region, specifically in the Mangochi District. Similarly, the Synod of Livingstonia had congregations in northern Malawi, eastern Zambia and some in central Malawi, particularly in the Nkhotakota and Kasungu Districts. This geographical description is completely misleading, and misrepresented in most studies discussing the history of the CCAP, on the one hand, and discussing politics, ethnicity and religion, on the other hand. This is why historians, in telling the history of the CCAP, begin by saying that the Blantyre Mission came to the Southern Region, the DRCM to the Central Region, and the Livingstonia Mission to the Northern Region.⁸ This narrative is historically incorrect, and a misrepresentation of the CCAP history, as Chapters Two and Three will show.

Another factor related to the border dispute is the establishment of agricultural estates in north Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts. After independence, the Malawian government emphasised agriculture, which led to the establishment of tobacco and sugar estates.⁹ The north of the Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts were considered as potential areas where these economic activities could be [developed \(B 7\)](#). The establishment of the estates led to an influx of local migrants from other parts of the country, to work in these estates.¹⁰ These estates were established in the area that was under the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, whose indigenous official languages were Chitumbuka and Chitonga. It is reported, in church, media and academic circles, that CCAP members who were working on these estates and who had a Nkhoma Synod background complained that both Chitumbuka and Chitonga were difficult to speak and understand. This led them to plant their own prayer-houses so that they could worship in their mother-tongue – Chichewa.¹¹ This assumption

⁷ E. Kayambazithu and Falata Moyo, "Hate Speech in the New Malawi" in *A Democracy of Chameleon: Politics and Culture in the New Malawi* edited by Harri Englund, Blantyre: CLAIM, 2002, 92.

⁸ J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, Pretoria: Institute for Missiological Research, 1982, 87.

⁹ R. Carver, *Where Silence Rules: The Suppression of Dissent in Malawi*, London: Africa Watch Report, 1990, 18-19; J. Harrigan, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: Economic Policy in Malawi 1964-2000*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing co, 2001, 12, 31.

¹⁰ Interview [\(A14\)](#) Mr Edgar Kamanga at Mphomwa Trading centre, Kasungu on 24/01/2015.

¹¹ Mother tongue refers to first language a person learnt as a child, although it is not always [the \(A 16\)](#) link to one's membership to a particular ethnic group. However, it is difficult to completely disassociate one's ethnic membership

has led most studies to say that the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute started in the mid-1960s.¹² Yet the border dispute predates the opening of agricultural estates in this area. As a result, these studies do not consider other historical factors within the CCAP history or ask deeper questions. For example, what led to the border dispute in 1956? Martin Ott, questioning the simplistic use of the word regionalism, asked why the literature on religion and regionalism focuses on the CCAP alone. He noted that other mainline churches, such as the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church, have the same structures.¹³ Besides Ott, there is no study [that \(A 13\) \(B 7\)](#) has asked why the border dispute is a problem for the CCAP alone, and why the Roman Catholic Church, which has the same population characteristics as those of the CCAP in the north Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts, does not have the same problem.

Another issue to consider is why the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute resurfaced during the period when Dr Banda was politicising ethnicity by excluding non-Chewa ethnic groups from the public space. The Banda regime banned Chitumbuka as a medium of instruction in schools, in the media and public spaces when the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods started to contest their border along ethnolinguistic differences.¹⁴ The question is whether the two events were concomitant or accidental.

Since 1956, the issue of the border dispute has been discussed between the two Synods, without finding a lasting solution.¹⁵ There were several attempts to resolve the border dispute by partner churches and ecumenical bodies to which CCAP is a member such as the Church of Scotland, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Presbyterian Church in USA, the Dutch Reformed Church, World Council of Reformed Churches and the Southern Africa Alliance of Reformed Churches. Their efforts to resolve the dispute proved futile.

In 1990, after the CCAP General Synod and partner churches failed to solve the border dispute, the Synod of Livingstonia passed a resolution of no-border between the Nkhoma Synod and itself. Although the Synod of Livingstonia passed the resolution of no-border, it did not immediately

to mother's tongue because most people are inclined to communicate [in \(A 15\)](#) a language associated with their ethnicity.

¹² W. L. [\(A 17\)](#) Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church During the First Years of Autonomy: An Ecclesiological Study," Th.D. diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2005, 251.

¹³ M. Ott, "The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999) in *Malawi's Second Democratic Elections*, edited by Martin Ott, Kings M. Phiri & Nandini Patel, Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000, 135.

¹⁴ G.H. Kamwendo, "Ethnic Revival and Language Associations in the New Malawi: The Case of Chitumbuka" in *A Democracy of Chameleon*, edited by Harri Englund, Blantyre: CLAIM, 2002, 141.

¹⁵ Interviewed the Very Rev. Dr F.L. Chingota (2000-2006 General Synod Moderator) at Zomba Theological College on 29/01/2015.

implement it. It only implemented the no-border resolution fifteen years later, after Malawi returned to multiparty politics. The question is, why did the Synod of Livingstonia find it necessary to implement the 1990 no-border resolution at this time and not during the one-party era.

This account provides a background to the main problem of this study. In a preliminary survey, the researcher conducted research on the church records, church press releases, the Report of the 2006 Commission of Inquiry on the CCAP Border Dispute and newspapers, as well as fieldwork¹⁶, which all indicated that the issue underpinning the border dispute was, and still is ethnicity.¹⁷

1.1.2 Statement of the problem

The main problem for this study is why the border dispute between the Synod of Livingstonia and the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) reached a stalemate, and why ethnicity is a recurrent problem in this border dispute. Critical to the study is that ethnicity is emerging as one of the critical political, socioeconomic and ethno-religious issues in Africa and the global village.¹⁸ What happens when religious and ethnic identities overlap, as is the case in the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the CCAP?

In his recent study, Daniel N. Posner ascribed ethnic cleavages between the Chewa of the Central Region and the non-Chewa ethnic groups, found in the Northern Region of Malawi, to demographic size.¹⁹ However, Posner's explanation is unsatisfactory, as it fails [\(A\)](#) to take into consideration other important aspects of the history of Christianity in Malawi and colonial and postcolonial legacies that have shaped Malawian history. Like the authors of other studies, Posner assumed that the Northern and Central Regions are ethnically and linguistically Tumbuka and Chewa, in that order.²⁰ This view does not take into consideration the fact that not all people in the two regions accept to be ascribed, or described as, Chewa or Tumbuka. The [people of these two](#)

¹⁶ The outcome of fieldwork conducted in Malawi showed that ethnicity was used as a resource by church leaders.

¹⁷ I conducted a survey in Malawi, and the data was analysed with content analysis and NVivo 6. The results indicated that ethnicity is one of the recurrent issues underpinning the border dispute between the CCAP Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods.

¹⁸ C. Lentz, "Tribalism and Ethnicity in Africa," in *Cah. Sci. Hum.*, 31:2, 1995, 304.

¹⁹ D.N. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," 531.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 531; See also L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi," 173.

[regions \(B 8\)](#) are ethnically and linguistically distinct from the two mentioned ethnic groups.²¹ Malawian regions are ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous.

Further to this, church historians pay very little attention to how ethnicity interfaces with religion, and most studies on ethnicity in Malawi do not look at history as a process. Vail observed that most studies on ethnicity are primarily concerned with the situation at the time that a phenomenon is studied.²² For example, [most \(B 9\)](#) studies on ethnicity, conducted on, and in [\(A 20\)](#) Malawi after 1994, were largely influenced by the electoral outcome of 1994, without considering other historical factors. Martin Ott rightly observes, “A blunt use of the term regionalism does not take into account the differentiated will of the voter.”²³ It can be added that it does not also consider other factors that influence the electorate’s [\(A 19\)](#) decisions. As this study will show, the assumption made on the basis of the 1994 electoral outcome has been challenged by the electoral results of later elections. Hence, there is a need to re-examine the history of ethnicity from the precolonial period, to ascertain how different ethnic groups have related to each other in Malawi, with particular attention to acculturation, integration and intermarriage, and how these sociological processes shape people’s ethnic identities.

The CCAP is not only one of the influential churches in the country, it is also the main political player in the creation of Malawi as a nation-state, prior to and after 1890, amidst resistance from the British Government and South African British Company to colonise the country.²⁴ It was the Scottish-oriented Synods that supported the African nationalists in their political struggle against the British colonial government, which culminated in Malawi attaining independence in 1964, with the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) as the governing party, and with Dr Banda as the Prime Minister.²⁵ In 1966, Malawi became a republic and Dr Banda became the State President.²⁶ Following the issuance of the 1992 Roman Catholic Pastoral letter, it were the Livingstonia and Blantyre Synods of CCAP that turned the Roman Catholic Church (RC) [Pastoral Letter \(A 22\)](#)

²¹ This study uses the term “ethnic groups” as opposed to “Tumbuka” because [the \(A 21\)](#) term Tumbuka is confusing. See G.H. Kamwendo, “Ethnic Revival and Language Associations in the New Malawi: The Case of Chitumbuka”, 143.

²² L. Vail, “Introduction: Ethnicity in Southern African History,” in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* edited by Leroy Vail, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, 1, 2.

²³ M. Ott, “The Role of the Christians Churches in Democratic Malawi,” 135.

²⁴ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996, 85, 103.

²⁵ J. McCracken, “Democracy and Nationalism in Historical Perspective: The Case of Malawi,” in *African Affairs*, 97: 387, 2002, 238.

²⁶ Hansard, Malawi Parliament, 7th October, 1965, Zomba: Government Print, Synod of Livingstonia Archive (SLA), Box 67.

into a political discourse, leading Malawi to return to multiparty politics in 1994.²⁷ This is why most historians regard the CCAP as a midwife or power broker and a custodian of national identity.²⁸

In reference to the Rwandan scenario, Ott, however, has warned against the propensity of having “high expectations towards Christian churches and their possibilities to mitigate the negative effects of tribalism and regionalism in the modern democratic system.”²⁹ Putting too much emphasis on the functional aspect of the Christian churches could jeopardise a balanced assessment of the role of the Christian church in society. To balance the equation, there is a need to critically re-examine how the Christian church could be functional and dysfunctional in its witnessing. For example, since the CCAP Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute took a new shape in the 2000s, the CCAP is no longer perceived as a midwife in political transition or a custodian of national unity and constitution, but rather it is [\(A 23\)](#) regarded as a catalyst of inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts. This juxtaposition invites to re-examine the role of the Christian church in the society, in the context of [the \(A 24\)](#) ongoing border dispute.

1.1.3 Motivation to the study

The events that took place between 2000 and 2008 played a role in motivating the researcher to undertake this study. Between 1996 and December 2005, there were several attempts by the Synod of Livingstonia to implement its 1990 decision of no-border between the Nkhoma Synod and itself. Despite the protest staged by some of its church ministers against the decision of crossing the border, the Livingstonia Synod began planting congregations inside the Nkhoma Synod’s territory, particularly at the Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts’ headquarters, and in Lilongwe City. Although the Livingstonia Synod’s action was prompted by the Nkhoma Synod’s activities, it is its action which attracted the attention of the media and [the \(A 26\)](#) general public. In 2015, the Nkhoma Synod moderator Chatha Msangaambe, [reminiscing what](#) his Synod had [agreed \(A 27\)](#), is quoted in the *Times Group* to have said,

It is us, CCAP Nkhoma Synod, who proposed that [constitutional review] because our friends, [the] Livingstonia Synod had already stormed our territory. It is normal for them to establish churches

²⁷ M. Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1999.

²⁸ K.R. Ross, “Christain Faith and National Identity,” in *Here Comes your King! Christ, Church and Nation in Malawi*, edited by Kenneth R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998, 159.

²⁹ M. Ott, “The Role of the Christian [\(A 25\)](#) Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999),” 138.

anywhere within our land and we are also going to reach up north. However, it was agreed that because this is a new thing in both synods should be done orderly and maturely.³⁰

Given the history of the border dispute, one wonders why the Nkhoma Synod considered the Synod of Livingstonia to be the one that started to “storm in someone’s territory”, to use Msangaambe’s catch phrase. Why did the Nkhoma Synod not consider its own activities inside the Synod of Livingstonia as storming in someone’s territory?

In the church fora and media, the border dispute was linked to the politicisation of ethnicity during Banda’s regime.³¹ The Synod of Livingstonia’s press statement reads, “Livingstonia Synod, having at last discovered that [the] Nkhoma Synod was pursuing a deliberate policy of following their own children, was convinced that she would follow suit.”³² This statement raises a number of questions. Why was the border dispute debated along ethnolinguistic lines? Why did the Synod of Livingstonia opt for retaliation?

Between 2007 and 2008, while pursuing a Master’s programme at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, the researcher got new insights into the border dispute after reading the missionaries’ archival sources available at the National Library of Scotland and missionaries’ depositories at the University’s libraries. There were inconsistencies between the archival sources and the literature, including the recent church records,³³ and some oral testimonies on the boundary between the two Synods after the transfer of the Kasungu and Tamanda stations of the Livingstonia Mission to the DRCM in 1924. For example, DRC historians claim that William Hoppe Murray accompanied George Prentice of the Livingstonia Mission for a site survey in Kasungu.³⁴ Yet he was not part of the team. The interpretation given in the Report of the 2006 Commission of Inquiry failed to explain why the 1910 boundary between the DRCM and the Livingstonia Mission did not extend to the Lake.³⁵ No body of literature has properly documented the boundary between the two Synods after the transfer of the Kasungu Station. Some church historians, of course, have

³⁰ Article authored by Samuel Kalima in *Times Group* online newspaper of 21st September 2015 titled, “Livingstonia, Nkhoma border resurfaces” <http://www.times.mw/livingstonia-nkhoma-border-battle-resurfaces/> accessed on 8 November, 2015.

³¹ The CCAP Nkhoma Synod, Statement of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod on the Border Issue Between Nkhoma Synod and Synod of Livingstonia issued at the Synod Bi-annual meeting held at Namoni Katengeza C.L.T.C. from 22 to 27 October, 2009, Nkhoma Synod Office, Nkhoma in Lilongwe.

³² The CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, Press Statement issued over the border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods dated 24/10/2008, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

³³ Church records referred in the discussion is that written between 1967 and 2010.

³⁴ J.L. Pretorius, “The Story of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland,” in *The Nyasaland Journal*, 10: 1, 1957, 11.

³⁵ CCAP General Assembly, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Border Dispute,” 25, 35.

generalised it.³⁶ Considering all these inconsistencies, there was a need to re-read the history of the CCAP, with a keen interest in the ongoing border dispute. This is why the researcher embarked on a doctoral programme, in order to establish profundity and analytical precision on the ongoing border dispute between the two CCAP Synods, with the purpose of contributing to the body of knowledge and to fill the gaps of knowledge.

1.1.4 *Defining of terms*

From the onset, it should be noted that the CCAP is the Church, while the Synods are just its courts. For the sake of consistency, the section that discusses the history of the CCAP from September 1924 to April 1956, shall refer to the General Synod, which is the highest court of appeal for the Church, as the “Synod”. After 1956, it shall be referred to as the “General Synod”, because its presbyteries became synods. From 2002, it shall be referred to as the General Assembly.

Between 1924 and the early 1960s, each presbytery/synod of the CCAP had two ecclesiastical structures, namely, mission and the presbytery. Mission, as an institution, meant a body composed of white missionaries, with its administrative committee being the mission council. The mission council was responsible for controlling missionaries and overseas finances, as well as mission station buildings and its institutions, namely, schools and hospitals funded by overseas finances. This was the first structure, which was predominantly European. A presbytery, though also dominated by white missionaries until the early 1960s, was an indigenous body comprised of African indigenous clergy and [church elders \(A 28\)](#). This body was responsible for church discipline for indigenes, as well as the ordination and management of the indigenous church in general.³⁷ Though there were two structures governing one church, the most powerful structure was the mission council, because it was the ultimate decision-making body for all operations of the indigenous church³⁸, including the determination of salaries for indigenous clergy and lay employees of the Church.

³⁶C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 96; J. Weller & J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984, 123 P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, Sneek: T. Wever-Franeker, 1967, 83.

³⁷ T.J. Thompson in *Mainstream Christianity*, 125.

³⁸ The white missionaries were considered as members of the Church, but as founding agents of it until time when the mission and the church were integrated as one.

Although this study focuses on the CCAP, it shall also refer to the sending churches of the missionaries who were part of the CCAP, such as the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa and the Church of Scotland in Britain. Since the word “DRC”, within the South African context, is ambiguous because different churches bear the same name, the DRC Cape Synod will be qualified. This study will refer to it as the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (NGK) in the discussion. The DRC is used as a collective name for all churches with Dutch Reformed identity, unless it is in quote form, in which case clarification will be provided. Most members of the NGK in Malawi were of Dutch-Afrikaner descent. Hence, the Dutch identity shall refer to the church, while Afrikaner identity to the people of Dutch descent and their political system.³⁹

Since this study discusses the [border dispute between Livingstonia and Nkhoma of the CCAP in regard to how Christianity interfaces with](#) ethnicity, it is appropriate to define ethnicity. There is no commonly-agreed definition of ethnicity. It is appropriate to begin by defining the word “ethnic group”. George de Vos defines an ethnic group as a “self-perceived group of people who hold in common a set of traditions not shared by others with whom they are in contact. Such traditions typically include folk religious beliefs and practices, language, a sense of historic continuity, and a common ancestry.”⁴⁰ This implies that an ethnic group is socially constructed by individuals who are involved in an ideological consciousness, based on shared characteristics such as common origin, customs, language, *inter alia*. The common ethnic identification is shaped by historical, political and cultural forces, as members of a specific group come into contact with another group. In this sense, an ethnic group cannot be said to be fixed, but it is contingent, constructed and contested.

Having defined an ethnic group, it is also paramount to understand what an ethnic identity means. According to Jean Phinney, an ethnic identity “is not a fixed categorization, but rather a fluid and dynamic understanding of self and ethnic background. [It] is constructed and modified as individuals become aware of their ethnicity, within the large (socio-cultural) setting.”⁴¹ In this sense, members of a specific ethnic group can only know that they are distinct from other groups [\(A 29\)](#) if they come into contact with other groups, with whom they do not have shared

³⁹ H. Giliomee, “The Beginning of Afrikaner Ethnic Consciousness, 1850-1915,” in *The Creation of Tribalism in South African* edited by Leroy Vail, Berkeley; University of California Press, 1989, 22-23.

⁴⁰ G. DeVos, “Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation,” in *Cultural Continuities and Change* edited by George DeVos and Lora Romanucci-Ross, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986, 9.

⁴¹ J. Phinney quoted in M.A. Lone, “Towards a Sociology of Ethnicity: Concepts, theory, debate and perspectives,” in *Quest International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, II: I, 2013, 103.

characteristics. It is this realisation [that \(A 30\)](#) prompts them to define themselves as different from other groups. Therefore, ethnicity can be defined on the basis of the perceived characteristics of one group as compared to the other ethnic groups.

A common definition of ethnicity, though not universally agreed upon, is that which Arnim Langer provides. He says that ethnicity is “a sense of group belonging, based on ideas of common origins, history, culture, and language, experience and values.”⁴² However, the inclusion of the word “language” in the definition is somehow problematic because language is acquired, and any person can learn it. If a Chinese learns isiZulu, this does not make her/him to be ethnically categorised as a Zulu. This suggests that a definition of ethnicity goes beyond the perceived characteristics of a social group. It must be understood as a process. Carola Lentz defines ethnicity as “an awareness arising in relation to other ethnicities, with which it contrasts itself, typically other ethnic groups within the same” geopolitical space.⁴³ In this sense, ethnicity is regarded as a process in which a perceived in-group consciously defines itself as a distinct group in relation to the out-groups existing in the same space, and it is largely influenced by a shared ideology and common characteristics such as common origin.

Although ethnicity is often associated with conflicts, Wiseman C. Chirwa says that ethnicity is not evil *per se*, but it is its politicisation that is problematic.⁴⁴ Ethnicity brings a sense of belongingness as the “we” perceived in-group defines itself in relation to the “they” perceived out-group. Christian Karner’s expression of *ways of seeing and structures of action*, is a better description of the “we-and-they” dichotomy.⁴⁵ Karner, using his notion of *ways of seeing and structures of action*, argues that individuals have a propensity to include certain groups for the specific interests and context, and to exclude those who do not belong.⁴⁶ In this context, the term *ways of seeing* means how the “we” group defines the “they” group. The phrase, *structures of action*, means the actions the “we” group takes to fulfil its purpose of embracing, or excluding, the

⁴² A. Langer, “The Situational Importance of Ethnicity and Religion in Ghana,” in *Ethno-politics: Formerly Global Review of Ethno-politics*, 9: 1, 2010, 9.

⁴³ C. Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006, 3.

⁴⁴ W.C. Chirwa, “Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience, 1992-1996” in *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*, edited by Kings M. Phiri and Kenneth R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998, 56.

⁴⁵ C. Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2007, 102, 208, see also E. Obinna, “Contesting Identity: The Osu Caste system among Igbo of Nigeria” in *African Identities*, 10: 1, 2012, 119.

⁴⁶ C. Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, 208.

“they” or a perceived out-group. It is this process that becomes a contested site, if ethnicity is politicised.

The study has employed sociological terms, namely elite, bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie to describe the categorisation of social groups which contributed to Malawian ethnic debates, with special attention to the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute. Sociologists have different ways of categorising social classes. For example, Marxists categorise social groups according to means of production. But in this study, they will be hierarchically arranged in relation to their political power and influence that each category has in decision-making, political choices and preferences within the ecclesiastical and political circles. John Scott defines the term elite (upper class) as a “small minority which holds a ruling position in its economy, [\(A 31\)](#) society and political systems.”⁴⁷ In the ecclesiastical circles, the elite are synod leaders because they are the most powerful decision-makers in the CCAP. Below them, there are the bourgeoisie (the middle class), who are also powerful and influential [\(A 33\)](#)⁴⁸ but not compared to the elite.⁴⁹ In the study, the church leaders at presbytery level, and leaders of ethnic and political groups are referred to as bourgeoisie, because of the place and role they occupy and play in Malawian politics. The petty bourgeoisie is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat⁵⁰ (lower class). Members of this category [are \(A 32\)](#) also described as lower middle class.⁵¹ In this study, it refers to church leaders at a congregational level and political leaders, who have a direct influence on church members or ordinary people.

1.1.5 A brief socio-political context of Malawi

Malawi is a sub-Saharan country, with a population estimated at 13.1 million and a growth rate of 2.8 percent, according to the 2008 Population and Housing Census.⁵² Based on the same census, 10.8 million people are categorised as Christians, representing 82.7 percent, 1.7 million people are Muslims, representing 13 percent, 1.9 percent of the population belong to other faiths, while 2.5 percent do not belong to any religion. Among the 10.8 million Christians, 20.6 percent are Roman

⁴⁷ J. Scott, *Who Rules Britain?*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, 1.

⁴⁸ L. Beeghly, *The Structure of Social Stratification in the United States*, New York: Routledge, 2016, 6.

⁴⁹ J. Scott, *Who Rules Britain?*, 5, 7.

⁵⁰ Karl Marx used the word proletariat to include unemployed members. However, neo-Marxists limit to employees. (K. Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, Moscow: Progress Publisher, 2015 [1887], 444.

⁵¹ B. Misztal, “The Petite Bourgeoisie in Socialist Society,” in *The Petite Bourgeoisie: Comparative Studies of the Uneasy Status*, edited by Frank Bechhofer & Brian Elliott, London: Macmillan, 1981, 90.

⁵² NSO, *2008 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2010*, Zomba: NSO, 2011, 2.

Catholic, 16.6 percent are CCAP, 2.3 percent are Anglicans, and 46.2 percent belong to other Christian denominations.⁵³

Malawi is a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual country.⁵⁴ It was declared a British Protectorate in 1891 and named the British Central Africa Protectorate. In 1907, it was renamed Nyasaland. In 1964, Nyasaland attained independence from Britain, Kamuzu Banda became its Prime Minister, and the country was renamed Malawi. In 1966, it became a republic, and Banda became the first State President. In 1971, Banda was made the Life State President until 1994, when he was ousted through the ballot after the inception of multiparty politics.⁵⁵

1.2 *Preliminary and Selected Literature Review*

1.2.1 *The CCAP border dispute and ethnicity*

While there is a body of literature on church and politics, there is not sufficient literature on ethnicity and politics in Malawi that discusses how ethnicity interfaces with Christianity.

The only existing study on the border dispute was conducted by Humphreys F.C. Zgambo, a minister of the Blantyre Synod, for his Masters thesis. However, his approach was theological. He concluded that the border dispute was a product of sin.⁵⁶ But such a conclusion downplays the role of human actions in the historical process, and how human consciousness is related to reality. Hence, it defeats the purpose of understanding the Christian church as a social phenomenon, and how *ways of seeing and structures of action* are negotiated within its structures in the light of the *missio Dei*. Further, Zgambo's thesis heavily relied on the 2006 Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the border dispute. In truth, the sections that discuss the history of the border dispute in Zgambo's thesis are not an outcome of research, but a reproduction of the 2006 Report of the Commission of Inquiry.⁵⁷ Brown and Chilenje, in their doctoral theses have also referred to the

⁵³ NSO, *2008 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2010*, 26.

⁵⁴ E.T. Mvula, "Language Policies in Africa: The [Case \(A 34\)](#) of Chichewa in Malawi," in *Language and Society in Africa*, edited by Robert K. Herbert, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1992, 42; G.H. Kamwendo, "Ethnic Revival and Language Associations in the New Malawi: The Case of Chitumbuka," 141.

⁵⁵ EISA, *EISA Observer Mission Report: Malawi Presidential and Parliamentary Election 19 May 2009*, Johannesburg: EISA, 2009, 1.

⁵⁶ H.F.C. Zgambo, "Conflict within the Church: [A theological Approach to Conflict Resolution with special reference to the Boundary Dispute between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods in Malawi](#)," *MTh Thesis, University of Fort Hare, 2011*," 7, 53 ([A 35](#)).

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 32-54, 268-289.

border dispute in passing, as a problem for the CCAP's unity.⁵⁸ However, they have not dealt with the core issues in this regard, because it was not their primary concern.

T. Jack Thompson, Peter Bolink, Christoff M. Pauw and John McCracken have separately discussed history of the CCAP.⁵⁹ However, they focus on the period that comes before the border dispute, and it was not their concern. While they provide the background information to the study, certain issues raised in their books require further consideration. For example, Thompson, Bolink and Pauw have each described the boundary between the Livingstonia Synod and the Nkhoma Synod as having been ethnolinguistically created after the transfer of the Kasungu and Tamanda mission stations to the DRCM in 1924.⁶⁰ Their argument was influenced by the proposal made in the Church records that if the Kasungu and Tamanda Stations were to be transferred to the DRCM, then the border between the two Missions should follow the 'tribal line'.⁶¹ However, they have not given an anthropological interpretation of "tribal line", which leaves them generalising about it. There is a need to establish the border between the two Synods, in accordance with the 1923 meeting.

Their interpretation on the boundary appears to have influenced other scholars, who considered the ecclesiastical boundaries to be identical to the regional borders. For example, Edrinnie Kayambazinthu and Fulata L. Moyo contended that regionalism and tribalism were partly contributed to by the CCAP, because their borders are identical to the regional boundaries.⁶² However, Ott questioned this assumption of associating tribalism and regionalism to the CCAP border, arguing that other mainline Churches, such as the Roman Catholic and Anglican structures, follow the same pattern.⁶³ Why do they not have a similar problem as the CCAP Synods? This assumption needs to be put under microscopic scrutiny.

⁵⁸ V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882-2004," Th.D. Diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2007, 116; W. L. Brown, *The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church During the First Years of Autonomy*, 243.

⁵⁹ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, Sneek: T. Wever-Franeker, 1967; T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*.

⁶⁰ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 83; J. Thompson "The Presbyterians in Malawi," in J. Weller and J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984, 123; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 96.

⁶¹ Foreign Mission Committee Minutes, Min. 6632 (2) (3) of 16th October, 1923, Dep. 298 (131), Livingstonia papers, National Library of Scotland (NLS).

⁶² E. Kayambazinthu and F.L. Moyo, "Hate Speech in the New Malawi," 92.

⁶³ M. Ott, "The Role of the Christians Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999), 135.

In contrast to Kayambazinthu and Moyo, Kenneth R. Ross considered the Christian church as a power broker and a custodian of the national unity.⁶⁴ This ambivalence calls for a re-examination of the Christian church's role in the society.

Leroy Vail and Landeg White traced the origin of ethnic consciousness in missionary activities, and of ethnic cleavages in the colonial and the postcolonial government policies.⁶⁵ Although they conducted research after the border dispute took its present shape, they did not refer to it as area of concern, regarding ethnicity. Chirwa, Rueben M. Chirambo, Pascal J. Kishindo, Bertha Osei-Hwedie, Bonaventure Mkandawire, following Vail and White's view (A 36), have also argued that ethnicity, regionalism and tribalism are coterminous.⁶⁶ As will be seen in the next subsection, the argument of those who came after Vail and White seems to have been influenced by the electoral outcome of the 1994 Malawi General Elections. The inconsistency of the later electoral results raises questions regarding their claim that ethnicity, regionalism and tribalism are really coterminous.

1.2.2 *Ethnicity, regionalism and religion as coterminous*

This study argues against the assertion that ethnicity, religion and regionalism are coterminous, and it is the researcher's argument that they are a crafted ideology by the media, politicians and academia. This assertion was also based on the understanding that each region is ethnically labelled, with a particular (A 37) ethnic constituency, although they are linguistically, ethnically and culturally distinct and heterogeneous. For example, Alan Thorold states,

What is clear though is that each of the regions in Malawi is dominated by one particular ethnic group. The central region is the most ethnically homogeneous and is populated mostly by the Chewa. The north and south are more heterogeneous but are dominated by the Tumbuka in the case of the former and the Yao in the latter.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ K. R. Ross, *Here Comes Your King*, 159.

⁶⁵ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi," 268-289.

⁶⁶ P.J. Kishindo, "Politics of Language in Contemporary Malawi," 253; B. Osei-Hwedie, "The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia," 228; L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi," 163-173, 179; W.C. Chirwa, "Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience, 1992-1996," 55; B. Mkandawire, "Ethnicity, Language and Cultural Violence: Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda's Malawi, 1964-1994," 31; R.M. Chirambo, "Mzinu wa Soldier: Contemporary Popular Music and Politics in Malawi" in *A Democracy of Chameleon: Politics and Culture in the New Malawi*, edited by Harri Englund, Blantyre: CLAIM, 2002, 115; E. Kayambazinthu and F.L. Moyo, "Hate Speech in the New Malawi," 92; R.M. Chirambo, "Corruption, Tribalism and Democracy: Coded Messages in Wambali Mkandawire's popular songs in Malawi," 47.

⁶⁷ A. Thorold, "Regionalism, Tribalism and Multiparty Democracy: A Case of Malawi," in *Southern Africa Journal of International Affairs*, 7:2, 2000, 137.

Thorold, like scholars who share a similar, or the same view as him, fail to draw a line between speaking a common language and belonging to an ethnic group. The fact is that the three regions in Malawi are ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous. To say that a region predominantly speaks one language does not make it ethnically homogeneous. Although Chitumbuka is regarded as the *lingua franca* of the Northern Region, not every person in the region accepts being Tumbuka, and some do not even speak Chitumbuka.⁶⁸ Only 65 percent of the households regularly speak Chitumbuka.⁶⁹ Although 91 percent of the Central Region households speak Chichewa⁷⁰, this does not mean that the region is ethnically homogenous. The region has the following ethnic groups: Tonga, Tumbuka, Chewa, Senga, Yao and Ngoni, but the Tonga, Tumbuka and Yao people have retained their cultures and languages. According to the 2008 Population and Housing Census, the Central Region had a total population of 5,497,252. Out of this total, 3,857,386 (A 38) people were ethnically described as Chewa, representing 70.17 percent. This implies that 28.83 percent belonged to other ethnic groups. Similarly, the Southern Region had a total population of 5,852,755 people. 2,141,858 of this population was described as Lomwe, representing 36.6 percent, and 1,439,932 people as Yao, representing 24.6 percent.⁷¹ Other ethnic groups are the Nyanja, Sena, Ngoni, Mang'anja and Chewa, with the majority of these ethnic groups maintaining their linguistic and cultural identities.⁷²

It is interesting to note that this ascription is largely based on a language considered [as a means of](#) inter-ethnic communication in [a particular](#) area (A 40). Yet it is not the reality. For instance, Chiyao is not the *lingua franca* for [the](#) (A 39) Southern Region, as Bertha Osei-Hwedie⁷³ claims, because only 19 percent of households speak Chiyao, while 42% and 26% speak Chichewa and Chinyanja among other languages.⁷⁴ Although 42 percent of the Southern Region speak Chichewa, according to the 2008 Population and Housing Census, the region had 296,065 people classified as Chewa. This means that those who speak Chichewa, as Chapters Six and Seven will illustrate,

⁶⁸R.M. Chirambo, "Corruption, Tribalism and Democracy: Coded Messages in Wambali Mkandawire's popular songs in Malawi in *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies*, 2009, 23: 1, 48; A. Thorold, "Regionalism, Tribalism and Multiparty Democracy," 231.

⁶⁹ E. Lora-Kayambazithu, "Language Rights and the Role of Minority Languages in National Development in Malawi," in *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 4:2, 2003, 149-150.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 150.

⁷¹ NSO, 2008 Population and Housing Census, Zomba, 2008.

⁷² B. Osei-Hwedie, "The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia," 231.

⁷³ Ibid, 231.

⁷⁴ E. Lora-Kayambazithu, "Language Rights and the Role of Minority Languages in National Development in Malawi," 150-151.

were influenced by the 1968 language policy. Hastings M. Abale-Phiri's claim that the Southern Region is predominantly populated with Yao and Nyanja is not statistically correct.⁷⁵ National statistics show (A 41) that the Lomwe are the largest ethnic group, representing 36.6 percent.⁷⁶ Such claims appear to have been influenced by whichever ethnic constituency was in power at the time. Dr Banda also made the claim that Chewa were made up of half of the national population, which is inconsistent with the 1966 population census⁷⁷ as well as other censuses that were conducted before the claim was made and after 1994, as this study will show. The claim was to impress on other ethnic groups that they were not as important as the ethnic group at the centre. This assumption led some quarters to claim that every Malawian speaks Chichewa. In her recent study, Edrinnie Lora-Kayambazinthu rules out this assumption.⁷⁸

It also appears to have contributed to the salience of ethnic identities in the country. Andrew C. Ross reports, "By 1948, tens of thousands of Nyasas⁷⁹, who had either worked in the south or served in the army, undoubtedly felt they were Nyasas, rather than simply Nyanja, Chewa, Ngoni, Yao, Tumbuka, Tonga or Lomwe."⁸⁰ Does this suggest that the visibility of putative ethnic identities emerged in post-independence era? However, Enoch S. Timpunza Mvula argued that, during Dr Banda's term of leadership, ethnic antagonism did not exist in Malawi because of his language policy.⁸¹ This could imply that ethnic polarisation only emerged after the inception of multipartyism in 1994. Interestingly, other studies in Malawi and Africa attribute the salience of ethnic identities and polarisation to the period before independence.

The scholarship on ethnic conflict and ethnicity has attributed the ethnic cleavages happening in postcolonial Africa to colonial legacies and missionary language manipulations. One colonial legacy is the indirect rule, using its strategy of divide and rule.⁸² Although indirect rule started in

⁷⁵ H.M. Abale-Phiri, "Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis: The Case of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod: Urban Ministry," Th.D. diss., University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, 2011, 110.

⁷⁶ National Statistics Office, *2008 Population and Housing Census*, Zomba, 2010.

⁷⁷ The 1966 Population Census indicated that there 28.3 % of people classified as Chewa, 15.3% as Nyanja, 11.8% as Lomwe, 11.2% as Yao, 9.0% as Ngoni, 7.4 % as Tumbuka, 2.8% as Sena, 2.0% as Tonga, and 12.2% as other ethnic groups. See K.R. Ross, *Here Comes Your King*, 157.

⁷⁸ E. Lora-Kayambazinthu, "Language Rights and the Role of Minority Languages in National Development in Malawi," 151.

⁷⁹ Old name for Malawians.

⁸⁰ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis: A Political History of Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2009, 48.

⁸¹ E.T. Mvula, "Language Politics in Africa", 46.

⁸² O. Abegunrin, *Africa in Global Politics in Twenty-first Century: A Pan-African Perspective*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 91; M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 183.

the 1880s, it became a dominant practice in Africa between the 1930s and 1950s.⁸³ Robert Blanton, T. David Mason and Brian Athow also observed that the ethnic conflict in the Anglophone African states are largely a direct product of the British colonial legacy of the indirect rule through a strategy of divide and rule.⁸⁴ Mahmood Mamdani has extensively discussed the implication of this colonial legacy of indirect rule in Chapter Three of his book titled *Citizen and Subject*. However, he has not directly linked ethnicity to this colonial legacy, but rather he has demonstrated how the colonial legacy of indirect rule defined the tribe (ethnic grouping) as a unit.⁸⁵ The definition was based on the notion that ‘every African belongs to a tribe’ and that ‘every tribe is under a traditional leader or chief.’⁸⁶ In discussing the indirect rule reform of the 1950s, Mamdani noted that traditional leaders were grouped together with the bourgeoisie, to form district councils.⁸⁷ He further pointed out that it was these district councils that were ethnically defined. It was this process that led to the visibility of ethnic identity.⁸⁸

In the course of defining the ethnic group identity, individuals began to mobilise themselves and exclude those who did not belong. This could be the reason why Mamdani said that ethnicity is political⁸⁹, because it is socially constructed for an intended group purpose. While this could be the case in some African societies, it was not universally practiced across the continent, because in certain instances, a tribal chief was ruling an ethnically heterogeneous society. For example, most Malawian chiefs have been ruling ethnically heterogeneous societies for over a century.⁹⁰ Mamdani’s claim is subject to challenge, as Chapter Three will show.

Blanton, Mason and Athow have also pointed out that the structural configuration of ethnic groups, through indirect rule, created a potential ground for members of a particular ethnic grouping to mobilise themselves for economic, social, and political reasons, with the purpose of excluding other groups, which often culminates in interethnic tensions or conflicts.⁹¹ While ‘divide and rule’ is being ascribed as one of major roots of interethnic conflicts in some African countries

⁸³ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 104.

⁸⁴ R. Blanton, T.D. Mason and B. Athow, “Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa,” in *Journal of Peace Research*, 38: 4, 2001, 480.

⁸⁵ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 79.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 86.

⁸⁷ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 104.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 79.

⁸⁹ M. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 22.

⁹⁰ P.J. Kishindo, “Politics of Language in Contemporary Malawi,” 265.

⁹¹ R. Blanton, T.D. Mason and B. Athow, “Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa,” 475.

such as Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda, it remains questionable whether it had the same impact on the history of individual countries on the continent.⁹² For instance, Zimbabwe, although it was a British colony, was not affected by indirect rule, yet it has experienced interethnic tensions and conflicts (A 201).⁹³ Hence, to argue that interethnic tensions and conflicts in African countries could have a direct link to indirect rule is an overstatement because its impact varies from place to place and from situation to situation. However, this does not rule out the fact that the colonial administration could have used the strategy of ‘divide and rule’ for the same purpose.

Similarly, it remains questionable whether indirect rule had a significant impact in Malawi, in regard to ethnic cleavages because there is no salient political cleavage linked to the ethnic groups that were influenced by the colonial legacy of indirect rule.⁹⁴ As Chapter Three will show, the colonial administration did not favour all ethnic groups in northern Malawi at the expense of other ethnic groups found in the Central Region. If such a practice prevailed, then it is alleged that the Colonial administration favoured certain ethnic groups in each of the three regions of the country such as the Ngoni, the Ngonde and the Yao.⁹⁵ However, there is no research showing that any of these ethnic groupings have experienced substantial ethnic tension and conflict with other ethnic groups on the margins of society.

Furthermore, the ‘divide and rule’ strategy was also employed by the British colonial administration and other colonial masters in Africa, to create educational disparities among the ethnic groups existing in the same space or colony. Blanton, Mason and Athow point out that “the British would often choose one of the smaller minority groups - ones that had been relegated to [a] subordinate status by the large ethnic groups in the territory - to receive British education. That group came to dominate the colonial civil service and police/military forces.”⁹⁶ Although this could have been the case in some African countries, like Nigeria and Kenya, it was not universally practiced in British colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, educational disparities in Malawi have never been attributed to any colonial policy, but rather to Christian missionaries’

⁹² M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 104.

⁹³ D. Jeater, “Imaging Africans: Scholarship, Fantasy, and Science in Colonial Administration, 1920s Southern Rhodesia,” in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 38: 1, 2005, 1. [Ranger, T., “Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe,” in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, edited by Leroy Vail, London: James Currey, 1989, 118 – 150; S.B. Makoni, B. Dube and P. Mashiri, “Colonial and Post-Colonial Language Policy and Planning Practices,” in *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 7:4, pp 381 – 396.](#)

⁹⁴ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi,” 268.

⁹⁵ W.C. Chirwa, “Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience, 1992-1996,” 65.

⁹⁶ R. Blanton, T.D. Mason and B. Athow, “Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa,” 480.

educational policies.⁹⁷ Hence, this study will re-examine the origin of ethnic salience and polarisation in Malawi, with specific attention to the border dispute.

One scholars who wrote documented Tumbuka ethnicities was T. Cullen Young. The primary purpose of Young was to ducement the history of Tumbuka, particularly the Kamanga who were under Chief Chikulamayembe.⁹⁸ His primary source appears to be Saulos Nyirenda who is considered as the father of Tumbuka.history. In his book, there are two memoranda wrote by Ngonde elites, on one hand and on the other hand, Uriah Chirwa, a Tonga by ethnicity.⁹⁹ The two memoranda were written to counterargue the Tumbuka claims. This has led Recently, Zambian Historians Yizenge A. Chondoka and Frackson Fwita Botha, has challenged T. Cullen Young as being biased towards Chikulamayembe chieftainship.¹⁰⁰ (A 01)

1.3 *Research Questions*

1.3.1 *The main research question*

The research question is why ethnicity is the recurrent problem in the CCAP border dispute between the Livingstonia and the Nkhoma and why it remains an unresolved issue B 02 since 1967. The core question is substantiated with sub-questions, as outlined below.

1.3.2 *Sub-questions*

The sub-questions are as follows:

- a) To what extent did the missionaries' legacy contribute to the exacerbation of ethnic feeling in Malawi, with special reference to the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods, and in the context of the diaspora discourses among Malawian CCAP migrant labourers in Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa? How do these diasporic ethnic debates correlate to the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute?
- b) Since the handover of the Kasungu Stations of the Livingstonia Mission is central to the understanding of the border dispute and ethnicity, did the CCAP create a different boundary from that of 1904, based on perceived ethnic differences?

⁹⁷ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 343.

⁹⁸ Young, T.C., *Notes on the History of the Tumbuka-Kamanga People*, London: The Religious Tract Society, 1932.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 75.

¹⁰⁰ Y.A. Chondoka and F.F. Botha, *A History of the Tumbuka from 1400 – 1900: The Tumbuka under Mnyanjagha, Chewa, Balowoka, Senga and Ngoni Chiefs*, Lusaka: Academia Press, 2007.

- c) How did the uncertainty surrounding the CCAP formation contribute to the current border dispute?
- d) How does Dr Banda's socio-political legacy contribute to the ongoing border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods?

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

1.4.1 The Aim

The overall objective of this study is to understand the political, socio-cultural and ecclesiastical circumstances that explain why the border dispute has reached a stalemate, why ethnicity is a recurrent problem in the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the CCAP in Malawi and how this provides a better understanding to the interface between ethnicity and religion in [the region \(B 10\)](#). The overall objective is substantiated by specific objectives, as outlined below.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

It will be the aim of this study:

- a) to explore the extent to which the missionaries' legacies contribute to ethnicity in Malawi, with special reference to the Livingstonia and the Nkhoma Synods, as well as among the CCAP diaspora Malawian labour migrants living in Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa, in relation to the home border dispute;
- b) to investigate whether the border between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods was re-established after the handover of the Kasungu and the Tamanda Missions to the DRCM, based on ethnic differences;
- c) to investigate how the uncertainty surrounding the CCAP formation contributes to the current border dispute between the two Synods; and
- d) to explore how Dr Banda's socio-political legacy contributes to the ongoing border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that undergirds the research problem is a combination of the three theories developed by Antonio Gramsci, Horace M. Kallen and David J. Bosch, respectively. The theories are the Gramscian Hegemonic Theory, the Cultural Pluralism Theory, and the Mission in Unity Theory, respectively. The three theories were employed as a lens through which the research questions are discussed.

The theoretical framework focuses on the construction and the production of a self-other dichotomy through *structures of action* and *ways of seeing* among perceived dominant ethnic majorities and perceived minorities. Its primary role is to examine how the politics of inclusion and exclusion are negotiated and contested in Malawian ethnic debates, and how individuals navigate and maintain their social boundaries, as they mobilise the putative in-group against the putative out-group.¹⁰¹

1.5.1 Gramscian hegemonic theory

One contribution of Antonio Gramsci to political theory was how he conceptualised the idea of hegemony, which is one of the theoretical lenses through which the research question(s) of this study is discussed. The concept of hegemony is associated with how different social groups attain dominance by constructing spontaneous consent among the ruled, using socio-political and economic projects.¹⁰² Gramsci was largely influenced by Marxism, which he called a philosophy of praxis. It was on this basis that he gave his radical interpretation of the base/superstructure model in his theory of hegemony, which this study calls the Gramscian Hegemonic Theory, to distinguish it from other hegemonic theories.

His historical analysis was centred on the state and civil society, with specific attention to mechanisms that the ruling classes use to secure the consent of the ruled.¹⁰³ However, this section will not spend much time explaining the Marxian concept of the base/superstructure, because it is not the focus of this study, but rather it will briefly explain the Gramscian Hegemonic Theory.

Scott Lash defines hegemony as “domination through consent, as much as, coercion”. It can be “domination through ideology or discourse.”¹⁰⁴ Contrary to the Marxian interpretation, Gramsci

¹⁰¹ E. Obinna, “Contesting Identity: The Osu Caste system among Igbo of Nigeria” in *African Identities*, 10: 1, 2012, 119; C. Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, 102.

¹⁰² A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Quentin Hoarace & Geoffrey Nowell Smith eds., London: Elec Book, 1991, 373.

¹⁰³ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 145.

¹⁰⁴ S. Lash, “Power after Hegemony: Cultural Studies in Mutation,” in *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24: 3, 2007, 55

postulated a non-instrumental interpretation of hegemony, in which he incorporated political practices and forms of rule.¹⁰⁵ He did not consider hegemony as an instrumental or incidental alliance between the subordinated groups (A 42), which are limited to their economic and political interests, but as a concept that includes “intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages”, and that it is not based on “a corporate, but on a ‘universal’ plane.”¹⁰⁶ Hence, in Gramscian language, hegemony cannot be limited to dominance, but it can also refer to resistance.

Gramsci was interested in understanding the relation between human consciousness and historical process.¹⁰⁷ His theory posits that the institutionalization and the stabilization of any social order depend on the spontaneous consent of the ruled. Gramsci identified two aspects in which spontaneous consent could be secured, namely, leadership (*direzione*) and education. The underpinning insight of Gramscian Hegemony was that leadership should depend on the spontaneous consent of the ruled.¹⁰⁸ In Gramsci’s view, the consent is organised at civil society level, and attained through the state, schools, the judicial system and the civil society.¹⁰⁹ This study engages the Gramscian Hegemony Theory to understand how missionaries, African elites within the ecclesiastical circles, as well as Dr Banda’s government, secured the consent of the ruled or led, and how that consent relates to the ongoing border dispute debated along ethnic lines among domiciled¹¹⁰ and diaspora Malawians of the CCAP.

Gramsci also said that if spontaneous consent fails, the State can legally use coercive power. This can be problematic if the State intends to execute the dominant group’s objectives, and exclude the out-groups.¹¹¹ Gramsci writes (A 43),

One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer ‘ideologically’ the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 405.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 405-406.

¹⁰⁷ T. Lesniak, “Ideology, Politics and Society in Antonio Gramsci’s Theory of Hegemony” in *Internetowy Magazyn Filoficzny Hybris*, issue 16, 2012, 86.

¹⁰⁸ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 145.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 145.

¹¹⁰ The word domiciled refers to Malawians living in Malawi.

¹¹¹ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 145.

¹¹² Ibid, 142.

The core strategies of the hegemonic groups are: *anthropoemic*, the primary purpose of which is to exclude those who do not belong to the super-culture, and *anthropophagic*, which seeks to assimilate minor cultures into a dominant culture.¹¹³ Gramsci also points out that a totalitarian policy precisely aims:

- 1) “at ensuring that members of a particular party find in that party all the satisfactions that they formerly found in a multiplicity of organisations, i.e. at breaking all the threads that bind these members to extraneous cultural organisms.
- 2) at destroying all other organisations or incorporating them into a system of which the party is the sole regulator.”¹¹⁴

This is exactly what assimilation does. Primarily, assimilation serves to dissolve ethnic boundaries, in order to acquire a new identity for the purpose of social order.¹¹⁵ It can occur through acculturation (cultural assimilation), integration (structural assimilation) and intermarriage. It can be voluntary or coercive. If it is coercive, it is likely to attract resistance from minority groups. Ironically, it exists to preserve the dominant culture and dissolve the underdog cultures through cultural, structural and marital assimilations, either through voluntary means, or by imposition.¹¹⁶

However, Gramsci challenged the perception of looking at the State as if it operates in a forcible, dominating and conspiratorial manner to maintain its position. He pointed out that “undoubtedly, the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed.”¹¹⁷ Since the interests of the dominant group and the ruled are critical, it is important to re-examine how the minority relates to the dominant group in the context of assimilation. It should be noted that minority groups are distinct groups with their own languages, cultures, religions and traditions. Do they passively accept the assimilation? In order to respond to this question, the study engages the Cultural Pluralism, as espoused by Horace Kallen.

1.5.2 Cultural pluralism (multiculturalism)

¹¹³ C. Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, 108.

¹¹⁴ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 536.

¹¹⁵ C. Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, 46.

¹¹⁶ J.F. Healey, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class: The Sociology of Group Conflict and Change*, Sixth Edition, London: SAGE Publication, 2012, 47-48.

¹¹⁷ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 373.

Cultural pluralism or (multiculturalism) emphasizes mutual respect for all ethnic groups occupying the same space.¹¹⁸ It aims at preserving cultural diversity and questions the rationale behind the dichotomy of the self-and-other.¹¹⁹ It appreciates the salience of group differences and “legitimizes communally-based social structures and political activity” as critical for the mutual coexistence of various ethnic groups in a particular space.¹²⁰

Horace Kallen, in his article published in *The Nation* of 25th February 1915 (A 44), argued that the American *melting-pot* was intended to serve the interests of the Anglo-Saxon dominant group at the expense of other groupings. *Melting-pot*, Anglo-Conformity or Americanisation is one form of assimilation in which all cultures of various ethnic groups existing in the same space contribute to form a new cultural identity, which represents all groups under the principle of integration or unison.¹²¹ It was espoused and popularised in the United States with the purpose of having a single national consciousness of being American. Being a country largely made up of migrants from Europe, it was proposed that all Americans should have a single national identity, specifically with regard to their language and culture, rather than maintaining their home identities, either by nationality or by descent.¹²² However, this project was appropriated by the Americans of the Anglo-Saxon descent. The Anglo-Conformity project was coercive and discriminatory.¹²³ It intended to promote the Anglo-Saxon culture and the English language and to erase ethnic cultures and languages of other ethnic immigrants. Kallen contends,

More and more public emphasis has been placed upon the unity of the English and American stock – the common interests of the Anglo-Saxon’ nations, and of Anglo-Saxon’ civilization, unity of the political, literary, and social tradition. If all that is not ethnic nationality returned to consciousness, what is it.¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ J.F. Healey, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class*, 51.

¹¹⁹ C. Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, 102; J.F. Healey, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class*, 49; O.U. Kalu, “Babel, Multiculturalism and Theological Education in Africa 1960-2000” in *Christian Mission in Africa: Success, Ferment and Trauma* edited by Wilhelmina J. Kalu, Nimi Wamboko and Tayin Falola, Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2010, 479.

¹²⁰ M.J. Esman, “Communal Conflict in Southeast Asia,” in *Ethnicity: theory and Experience*, edited by Nathan Glazer and Ariel P. Moynihan, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975, 404.

¹²¹ J.F. Healey, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class*, 44.

¹²² H.M. Kallen, “Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot,” in *The Nation*, 18th February, 1915, Vol. 100, No. 2590, 2 <https://webstorage.worcester.edu/sites/thangen/web/Shared%20Documents/Kallen.DemVsMelting.pdf> accessed on 20 July, 2014.

¹²³ J.F. Healey, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class*, 45.

¹²⁴ H.M. Kallen, “Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot,” in *The Nation*, 18th February, 1915, 194.

The main mechanism for the American *melting-pot* was the public educational system and media in which the Anglo-Saxon culture, values and language were propagated, in order to erase the cultures and languages of other ethnic groups.¹²⁵

Kallen observed that the process of the *melting-pot* was intended to assimilate other ethnic identities into a dominant British culture. To argue against the Anglo-Conformity, using the metaphor of orchestra in expressing a “symphony of civilisations” as a basis for his Cultural Pluralism Theory, he states,

As in an orchestra, every type of instrument has its specific timbre and tonality, founded in its substance and form; as every type has its appropriate theme and melody in the whole symphony, so in society each ethnic group is the natural instrument, its spirit and culture are its theme and melody, and the harmony and dissonances and discords of them all make the symphony of civilization, with this difference: a musical symphony is written before it is played; in the symphony of civilization [in which] the playing is the writing... the range and variety of the harmonies may become wider and richer and more beautiful.¹²⁶

Based on this reasoning, he argues that diverse ethnic groups, religious beliefs, languages and cultures were consistent with democracy. Hence, it was inappropriate to force other ethnic groups to surrender their identities, so that they might be accepted in the United States as citizens.¹²⁷

Arguing in favour of (A 45) cultural pluralism, he contends, “The general notion, ‘Americanization’, appears to denote the adoption of English speech ... It connotes the fusion of various bloods ... into beings similar in background, tradition, outlook, and spirit to the descendants of the British colonists, the Anglo-Saxon stock.”¹²⁸ Ideally, to be an American, according to the Anglo-Conformity, meant to cease to be what one was and to become a British American. To use Mamdani’s metaphor, no subject was to become an American citizen without being Anglo-Saxon. It was because of this view that Kallen opted for cultural pluralism, in which the integrity of ethnic groups was to be retained and maintained.

Donald A. Fishman says that “although cultural pluralism suggests a tolerance and appreciation for ethnic differences, the term also implies a resistance and rejection of assimilation by a minority group seeking to preserve its identity.”¹²⁹ The Cultural Pluralism Theory helps this study to explain how people at the centre underestimate the cultural rights of those on the periphery and impose

¹²⁵ Ibid, 192, 193; H.M. Kallen, ‘Americanization’ and the Cultural Prospect, 1924 (A 44), 212. <http://cas.ssc.uwo.ca/documents/Kallen.Americanization.pdf> accessed on 12 June 2014.

¹²⁶ H.M. Kallen, “Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot,” in *The Nation*, 25th February, 1915, 220 (A 47).

¹²⁷ H.M. Kallen, “Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot,” in *The Nation*, 18th February, 1915, 3 (A 47)

¹²⁸ Ibid, 3.

¹²⁹ D.A. Fishman, “Mainstreaming Ethnicity: Horace Kallen, the Strategy of Transcendence, and Cultural Pluralism,” in *Southern Communication Journal*, 62: 2, 2004, 157.

their culture on others, as if other ethnic groups are cultureless. On the other hand, it helps to understand why people on the periphery resist the imposition and domination.

Like Anglo-Conformity, the integration policy, which was pursued by some postcolonial African Heads of States soon after African states attained independence from European colonial (A 46) powers in 1960s, was intended to assimilate other groups. The process had variant versions, as dictated by those in power, under the programme of integration. The integration espoused by Pan-Africanist leaders, on the one hand, was intended to unite multi-ethnic African societies under one national identity.¹³⁰ However, the programme in certain circumstances was intended to assimilate other ethnic groups into a dominant ethnic group or culture, which was associated with the Head of the State. For instance, Malawi, under Dr Banda, was a prime example of this system, as this study will illustrate. When Dr Banda introduced the *Chichewa-ization*, under the pretext of integration, some cultures, considered as subordinate (A 48), protested in favour of maintaining their ancestral identities.¹³¹ The question is, why did some ethnic groups resist Banda's language policy if it was intended to promote unity? How does this impact to the ecclesiastical and ethnic debates in the border dispute between the Synod of Livingstonia and the Nkhoma Synod?

1.5.3 Bosch's theory of mission in unity

The ongoing debate on ethnicity in the border dispute hinges on mission in unity among the CCAP Synods and it is, therefore, imperative to engage David Bosch perspective of "Mission in Unity." [Although Bosch problematises mission in unity from a wide perspective and South African context that might not be similar to Malawian scenario, it helps to postulate how ecclesiastical differences can be understood in CCAP. \(B 11\)](#) This perspective helps to [explore](#) how the Christian churches can engage in the *missio Dei*, even amidst their differences. Bosch, arguing from the ecclesiological perspective, takes a similar view to Kallen on the need to maintain unity in diversity. However, Bosch's discourse does not focus on the political dimension of unity in diversity, but on how the Christian church can engage in the *missio Dei* in a plural space. This is

¹³⁰ E.T. Mvula, "Language Politics in Africa," 37.

¹³¹ P.J. Kishindo, "Politics of Language in Contemporary Malawi," in *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking* edited by Kings M. Phiri and Kenneth R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998 265.

the reason why Bosch considers “Mission in Unity” as being critical in understanding the activity of the Christian church in a fragmented world.¹³²

Bosch observes, “Since mission and unity belong together, we may not view them as consecutive stages; if this is not consistently kept in mind, we would only be converting people to our own ‘denomination’, while at the same time administering to them the poison of division.”¹³³ In Bosch’s view, differences cannot be avoided because they are real.¹³⁴ Being different does not deter people of diverse backgrounds from living and working together. Bosch continues to argue, “Ecumenism is only possible where people accept each other, despite [their] differences. Our goal is not a fellowship exempt from conflict, but one which is characterized by unity in reconciled diversity.”¹³⁵ His view is resonated in Kallen, who argues, “The right to be equal did not contradict the right to be different.”¹³⁶ Since the question under scrutiny is discussed from an inter-ethnic perspective and is partly influenced by intra-denominational differences, Bosch’s perspective provides a better understanding of how the Christian churches, in this context synods, can together engage in the mission in which two evangelisers are competing, on the grounds of ethnic identities, through the Christian church’s structures. This theory brings a different perspective, which has not been captured in Kallen’s theory of cultural pluralism. It helps us to understand how the Church can engage in mission in a multi-ethnic society and remain a multi-ethnic church, as the CCAP was before the emergency of the border dispute.

1.6 *The Location of the Study*

The study location is the History of Christianity in the Post-Modern Era, focusing on the three political dispensations in Malawian history, namely, that is between 1890 and 1960 (the colonial and missionary era), 1960 and 1994 (the One-Party era under Dr Banda), 1994 and to date (the Multipartyism period).

1.7 *Research Design and Methodology*

¹³² D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigms Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996 [1991], 463-67.

¹³³ Ibid, 460.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 464-65.

¹³⁵ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 465.

¹³⁶ H. M. Kallen *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, with a new Introduction by Stephen J. Whitfield, New Brunswick (U.S.A): Transaction Press, [1924] 1998, xix.

This section describes the research design and methodology, as well as other related aspects such as ethical reconsideration. It should be noted the research design is the whole process that begins from conceptualising the problem to the production of the research results.

1.7.1 Research ethical considerations

Before embarking on fieldwork, the researcher requested ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and it was granted (see Appendix G). Similarly, the information collected was treated with high integrity and confidentiality. Before consulting archives, permission was sought from the relevant authorities, particular gatekeepers and research participants. Where permission was not granted, the researcher respected the wishes of the gatekeeper or research participant. For example, the General Secretary of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod informed the researcher that the actuaries¹³⁷ had refused to release documents related to the border dispute because they considered the issue to still be sensitive. However, this did not affect the results the study because some Nkhoma Synod records were available at the NGK archives in Stellenbosch, where permission was granted. The researcher had access to required data, and some related data were also available at the General Synod office and the Synod of Livingstonia Archive. Informed consent was sought from respondents of the questionnaire, participants of individual and focus groups interviews, in which subjects voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. In writing the dissertation, some names of the research participants have not been mentioned or changed to preserve anonymity. This has been as part of the ethical consideration.

1.7.2 Documentation

Because of the nature of the question that this study discusses, it relied mostly on written documents. Both written primary and secondary sources, which are found online and in Libraries, were consulted. Archival sources and church records were consulted at the Malawi National Archives in Zomba, the NGK Archives at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, the Livingstonia Synod Archives and Synod offices in Mzuzu, and at the General Synod Offices in Lilongwe. As indicated above, the Nkhoma Synod authority refused to release the church records. However, this did not affect the results of the study, as explained above. This study also benefitted

¹³⁷ Actuaries are custodians of the Nkhoma Synod's records.

from the archival sources that the researcher obtained from the National Library of Scotland in 2008. However, the research also used oral history sources as the next section will show.

1.7.3 *Fieldwork: Population, sampling and the position of the researcher and the researched*

As said above, this section discusses the nature of the fieldwork, the population, sampling and the position of the researcher and the research subjects. The population of this study comprised CCAP and non-CCAP members living in areas affected by the border dispute. In total, 216 research participants (A 49) took part in this study. Although it included non-CCAP subjects, the study predominantly targeted members of the CCAP, particularly those of the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods in Malawi and of the four CCAP synods in Zimbabwe and [those who belong to the South African congregations of the three CCAP synods \(A 50\)](#). The researcher conducted fieldwork in the following places: Nkhotakota, Kasungu and Lilongwe districts in Malawi, Harare in Zimbabwe, and Johannesburg in South Africa. In Malawi, the fieldwork was conducted between November 2014 and February 2015 while in Zimbabwe and South Africa, it was conducted between October 2015 and February 2016.

1.7.3.1 *Population and sampling of the study*

Richard L. Scheaffer et. al., defines of a population of a research study as “a collection of elements about which we wish to make an inference.”¹³⁸ In Malawi, the population of this study was drawn from the members of the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods. [Although the focus was on the two synods, the study included members of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly of Mzuzu and Lilongwe Diocese, as part of the population of this research for comparative purposes \(A 51\)](#). In Zimbabwe and South Africa, it focused on all CCAP diaspora members living and working in those countries, who belonged to the Blantyre, Harare, Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods.

Out of the 216 subjects, eighteen were clergy. Three came from the Blantyre Synod, six from the Synod of Livingstonia, six from the Nkhoma Synod and one from the Harare Synod. Other subjects were non-clergy and were as follows: 38 subjects were drawn from the Synod of Livingstonia, 34 from the Nkhoma Synod, five from the Blantyre Synod, four from Harare Synod

¹³⁸ R.L. Scheaffer, et. al., *Elementary Survey Sampling*, (5th ed.) New York: Duxbury Press, 1996, 42.

and seven from [the \(A 52\)](#) Roman Catholic Church, all totalling to 198 research participants. This sample was selected to ensure that representativeness is achieved and biases reduced. These participants were randomly selected to give a probability to each member to contribute [\(A 53\)](#) to this study. These subjects were identified by using cluster sampling technique. They were randomly selected within their natural sets of observations such as churches, home and workplaces. This technique was engaged to ensure that the data obtained should be filled with insights of the knowledgeable, interested, experienced and affected subjects. The random sampling was opted because “it works to ensure representativeness on all characteristics of the population.”¹³⁹ The sampled groups were heterogeneous in all strategies, [as reflected in the variables mentioned below \(A 54\)](#).

Those who participated in the semi-structured interviews [\(A 56\)](#) for individuals were 106 subjects. They comprised 18 clergy and 88 non-clergy participants. Among the 88 subjects, there were two sub-Traditional Authorities (chiefs) from the Kasungu District. The selection was based on the following variables: age, ethnicity, region of origin, academic qualification, social status, political and ecclesiastical affiliations [\(A 55\)](#). When it came to the selection of those to take part in the focus groups, ethnic and political memberships of the subjects were not considered because synods’ membership comprised all ethnic groups and political parties. For example, ten members who participated in focus groups at Matiki congregation of the Synod of Livingstonia, three members were classified as Tumbuka, four as Chewa, two as Tonga and one as Lomwe. The primary purpose of this selection was to get well-balanced stories from subjects about the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute, and to ensure heterogeneous is attained.

The people targeted in this study were [selected \(A 57\)](#) due to their authority, experience, expertise, responsibility and interest in the problem under investigation. A group of the subjects were selected for a specific strategy so that they should not participate in other strategies. For example, 106 participants who took part in an individual semi-structured interviews [\(A 58\)](#) were not allowed to participate in the questionnaire and focus groups strategies. The reason for this technique was to replicate the results. As shown in Chapters Six and Seven, the results obtained by focus groups were replicated in the individual semi-structured interviews method. Geoffrey Marezyk et. al., points out that replication helps to “avoid drawing broad conclusions based on the results of a single research study because it is always possible that the results of that particular

¹³⁹ Ibid, 220.

study were an aberration.”¹⁴⁰ Engaging different strategies helped to reduce errors in the outcome of the fieldwork, and to establish reliability and generalisability of the original findings.

1.7.3.2 *The Position of the researcher and the researched*

Doing fieldwork was a challenging exercise as far as the role and place of the researcher and the subjects was concerned. In this regard, the place of a researcher in a study becomes crucial regarding his methodological and analytic perspective and how he positions himself in understanding the *otherness* (as represented by the subjects of his research), which also impacts on the validity of the research. This could be the reason why Afe Adogame says,

The negotiation and navigation of boundaries is usually a very delicate and controversial venture because it often has cultural, religious, political and other undertones. The insider and outsider positions are much more complicated than they may appear due to their attendant tendency towards exclusivity and inclusivity.¹⁴¹

This situation necessitated the researcher to place himself as an *insider* and *outsider* in order, on the one hand, to participate in the study as a participant observer and, on the other hand, to critically describe the question being investigated, as understood by the interviewees and respondents.¹⁴² The researcher’s role as an ordained minister of the CCAP, and as a Malawian, was that of an *insider* and *outsider* both during the field work and the writing.¹⁴³ [Although ethnically, the researcher describes himself as a Ngoni, his ethnic affiliation did not influence the results of the study during data collection and analysis, as well as during the writing of the thesis. In the whole process he maintained the politics of an insider and outsider \(B0 5\).](#)

However, the question remains as to what extent a researcher can be an *outsider* or an *insider* when he/she is investigating a religious and socio-political phenomenon to which she/he belongs. Ezra Chitambo suggests, “If researchers become more self-reflexive, it is possible to transcend barriers brought about by cultural closure, ethnicity, racism and others.”¹⁴⁴ This principle became a guiding tool through the process of the data collection, analysis and writing of the thesis, because

¹⁴⁰ G. Marezyk, et. al., *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology*, Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2005, 15.

¹⁴¹ A. Adogame, “To be or not to be? Politics of Belonging and African Christian Communities in Germany,” in *Religion in the Context of African Migration*, Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies Series, 2005, 96.

¹⁴² S. Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 220.

¹⁴³ P. Drake and L. Heath, *Practitioner Research at Doctoral Level: Developing Coherent Research Methodologies*, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2011, 37.

¹⁴⁴ E. Chitambo, “The Insider/Outsider Problem in Research on Religion and Migration” in *Religion in the Context of African Migration*, Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies Series, 2005, 89.

the researcher was aware of the implications of his position as an *insider* or an *outsider*. For example, when running focus groups, the researcher played the role of a facilitator in all sampled places. Chitambo also warns, “Although it remains possible for insiders to be self-reflexive and to provide useful information about their religion, scholarship is served better when researchers divest themselves of commitment.”¹⁴⁵ It was for this reason that the researcher did not present himself as a church minister but as a researcher throughout the exercise. This was to ensure that his church and ethnic affiliations did not compromise the study objectives.

As a result, the researcher was able to interact with the subjects. In most places, he was encouraged by the reception, the support given and the turnout of the subjects, particularly for the group discussions. Most research participants were very open to telling stories, as they knew and understood them. All church officers agreed to participate, although some church ministers agreed to give interviews on condition of anonymity because of their synod’s policies regarding access to information and of the repercussions that might follow their actions. In all synods, what was encouraging was the role played by the retired Synod officials, who were very open to sharing information with the researcher, and they were critical of the decisions, which they may have contributed towards. It was like a moment for reflection. Their interaction enriched my understanding of the problem interrogated.

1.7.4 Mixed method approach

This study is a [historical inquiry \(A 58\)](#). To achieve its intended objectives, it employed a mixed-method approach. Although it [is](#) historical, it [is](#) punctuated with sociological and ethnographic research strategies, with the purpose of illustrating attitudes, behaviour and practices of certain ethnic groups in Malawi. As a result, it engaged in a variety of strategies for data collection and analysis.

1.7.5 Validity and reliability of the study tools

Since the question of validity and reliability was critical to the findings, a number of measures were taken in the whole process, with specific attention to data collection and analysis. By definition, validity is the extent to which the instruments measure what they intend to measure,

¹⁴⁵ E. Chitambo, “The Insider/Outsider Problem in Research on Religion and Migration”, 90.

while reliability is the degree to which the instrument yields consistent outcomes, when the characteristics being measured have not changed.¹⁴⁶

Validity hinges on data collection and the analysis and techniques employed in a research study. This triangulation ensured that validity was attained by using of a range of strategies, by spending an extensive period on fieldwork, by employing a representative sample, mechanically recording data, and replicating in different contexts, through the strategies employed. The computer packages engaged in data processing [contributed to](#) ensure that both validity and reliability were achieved [\(A 59\)](#). To attain reliability, the literature reviewed assisted to discriminate some information collected through oral history during data analysis.

1.7.6 Methods for data collection and sampling

Data were obtained through ethnographic observations, questionnaires, semi-structured individual interviews, focus groups and documentation. The study employed cluster sampling. To have a wide range of views on the topic, the research subjects that participated in one strategy, were not allowed to take part in other strategies.

1.7.6.1 Ethnographic strategies

Ethnographic observations were engaged, to understand how different ethnic groups living and worshipping in the affected areas of the two synods interact in their everyday life, with particular attention to language use.¹⁴⁷ The researcher also attended church functions and other gatherings. The primary purpose was to re-read, to understand the question from the participants' perspective and to ascertain how ethno-linguistic boundaries are contested, negotiated and navigated between the Chichewa and Chitumbuka speakers in the sampled areas. This was carried out between November 2014 and January 2015.

1.7.6.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered in Kasungu District, Lilongwe City, and Nkhatakota District, particular in the Traditional Authority Kanyenda. The questionnaire was designed, based

¹⁴⁶ W. Fox and M.S. Bayat, *A Guide to Managing Research*, Cape Town: Juta & Co Ltd, 2007, 144, 145.

¹⁴⁷ T. Bilton et al., *Introduction to Sociology*, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, [1981], 1996, 119.

on the Likert scale.¹⁴⁸ The questionnaire was written in four languages, namely, English, Chitonga, Chitumbuka and Chichewa, which are the languages spoken by most people in the sampled areas, in order to allow for the respondents' full participation (see appendix B). Questionnaires were administered by the researcher, to maximize the return. Out of 60 participants, a total of 56 subjects responded to the questionnaire, representing 93.3 percent of the return. The characteristics of the respondents are as displayed in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1. [Demographic Details \(B 4\)](#) on 56 respondents to the questionnaires conducted in Malawi ([A 60](#))

Variable	Description	No. of participants	Percentage
Age	I. 16-30 years	2	3.6
	II. 20-30 years	22	39.2
	III. 30-50 years	23	41.1
	IV. 50 years, plus	9	16.1
Sex	Male	29	51.8
	Female	27	48.2
Political Affiliation	I. MCP	25	44.6
	II. UDF	1	1.8
	III. DPP	5	8.9
	IV. PP	8	14.3
	V. No political party	17	30.4
Region of origin	I. Southern region	3	5.4
	II. Central region	26	46.4
	III. Northern region	27	48.2
Academic qualification	I. Primary education	8	14.3
	II. Junior Sec. education	7	12.5
	III. Senior Sec. education	20	35.7
	IV. Tertiary education	21	37.5
Occupation	I. White collar jobs	13	23.2
	II. Businesspersons	16	28.6
	III. Farmers	12	21.4
	IV. Blue collar jobs	15	26.8
Ethnicity	I. Chewa	18	32.1
	II. Ngoni (Dedza district)	2	3.6
	III. Tumbuka	27	48.2
	IV. Yao	2	3.6
	V. Ngonde	1	1.8
	VI. Tonga	3	5.3
	VII. Sena	1	1.8
	VIII. Lomwe	2	3.6

¹⁴⁸ S. Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 2nd ed. Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998, 89; K. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, London: SAGE Publications, 1998, 94-5.

Denomination	I.	Livingstonia Synod	36	64.3
	II.	Nkhoma Synod	18	32.1
	III.	Roman Catholic	2	3.6

As shown in Table 1.1 and indicated above, respondents to the questionnaires were members of the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods. The strategy targeted 30 respondents from each synod. 26 participants of the Nkhoma Synod returned the responses, representing 86.7 percent. Among the Nkhoma Synod's respondents were Tumbuka. This explains why Tumbuka outnumbered other participants from other ethnic groups.

1.7.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

The researcher conducted oral interviews in Malawi with the help of two assistant researchers. One of the reasons why the assistant researchers were included was to assess whether the research results could be replicated. This also helped the researcher to understand the problem from the perspective of a wide and representative range of research subjects.¹⁴⁹ In order to ensure validity and reliability, the exercise began by training identified assistant researchers in order for them to be acquainted with the research topic, strategies, objectives and ethics regarding how they could negotiate the boundaries between themselves and the study subjects in handling crisis and exercising flexibility and adaptability during data collection. Although the use of the assistant researchers has potential problems regarding the 'observer variability,' this was countered, by ensuring that their training was sufficient to meet the research requirements of validity and reliability.¹⁵⁰ In any event, the researcher put himself at the centre of the exercise, by interviewing 90 percent of the subjects.

Semi-structured interviews were employed as a follow-up to the questionnaire in order to fill the gaps of the preceding strategies.¹⁵¹ There (A 61) were in the four languages mentioned above. The questions were tested for their *construct validity* to ascertain whether they met the expectations of the research questions and objectives.¹⁵² They were two types of semi-structured interviews. The first type of semi-structured interviews targeted the Church leaders and was conducted in English (Appendix C). The second one concerned individuals and focus groups (see appendix D).

¹⁴⁹ S. Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 2nd ed., 79, 86.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 226.

¹⁵¹ C. McNarama, *PhD General Guideline for Conducting Interviews*, Minnesota, 1999, 20.

¹⁵² S. Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 2nd ed., 80.

Tape recorders and cameras were used in documentation. However, some interviewees were reluctant to record their voices. In such case, note-taking was employed in recording the proceedings of the interviews. This method helped the researcher to have a better understanding of the question investigated in this study. In some instances, the position of the CCAP ordinary members on the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute contradicted the synod's official version made by their synods, which helped the researcher to a better understanding of the matter under study.

1.7.6.4 Focus groups

The researcher used the same method of semi-structured interviews for individuals during the focus group discussions in the four sampled congregations. In each congregation, two five-member groups participated in the exercise. Each group chose its own moderator and recording secretary. The researcher's role was to facilitate, monitor and take notes during the group interaction. Unlike other strategies, this method helped the researcher to have a clear understanding of the ongoing topic because of the interaction he had with research participants.¹⁵³ At the end of each discussion, the researcher collected the minutes recorded by the group, thanked members for their contribution, and gave some snacks and minerals for lunch. The Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods' church ministers and their congregants in the sampled congregations were very cooperative and resourceful.

The total of the subjects took part in this method were 50. They were selected from five congregations of the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods. The congregations for the Nkhoma Synod that participated in this study were as follows: Kakonje, Kafita and Majiga; for the Synod of Livingstonia were Matiki and Kasasanya congregations. At each congregation, ten participants took part in this method.

1.7.7 Data analysis

For individual and group interviews, data were analysed through QSR NUD*IST revision, or NVivo10, as the computer package works well with quantitative data (see summary of results in

¹⁵³ K. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, London: SAGE Publications, 1998, 177.

appendix E).¹⁵⁴ Some data were analysed with content analysis, as it is also suitable for a mixed approach.¹⁵⁵ The researcher transcribed and translated the data collected into English for data coding, analysis and interpretation, and did the analysis and interpretation. He also analysed the data collected through questionnaires with the SPSS 16.0 version (see the summary of the results in appendix F).

1.8 *Significance of the Study*

The study enabled the researcher to reflect with profundity and analytical precision of [\(B 10\)](#) the subject studied. The findings, as demanded by most research participants, particularly church leaders, will help the church to take a fresh look at the question of the CCAP border dispute and to begin re-reading the history of the Church. It will enrich future debates within the Church and beyond its walls, help to avoid a repetition of the previous mistakes, regarding the question of the unity of the Christian church, and redefine its role in society and the mission in unity.

1.9 *Scope and Limitation of the Study*

[While the study explains ethnicities as they are manifested, understood and defined in the CCAP border dispute, it limits the](#) scope of the study to the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the CCAP between 1890 and 2015. [Although the border dispute began in the late 1940s, the study will document the history of the CCAP with keen interest to its agency, that is, the missionaries and indigenous Christians in order to provide a better understanding of how debate started \(B 01, B 02\).](#) Methodologically, it was impossible to interview every member of the CCAP, and therefore, a limited number of individuals and congregations were interviewed, representatively [as possible \(A 62\)](#).

1.10 *Structure of the Thesis*

This section provides the chapter outline of this dissertation. Chapter One gives an overview of the whole thesis. It raises questions to be considered in the discussion. It discusses the

¹⁵⁴ K. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research*, 134, 233-34.

¹⁵⁵ D. Plowright, *Using Mixed Methods: Framework for an Integrated Methodology*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011, 108; S.B. Merriam *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009, 205; K. Punch, *Introduction to Social Research*, 231.

methodology and methods, the theoretical framework, the objectives of the study, the statement of the problem, preliminary and selected literature review, the significance and limitation of the study, as well as the thesis' chapter outline.

Chapter Two discusses the beginning of Christianity in Malawi, with particular attention to four [Protestant \(A 63\)](#) missions, namely, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, the Livingstonia Mission, the Blantyre Mission and the Dutch Reformed Church Mission, in the light of the interface between ethnicity and Christianity.

Chapter Three examines whether the border between the Synod of Livingstonia and the Nkhoma Synod were established after the transfer of Kasungu and Tamanda stations to the DRCM. It also examines colonial policies such as indirect rule, and church-state relationship, and whether they contributed to the visibility of ethnic identities in the contested area. It also examines how the history of the transfer of Kasungu has been told in the body of literature.

Chapter Four looks at church policies and the beginning of the CCAP as a church in the light of ethnicity, with particular interest [in \(A 64\)](#) the unity of the church.

Chapter Fives explores the CCAP diaspora debates in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, with the purpose of ascertaining whether the ethnic and ecclesiastical debates that occurred there correlate to the border dispute in Malawi.

Chapter Six re-examines how Banda's politics contributed to the ongoing border dispute between the two Synods.

Chapter Seven explores how Banda's legacy shaped and contributed to the ethnic and ecclesiastical debates in the light of the border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods. It then raises the question of whether there should be one, or many CCAPs.

Chapter Eight draws the main conclusions for the study and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY IN MALAWI (1875-1924)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the extent to which Christian missionary's legacies could have contributed to ethnic debates in Malawi, with special reference to the Livingstonia Mission and the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM). To accomplish this, it also explores how Christianity was introduced to the Lake Malawi region by four Protestant missions, namely, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), the Livingstonia Mission, the Blantyre Mission and the DRCM. In addition, it explores how these missions and [their \(A 65\)](#) missionaries related to each other in the early years of their existence. To have a better perspective of this historical

process, the chapter attempts to reread how histories of these missions have been written, and how they shape the *ways of seeing* and the *structures of action* of the upcoming generations of the evangelised. As one of [the \(A 66\)](#) missionary's legacies, it examines how indigenous languages were developed by missionaries, and their functions in the area of identity construction among themselves and the evangelised.

To begin with, Christianity, as a religion, has both functional and dysfunctional dimensions. It is functional where it brings positive changes to society, but is dysfunctional where it contributes to divisions through social and geopolitical boundaries. For instance, in places where Islam preceded Christianity, people of that particular area not only embraced that religion, but they also acquired a new identity that came with the religion. That identity became prominent in the way people began to define themselves in relation to one another. As a group defines itself, it tends to engage in a politics of inclusion and exclusion. In this light, religion needs to be scrutinised to see how it functions within the public spaces, especially how it interfaces with ethnicity, which is also a site of inclusionary and exclusionary politics. This common characteristic of religion and ethnicity necessitates assessment of how they interface, and what happens when religious and ethnic identities overlap. Therefore, it is imperative to explore how certain sections of the missionary population asserted hegemonic control and mobilised themselves against the other missionaries, and how this impacted on the evangelised people.

In order to understand religion's public role, it is necessary to examine how its agencies function. Haynes rightly says that the state of affairs in contemporary Africa has been largely influenced and shaped by the missionary and colonial legacies.¹⁵⁶ In this chapter, agencies are Christian missionaries of the four missions, which were working in Malawi. The chapter focuses on how Presbyterian missionaries related to each other, and to other missions working in the same space. Its emphasis is on how the relationships between white missionaries, including those in the colonial administration, became instrumental in defining, contesting and drawing social boundaries based on European ethnic and ecclesiastical identities before and after the 1898-1902 Anglo-Boer War in South Africa, and how the effects of the war defined missionaries' relationships in the mission fields. The chapter examines missionary's legacies in defining, navigating, contesting and negotiating identities among the indigenes in their spheres of influence in respect to the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of CCAP.

¹⁵⁶ J. Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 1996, 24.

2.2 *The Historical Background to the Four Protestant Christian Missions in Malawi*

The history of Christianity in Malawi and Zambia cannot be complete without making reference to Dr David Livingstone, the Scottish explorer. He was not only the first symbol of British power but also a pathfinder for the British missionaries to this part of Africa.¹⁵⁷ In addition, it is not possible to discuss the Christian missionaries' enterprise without making reference to imperial-colonial expansion. Hence, this section examines how the presence of these social players shaped the history in this part of Africa, and how this historical process provides a better understanding to the ongoing debate on the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute.

Although Christian missionaries primarily came to disseminate the gospel, the possibility that their actions and perceptions in everyday life were significantly shaped by nationalistic attitudes towards 'the other' cannot be ruled out. For example, on 8th January 1879 Robert Laws, the head of the Livingstonia Mission, before Malawi was declared a British Protectorate in 1891, hoisted the Union Jack on Malawian soil.¹⁵⁸ This had nothing to do with Christianity but was done to show the British imperial power to the evangelised people and to protect the imperial interests.¹⁵⁹ In this sense, Christian missionaries cannot be regarded as emissaries of the gospel of Christ only; they were also representatives of the colonial-imperial enterprise and cultural hegemony.¹⁶⁰ To a large extent, Christian missionaries were there to advance the agenda of their home countries or governments, through western education and other political activities.¹⁶¹ From the missionaries' perspective, mission schools were not only critical instruments for evangelisation, they were also regarded as channels for westernisation.¹⁶² This criticism does not minimise the popular resistance that missionaries staged against the colonial authority in support of African indigenes on certain colonial policies and actions perceived as incompatible with their teachings.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, the

¹⁵⁷ J.G. Pike, *Malawi: A Political and Economic History*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1968, 70.

¹⁵⁸ Kaning'ina Journal of the Livingstonia [Mission \(A 67\)](#), entry of 8th January, 1879, Livingstonia papers (Liv. Papers), National Library of Scotland (NLS).

¹⁵⁹ K.N. Mafuka, *Mission and Politics in Malawi*, Kingston, Ont.: Limestone Press, 1977, 2.

¹⁶⁰ J. Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, 25; A. Porter, "The Universities' Mission to Central Africa: Anglo-Catholicism and the Twentieth-Century Colonial Encounter," in *Mission, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, edited by Brian Stanley, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company., 2003, 81.

¹⁶¹ J. Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, 42.

¹⁶² J. McCracken, *A History of Malawi 1859-1966*, Woodbridge: James Currey, 2012, 108.

¹⁶³ T.J. Thompson, "Presbyterians and Politics in Malawi: A Century of Interaction," in *The Round Table*, 94:382, 2005, 575; *Ngoni, Xhosa and Scot*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2007, 137.

relationship between Christian missionaries and the colonial authorities needs to be put under microscopic scrutiny, to assess its function in the area of politicisation of ethnicity.

[The problem emerges when ethnicity is politicised](#). Ethnicity *per se* exists to bring a sense of belonging (B12) and identity to the group of individuals who belong to that particular ethnic group.¹⁶⁴ However, the problem comes when a particular ethnic group wants to define itself in opposition to other. It is through the process of self-defining that some individuals have a tendency of mobilising themselves and excluding the other.¹⁶⁵ It is within this framework that ethnicity is politicised and becomes problematic.

The politicisation of ethnicity by the missionaries appears to have been influenced not only by the way they related to the other missionaries, but also how missionaries of a particular mission related to the colonial authorities. The missionaries-colonialists' relationship is a critical one in understanding the politics of ethnicity in Africa. This relationship varied significantly depending on various factors, one of them being the degree of intimacy they had with the colonial authorities. For example, in the Belgian Congo, the Roman Catholic missionaries had a close relationship with the colonial authorities, in contrast to the relationship they had in Portuguese and French colonies.¹⁶⁶ In Anglophone African colonies, some Protestant missionaries enjoyed a hegemonic control because of their close ties to the colonial authorities. For example, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries in Uganda enjoyed a hegemony greater than any other Christian mission, because of its relationship to the colonial administration. The CMS entered into Uganda in 1877 and were later followed, in 1884, by the White Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁶⁷ Paul Gifford, commenting on the Anglican-Catholic relationship in Uganda, observes: "In 1882 when the war broke out between the Catholics and Anglicans, [Captain Frederick] Lugard naturally sided with the Anglicans; they were British, whereas the White Fathers were French."¹⁶⁸ The position taken by Captain Lugard was largely influenced by the ethno-national identity he shared with the English missionaries. Categorically, when the British East African [Company \(A](#)

¹⁶⁴ A. Langer, "The Situational Importance of Ethnicity and Religion in Ghana," 9; O. Abegunrin, *Africa in Global Politics in the Twenty-first Century*, 84-5.

¹⁶⁵ W.C. Chirwa, "Democracy, Ethnicity, and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience, 1992-1996", 54, 55; C. Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, 102; E. Obinna, "Contesting Identity: The Osu Caste System among Igbo of Nigeria," 112.

¹⁶⁶ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 43, 44.

¹⁶⁷ P. Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998, 112; T.J. [\(A 17\)](#) Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 46.

¹⁶⁸ P. Gifford, *African Christianity*, 113.

67) wanted to withdraw, it was the CMS that lobbied the British Government to colonise Uganda so that they might continue enjoying the English hegemony.¹⁶⁹ This chapter will similarly show how missionaries with English identity behaved in the public domain in Malawi, especially how the ethno-national identities of missionaries were contested, negotiated and redefined in the public spaces, and how they shaped their *ways of seeing* and their *structures of action*.

2.2.1 *The Universities' Mission to Central Africa and ethnic identity construction*

The history of the UMCA is so enormous that this section cannot fully discuss it. Hence, it is not the purpose of this section to give a full account of it as others have already done so. For instance, Anderson-Morshead discussed the history of the UMCA from 1859 to 1909, and James Tengatenga, when he edited the same book authored by Anderson-Morshead, added some historical points that connect the previous work to the present Anglican Church in Malawi.¹⁷⁰ A.G. Blood has also discussed the UMCA history from 1907 to 1932¹⁷¹ while and Henry Mbaya,¹⁷² in his doctoral thesis, has provided a full account of the UMCA history from 1860s to 2004, although his emphasis was on the church leadership in the Anglican Church. This section gives a brief history of the UMCA in relation to the topic under discussion.

2.2.1.1 *Origin and work around Lake Malawi area*

The UMCA was the first English mission to respond to Dr David Livingstone's appeal at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford in 1857 on the possibility of starting mission work in the area surrounding Lake Malawi. But it was the third English mission to permanently become established in Malawi, after the Livingstonia Mission and the Blantyre Mission.

The beginning of the UMCA is traced to the speech Dr Livingstone made in England. Addressing a gathering in the Senate House at the University of Cambridge on 4th December, 1857, Livingstone said, "I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity. Do you carry on the work which I have begun? I leave it with you."¹⁷³ It was this famous speech

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 113.

¹⁷⁰ A.E.M. Anderson-Morshead, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, London: UMCA, 1956; J. Tengatenga (ed.), *UMCA in Malawi: A History of the Anglican Church*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2010.

¹⁷¹ A.G. Blood, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, London: Industrial Press, 1957.

¹⁷² H.H. Mbaya, "The Making of an African Clergy in the Anglican Church in Malawi with Special Focus on the Election of Bishops 1898-1996," PhD diss., University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2004.

¹⁷³ F. Winspear, "A Short History of the Universities Mission to Central Africa," in *Nyasaland Journal*, 9:1, 1956, 13; J. Weller and J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, 14.

inspiring British Christians to engage in the missionary enterprise that led to the birth of the UMCA. This mission came to Central Africa under the leadership of Bishop Charles Mackenzie, who was also a Scot, in fulfilment of Livingstone's plea to curb the slave trade.¹⁷⁴

Although Livingstone's objective in the Zambezi expedition was humanitarian, he thought that introducing legitimate trade without Christianity would not be an ideal way of eliminating the slave trade.¹⁷⁵ Hence, he made an appeal for Christian missionaries to come and work in the Lake Malawi region. The first Christian missionaries to respond to his appeal had both English and Anglican identities. They were products of the four English universities: Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin and Durham.¹⁷⁶ They formed a missionary organisation called Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), whose primary objective was to Christianise [and civilise \(A 68\)](#) the indigenes, and replace the slave trade with lawful Christian commerce.¹⁷⁷

Although the first group to respond to Livingstone's request largely comprised Christian missionaries alone, they were also representatives of the English culture. Mbaya is right in saying that the UMCA "was increasingly portrayed as an enterprise to demonstrate superior English principles to those who had none."¹⁷⁸ [\(A 69\)](#) However, this was not the problem of the UMCA missionaries alone, it was a common practice among western missionaries working outside Europe.¹⁷⁹ They shared a similar attitude and way of propagating western interests and values through western education and lifestyle, at the expense of the rich African heritage. This could be the reason why Christian missionaries were considered to be not only colonial emissaries but also agents of western civilisation.¹⁸⁰ They were there to impose western values, beliefs and practices on the evangelised, sometimes without proper consultation with the African indigenes, which often resulted in social tensions and conflicts.¹⁸¹ This practice was reinforced by the missionaries' paternalistic attitude towards Africans and their African-ness. This attitude played an immense

¹⁷⁴ A. Porter, "The Universities' Mission to Central Africa: Anglo-Catholicism and the Twentieth Century Colonial Encounter," in *Missions, Nationalism and the End of Empire*, edited by Brian Stanley, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003, 83.

¹⁷⁵ J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 70, 71.

¹⁷⁶ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 50.

¹⁷⁷ H. Rowley, *The Story of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 2nd edition, London: Saunders, Otley and Co., 1867, 3.

¹⁷⁸ H. H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam: An Anglican Mission on Lake Malawi-Nkhotakota, Malawi: 1894-1906," in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, issue 148, 2014, 98.

¹⁷⁹ [J. McCracken, A History of Malawi, 50; Gray, Gray, R., Black Christians and White Missionaries, 95](#)

¹⁸⁰ P. Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 48, 49; J. Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, 46.

¹⁸¹ H.H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam", 117.

role in shaping indigenous identities within the missionaries' sphere of influence, as both Western missionaries and African indigenes considered that embracing new identities was part of the process of European civilising of Africa.¹⁸² Civilisation was brought largely in the form of education, in which the medium of instruction was conducted in the imperial language [in upper classes, alongside indigenous languages \(A 70\)](#).¹⁸³ In British colonies, it was English.

The UMCA did not prioritise education through English as a medium of instruction, but the English identity remained a symbol for the missionaries and the evangelised. This was the reason why the first UMCA's presence in the country was perceived as the beginning of the British influence, although this goes back to Livingstone's first visit. The UMCA first temporarily settled at Magomero in 1861, which was located to the north-east of the present Blantyre City and close to Nasawa Technical College in Chiradzulu District.¹⁸⁴ The indigenes who joined [this mission at that time](#) did not come for the gospel, but to seek protection, because it was held that the English people were a source of protection from slave traders and other warlike ethnic groups [\(A 71\)](#).

However, following socio-political problems and the deaths of missionaries, including Bishop Mackenzie who was a central figure to the establishment of the Anglican mission in this part of Africa, the UMCA under the leadership of William Tozer, the new Bishop, withdrew from Malawi to the Island of Zanzibar in 1863. The withdrawal happened after they failed to establish another station near Mount Morambala in 1863.¹⁸⁵ At the time of withdrawal, the UMCA did not convert any indigene to Christianity. From that time, the UMCA missionaries did not have a station in Malawi until they returned to Likoma Island on Lake Malawi in 1885. The withdrawal had socio-political implications for those who felt protected by the English missionaries' presence, because their absence gave more power to the Yao to continue trading in slaves and destabilising other

¹⁸² A.C. Ross, "The Blantyre Mission and the Problem of Land Labour, 1891 – 1915," in *From Nyasaland to Malawi*, edited by Roderick J Macdonald, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975, 87

¹⁸³ [Most early missionary schools used vernacular languages while some schools used vernacular languages alongside imperial languages such as English, Portuguese and French. See William E. Phipps \(1972: 95\), "Christianity and Nationalism in Tropical Africa," in *JSTOR – Civilizations*, 22: 1, 92 – 100; Kelvin Ward, "Christianity, Colonialism and Missions," in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, edited by Hugh McLeod, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp 75. Livingstonia Mission was one of the missions that used English alongside indigenous languages.](#)

¹⁸⁴ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, London: Longman, 1973, 85.

¹⁸⁵ J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 72; J. Tengatenga, (ed.) *The UMCA in Malawi*, 58, H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam", 100.

ethnic groups, such as the Mang'anja inhabiting Shire Highlands.¹⁸⁶ When the Blantyre Mission came into the area, they found the socio-political situation had not yet changed.

Notably, during its withdrawal, the UMCA made one significant contribution to the success of other western missions such as the Livingstonia, Blantyre and DRC missions. When they withdrew, they carried with them a number of freed Malawian slaves, such as Tom Bokwito and Sam Sambani, who became instrumental to the success of the aforementioned missions. Bokwito and Sambani were freed by Dr Livingstone at Mbane village in [the \(A 71\)](#) Shire Highlands in 1861. After the withdrawal of the UMCA, they were taken to South Africa to study at the Lovedale Institute.¹⁸⁷ These freed slaves did not only benefit from formal education offered at the Lovedale Institute but they also became language instructors for the missionaries who were coming to work in the Lake Malawi region. However, there is little written about these freed slaves during their stay at Lovedale. One of the freed slaves who accompanied the Livingstonia missionaries was Tom Bokwito. Although Laws does not tell us the name of the students who taught them the indigenous language, it is likely that Tom and Sam were their language instructors.¹⁸⁸ Although the Yao were masters, it was the language of the slaves that became the first language for the missionaries. Hence, it was not a surprise that all the first missionaries learnt Chinyanja, as the interethnic medium of communication.¹⁸⁹ Chinyanja was first reduced to writing by the Livingstonia missionaries, especially Dr Laws with the help of his students.¹⁹⁰ [\(A 73\)](#)

2.2.1.2 *Return to Malawi*

The UMCA returned permanently to Malawi in 1885. On 24 August 1885, the UMCA established a permanent station at Likoma Island.¹⁹¹ It did not necessarily mean that the UMCA returned to Malawi in 1885, because Likoma Island was geographically located in Mozambique, a Portuguese colony, and Malawi was not a state, with its geopolitical boundaries that it acquired in 1890. When Malawi was declared a state, it was the presence of the English missionaries that

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 75.

¹⁸⁷ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 169.

¹⁸⁸ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 129.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 126, 127.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid*, 129

¹⁹¹ H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam", 148, 100.

made the Island to be included as part of Malawi in 1890.¹⁹² Mackintosh, commenting on territorial boundaries created by European colonial powers in 1890, says, “The Island of Likoma, however, was to remain British because [it was] occupied by the Mission.” [\(A 74\)](#)¹⁹³ Hence, the presence of missionaries in a particular space was critical when it came to how geopolitical and social boundaries were defined and negotiated. In this case, the social boundary of the missionaries defined the territorial boundary. As Huntington points out, “As part of this cultural resurgence, religion is increasingly important in shaping the identities and alignments of states.”¹⁹⁴ The ethno-national identity of the missionaries did not only define the political boundaries of a particular territory but it also shaped the indigenes’ identities. For example, indigenes living on the Island came to be defined as Malawians, while their immediate relatives or kinsmen, who remained in Portuguese East Africa, were called Mozambicans.

The UMCA, for some time, confined its operations to the Island until the 1890s when it began extending its mission activities to the mainland of Malawi, working among the Muslim populated area on the shores of Lake Malawi.¹⁹⁵ The UMCA conducted the first adult baptism on the mainland Malawi on 25 July 1895, fifteen years after the Livingstonia Mission had baptised its first convert, Albert Namalambe.¹⁹⁶ On the mainland, the UMCA first worked in Nkhotakota District and then Mangochi District. The first stations to be opened in Mangochi District were among the Yao of Chief Mponda in 1896 and then Malindi in 1898 although regular work at the latter station started on 25th April 1902.¹⁹⁷ In 1906, Mangochi Station was also established. The choice for the UMCA’s site of operation was largely influenced by their prior experience on the Island of Zanzibar where they worked among Muslims.¹⁹⁸

They had difficulty in extending their sphere of influence for three reasons: firstly, they found it hard to encroach into the territories of fellow Protestant missions, especially Blantyre and Livingstonia Missions, who supported them in their difficult times.¹⁹⁹ Secondly, they thought it

¹⁹² J. Weller and J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984, 39.

¹⁹³ C.W. Mackintosh, *Some Pioneer Missions of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, [s.n.], n.d., 32.

¹⁹⁴ S.P. Huntington, *America in the World*, 11

¹⁹⁵ J. Tengtenga (ed.), *The UMCA in Malawi*, [120 - 122 \(A 75\)](#).

¹⁹⁶ A.E.M. Anderson-Morshead, *History of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa*, 218.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 233.

¹⁹⁸ P. Elston, “A Note on the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa 1859-1914,” in *The Early History of Malawi* edited by B. Pachai, London: Longman, 1972, 365; W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923, 253.

¹⁹⁹ [P. Elston, “A Note on the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa 1859-1914,” \(A 77\) 38.](#)

would be difficult for them to work in Portuguese East Africa after the partition of Africa. The latter reason forced them to find space for expansion in the British Protectorate, which was not fully occupied by the Livingstonia and Blantyre missions. This, to some extent, led to clashes with their fellow Protestant missions. They did not have significant clashes with the Livingstonia Mission in Nkhotakota because the issue was amicably settled. Nkhotakota, prior to the UMCA occupation, belonged to the Livingstonia Mission.²⁰⁰ In the interest of accommodating the brothers, the Livingstonia leadership allowed the UMCA missionaries to work at Nkhotakota south of the Bua River.²⁰¹ At that time, Nkhotakota covered an area now under the Nkhotakota and Ntchisi Districts.

In Ntchisi District, the first station to be opened by the UMCA was Kayoyo in 1907 where it bordered with the DRCM. The DRCM established a station at Chinthembwe in 1910 after the UMCA²⁰² While the DRCM had clashes with the UMCA, they were solved amicably. Each mission was allowed to work in the area it already occupied.²⁰³ However, for a long time, the UMCA had a considerable number of clashes with the Blantyre Mission, because the latter regarded the UMCA's expansion in the south as an encroachment into its territory.²⁰⁴ For example, in January 1905, they began to extend their activities along the Shire River, which the Blantyre Mission regarded as its sphere of influence.²⁰⁵

By the 1920s, it was apparent in urban centres that the missions' clearly defined borders were beginning to be blurred, especially, between the UMCA and the Presbyterian Missions, namely, the Blantyre Mission, the DRCM and the Livingstonia Mission - contrary to what was happening in the rural areas. For example, in Blantyre, the first urban [settlement \(A 78\)](#) of the Protectorate, the UMCA had a church building within the same area as the Blantyre Mission. Prior to this date, the area was only occupied by the Blantyre Mission. On 22nd May 1922, St Paul Parish of the UMCA was consecrated to serve the Anglican community working in Blantyre Township.²⁰⁶ Basically, this was to meet the spiritual and social needs of people from diverse religious and

²⁰⁰ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923, 253 (A 76); C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 71; H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam", 104.

²⁰¹ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 253; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 71.

²⁰² J.L. Pretorius, "Introduction to the History of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi", in *The Early History of Malawi* edited by Bridglal Pachai, London: Longman, 1972, 371, W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 253.

²⁰³ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 71.

²⁰⁴ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 180.

²⁰⁵ A.E.M. Anderson-Morshed, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 232, 233, 234.

²⁰⁶ F. Winspear, "A Short History of the Universities Mission to Central Africa," 44.

ethnic backgrounds who migrated to urban centres from rural areas in search of employment. However, spheres of influence in rural areas were still respected by the four Protestant missions. In 1925, Bishop Douglas of the UMCA, as quoted in Blood, reported that “a certain comity is recognised between all missions working here, with one exception, in that they do not work against each other, but the Roman Catholic Missions repudiate this.”²⁰⁷ The Roman Catholic missionaries were not bound by a comity agreement because of the missiological approach the Church adopted towards non-Catholic churches from the time of the [Reformation](#) in the 16th century ([A 79](#)).

But one important characteristic of the Christian missions working in rural Africa was that people were clearly defined in terms of the identity of the Christian mission occupying that area. This brought divisions, an outcome of the perceived differences in thought and actions of missionaries, which was undesired.²⁰⁸ ([A 365](#)) Predominantly, it was the geography that determined the identity of most Christians in rural areas and those migrating to urban centres. It was the presence of a particular Christian mission or religious institution in a certain area that defined the religious identity of the indigenes by virtue of their affiliation to that mission. As such, membership of urban congregations was not defined by ethnic identity, but rather, by the ecclesiastical identity. In this context, the first urban congregations ([A 80](#)) were described as multi-ethnic, because the membership did not take into consideration the social or ethnic origin of a person, but rather it was based on denominational affiliation. For example, if a Presbyterian migrated to an urban or rural centre where there was no church for the mission of which she/he was a member, it was not necessary for her/him to continue identifying with a home Presbyterian mission, but rather she/he had to join another Presbyterian mission operating in that place or a mission which had a similar tradition with the home church.

2.2.1.3 *Mission extension to the west of the Lake*

By 1890, the UMCA began extending its activities to [the \(A 81\)](#) west of Lake Malawi. Its first station was at Nkhotakota. It was opened on 9th September 1894 by Arthur Fraser Sim during the reign of Jumbe III, the slave trader and sultan of Nkhotakota, who died in July 1894.²⁰⁹ The British

²⁰⁷ A.G. Blood, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 257.

²⁰⁸ E. Isichei, *History of Christianity in Africa*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1995, 81.

²⁰⁹ A.E.M. Anderson-Morhead, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 217; F. Winspear, “A Short History of the Universities Mission to Central Africa,” 29; H. Mbaya, “Christianity, Colonialism and Islam”, 102; Pachai, *History of Nation*, 46 says the UMCA opened the mission station at Nkhotakota on 2nd September, 1894.

colonial resident John L. Nicoll came to Nkhotakota before the death of Jumbe III and witnessed the installation of Jumbe IV, who was deposed by Nicoll himself in December 1894 on murder charges.²¹⁰ Nkhotakota station was situated to the south of the Bua River, [in \(A82\)](#) the Muslim populated area.

Prior to the return of the UMCA to the west of the Lake, this area was the Livingstonia Mission sphere of influence.²¹¹ Mbaya quotes Winspear who states that Jumbe IV preferred Bishop Maples of UMCA to Dr Laws, because he spoke the Swahili language, as did Jumbe IV.²¹² It is an undisputed fact that Maples was a gifted linguist who could learn a new language within a short period.²¹³ But it is questionable whether his linguistic ability played a role in the acceptance of the UMCA's opening a station at Nkhotakota. Anderson-Morshed reported that Archdeacon Maples started a new station at Nkhotakota.²¹⁴ Then she reported that the station at Nkhotakota came into being through Rev. Authur Frank Sim on 9th September 1894 and that in the same year Archdeacon Maples was received by Sim at Nkhotakota on his way to England for consecration as a Bishop for Nyasaland.²¹⁵ There is inconsistency in Anderson-Morshead's account on the opening of the new station and when Maples visited Nkhotakota. If we would go with the latter claim, it appears that Archdeacon Maples only came to Nkhotakota from Likoma Island after Sim had already opened the station. Pachai agrees that the new station was opened by Sim, but he is of the view that it was Archdeacon Johnson who was assigned to look for a place where a new station could be opened on the western shore of the Lake.²¹⁶ Pachai's view could be supported by the fact that it was Johnson who was the first UMCA missionary to visit the Bandawe Station of the Livingstonia Mission, which was close to Nkhotakota.²¹⁷ However, the UMCA historians do not attribute this to him but to Maples. Further, it should be noted that Archdeacon Maples never visited Nkhotakota as a bishop but as the archdeacon. When he became the bishop of Nyasaland,

Although there are two dates, what is important is the month and year Nkhotakota was occupied by the UMCA missionaries.

²¹⁰ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 46, 47.

²¹¹ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 253; P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 99.

²¹² H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam", 102.

²¹³ J. Tengtenga ed., *The UMCA in Malawi*, 98.

²¹⁴ J. Tengtenga ed., *The UMCA in Malawi*, 100; Anderson-Morshead, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 211.

²¹⁵ J. Tengtenga ed., *The UMCA in Malawi*, 106.

²¹⁶ B. Pachai *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 46.

²¹⁷ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia* 183.

he did not visit Nkhotakota because he died on his way to Nkhotakota from his consecration in England.

Why is Maples linked to the establishment of the Nkhotakota Station [\(A 82\)](#)? One explanation could be that Maples, as archdeacon of Likoma, could have participated in the discussion that Laws had with Bishop Smythies on the possibility of the UMCA opening a station at Jumbe III's town. Laws asked the bishop if he was interested in occupying Jumbe's area, because Jumbe was looking for Christian missionaries to open schools in his area. However, the bishop was reluctant to take up the offer. This prompted Laws to ask the DRCM missionaries if they could plant a station in the Muslim populated area in Nkhotakota, but they also turned down the offer.²¹⁸ Archdeacon Maples could only have taken the issue of opening a new station at Nkhotakota seriously after the death of Bishop Smythies on 7th May 1894, almost four months before a new station was opened at Nkhotakota.²¹⁹ However, Maples only visited a new station at Nkhotakota after it was opened, between the time that he died and a new station was opened. On the basis of the account given, it is doubtful whether the linguistic ability of Bishop Maples played a role in Jumbe III's preference for the UMCA to open a station in his territory.

At the time when the UMCA opened the station at Nkhotakota, Jumbe III no longer had the same authority as before, because by then the British Protectorate administration had lodged its officer to govern the district. Hetherwick, the Blantyre missionary who was in the country at that time, said that when Nyasaland was declared a Protectorate "all future transactions in the land between European and native were carried out under the sanction and supervision of Government - the Government thus acting in *loco parentis* for chiefs and people."²²⁰ Nichol, the British Resident at Nkhotakota, came to the district soon after Malawi was declared a British Protectorate in the early 1890s.²²¹ Hence, it was the British Resident, rather than Sultan Jumbe, who had power to authorise any person or institution to start any activity in the district. It is not correct then to argue that Jumbe III preferred the UMCA missionaries to the Livingstonia missionaries because they were speaking Swahili language. Possibly a better explanation is Elston's suggestion that the UMCA missionaries chose Nkhotakota as a place to open a new station because no mission had

²¹⁸ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 71.

²¹⁹ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 291.

²²⁰ A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, London: James Clarke & Company, 1931, 86.

²²¹ B. Pachai, [Malawi: The History of Nation](#), 46.

opened a school in the area.²²² This supports the fact that the Livingstonia missionaries failed to open schools in Jumbe's area because they did not have enough staff. This led the Livingstonia leadership to ask the UMCA and DRCM separately whether they could occupy the land.

Prior to the UMCA's occupation of Nkhotakota, Jumbe III and Laws had fruitful discussions on the possibility of opening schools in Nkhotakota. However, it was not possible because Laws did not have enough staff to deploy there.²²³ It was one factor that could have led him to accept the UMCA's opening a station at Nkhotakota. This was also influenced by the fact that after the Anglo-German and Anglo-Portuguese agreements in 1890, the UMCA did not have enough space for expansion.²²⁴ Hence, it was looking for an area where it could extend its activities. The only option was to go where the British imperial government had declared the land as theirs, and the appropriate territory was Nyasaland. Considering that the headquarters for the UMCA was Likoma Island, it made sense for them to open a new station in Nkhotakota, because of its proximity to its headquarters at Likoma Island.

Peter Bolink, commenting on the same issue of Nkhotakota, argues, "Neither could [Livingstonia Mission] honourably claim that part of the field as its sphere of work, for the UMCA had set out towards the Lake long before the Scottish Mission and, therefore, had the right to start work there now."²²⁵ However, Bolink's argument contradicts Bishop John Edward Hine, who became bishop of the UMCA on 29th June 1896 following the death of Bishop Maples. Bishop Hine is quoted in A.G. Blood to have said, "There is large tracts of country untouched by any of these societies: it will be our aim to work, as far as may be possible, in a spirit of brotherly co-operation with all those who have already done so much and have been the pioneers of Christianity in this land." Bishop Hine did not dispute the fact that Livingstonia Mission and other Presbyterian missions were pioneer Christian missions. What Bolink failed to acknowledge, or perhaps did not know, was that all missions that came to Malawi, before the country was declared a British Protectorate, did not have in mind a specific area with geopolitical boundaries, as suggested through the agreement mentioned above. Maxwell is right in saying that,

on mundane level mission organisations often worked in landscape bearing little relation to colonial state. Pioneering missionaries located their mission stations on highways or natural frontiers with little

²²² P. Elston, "A Note on the Universities' Mission to Central Africa," 353.

²²³ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 252.

²²⁴ J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 81, 86.

²²⁵ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 99.

concern for region's eventual political landscape. The pioneers of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa had this in mind when they built a station on Likoma Island, Lake Malawi.²²⁶

Before the partition of Africa, [Christian missionaries were not confined to](#) specific geopolitical areas [because it was](#) not part of [their](#) enterprise [\(A 83\)](#). Their primary objective was to evangelise Africans. Likewise, the Livingstonia Mission's choice to work to the west of the Lake was not determined by the British influence but other factors. Laws, in his book *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, said that at first, in 1876, they wanted to build a new station at Likoma Island as a replica of Iona Island in north of Scotland. But considering "the east side of the Lake with slave-trading Swahili coastmen travelling between it and the sea coast with caravans of slaves and ivory," they decided to plant a new station to the west of Lake Malawi.²²⁷ Hence, Bolink's argument is not only far from being accurate but it is misleading. Further, what he does not know is that the Livingstonia Mission was the first Christian mission to work along the west shores of Lake Malawi, before any other Christian mission.

The UMCA, when it decided to return to inland Africa, did not intend to work in Malawi at first, but to the east of the Lake where they established themselves. It was following the political development after the 1884/5 Berlin Conference, where the European powers arbitrarily divided Africa among themselves, that the UMCA decided to work to the west of Lake Malawi. The implications of this political development not only concerned the UMCA missionaries, it raised common disquiet among different missionaries. For instance, the Roman Catholic White Fathers, who worked in Malawi before it was declared a British Protectorate, expressed the same fears about their fate. In the entry of 17th November 1890 of Mponda Mission Diary (1889-1891), the author, commenting on the Anglo-Portuguese Agreement, writes, "According to an agreement made between the two powers, the provicariate of Nyasa, with its original limits, is now in English territory. We wait with anxiety the decisions of our venerable superior as to our fate."²²⁸ Similarly, the role undertaken by the Scottish missionaries to push the British Government to colonise Malawi was basically out of fear that once the Portuguese colonised the territory, they would be expelled from the country, as happened later to the DRCM in 1922. It was this fear that could have

²²⁶ D. Maxwell, "Decolonization" in *Mission and Empire*, edited by Norman Etherington, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 289.

²²⁷ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 65.

²²⁸ K.R. Ross, ed., Mponda Mission Diary (1889-1891) of the White Fathers in *Christianity in Malawi: A Source Book*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996, 21.

influenced the UMCA to move into mainland Malawi, and not necessarily that they were first to work in the area.

As indicated above, the UMCA preferred Nkhotakota because Laws had already suggested this to Bishop Smythies. Secondly, the presence of the British Resident could have played a big role. Elston reported that it was Nicoll who invited Sim to begin a mission station at Nkhotakota.²²⁹ So Sim came on invitation of the British District Resident. Sim did not live to see the fruit of his labour as he died on 29th October 1895. He was succeeded by Rev. J. Wimbush.²³⁰ The invitation of Sim by Nicoll gives a full explanation how and why the UMCA opened a new station at Nkhotakota. It was partly because Nicoll had the same ecclesiastical and ethnic identities as Sim, thus Anglican and English. In this sense, it was the ethno-national (English) and ecclesiastical (Anglican) identities that played a major role in the UMCA opening a new station at Nkhotakota. Laws, by that time, had also accepted that the UMCA missionaries should start working in Nkhotakota for two reasons: Firstly, he accepted because the UMCA missionaries had experience of working among the Muslims. Secondly, the Livingstonia leadership decided to allow them to work in the Muslim enclaved area in order to enhance a cordial working relationship.²³¹ It was further agreed that the UMCA should not extend to the west. This prompted the Livingstonia Mission to establish a station at Kasungu in November 1897, in Chewa Chief Mwase's area.²³² Gradually, beginning in 1897, the UMCA missionaries began extending their mission activities to the present Nchitsi District among the Chewa and Ngoni people. In the Southern Region, they worked among the Yao population, who were predominantly Muslims.

When the UMCA missionaries were deciding to return to the west of Lake Malawi, they first worked at the Islands of Likoma and Chizumulo, then later at Nkhotakota among the Swahili-influenced Chinyanja speakers. Nkhotakota District was predominantly occupied by Chipeta, one of the ethnic groups of the Maravi people. The UMCA missionaries also opened stations in Mangochi, thus Mponda, Malindi and Mangochi stations, where they worked among the Yao and Nyanja people.²³³ However, Mangochi was predominantly inhabited by Chiyao speakers.²³⁴ By

²²⁹ P. Elston, "A Note on the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, 353; H. H. Mbaya "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam", 102.

²³⁰ A.E.M. Anderson-Morshead, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 217.

²³¹ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 291.

²³² J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 163.

²³³ A.E.M. Anderson-Morshead, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 229, 233.

²³⁴ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 127.

1897, the UMCA missionaries began to extend to unoccupied areas, especially among Muslim populated areas, along the Lakeshore and in some parts along the Shire River.

They expanded by building schools, as tools for evangelisation. In their mission schools, for the first ten years they made Chiswahili the core medium of instruction while English, Chinyanja and Chiyao were rarely used.²³⁵ Although the UMCA missionaries were English, they offered education through vernacular classes until the 1920s. The foundation of their schooling was not education and industrial training as was the case with other missions, but religious teaching.²³⁶

[The UMCA Bishop, commenting on government educational policy in 1927 as quoted in Tengtenga, writes, “If the Education authorities will realize that we are here first and last to do religious work, that we regard educational work as part of that and in many ways a means to that end, but in no sense whatever a substitute for it.”²³⁷ \(A 84\)](#) It is likely that Chinyanja and Chiyao

were the languages most used in everyday life of the indigenous adherents of their Mission. After all, the first converts of the UMCA to eastern and southern part of Lake Malawi were mostly Chiyao speakers. Secondly, the UMCA area of operation posed a challenge to the opening of schools because Muslim African parents were not ready to release their children to schools. Again, the Muslim chiefs did not allow Christian missionaries to open schools in their area.²³⁸ This meant that most children of the indigenes in the UMCA area of influence did not acquire western forms of education compared to those in the area occupied by the Livingstonia and Blantyre missions.²³⁹ Ross, quoting Roger Tangri, says that “in the Central Region education was provided by the Dutch Reformed Church, Anglican and Roman Catholic Missions none of whom, at that time, concentrated on education in English...the modernizers were almost all products of the Livingstonia or Blantyre Mission school systems.”²⁴⁰ Hence, the UMCA approach minimised chances and opportunities for its adherents to secure better jobs in private and public institutions. This explains why most members of the UMCA did not hold influential positions in Malawian politics in the 1960s. The first Malawian cabinet was predominantly Presbyterian, including Dr

²³⁵ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 87.

²³⁶ K.N. Banda, *A Brief History of Education in Malawi*, Blantyre: Dzuka Publishing Company, 1982, 3, 4.

²³⁷ [J. Tengtenga, ed., *The UMCA in Malawi*, 241.](#)

²³⁸ M. Salanjira, “Contesting Spaces in Curriculum Policy Change,” PhD diss., University of KwaZulu Natal, 2009, 36.

²³⁹ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 183.

²⁴⁰ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 32.

Banda and regional ministers, with the exception of Chipembere and Msonthi who were Anglican members.²⁴¹

2.2.1.4 *Problematizing the English hegemony: The politics of language*

Often missionaries' hegemony manifested in the imperial language of their country. Mbaya, commenting on role of the imperial language, points out,

In this case, language is a means of power since it is the medium in which the entire worldview is transmitted to the subordinate individual or group. In this regard, depriving the African the privilege of mastering European knowledge through the English language could have served as a means for the UMCA to control the Africans, consequently retard the pace and the extent to which European power would be made available to them.²⁴²

While the imperial language was employed in English hegemonic control, it also facilitated the manner in which African indigenes came to define their social boundaries, including ethnic identities. Richard Gray points out that the literacy instruction by Christian missionaries “involved a massive penetration into African languages” which led them to open more schools.²⁴³ Through schooling, the missionaries also played a vital role in ethnic consciousness.²⁴⁴ It was through this process that the educated Africans rewrote their histories as a way of reclaiming their ethnic identities. The initiative taken by mission graduates was a counter-hegemonic strategy against the established hegemonies. For example, after being influenced with mission education, Yohana Abdallah, a Yao by ethnicity and who was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1898, wrote the history of the Yao people. [He wrote the Yao history](#) to claim [what he and his people were](#) (A 85).²⁴⁵ Hence, mission education not only reinforced the European hegemony, through the use of imperial languages, but it also acted as a counter-hegemonic force, by allowing ethnic groups at the margins of societies begin to negotiate, define, affirm and redraw their own ethnic identities.

Various missions adopted different educational policies in relation to education, language and literacy. This raised the question of how indigenes came to define themselves in relation to the other, especially where a mission chose not to prioritise education or offer education through the

²⁴¹ Ibid, 89, 227.

²⁴² H.H. Mbaya, “The Making of an African Clergy in the Anglican Church,” 162.

²⁴³ R. Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, London: Yale University Press, 1990, 96.

²⁴⁴ N. Alexander, *Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa*, Sea Point: The Estate of Neville Edward Alexander, 2013, 16; W.E. Phipps, “Christian and Nationalism in Tropical Africa,” in *JSTOR: Civilization*, 22:1, 1972, 93; K. Ward, “Christianity, Colonialism and Missions,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, edited by Hugh McLeod, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 78.

²⁴⁵ [B. Pachai, Malawi: The History of the Nation, 53.](#)

imperial language, as a medium of instruction and as a subject. For example, the Africa Inland Mission missionaries in Kenya did not emphasize the significance of education. They believed that offering education to the evangelised was dangerous and outside their mandate because they came to make them good Christians. The policy attracted protest from indigenes within their sphere of influence.²⁴⁶ Similarly, in Malawi the UMCA did not do well in provision of education because of its emphasis on religion and refusal of government aid in its schools.²⁴⁷ Yet education beyond reading the Bible was necessary for socioeconomic development, and most importantly it was critical to Livingstone's vision of commerce, civilisation and Christianity in Africa. Above all, it was a gateway to a world of opportunities for the evangelised.

However, the imperial language was not only a gateway to the world of opportunities, it was also the most "visible" symbol of ethnicity.²⁴⁸ Those who acquired western education considered themselves to be on par with the colonial masters. This distinction had both political and social undertones as those denied access to western formal education felt they were being deprived and discriminated against, as this study will show on the causes [of \(A 86\)](#) ethnic polarisation in post-independence Malawi. It also raised tension between Malawians with formal education and those without it. Western education became a site of politics in most areas occupied by the UMCA in Malawi, especially between those who embraced Christianity and western education, on the one hand, and on the other hand, those who rejected mission education on the grounds of religious or cultural beliefs. For example, the Nyau society and Muslims [\(A 87\)](#) burnt schools built by the UMCA missionaries.²⁴⁹ This contributed to low enrolment in its schools because the majority of the population in these societies were against Christianity, which they feared a threat to their religion and culture.²⁵⁰ This was because most of those who embraced Islam were Yao people, but this does not suggest that all Yao people were Muslims. This action taken of not allowing the UMCA to open schools in Muslim or Chewa Nyau areas denied the opportunity of education to [people \(A 88\)](#) in these areas. This had a profound effect on how those were under the influence of

²⁴⁶ J. Gathogo, "The Early Attempts at Ecumenical Cooperation in East Africa: The Case of the Kikuyu Conference of 1913," in *Studia Historiae Ecclesiae*, 36:2, 2010, 79, 80.

²⁴⁷ K.N. Banda, *A Brief History of Education in Malawi*, 3.

²⁴⁸ P.J. Kishindo, "Politics of language in Contemporary Malawi", 277.

²⁴⁹ H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam", 109, 110, 112.

²⁵⁰ [J. Weller and J. Linden. *Mainstream Christianity*, 131 \(A: M. Salanjira, "Contesting Spaces in Curriculum Policy Change," 36.](#)

the UMCA began to define themselves, as opposed to those who acquired Western formal education. Let us turn to the Livingstonia Mission.

2.2.2 *The Livingstonia Mission: Identity Construction*

There [\(A 89\)](#) is no published historical work of the CCAP Livingstonia Synod since 1875, written from [an\(A 90\)](#) African perspective. Thompson, a historian and former missionary to Malawi, in his article titled *Speaking for Ourselves: The African Writers of Livingstonia* published in 1994, admits that there is no published work on Livingstonia using an African lens. Among all the articles and books he mentions in his article, none of them directly discusses the history of the Livingstonia Presbytery and/or Synod.²⁵¹ Most books, so far, providing a historical account of the Synod are written by [\(A 91\)](#) British former missionaries to Malawi and Zambia and from their own perspectives.

Most publications written by the ex-missionaries focused on the period between 1875 and 1930. These publications are those of Robert Laws, Walter Elmslie, William Livingstone, and Donald Fraser *inter alia*. Recent publications include that of McCracken, who has written on the impact of Livingstonia Mission on politics and Christianity in Malawi from 1875 to 1940. Thompson has also written on Livingstonia Mission with specific attention to Donald Fraser's missionary strategies among the M'belwa Ngoni. But again, he does not go beyond 1940. There is no comprehensive history of the Synod of Livingstonia since it was made a synod in 1956. However, this section does not intend to give a full historical account of the Livingstonia Mission and Presbytery or Synod but to briefly provide the historical background in relation to the topic being interrogated. The discussion, as it unfolds in the coming chapters, attempts to provide a history of the CCAP with a primary focus on the interface between ethnicity and Christianity, in light of the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute.

At this point, it is significant to explain the name 'Livingstonia'. Broadly, the name Livingstonia means the land of Dr Livingstone. To be more precise, it refers to area to be evangelised by the Livingstonia Mission. However, the name also referred to the headquarters of the mission. Prior to the transfer of Laws to Bandawe, it was Cape Maclear, which was called 'Livingstonia' although the name 'Livingstonia' referring to Cape Maclear continued appearing in

²⁵¹ T.J. Thompson, "Speaking for Ourselves: The African Writers of Livingstonia," in *Bulletin of the Scottish Institute of Missionaries Studies*, Series 10, 1994, 24, 30.

correspondences after the transfer of the headquarters to Bandawe. For example, in all the letters that Namalambe, the first convert of the Mission, used to write Laws, he referred to the place as 'Livingstonia'.²⁵² Similarly, when Laws moved the headquarters to Bandawe, it was this station which was called 'Livingstonia'.²⁵³ Again, when he moved to Khondowe plateau, the new place was also called 'Livingstonia'. In 1899, when a presbytery for the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa was formed by the Livingstonia Mission, it was also called 'Livingstonia Presbytery'. This presbytery was qualified as North Livingstonia Presbytery to distinguish it from the South Livingstonia Presbytery, which comprised its southern stations including those recently opened and occupied by the DRC missionaries, though in 1903 it retained its name as Livingstonia Presbytery.²⁵⁴ When the Livingstonia Presbytery in 1956 became a synod, it was known as the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia. Hence, the name 'Livingstonia' is multifaceted and contextual. It means different things in the history of the Church. Hence, it is important to note the context in which it is used for the sake of clarity.

2.2.2.1 *The origin of the Livingstonia Mission*

To have a better understanding of ecclesiastical and ethno-national identities of the Livingstonia missionaries, it is imperative to re-examine the beginnings of the Mission. The Church of Scotland was a product of the 16th century reformation, which was built on Calvinistic theology. Within the period of 114 years, the Church of Scotland had three major schisms. The first schism happened in 1733 when some left the Church to form another church. However, most of the ministers returned. In 1761 another group of church ministers broke away from the Church of Scotland, and later in 1847 formed the United Presbyterian Church (UPC) of which Dr Laws was a member until 1900. However, the critical schism occurred in 1843, which is technically called the Disruption, in which almost half of the members walked out of the Church of Scotland as a means of protest against intolerable and unbearable government interference into ecclesiastical matters. This group formed the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) [in 1843 \(A 92\)](#).²⁵⁵ The schisms were more politically motivated than being theological.

²⁵² Albert Namalambe's letter to Dr Laws dated 27th November, 1883. Namalambe wrote in *Chinyanja*, "Koma ilipo njala ya mbiri pano pa Livingstonia" (translation: "but there is a [\(A 93\)](#) hunger crisis here at Livingstonia").

²⁵³ H. McIntosh, *Robert Laws: Servant of Africa*, Carberry: The Handsel Press Ltd, 1993, 74.

²⁵⁴ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 212, McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 293.

²⁵⁵ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 52; A. McGowan, "A Presbyterian Reunion," in *Life and Works: The Editorially Independent Magazine of the Church of Scotland*, April, 2003, 17.

The crucial part of this schism was that three quarters of church ministers left the Church. Those remained in the Church renamed it the Established Church of Scotland (ECS) because it was following the established principle.²⁵⁶ It was the FCS that formed the Livingstonia Mission under the influence of James Stewart, who was the Principal of Lovedale Institution. In 1900, the FCS amalgamated with the UPC to form the United Free Church of Scotland (UFCS), which, in 1929, also re-joined with the ECS to form the Church of Scotland as it stands today. By 1929, both Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions were under one umbrella, the Church of Scotland. However, this amalgamation came after the Livingstonia and Blantyre Presbyteries had formed one church, namely, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) under one Synod, as its highest decision-making body.

In Malawi, the missions that came from a background of following the established principle were the UMCA in England, the Blantyre Mission in Scotland and the DRCM in South Africa. In Malawi, according to Tengtenga, it was the UMCA that was perceived as the *de facto* established church, because most of the colonial administrators had an Anglican background or were linked to the Church of England.²⁵⁷ However, the UMCA affiliation to the colonial administrators did not override the influence the Scottish missionaries had in the country on public affairs. Secondly, their English identity meant the Scottish missionaries were much closer to the colonial administrators than the DRCM missionaries. In Malawi, Scots were known with an English identity rather Scottish identity. In Malawi, if we are to adhere to the testimony of Henry Rowley, one of the first UMCA members in the country, this assertion is affirmed. In his account, he observes that the indigenes associated the name English with protection and a friend.²⁵⁸ This could be one of the reasons that even the Scottish missionaries used to refer to themselves as English. Nevertheless, in certain writings they kept defining themselves as Scots, particularly in their nationalistic narratives.²⁵⁹ (C 1) It is this fluidity of their ecclesiastical and ethno-national [identity \(A 95\)](#) defined how Scottish missionaries the “other.”

2.2.2.2 *The establishment and development of the Mission*

²⁵⁶ The established principle means “that the State has a duty to protect and support the church and the church has the duty to advise the State” (*Free Church Witness*, December, 2009, Issue, p 4).

²⁵⁷ J. Tengtenga, “Religious Pluralism in Malawi: A Challenge to the Church”, in *Religion in Malawi*, No. 8, 1998, 18.

²⁵⁸ H. Rowley, *The Story of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa*, 278.

²⁵⁹ [William Koyi to Dr Laws of 23 January 1882; Kaning’ina Journal, entry of 8 June 1879, NLS \(A 94\); J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 44 - 45.](#)

Just as the UMCA traces its origin from the speech made by Dr Livingstone, the Livingstonia Mission traced its origin from the speech made by James Stewart to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) in 1874 after the burial of the Scottish explorer Livingstone at Westminster Abbey.²⁶⁰ Although Stewart was moved by [the \(A 96\)](#) death of Livingstone, he was greatly influenced by the permanent withdrawal of the UMCA in 1863 from the area Livingstone dedicated his life to and the lack of interest shown at home by fellow Scots to pursue Livingstone's dream. He felt the UMCA withdrawal was somehow a betrayal to the efforts of the patriotic Scot to serve the people outside the bounds of Europe.²⁶¹

In 1861, Stewart accompanied Livingstone and the UMCA in search of the place where the FCS could start mission work in the Lake Malawi region. Before 1861, Stewart, as a theological student at the University of Edinburgh, is quoted by W.P. Livingstone as having urged the FCS to send missionaries to the Lake region. Stewart said, "We are willing to go out and begin a mission somewhere in the countries opened by Dr Livingstone. We ask you to send us." Later Dr Livingstone, while in company with Stewart to Africa, is quoted in W.P. Livingstone to have said to him, "I am glad you have come ... come up and see the country for yourself."²⁶² Upon his arrival in Malawi, however, Stewart was not impressed with what he found and decided not to continue with his ambition to start a mission.²⁶³ But at the funeral of the great Scottish explorer, his previous ambition was reinvigorated. He then asked the General Assembly of FCS to reconsider sending missionaries to the Lake region.²⁶⁴

Livingstonia Mission, from the onset, unlike any other mission, demonstrated [that \(A 97\)](#) it was geared to fulfil Livingstone's vision and aspiration. Livingstone's vision was to introduce commerce to replace the horrible trade in human beings, civilisation and Christianity, what often is called the Three Cs. [\(A 98\)](#) The first crew of the Livingstonia Mission comprised well trained personnel ranging from the clergy, medical doctors, a carpenter, engineer and blacksmith, agriculturalists, marine, and businessmen.²⁶⁵ The Livingstonia Central African Company, which was later called African Lakes Company, was to champion commerce while the Mission was for

²⁶⁰ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 18.

²⁶¹ J. Johnston, *Robert Laws of Livingstonia*, London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d., 21.

²⁶² W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 5,6; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 51.

²⁶³ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 18.

²⁶⁴ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 54, 57.

²⁶⁵ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 88.

Christianity and civilisation through evangelisation, education and industrial training. Strategically, they separated the work of the mission from that of commerce by having different leaders heading each section. It is this arrangement that led to its successful history in its mission enterprise.

[According to Alexander Hetherwick, the subject of starting missionary work in the Lake Nyasa region was introduced to the both General Assemblies of the ESC and FCS.](#)²⁶⁶ Unlike the ECS, the FCS, which was missionary-minded, responded quickly to Stewart's call by forming a mission named after the Scottish explorer Livingstone. It was named Livingstonia, which has already been explained above.²⁶⁷ [This mission came to the Lake Nyasa \(Malawi\) region to start the work Livingstone wanted his countrymen to do after the withdrawal of the UMCA.](#) The name [of the mission \(A 99\)](#) was linked to Dr Livingstone for symbolic purposes. [This is one of the reasons why](#) Chitambo area, where Livingstone's heart and intestines were buried, was reserved for the Livingstonia Mission during the comity agreement in Zambia, to retain Livingstonia's legacy and vision of the Three Cs.²⁶⁸

The first crew of the Livingstonia Mission comprised the following: Lieutenant E.D. Young, the leader of the expedition, George Johnston, the carpenter, Allan Simpson, the blacksmith, John Macfadyen, the engineer, Alexander Riddle, the agriculturalist, William Baker, the seaman, Robert Laws, the only clergy whom the FCS lent from the UPC, and Henry Henderson, a member of the ECS, whose primary task was to find a place where the ECS could start mission work in Malawi.²⁶⁹ E.D. Young stayed for a short time as a leader for the Mission. Then he was succeeded by James Stewart in 1876. At end of 1877, Stewart resigned as the leader for the Mission, and handed over the leadership to Laws. It was Laws who became instrumental for the growth of the Mission, and to the formation and development of the CCAP. Laws remained the leader of the Mission until 1926 when he was forced to retire because of old age.²⁷⁰

On 12th October 1875, the Livingstonia Mission landed at its final destination in the area belonging to Chief Mponda, a Yao chief, which Dr Livingstone named as Cape Maclear after his

²⁶⁶ A. Hetherwick, *The Romance of Blantyre*, 14.

²⁶⁷ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making Modern Malawi*, 18.

²⁶⁸ C.W. Mackintosh, *Some Pioneer Missions of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, 34.

²⁶⁹ J.W. (A17) Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia: The Story of the Livingstonia Mission British Central Africa*, New York: Young People's Missionary Movement, 1900, 37.

²⁷⁰ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 281.

friend Dr Maclear. In the following year, the Mission opened the first school.²⁷¹ Despite the Livingstonia Mission starting mission activities in this area, the Yao chiefs, who were predominantly Muslims, did not allow their children to attend classes because they were suspicious that their children could be converted to Christianity. Instead, it was the redeemed slaves of the Mang'anja and the Makololo, former porters of Livingstone, who began attending classes.²⁷² The medium of instruction opted for by the missionaries [possibly](#) was Chinyanja, [alongside English because the teachers were English speakers \(A 100\)](#).²⁷³

Like the UMCA, the place became [un-habitable \(A 101\)](#) for the missionaries following the death of its staff, both Europeans and Africans. Unlike the UMCA, both Stewart and Laws decided not to completely withdraw from the place. Rather they opted to look for another suitable place for the Mission headquarters along Lake Malawi to sustain the vision and aspiration of their fellow Scotsman, Livingstone. Even Cape Maclear, as a station, was not completely abandoned, as Retief reports.²⁷⁴ It was left in the hands of the first convert, Albert Namalambe, a Mang'anja by ethnicity.²⁷⁵ Namalambe was in charge of Cape Maclear Station until it was put under the charge of the DRC missionaries.²⁷⁶ The DRCM abandoned it later and the place has remained no man's land up to the present.

[Surprisingly](#) ninety years after its handover, the Nkhoma Synod still considered Cape Maclear to be a co-owned place with the Synod of Livingstonia, despite the fact that Cape Maclear was within the bounds of the Nkhoma Synod [and belonged to it \(A 102\)](#). Minute SC 842 of the Nkhoma Synod reads, "The minute SC 2336 is revised in such a way that the responsibility to build the monument at Cape Maclear will not be that of [the] Nkhoma Synod alone but the responsibility will be shared by [the] Nkhoma Synod, [the Synod of] Livingstonia and [the] General Synod."²⁷⁷ What is interesting in this Minute was the singling out of the Synod of Livingstonia, among the other four synods of the CCAP. If the Nkhoma Synod intended to push the responsibility to sister synods because of the historical significance of the place, it could have appealed to all synods through the General Synod. Secondly, it can be asked why the Synod of Livingstonia was not

²⁷¹ Ibid, 66.

²⁷² B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 168.

²⁷³ Ibid, 169. J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 81.

²⁷⁴ M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 24.

²⁷⁵ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 84.

²⁷⁶ Dr Laws' letter to Mr Gill dated 12th March, 1888; Namalambe's letter to Dr Laws dated 17th January, 1884 Livingstonia papers, NLS.

²⁷⁷ Min. SC 842, CCAP, Nkhoma Synod Minutes 1976-1991, Box 94, NGK Archive, Stellenbosch (St.), South Africa.

involved in the celebration of Kasungu Station, which it had opened, like Cape Maclear Station. Hence, the singling out of the CCAP Livingstonia Synod raises a serious question that requires thorough consideration in next chapters.

It was through the search for a new place that the Livingstonia missionaries came into contact with ethnic groups in the present Northern Malawi as early as 1877 [\(A 103\)](#). This led to the establishment of stations: Kaning'ina, close to where the Moyale Barracks is located [\(A 104\)](#) in Mzuzu City and, Bandawe Mission in 1878.²⁷⁸ Kaning'ina station bordered the Tonga areas of Lakeshore and the M'belwa Ngoni areas to upper land, especially those under Chiputula Nhlane, although it was later abandoned.

However, Mbaya wants to impress on us that the first Christian mission to permanently become established in Malawi was the Blantyre Mission, followed by the UMCA and then the Livingstonia Mission. To the contrary, this study argues that the Livingstonia Mission was the first English Christian mission to permanently establish itself in Malawi, as early as 1875. Mbaya, commenting on the withdrawal of the UMCA in 1861, states,

In the meantime, originating in Scotland, the Livingstonia Mission established itself initially at Bandawe in 1878 but more permanently at Ekwendeni from 1889 in the Northern Province of Malawi. In 1875, the Blantyre Mission, also formed in Scotland, permanently established itself in Chief Kapeni's area in Southern Malawi.²⁷⁹

He goes on to say, "In 1885 the UMCA returned to Malawi from Zanzibar and established a permanent station on Likoma Island."²⁸⁰ While it is historically correct to say that the UMCA established its first permanent station on Likoma Island in 1885, which became part of the Northern Malawi later, it should also be stated that the Livingstonia Mission established its first mission station at Cape Maclear in 1875. Then later in 1878, it opened other two observational stations at Kaning'ina and Bandawe. Kaning'ina was under the leadership of Alexander Riddell [\(A 105\)](#).²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Kaning'ina station was located the south of the Matete River in City of Mzuzu. It was estimated at a distance of six to seven hours walking to Chiputula Nhlane village built between Mzuzu and Ekwendeni, and about 14 hours walking to Bandawe (The entries of 20th October, 1879 and 22nd January, 1979, of Kaning'ina Journal, Livingstonia papers (NLS). Considering the geographical description given, the Moyale barracks or any place close to it, would be the appropriate place for the station. Also see B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 19.

²⁷⁹ H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam", 100.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 100.

²⁸¹ Alexander Miller's letter to Stewart, C.E. dated 08.06.1879, Livingstonia papers, NLS; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 94; R. Laws, *Reminiscence of Livingstonia*, 83; [Entry of 20 January 1879 says that "Dr Laws, Mr Moir and Stewart left to visit Mr Riddell and the Angoni of Chipatula \[Chiputula\]. J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 94 – 95.](#)

Kaning'ina was later abandoned because of the raids the Ngoni and the Tonga waged on each other, and that the weather was hotter than Bandawe [\(A 106\)](#).²⁸²

Although Bandawe was opened as an observational station in 1878, the researcher concurs with Pachai who argues that Bandawe became a permanent station in the same year; unlike Kaning'ina, it was not abandoned.²⁸³ It was chosen as a station because of ease of communication and it had a good dock for their steamer - named after an ethnic group among whom Dr Livingstone died, *Ilala*.²⁸⁴ Further, it was strategically preferred to be the second headquarters of the Mission after Cape Maclear because it stood as a rival to Nkhotakota, the port and town of Jumbe, the slave dealer.²⁸⁵ On 18th October 1879, Laws wrote a letter on his intention to transfer the mission station from Kaning'ina to Bandawe because of the political tension between the Ngoni and Tonga. On 20th October 1879, Kaning'ina was closed.²⁸⁶ Then Laws and his wife were transferred to Bandawe in 1881. His transfer as the head of the Mission meant Bandawe became [the \(A 107\)](#) new headquarters for the Mission, and not a new station. Hence, it will not be correct to say that Livingstonia Mission established itself more permanently at Ekwendeni in 1889. By this time, the Livingstonia Mission was well established with all basic structures in place, with a reasonable number of staff, permanent infrastructures, and continued planting of new stations across the country.

It is also important to state that before the UMCA founded Likoma as a permanent mission station in [\(A 108\)](#) northern Malawi, the Livingstonia Mission had already established other permanent mission stations: at Nyuju [\(A109\)](#) in 1882 among the Ngoni of M'mbelwa in the northern Malawi, and at Ncherenje which was opened in 1883 with Dr Cross as head of the station, [but later abandoned \(A 110\)](#).²⁸⁷ Ncherenje was close to Mwenibanda village at Kapoka. It was situated to the east of Chitipa District headquarters, to serve the Lambya, Sukwa, Ndale, Nyiha, Nyika and Tumbuka people. Karonga Station²⁸⁸ [\(A 116\)](#) was opened among the Nkhonde,

²⁸² R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 84.

²⁸³ B. Pachai, "Christianity and Commerce in Malawi: Some Pre-Colonial Aspects," in *Past and Present: Selected Papers from the University of Malawi History Conference*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1971, 48.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 90.

²⁸⁵ H. McIntosh, *Robert Laws*, 73.

²⁸⁶ 18th and 20th January, 1879 entries and 13th and 16th January, 1880, entries of the Kaning'ina Journal, Livingstonia papers, NLS.

²⁸⁷ J. Thompson, *Ngoni, Xhosa and Scot*, Zomba: Kacherere, 2007, 49.

²⁸⁸ [There is a confusion between Karonga Station and Karonga Old Mission. Livingstonia Mission did not have Karonga and Karonga Old Mission stations. It only had Karonga Mission Station. The name Karonga Old Mission](#)

Nakyusa and Henga-Tumbuka people in 1885, in order to prevent the RC missionaries from encroaching into the area.²⁸⁹ And J.H. Bain was the head of it. Addressing the issue of understaffing, Laws sent Andrew C. Murray, when he arrived, to join Bain at Karonga.

In 1887, the Livingstonia missionaries opened Livlezi Station among the Ngoni of Chief Chikuse, in the present Ntcheu District in the Central Region bordering with Blantyre Mission situated in the Southern Region, following the request Chief Chikuse made to Laws on 17th February 1886 through Namalambe.²⁹⁰ Livlezi Station was under the charge of Dr Henry until his death on 5th July 1893. After his death the station was put under the charge of Alexander Dewar, James H. Artiken and W. Govan Robertson. Artiken died on 8th February 1894 before William Hoppe Murray of the NGK took charge of the station in September 1894.²⁹¹ When W.H. Murray and Vlok joined the station, they continued working with Govan Robertson, a member of the Livingstonia Mission. This arrangement was made in such [a \(A 111\)](#) way because the area being occupied by the NGK missionaries was in the south of the Kasungu District, which was to be regarded as the South Livingstonia Presbytery while Kasungu District going northward was referred to as the North Livingstonia Presbytery. Laws' original plan was to have one church in this area from [the \(A 112\)](#) onset. The idea of having separate Presbyterian churches appears to have originated from the NGK missionaries and their home committee, as the section on the history of the DRCM and Chapter Four will explain.

In the beginning, the idea was that the NGK and Livingstonia missionaries should work together in anticipation of forming one indigenous church. But Bolink seems not [to \(A 113\)](#) share this view. He says, "Up to 1900 the Livingstonia people would continue to speak of the Dutch Reformed field as the South Livingstonia Mission (Dutch Section)."²⁹² What Bolink fails to tell us, or perhaps did not know, was that in 1894 there was no discussion about the boundary between missions, as he states. The boundary between Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM was only discussed and established in 1904, when the latter became autonomous from the Livingstonia Mission (in figure 2.2). The minutes of the meeting held at Chinkhwiri village read [\(A114\)](#),

[refers to the congregation that was built on the site where Karonga Mission Station was before it was transferred to the new site, as agreed in 1902. See Min. 12 of 1902 of the Staff Records of the Livingstonia Mission, page 27. N.L.S.](#)

²⁸⁹ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 105-6; Livingstonia Mission Staff Record, Livingstonia Papers, NLS, p 30.

²⁹⁰ Albert Namalambe's letter to Dr Laws, dated 17.02.1886, Livingstonia papers, NLS; James W. Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, 179.

²⁹¹ J.W. Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, 184, 185.

²⁹² P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 83.

At the meeting of the representative of the Livingstonia and the DR Mission held at the village of Chinkhwiri on the 29th July 1904, the boundary between their respective spheres was agreed upon as follows: From the highest point of Chipata mountain the boundary line passes through the highest points of Mapasa, Kanjoka (a small knoll south of Chinkhwiri), Mpale, Mwanjazi; Watershed between the Bua River; from which point the boundary is the watershed between the Rusa and Bua rivers passing the Kapirimiwa, across the Rusa onto Mbwabwa.²⁹³

The agreement was signed by Prentice and Henderson on the Livingstonia Mission's side while on DRCM side it was countersigned by W.H. Murray and A.J. Liebenberg.

²⁹³ Minutes of the Chinkhwiri border Agreement between Livingstonia Mission and DRCM held on 29th July, 1904, Synod of Livingstonia office. See the Extract in CCAP, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry," 45.

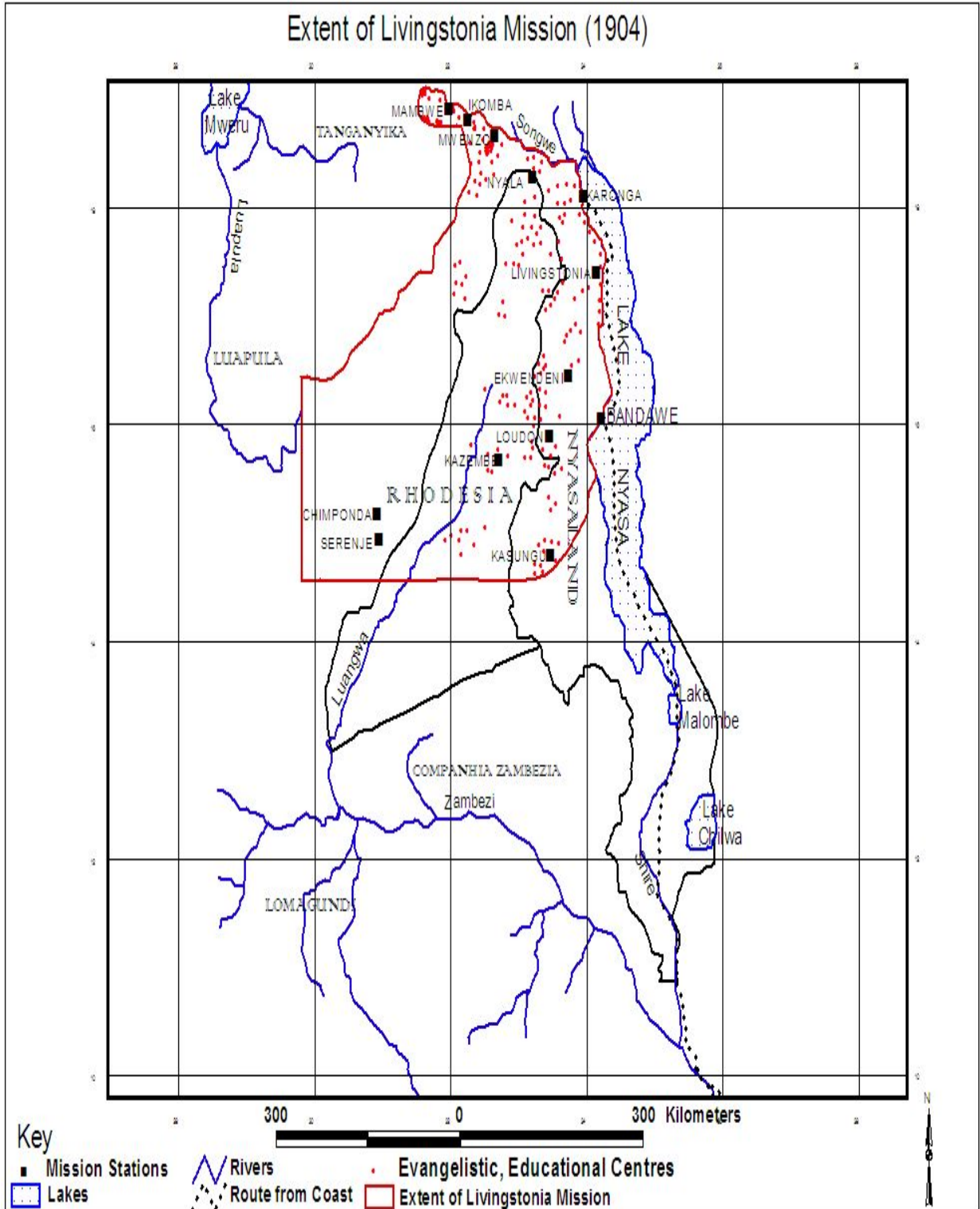


FIGURE 2.2. The map of the Livingstonia Mission after the DRCM became an autonomous mission showing stations and schools (Source: from M.M.S. Ballantyre (ed.) *Forerunners of Modern Malawi: The Early Missionary Adventures of Dr James Henderson 1885-1898*, Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1968, See the original map in appendix A) [\(A 115\)](#)

The 1904 ecclesiastical boundary, as Chapter Three will show, put Kasungu District as part of what became the Northern Province in 1921. But the point to underscore is that Bolink's statement is far from being accurate because, prior to 1904, there was no clear border between the two missions. Pauw reports that even after the DRCM had an autonomous executive committee in 1898, they continued to be part of the Livingstonia Mission.²⁹⁴

McCracken, commenting on what happened in 1894, points out that the DRCM camouflaged itself in A.C. Murray, first NGK missionary, when he came to work with Livingstonia, yet the DRCM had the intention of setting up its own mission.²⁹⁵ However, Pauw argues, "This did not mean a total break with Livingstonia since cordial relations and cooperation were to continue in any respects ... led to the formation of the one Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in 1924."²⁹⁶ In 1894, the NGK missionaries asked the Livingstonia leadership if they could have their own mission council to handle financial issues without prior reference to the Livingstonia Council. The DRC mission council was set up in 1897. It should be noted that the DRCM executive council was just regarded as a subordinate committee of the Livingstonia Mission Council.²⁹⁷ Hence, reference to the area occupied by the DRCM missionaries as the South Livingstonia Presbytery, prior to 1903, was appropriate because the DRCM was not yet an autonomous mission.

The stations constituted the Northern Livingstonia Presbyteries were as follows: Ekwendeni station was opened in 1889 when Njuyu became its outstation. In 1894, another station was established at Khondowe plateau, which became the third headquarters of the Mission after Cape Maclear and Bandawe stations. Between 1875 and 1900, the Livingstonia Mission established other stations as follows: Mwenzo Station, among the Mwanga of Zambia, was opened by a Tonga evangelist, Yohane Afwenge Banda in 1895, before Dr James Chisholm took over the leadership in 1900; Kasungu was opened by the indigenes in 1897, before Dr George Prentice became its leader in 1900; in 1902 the Hora station, under Donald Fraser, was transferred close to Lwasozi River and was named after it. It was later changed from Lwasozi Station to Loudon; in 1904, David Julizga Kaunda, father of the first president of Zambia and a Tonga-Tumbuka by ethnicity, opened a station at Chinsali among the Bemba of Zambia.²⁹⁸ In 1907, Chitambo Station was opened where

²⁹⁴ C. M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 78, 79, 81.

²⁹⁵ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 216,

²⁹⁶ C. M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 78.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 217; C. M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 78.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 169.

Dr Livingstone died. As stated above, Chitambo was purposely reserved for the Livingstonia Mission by the British administrators in Zambia, as a symbolic place for the Mission that bears his name.²⁹⁹ In 1912 Tamanda Station was established by Riddel Henderson among the Chewa people of Zambia. According to the map appended to Elsmilie's book titled *Among the Wild Ngoni*, Kanyenda was an outstation of Bandawe Station before 1899. Kanyenda outstation grew into a congregation in 1915 and was named Malawe (a Tonga corruption for Malawi) congregation.

2.2.2.3 *The date of establishment of the Livingstonia Mission*

Mbaya's assertion that the Blantyre Mission "permanently established itself in Chief Kapeni's area in Southern Malawi" in 1875 is far from being accurate.³⁰⁰ Even Andrew Ross, whom he quoted, does not make this claim. Ross categorically states that in 1875, Henry Henderson joined the Livingstonia Mission's crew as a pathfinder of the Blantyre Mission.³⁰¹ He dates the arrival of the Blantyre Mission on 23rd October, 1876.³⁰² At this time, Henderson did not consider himself to be doing his own work independently from the Livingstonia missionaries. Even at that time, the Established Church of Scotland was not ready to engage in mission work in Malawi.³⁰³ Rather, Henderson's primary purpose was to find the location where the Blantyre Mission of the Established Church of Scotland could start its mission work in the country.³⁰⁴ However, he did much of his work with [the \(A 117\)](#) help and supervision of the Livingstonia staff, especially Laws. Kenneth Ross also, in one of his books, puts 1875 as the date when Blantyre Mission was established in Malawi on account of the presence [of \(A 118\)](#) its pioneer missionary, Henry Henderson.³⁰⁵ However, it is generally agreed by most scholars that the Blantyre Mission came to Malawi in 1876.³⁰⁶

If the reasoning for setting the inception date of the Blantyre Mission as 1875 is based on the presence of its pioneer missionary, then the Livingstonia Mission could be said to have come to Malawi much earlier through its pioneer missionary James Stewart of the Free Church of Scotland.

²⁹⁹ C.W. Mackintosh, *Some Pioneer Missions of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, 34.

³⁰⁰ H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam," 100.

³⁰¹ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making Modern Malawi*, 15-16; see also J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 72; Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 23.

³⁰² Ibid, 43.

³⁰³ A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, 16.

³⁰⁴ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 41.

³⁰⁵ K.R. Ross, *Gospel Ferment in Malawi: Theological Essays*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1995, 11.

³⁰⁶ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 44; B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 89; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 72; A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, 22.

Stewart was in the company of Dr Livingstone and the UMCA in 1861.³⁰⁷ Although Stewart was not financially supported by the Free Church of Scotland, his trip to the regions of Lake Malawi was to find a suitable place where the Free Church of Scotland could start mission work.³⁰⁸ More importantly, the same business people who funded this trip continued to support the Livingstonia Mission financially from its inception. It was Stewart who, after the burial of Livingstone, proposed to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1874 to start mission work in Malawi in fulfilment of the dream of Livingstone, a fellow Scot. It was also Stewart who became a leader of the mission before handing over the role to Laws in 1877. It was Stewart, again, who identified the Xhosa missionaries and Tom Bokwito. Both Bokwito and the Xhosa missionaries contributed significantly to the establishment of Christianity in Malawi. Without their support, the Scots could not have effectively accomplished their goal of introducing Christianity to this part of Africa. This could be the reason why James Jack describes Stewart as “the original promoter of this Livingstonia Mission in the British Central Africa, and the means of its establishment.”³⁰⁹ In this light, the appropriate date for the inception of each mission could arguably be the time when the first crew landed on Malawian soil. Hence, the exact dates for the establishment Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions are 12th October 1875 and 23rd October 1876, respectively.

2.2.2.4 *Ethnic composition of the Mission and its language policy*

Pachai gave a composition of ethnic backgrounds where students attending the Overtoun Institute of the Livingstonia Mission came from. He says,

At the end of 1897 there were 302 boys attending all the Institute; 141...were boarders representing all the stations of the Livingstonia Mission from Karonga in the north to Nkhoma in the mid-south. A breakdown of the tribal affiliations of 158 of the students shows that they were drawn tribes, as follows: Henga, 43; Tonga, 36; Ngoni, 19; Nyika, or Phoka, 19; Namwanga, 9; Nyanja, 13; Tumbuka, 4; Nkhonde, 3; Wanda, 3; Kamanga, 3; Senga, 3, Siska, 2 and Gunda, 1.³¹⁰

It was this diverse ethnic backgrounds amidst which the Livingstonia Mission worked [that \(A119\)](#) influenced and shaped its language policy. Laws says in the beginning they wanted to impose Chinyanja on the people for whom it was not their mother-tongue, but it was rejected.³¹¹

³⁰⁷ J. McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, 39; A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 18.

³⁰⁸ T.J. Thompson, “Xhosa Missionaries in Late Nineteenth Century Malawi: Strangers or Fellow Countrymen?” in *Religion in Malawi*, Issue 8, 1998, 9.

³⁰⁹ J.W. Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, 19.

³¹⁰ B. Pachai, “Christianity and Commerce in Malawi”, 49, 50.

³¹¹ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 133.

The position taken by African indigenes against what Laws and his colleagues wanted to do can be summarised in what Horace Kallen later argued against the Anglo-conformity, when the Americans with a British descent wanted to impose their Britishness on other ethnic groups in the United States. He argued,

Men may change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent; they cannot change their grandfathers...The selfhood, which is inalienable in them, and for the realization of which they require "inalienable" liberty, is ancestrally determined, and happiness which they pursue has its form implied in ancestral endowment. This is what, actually, democracy in operation assumes.³¹²

Kallen's theory of cultural pluralism stands against any form of cultural imposition. Language is a symbol of cultural identity that requires protection. Hence, the position taken by the indigenes set a blueprint for the Mission language policy. Although English was maintained as the official language, each missionary serving in a particular station was encouraged to learn and speak the language of the people (A 120) whom he/she was evangelising. This could be the reason why George Prentice, in proposing the transfer of Kasungu Station, argued that no one except Laws and himself spoke Chinyanja.³¹³ His argument came as a surprise because it was inconsistent with the Mission policy. Every expatriate was urged to learn a language of the people to whom he was serving. It was this spirit that motivated most missionaries to engage in language translation and literacy development in different indigenous languages, as a symbol of people's identity to whom they were evangelising.³¹⁴ For example, when the missionaries reduced isiZulu into writing in South Africa, isiZulu became a symbol for Zulu identity.³¹⁵ Similarly, the Livingstonia missionaries who found themselves in the multi-ethnic societies developed the alphabets for some indigenous languages. Although they did not develop alphabets for every indigenous language of the people to whom they worked in (A 121) their midst, the exercise brought ethnic consciousness to the people who spoke that particular language put in writing.³¹⁶

When the Livingstonia Mission came to the area of Mponda, the Yao Chief, Laws reported that people were bilingual: they spoke both Chiyao and Chinyanja. Then he said that Chief Mponda was fluent in his mother tongue - Chiyao rather than Chinyanja.³¹⁷ This indicates the value people

³¹² H.M. Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot," 194.

³¹³ George Prentice's letter to Frank Ashcroft of 5th July, 1923, Livingstonia Papers, NLS.

³¹⁴ W.E. Phipps, "Christian and Nationalism in Tropical Africa," 94.

³¹⁵ B. Carton, "Zuluness in the Past – and – Neo-worlds," in *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present*, edited by Benedicto Carton, John Laband and Jabulani Sithole, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008, 4, 5.

³¹⁶ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 133.

³¹⁷ *Ibid*, 36.

attached to their own language. Although Chiyao was the language of the rulers, the first language to be learnt and put into writing by missionaries was Chinyanja.³¹⁸ This was not done for the purpose of using language as a tool for counter-hegemony. Rather, the missionaries first might have learnt Chinyanja at Lovedale, possibly, through Tom Bokwito,³¹⁹ and improved as they interacted with students such as Albert Namalambe and James Brown Mvula, the [early \(A 121\)](#) converts, who happened to be Chinyanja speakers.³²⁰ Most of Namalambe's correspondence was in Chinyanja.

African indigenes were instrumental in the initial stages of language development of the Livingstonia Mission, the Blantyre Mission and the DRCM, since they acted as interpreters and teacher-evangelists until some of the European staff learnt the indigenous languages. When the Livingstonia Mission was expanding into areas inhabited by people who spoke a different language to that which the missionaries had put into writing, they attempted to impose the learned language on the people but the people resisted. In some instances, this imposition was accepted without question but in other cases the people rejected or opposed schooling in the alien languages of their neighbours. For example, [this happened \(A 122\)](#) when the Livingstonia missionaries wanted to introduce Chinyanja and Chitumbuka in areas [\(A 123\)](#) inhabited by other ethnic groups who did not speak these languages, such as in Zambia where people opposed it.³²¹ The question we are bound to ask is, why did the indigenes not oppose the imperial language which was also alien? Two explanations can be given: (a) it might be that they considered it to be a language of civilisation,³²² and (b) it was the language of their evangelisers. Hence, it appeared more attractive than languages of the neighbours.

As a result, the missionaries attempted to learn, use, code and reduce other languages, including the following: Chiyao, Chitonga, Chingoni, Chitumbuka, Chinamwanga, Chibemba and Kyangonde. These languages were put in writing by the missionaries working in [the \(A 124\)](#) area where that particular language was commonly spoken. For example, Chitonga was the second language to be put in writing by the Livingstonia missionaries, particularly MacAlpine in 1894,³²³ although at that time [it \(A 125\)](#) was still used and attempts to put it writing were made. According

³¹⁸ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 81.

³¹⁹ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 41.

³²⁰ *Ibid*, 128-129.

³²¹ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 133.

³²² N. Alexander, *Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa*, 16.

³²³ McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 159.

to the entry on 12th October 1879 in the Bandawe and Kaningina Journal, Luke 15:11-31 was read in Chinyanja but whole service was conducted in Chitonga. In the same year, Alexander Riddel translated English hymns into Chitonga. He began translation by writing a table of Chitonga concords in the early 1879.³²⁴ As noted above, the writing of a language brought a sense of pride to people who owned that language. It became a symbol of their ethnic identity. This might be the reason why language can be a source of people's pride and of resistance.

2.2.2.5 *Cooperation with other missions and its growth*

Europeans, regardless of their differences at home, worked in harmony in the mission fields in their early days. For example, the Livingstonia missionaries supported and worked with fellow Protestant missionaries such as those of the Blantyre Mission, the UMCA and the DRCM during their early days in Malawi. It is interesting to note that Protestant missionaries, who might have been considered a rival to the Roman Catholic (RC) missionaries, were supportive to the latter. It is interesting to note what a Diary of the first White Fathers at Mponda says in the entry of 1st October 1890. It reads, "As for us, we would have died of starvation long ago without the English. It is eight months since we heard from our superior."³²⁵ While in Uganda, Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries were great adversaries, in Malawi they were relative friends despite their competing for converts. This explains why Catholics continued having cordial relations with some Protestants in Malawi.³²⁶ (C 4) Home differences of various missionaries did not matter much in certain circumstances. The support the Livingstonia Mission rendered to other missions was largely a result of their shared identity, that is, for the Presbyterian missionaries, being English or Scottish rather than being divided along the lines of their denominational differences.

As stated above, British citizens, including David Livingstone, were fond of affirming the English identity. In Livingstone's diaries available at his home at Blantyre in Scotland, which the researcher read when he visited Blantyre in Scotland, Livingstone often did not refer to himself as a Scot, but rather as an Englishman.³²⁷ However, among the Livingstonia missionaries, no one

³²⁴ Bandawe and Kaningina Journal, Entry of 13th October, 1879, Liv. Papers, NLS (A 127).

³²⁵ "The Mponda Mission Dairy 1889-1891 of the White fathers", 20.

³²⁶ [However, it should be noted that the relationship between the Roman Catholics and Protestants are not always good although in certain it has been cordial \(C 4\).](#)

³²⁷ J.W. Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, 26.

ethnically could be described as English because all were Scots by descent although linguistically they were English.

2.2.3 *The Blantyre Mission*

The history of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, like other CCAP synods, is not yet fully written. Andrew Ross has written part of it but his interest is in the period ranging from 1876 to 1930, with emphasis on the role played by Clement D. Scott, the third leader of the Blantyre Mission, and the Mission's contribution to Malawian politics, as well as the growth of an indigenous church. A much earlier publication, possibly covering the same period as Ross, is that written by Alexander Hetherwick, the long serving leader of the Mission, titled, *The Romance of Blantyre*. It provides a historical account of the Blantyre Mission and the role of the Blantyre missionaries in the creation of Malawi as a state (crown territory- Protectorate) and the growth of the Church to his retirement in 1927 (A 126). Saindi Chipangwi, in his doctoral thesis, has briefly explained the Synod history but his focus was on the church's numerical growth in the post-independence period from 1960-1975, without making a reference to the Church's involvement in public politics.³²⁸ A recent study is Abale-Phiri's unpublished doctoral thesis, but he does not discuss the history of the Blantyre Synod *per se*, because his focus is on the Blantyre urban ministry from a cross-cultural perspective.³²⁹

Despite there being no full published and/or written account of the history of the Blantyre Synod, neither this section, nor the research as a whole, intends to write it because it is not within the scope of this study. However, it will provide a brief account of the history of the Blantyre Mission as it contributes to the ongoing topic of Christianity and ethnicity in relation to the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the CCAP. As stated above, by 1929 the Blantyre Mission was under the same umbrella as the Livingstonia Mission. Prior to 1929, both Scottish Churches allowed the Blantyre and Livingstonia Presbyteries to join and form the CCAP in 1924. Hence, most discourses affecting the Livingstonia Presbytery/Synod in many ways also had a direct impact on life of the Blantyre Presbytery/Synod. Therefore, we cannot discuss the border dispute of the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods without making reference to the Blantyre Mission or Presbytery, and in particular the Synod as it came be called by 1956.

³²⁸ S.D. Chipangwi, "Why People Join the Christian Church," PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 1978.

³²⁹ H.M. Abale-Phiri, *Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis*,

However, this intimacy can be problematic, as far as the question of belongingness and identity is concerned. For example, the report of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, commenting on how the Church was affected in Malawi following the 1959 State of Emergency reads: “This includes the Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre, with which the Church of Scotland missionaries work, and the Synod of Nkhoma which is associated with the Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.”³³⁰ What is interesting in this description is the distinction drawn between the Scottish-oriented Synods and the Dutch-oriented Synod. By 1926, the three synods ceased to be presbyteries of the mother churches that sent missionaries who were instrumental to the establishment of the CCAP. All synods belonged to the CCAP. So it was not necessary to draw such a distinction between Synods that had been independent for 35 years. It is this distinction based on belongingness that brings a sense of inclusion and exclusion in the CCAP, as some sections of it want to cling to either Scottish identity or Dutch identity in spite of having a common identity, the CCAP.

2.2.3.1 *Origin and establishment of the Mission in Malawi*

The Blantyre Mission was the third [British \(A 128\)](#) mission to come to Malawi, but the second to become permanently established. Named after the birth place of Dr Livingstone. It was sent by the Established Church of Scotland (ECS). The situation the ECS found itself in after the 1843 Disruption resulted in it not having enough clergy for mission work elsewhere. This could be one of the reasons why there was no clergy among the first crew that arrived in Malawi on 23rd October, 1876.³³¹ When the first crew arrived, it was welcomed by Henderson who became the leader of [\(A 129\)](#) the Mission.³³²

As historians attribute the beginning of the Livingstonia Mission to James Stewart, in a similar way, the genesis of the Blantyre Mission was ascribed to John McRae of Hawick, a member of the ECS. It was he who asked the General Assembly of the ECS to send a mission to the area around Lake Malawi after the meeting he had with James Stewart.³³³ After the approval of the General

³³⁰ Church of Scotland, “Supplementary Report of the Foreign Mission Committee,” Livingstonia Collections, Centre for Study of Christianity in Non-Western World Library, School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh.

³³¹ D.D. Phiri, *History of Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 2004, 135; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 72; A. F. Walls, “Societies for mission” in *The History of Christianity* edited T. Dowley, et. al., Oxford: Lion Publishing plc, 1977, 573-4; A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 19, 21, 41; S. Gleen, “Blantyre Mission,” in *The Nyasaland Journal*, 10:2, 1957, 7; B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 890.

³³² B. Pachai, “Christianity and Commerce in Malawi”, 50; A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, 20.

³³³ A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, 14.

Assembly, it was again McRae who took up the task of recruiting members for the new mission. However, no one was coming forth to lead the Mission. It was by coincidence that Henderson came across an advertisement in the *Missionary Herald* magazine. Immediately, he contacted McRae and volunteered to be a pathfinder for the newly established mission.³³⁴ In 1875, he joined the Livingstonia Mission crew on their voyage to Malawi. Soon after arrival at Cape Maclear, where the Livingstonia missionaries opened their first headquarters and station, Henderson embarked on finding a suitable site for the Mission, largely with the support of Tom Bokwito whom the Livingstonia mission lent as a partner and interpreter.

Although history credits Henderson more than Tom Bokwito, a Nyanja by ethnicity, it is important to point out that it was Bokwito who played a central role in identifying the site for the Mission.³³⁵ For instance, Stephen Green presents the whole story as if it was Henderson alone who found the place for Mission.³³⁶ Pachai's account is possibly more balanced, saying that "Henry Henderson and Tom Bokwito did a fine job of selecting a good site on Chief Kapeni's land."³³⁷ Considering Henderson's lack of knowledge of the indigenous language, one wonders whether he could have been in the position, more than Bokwito, to convince Chief Kapeni to allow the opening of a mission in his area. Ross rightly states, "The Livingstonia Mission lent Henderson an interpreter without whom Henderson would not have been a very effective agent."³³⁸ Bokwito was not just a mere interpreter but someone who was conversant with the culture, politics and geography of the area and the people.³³⁹ He was well placed to convince Chief Kapeni. Hence, it is unfair to write a history of the Blantyre Mission or Synod without naming Bokwito, as one of the main actors.

The Blantyre Mission started its mission work in the Shire Highlands, especially in the area of Kapeni, a Yao chief. The area was densely populated with the Mang'anja, the Nyanja, the Yao, and later the Lomwe.³⁴⁰ Although the Yao were the ruling class, both languages, Chinyanja and Chiyao, were used interchangeably by the people inhabiting this place. Chiyao was the first language the Blantyre missionaries put into writing. Then it was followed by Chinyanja in the

³³⁴ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 18, 19.

³³⁵ A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, 17.

³³⁶ S. Green, "Blantyre Mission," in *The Nyasaland Journal*, 10:2, 1957, 6 ([A 130](#)).

³³⁷ B. Pachai *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 89.

³³⁸ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 41.

³³⁹ *Ibid*, 42.

³⁴⁰ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 55.

1880s. Like the Livingstonia Mission, the Blantyre Mission, in the beginning, did not have a specific indigenous official language as each missionary was busy learning the language of the people to whom he was evangelising. This is why each of their missionaries preferred to develop [\(A 131\)](#) a language of that area. Those who worked in an area which was predominantly Yao preferred Chiyao more than any other language. The language most commonly used in an area was chosen as the medium for inter-ethnic communication and instruction.

2.2.3.2 *Its growth and challenges*

Between 1876 and 1881, the Blantyre Mission, which was located in the area predominantly affected by the slave trade and socio-political disturbances, experienced several challenges that prompted the home committee almost to withdraw its personnel from Malawi. Largely, the situation was exacerbated because of poor leadership by Henderson and the behaviour of his lieutenants George Fenwick and John Walker who lived scandalous [lives \(B 22\)](#). They fought with indigenes during beer drinking. Fenwick was killed by the indigenes after he murdered their chief.³⁴¹ Henderson admitted that he was not in a position to lead the Mission and was almost on the verge of abandoning the whole mission enterprise.

Unlike the UMCA, the Blantyre missionaries did not withdraw from Malawi, but rather they asked the Livingstonia [Mission \(A 132\)](#) leaders to provide leadership. It was with the intervention of the Livingstonia Mission that Blantyre Mission survived. Despite their ecclesiastical differences, the missionaries of the two Scottish missions worked together in Malawi. The Livingstonia Mission sent its personnel, including both Africans and Europeans, to support the Blantyre Mission and prevent it from collapsing during its crisis. In 1877, Laws temporarily took over the leadership of the Mission with the purpose of training Dr Macklin of the Blantyre Mission when Dr James Stewart was the leader of the Livingstonia Mission.³⁴² It was James Stewart, C.E., who came to the rescue of the mission with the help of William Koyi and Mapasi Nthitiri, the Xhosa [missionaries \(A 133\)](#).³⁴³ Stewart made a significant contribution that later missionaries of the Mission came to appreciate and admire. When Stewart C.E. took over the leadership of the Blantyre Mission, Laws just played a supervisory role.

³⁴¹ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 43.

³⁴² *Ibid*, 47.

³⁴³ *Ibid*, 44.

Phiri is far from being accurate in saying that Laws was the leader of the Livingstonia in 1876 when Henderson asked Laws to become a leader of the Blantyre Mission. Laws only assumed the leadership of the Livingstonia Mission at the beginning of 1878, after Dr Stewart left for South Africa.³⁴⁴ It is the resignation of Stewart that prompted Laws to prolong his contract from two years to fifty years. At the time when Duff MacDonald and his wife joined the Blantyre Mission on 12th July 1878, the Mission was still under Stewart C.E., while Laws continued supervising it, not Macklin as Green claims (A 134).³⁴⁵ Macklin did not come as a missionary but a medical doctor and was comfortable to be referred to with that status.³⁴⁶

Within a short period, MacDonald managed to learn Chiyao and he spoke it fluently. He also made some major contributions to the growth of the Mission in spite of challenges he encountered. He wrote Chiyao alphabet and began to (A 135) translate the New Testament and the *Pilgrim's Progress* into Chiyao.³⁴⁷ Chinyanja, although it became the official indigenous language for the Blantyre Synod, was only put into written form with the coming of Clement D. Scott who came in 1881.

However, MacDonald also did not succeed in his leadership, following several scandals that took place, as well as the socio-political atmosphere in which the missionaries found themselves because of the slave trade and other social ills. Blantyre missionaries intervened in (A136) local politics to a great degree. They set up a colony and a tribunal where people were tried and punished by flogging if found guilty of any offence. On a certain occasion, someone died in the course of being flogged at mission headquarters. When this scandal reached Scotland, the Foreign Mission Committee of the Established Church of Scotland recalled MacDonald from Malawi. When he left, it took time for the Mission to get another leader. Ross says that “apart from the MacDonalds, no new staff were forthcoming until the mission was dissolved and re-started in 1881”.³⁴⁸ However, dissolving does not imply withdrawing, but rather it was a period of redefining the Mission's purpose and functions. When Scott arrived, he brought new life to the Mission.

Soon after his arrival, Scott outlined his purpose. He said, “Our purpose we lay down as the foundation of all our work that we are building the African Church - not Scotch nor English but

³⁴⁴ D.D. Phiri, *History of Malawi*, 135.

³⁴⁵ S. Green, “Blantyre Mission,” 7.

³⁴⁶ A. C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 19.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 48.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 21.

African.”³⁴⁹ This demonstrated his keen interest in developing a non-racial and multi-ethnic church. He accelerated the opening of primary schools and apprenticeship programmes.³⁵⁰ For example, in *Life and Work in British Central Africa* magazine of December 1891, Scott wrote, “We are working for the unity of the Church - European and African. It has been the aim of the Mission during all those past years to bring and keep together the two parts of the Church – native and foreign.”³⁵¹ Scott, like Donald Fraser of the Livingstonia mission, valued African culture and its people. He came to Africa to enable Africans to realise their goal of life and build their *umunthu* (humanness).

When Scott left in 1898, he handed over the leadership to his lieutenant Alexander Hetherwick, who served the mission up to 1927. One of the contributions of Hetherwick, as a leader, was to establish a presbytery that was responsible for handling indigenous ecclesiastical issues rather [than \(A 137\)](#) relying on a mission council. He requested the ECS in Edinburgh to allow the Mission to constitute a presbytery. As a requirement in the Presbyterian system of governance, he was told to form a kirk session first.³⁵² In 1897, the Kirk Session was constituted. This was in anticipation of the establishment of a presbytery in Malawi. While the Livingstonia Presbytery was officially formed in 1899, the General Assembly of the ECS also sanctioned the establishment of the Blantyre Presbytery in 1902. In 1903, the Presbytery met for the first time.³⁵³ It became a presbytery two years after the discussion of having a native church, the CCAP, had started.

2.2.3.3 A challenge to Christian witnessing: Racial discrimination in the church [\(A 138\)](#)

The membership of the new presbytery comprised ordained ministers of the presbytery and European elders and representatives of each kirk session³⁵⁴. By 1902, there were a few kirk sessions of Blantyre, Domasi, Mulanje, Nthumbi, Panthumbwi. One characteristic of the Blantyre kirk session was its membership composition. As indicated above, Scott did not believe in colour divisions. The first kirk session was composed of Europeans and indigenous elders. Not only the kirk session but also church services were multiracial, as was the case in the Livingstonia Mission,

³⁴⁹ B. Pachai, “Christianity and Commerce in Malawi”, 52, 53.

³⁵⁰ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 23; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 102.

³⁵¹ K.R. Ross (ed.), “Blantyre Mission 1888-1898” in *Christianity in Malawi: A Source Book*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996, 89.

³⁵² A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 169.

³⁵³ A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, 125; C. M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 266.

³⁵⁴ A Kirk Session is composed of a church minister or ministers and church elders of a congregation. (A 139)

especially under Donald Fraser.³⁵⁵ However, as both Hetherwick and Ross separately have observed, the joint services, including Holy Communion, did not continue after Scott's departure, because of racial attitudes that later dominated the Church.³⁵⁶ Although Hetherwick tolerated the multiracial service, he was forced by the white settlers to separate European and African indigenes. This was semi-apartheid in the church. However, it was discontinued in the 1950s in favour of multi-ethnic and multiracial services.

In Africa, racial discrimination was commonly practiced in all missions although the degree of the practice varied.³⁵⁷ While racial issues were profoundly common in southern Malawi because of the high proportion of white settlers in the population, it was also practiced across the country. The prevalence of racism was also high in the DRCM's sphere of influence because it was a practice in the South African DRC, a sending church for the Malawi missionaries. In 1924, at the meeting when the Blantyre and Livingstonia Presbyteries united to form an indigenous church, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) at Livingstonia, the DRCM missionaries protested their having to eat together with Africans. Pauw writes,

An arrangement had been made, quite unbeknown to the delegates that everybody, white and black, were to eat together in one hall, with mixed seating. This upset the DRCM delegates considerably as it is something never done before at such conferences and they strongly objected to this arrangement...Some of the Scottish missionaries strongly resented the attitude of the DRC people.³⁵⁸

Pauw's words indicate that it was not every white and black delegate who resented the seating arrangement made for this meal, but for the DRCM missionaries, they felt it contradicted their home policy on racial segregation.³⁵⁹ There was a prevalence of racial discrimination in the Livingstonia Mission, but it was not as serious as it was in the south and central areas of Malawi. For example, Mubamba, a Tonga by ethnicity, married Mary Penelope Gill, a Scottish girl. Laws, happily writing to Alexander Gill of Aberdeen wrote, "Our baptismal roll which began with the name of Mary Penelope Gill Mubamba in 1895 as No. 1 now stands at 2042 for which we thank God. Mary is married and has at least one child of her own." Such kind of marriage would not have been endorsed by the Livingstonia leadership if racial prejudice was of the same magnitude

³⁵⁵ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 173.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 177; A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, 125.

³⁵⁷ J. H. Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in a Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Sudan United Mission*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1979, 103; N. Etherington, "Education and Medicine," *Mission and Empire*, edited by Norman Etherington, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 268, 269.

³⁵⁸ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 274.

³⁵⁹ R. Muller, "War and 'racial feeling' in the writings of an Afrikaner missionary," in *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 40:2, 2014, 79.

as that happening in South and Central Malawi. But later in 1913, Laws appears to have changed his attitude when he proposed the enactment of racist legislation aimed at protecting only white women against sexual assault by Africans.³⁶⁰ Whether he did this with a clear case in mind or not, it is questionable why he proposed a legislation protecting only white women and not black women, from sexual assault.

2.2.4 *A brief history of Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi* [\(A 140\)](#)

2.2.4.1 *Origin of the DRCM*

It is not the intention of the researcher to provide a full account of the history of the DRCM because other historians such as Pauw and Brown, and, in passing, Du Plessis, Pretorius, Retief, Bolink and Cronje, among other historians, have discussed a great deal of it.³⁶¹ Pauw gives a historical account for the period ranging from 1888 to 1962, while Brown, in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, has discussed it but his focus is on the Nkhoma Synod from 1962 to 2004. As the purpose of the chapter is to re-examine how Christianity and ethnicity interface, this section explores how the DRCM missionaries negotiated their ethnic and ecclesiastical identities in an English Protectorate as opposed to other non-Afrikaner missionaries.

At this point, it is important to provide a brief history of the DRC in South Africa in regard to how the politics of inclusion and exclusion were negotiated between DRC Afrikaners and English in light of ethnic identities. The DRC is the oldest Christian church in South Africa. Since the 17th century, it had enjoyed a hegemony in public worship and spaces. Richard Elphick points out that the DRC membership “reinforced a cultural boundary between Dutch speaking settlers and other white immigrants”. Despite the fact that other white migrants were coming to the Cape at end of 18th century, the DRC continued to be the “home of the long-established Dutch speakers and the most effective guardian of the Dutch language and cultural identity.”³⁶² This was further reinforced

³⁶⁰ J. McCracken, *Church and State in Malawi: The Role of the Scottish Presbyterian Missions 1875-1965*, in *Christian Missionaries & the State in the Third World* edited by Holger Bernt & Michael Twaddle, Oxford: James Currey, 181.

³⁶¹ J. Du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa*, London: Marshall Brothers, 1919, 373-381; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*; J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 83-108; M.W. Retief, *William Hoppe Murray of Nyasaland*; J.L. Pretorius, “The Story of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland”; P. Bolink, *Towards the Church Union in Zambia*; W.L. Brown, “The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church During the First Years of Autonomy”.

³⁶² R. Elphick, *The Equality of Believers: Protestant Missionaries and the Racial Politics of South Africa*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012, 39; M.E. Donaldson, “Christianity in the period of English

within the Afrikaner community when the British imperial government annexed the Cape in 1795.³⁶³ By 1834, Afrikaners were further alienated by the declaration of English as the official language of the Cape. The English hegemony was perceived as a threat to Afrikaner identity and culture.³⁶⁴ This created a spirit of nationalistic attitude among the Afrikaans speaking population. This attitude dominated white South African politics, especially between the English and Afrikaners.

One critical development, not only to the history of the NGK but also to this study, is the coming of the Scottish clergy to serve the NGK. Due to the shortage of church ministers of Dutch descent, Lord Charles Somerset, the British Governor, imported Scottish church ministers to man the NGK at the Cape in 1817. By 1834, the NGK had twenty-two church ministers. Of these, twelve were Scots, eight of Afrikaner descent, one German and one Dutch from the Netherlands.³⁶⁵ One of the twelve Scottish church ministers was the grandfather of Andrew C. Murray, who came to Malawi to work with the Livingstonia Mission in 1888 and played a significant role in mission work within and outside South Africa.³⁶⁶

However, the importation of the Scottish ministers attracted resentment from the Afrikaans speaking population at the Cape. When English was proclaimed as the official language, it did not please the Afrikaans speaking members of the NGK. Pauw states that Lord Somerset wanted to “anglicise the Dutch speaking section of the community at the Cape, but in this he did not succeed.”³⁶⁷ This implies that English was not used or rarely used in the worship service and that Afrikaans was a predominant language in public worship. Elphick further observes, “Although English was sometimes used in [the] worship service if worshippers requested it, the DRC remained an ethnically demarcated church, closely tied to the Dutch language and culture.”³⁶⁸ The English-Afrikaner relationship was aggravated by the Second Anglo-Boer War (1898-1902) in which

colonialization,” in *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, Vol. 1, edited by J.W. Hofmeyr and Gerald J. Pillay, 1994, 40.

³⁶³ M.E. Donaldson, “Christianity in the period of English colonialization,” in *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, Vol. 1, edited by J.W. Hofmeyr and Gerald J. Pillay, 1994, 40.

³⁶⁴ P.J. Strauss, “The Boer Emigrants and the Church,” in *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, Vol. 1, edited by J.W. Hofmeyr and Gerald J. Pillay, 1994, 94.

³⁶⁵ R. Elphick, *The Equality of Believers*, 39, 41; M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 8; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 45, 46.

³⁶⁶ Ibid, 41; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 45, 46.

³⁶⁷ C.M. Paul, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 45.

³⁶⁸ R. Elphick, *The Equality of Believers*, 40.

Afrikaners, as victims of the war instigated by the Imperial British government, came to hate what was English.

As a result, the DRC members of the Dutch descent resented English language and culture. This negation towards English was maintained even when they were working in the mission field away from South Africa. [What is surprising is that](#) the CCAP Nkhoma Synod [leadership suggested to introduce a Sunday service in Afrikaans alongside](#) English in [post-colonial](#) Malawi [\(A 141; C 5\)](#). In 1979, when Jack Selfridge, a missionary from the Church of Scotland working in the Central Malawi, asked for a Sunday worship service to be conducted in English because most educated Malawians working in Kasungu District headquarters demanded to have it, the Nkhoma Synod responded, “The expatriate minister of Lingadzi (Rev. Selfridge) may then start holding English service at Kasungu (and other places as required), in consultation with local minister. Services in Afrikaans may also be held, where required, under the same conditions.”³⁶⁹ Interestingly, the Afrikaner expatriates were bilingual speakers of Afrikaans and English. The question we are bound to ask is, why was the extension made to include Afrikaans services in post-independence Malawi where no single educated indigene spoke and understood it? Malawi’s official languages were Chichewa and English. There are two explanations to this: (a) it is possible that Afrikaner expatriates working in the hierarchy of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod could have influenced this decision, or (b) Malawian leaders of the Nkhoma Synod, in solidarity with the NGK, could have proposed this because they were still regarding NGK as their “mother Church”.³⁷⁰ This demonstrates how missionaries’ identities continued to influence how the “we” defines the “they” in the post-missionary Malawi.

2.2.4.2 *The DRCM in Malawi: An independent mission or part of the Livingstonia Mission?* [\(C 3\)](#)

The DRCM was the fourth Christian mission to come to Malawi. As this study continues to expose, one of the contested areas in the history of Christianity in Malawi is how the history of the CCAP has been told or written by ex-missionaries to Malawi. Often, the history of the DRCM begins with Andrew Charles Murray, the first member of the NGK to work with the Livingstonia

³⁶⁹ Min. KS 7628 of the Special Synodical Committee meeting of 13th June, 1979, box 94, NGK Archive, St.

³⁷⁰ Following the Deeds of Bond signed between the NGK and CCAP Nkhoma Synod, the latter stopped referring to the former as “mother church” but “partner Church.” However, this term keeps on recurring the Nkhoma Synod minutes. E.g. CCAP Nkhoma Synod Moderamen minutes of 4th July, 1983 refers to the NGK as ‘mother church’, Box 94, NGK Archive St.

Mission. The earliest documented history of the DRCM, one that has influenced later historians, was written by J.L. Pretorius. He begins the history of the DRCM by saying, “The birthday of the DRCM in Nyasaland is considered to be 28th November, 1889, when the Rev. A.C. Murray and T.C.B. Vlok pitched their tent under the spreading branches of the wild fig tree at Mvera, 26 miles west of present-day Salima railway station.”³⁷¹ The contested issue in Pretorius’ statement is whether Murray came to establish an independent mission or not. Secondly, there is a need to interrogate how the DRCM history has been written, and how it has shaped the history of the CCAP, in understanding the politics of exclusion and inclusion among missionaries and the evangelised, in light of the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute.

Most DRC historians attempt to demonstrate that the DRCM came to Malawi as an independent mission.³⁷² Yet, between 1889 and 1903, the NGK missionaries were part of the Livingstonia Mission enterprise. All activities the NGK members were doing during this period were considered as part of the Livingstonia Mission. The NGK was regarded as a body that sponsored missionaries coming from South Africa in support of the work of the Livingstonia Mission.³⁷³ It was a later development when the NGK missionaries were seen to have an independent mission from the Livingstonia Mission, as this section will argue.

Pauw, commenting on how A.C. Murray came to Malawi, says the Ministers’ Mission Union (MMU) had three options. The first was to send Murray as a medical missionary of the Livingstonia Mission with support from the NGK; second was that he should temporarily join the Livingstonia Mission; and finally, that he should begin an independent mission from the “beginning and only request” the Livingstonia Mission “to recognise their missionaries as co-workers and allow them as members of the Mission Council”. Pauw explains that they opted for the last option, which “was followed for the first ten years until the Dutch Mission set up its own Council”.³⁷⁴ Reading the events which were unfolding in the period referred to, thus between 1888 and 1899, and the option made, one wonders whether this option was communicated to the Livingstonia missionaries or the Livingstonia Committee in Scotland, and whether it was practical. Soon after the Livingstonia Mission Council formed the presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of

³⁷¹ J.L. Pretorius, “The Story of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland,” 11.

³⁷² J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 86, 87; P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 83; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 64; M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 11.

³⁷³ J.L. Pretorius, “History of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi,” 15.

³⁷⁴ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 58, 59.

Central Africa (PCCA), it was reported in *The Aurora* of 1st December 1899 that “meanwhile, in the spheres of the Livingstonia Mission, there should be formed two Presbyteries, those of the North and South Livingstonia (i.e. for the Scotch and Dutch Reformed sections of the mission) and one Synod.”³⁷⁵ If the Livingstonia missionaries knew that the DRCM was an independent mission, why did they describe their Mission as having the Scottish and Dutch Reformed sections?

To have a better perspective of whether Murray came to start a separate mission independent of the Livingstonia Mission or not, it is imperative to examine the origin of the DRCM, and ecclesiastical and socio-political events that unfolded after 1889. To begin with, on the recommendation as to where A.C. Murray should go, Du Plessis, commenting on the Minutes of the Executive Committee of the MMU of 19th July 1887, which Pauw also quoted,³⁷⁶ said that it was recommended to send him to work with the Livingstonia Mission.³⁷⁷ One of the MMU’s recommendations reads,

We should not venture to recommend that a single missionary be sent to a new sphere of work situated at such a distance, were it not that the Free Church of Scotland is prepared to receive him as a brother in the midst of its missionaries, as though he were one of them. There would be our missionary, and at the same time enjoy the support and the advice of the brethren around him. Further arrangements would be made only after we have decided to enter into relations with the Free Church.³⁷⁸

According to the recommendations and minutes of the 19th July meeting, there was no proposal that A.C. Murray would start an independent mission. As the chapter will argue later, the MMU did not recommend to send Murray to a new field that the Livingstonia Mission or its sending church proposed, but rather resolved to send him as their missionary among the Livingstonia missionaries.

Secondly, the origin of the Malawi DRCM is not without controversy, even among DRC historians. Du Plessis traces the origin of the Malawi DRCM to the formation of the South African Society for the Propagation and Extension of Christ’s Kingdom in 1799.³⁷⁹ Another version held by Pretorius, Pauw and Cronje traces the DRC mission work in Malawi to the 1884 and 1885

³⁷⁵ *The Aurora* of 1st December 1899, p 45, the Livingstonia Mission periodical, as quoted in P. Bolink, *Towards the Church Union in Zambia*, 191.

³⁷⁶ J. Du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa*, 375- 377; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 57-58.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 377.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 377.

³⁷⁹ J. Du Plessis, *A Thousand Miles in the Heart of Africa: A Record of a Visit to Mission-Field of the Boer Church in Central Africa*, Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson & Perrier, 1905, 18.

Spiritual Awakening and role A.C. Murray played.³⁸⁰ Further, Cronje even stated that the idea of working outside South Africa, especially [in \(A 142\)](#) Malawi, originated from A.C. Murray.³⁸¹ Those following this view tend to argue that the NGK missionaries came to Malawi to begin a separate mission in same space occupied by the Livingstonia missionaries.³⁸²

However, Bolink, while acknowledging the role Murray played and the impact of the revival meetings, quickly points out that the DRC mission work in Malawi originated from the discussion Murray had with Dr James Stewart of Lovedale. He states that Stewart proposed to Murray that he should join the Livingstonia Mission, which both Pauw and Cronje do not dispute.³⁸³ Retief is even more precise to say that Murray “had felt himself called to the mission-field when he was a student ... In that capacity he had written to Dr Stewart of Lovedale to ask for advice with regard to a new field of work, where the gospel was unknown”. Further, Retief says that the choice came from Murray and not the group sponsoring his enterprise. He says Murray went to the “field to which he himself wanted to go”.³⁸⁴ His view is also echoed by Du Plessis.³⁸⁵ Retief’s view contradicts Pauw’s account that it was the MMU which had agreed that Murray should go to Malawi and set up a separate mission while continuing to attend the Livingstonia Mission council.

Again, Pauw seems not to answer the question: in what capacity would Murray be allowed to attend a mission council to which he was not a member? A mission council was an exclusionary executive committee, which only eligible members of that mission were allowed to attend. Then Pretorius’ explanation gives us a better perspective. He says that the MMU original proposal was “to support a missionary on the staff the Livingstonia Mission”.³⁸⁶ This view seems to agree with the minutes of MMU, as quoted above.

The idea of doing mission work outside South Africa appears not have come from the MMU that supported Murray³⁸⁷, but rather from the student body at Stellenbosch of which Murray was a member or from someone who had the knowledge about the Lake Nyasa area. Pauw says that the student body wrote Stewart “asking for suggestions for supporting work somewhere in a

³⁸⁰ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 55,77; J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 86; J.L. Pretorius, “History of Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi”, 365.

³⁸¹ J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 86.

³⁸² *Ibid*, 87.

³⁸³ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union*, 82; J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 87.

³⁸⁴ M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 9.

³⁸⁵ J. Du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa*, 375.

³⁸⁶ J.L. Pretorius, “History of Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland,” 15.

³⁸⁷ J. Du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa*, 375

foreign [mission]”.³⁸⁸ Furthermore, Pauw’s narrative does not show any immediate connection to the NGK as an institution, rather it was individual students who showed keen interest in mission work beyond their borders. Having heard the interest expressed either by Murray or whole student body, Stewart might have no hesitation in proposing to Murray that he should work with the Livingstonia Mission.³⁸⁹ Murray’s inquiry came at the time when the Livingstonia committee was looking for more recruits to support the mission work in Malawi.³⁹⁰ In Pauw’s words, Stewart responded to the students, “suggesting the possibility of beginning by lending support to a station in Malawi in connection with the Livingstonia Mission”.³⁹¹ In this case, Stewart advised them not to start their own mission but to work with the already established mission. Hence, the best explanation for the original idea of Murray working in Malawi could be that it came from Dr Stewart upon looking at the interest Murray or fellow students and MUM had in mission work outside South Africa.

Cronje, commenting on events happening soon after the arrival of A.C. Murray, says,

An important decision had also to be taken with regard to the specific part of Malawi for which the DRCM was to be responsible. In the northern part of the country the Livingstonia Mission was extending its work and in the south the Blantyre Mission was active. Dr Laws and Rev. Murray therefore decided that a large and unoccupied mission field could be found in the central region of the country.³⁹²

Interestingly, the geographical description given in the Minutes of the Executive Committee of the MMU of 19th July 1888 does not suggest Karonga or Central Malawi as the place that the Livingstonia Mission proposed for the NGK to establish a mission, as often claimed by the DRC historians. On the proposed field, the Minute reads,

The sphere offered us by the Free Church is hundreds of miles in extent. From Bandawe, a station of the Free Church on the west coast of the Lake, it is a distance of three hundred miles westward to Lake Bangweulu, from where it is two hundred and fifty miles to Makuru, the station of Mr Arnot – the first mission one reaches after travelling more than five hundred miles.³⁹³

The proposed area where the MMU could start mission was in Zambia. It was the sphere that the MMU Executive Committee did not recommend to send Murray, as stated above.

Again, it is doubtful whether such a discussion, which Cronje claims, happened in the early years of Murray’s stay at the Livingstonia because he was not seen as an agent of the NGK coming

³⁸⁸ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 56.

³⁸⁹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 56.

³⁹⁰ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 247.

³⁹¹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 57.

³⁹² J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 87

³⁹³ J. Du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa*, 376

to start a new mission. From the Livingstonia missionaries' perspective, he came to reinforce their work. Murray's joining the Livingstonia Mission was not [a strange thing \(A143\)](#), because Laws was also hired from the United Presbyterian Church (UPC) for a contract of two years and later prolonged it.³⁹⁴ This is the reason why Murray's first assignment was not to work in central Malawi but in Karonga with Dr Cross and Bain. Even after Murray and Vlok started a mission station at Mvera, the station was still considered as part of the Livingstonia missionary enterprise. [This raises the question whether](#) the DRCM, as an entity, began in 1889 as some historians claim.³⁹⁵ The DRCM only began appearing as a semi-autonomous mission in 1898 when it formed its own executive committee to deal with internal issues, and was more distinct in 1903 when it had the full support of the NGK and its mission council.³⁹⁶ Pretorius [might be](#) right in saying, "Before 1900, the Dutch Reformed Church was still very much part of the Livingstonia Mission and its promising students were sent to Khondowe for further training."³⁹⁷

Murray came to Malawi to work together with the Livingstonia missionaries.³⁹⁸ Pretorius unambiguously states that the Livingstonia Mission was "willing to take the DRC missionary under its wing".³⁹⁹ [Considering the debate that started between](#), the Livingstonia missionaries [and the DRCM, one wonders whether](#) the NGK missionaries [was](#) independent [of the Livingstonia Mission or not](#). Laws, in his letter to W.H. Murray dated 25th May 1895, when seeking the view of Mission members on the question of baptism for polygamists, wrote:

They also think it necessary, or at least advisable to ascertain the views of the Dutch section of this Mission, and of the Established Church of Scotland's mission at Blantyre, so that as far as possible a uniform practice may be followed by at least the Presbyterian missions in the country, which will eventually, we hope, form the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa.⁴⁰⁰

Laws explicitly states that the DRC section was part of the Livingstonia Mission. It was not only Laws who used this expression but also Donald Fraser. Commenting on the death message that came with George Prentice, Fraser writes, "And with him came the news of the death of Du Toit - one of the Dutch section of the Mission".⁴⁰¹ In 1899, the map appended in Elmslie's book

³⁹⁴ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 58.

³⁹⁵ M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 11.

³⁹⁶ J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 86. J. Du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa*, 379

³⁹⁷ J.L. Pretorius, "The Story of School Education in Malawi 1875 – 1941," in *Past and Present: Selected Papers from the University of Malawi History Conference*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1971, 71.

³⁹⁸ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 82.

³⁹⁹ J.L. Pretorius, "History of Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi", 365.

⁴⁰⁰ Laws to W.H. Murray dated 25th May, 1895, Murray W.H, 1895-1918-1918 Malawi Korrespondensi, NGK Archive, St.

⁴⁰¹ Fraser quoted in A.R. Fraser, *Donald Fraser of Livingstonia*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1934, 43.

Among the Wild Ngoni, describes the area as the Dutch Reformed Section of the Livingstonia Mission stations.⁴⁰² Further, Laws does not suggest that there were more than two Presbyterian missions in the country, Blantyre and Livingstonia (A 144).

Another interesting claim from DRC historians is that soon after his arrival, Murray went to Karonga “to look for a suitable area among the Ngonde of northern Malawi”, to open a new station for the NGK.⁴⁰³ It should be noted, again, that Murray did not go to look for a suitable area or open a new station for the NGK in Karonga but to work with the Livingstonia staff, Cross and Bain.⁴⁰⁴ As stated above, Karonga Station was opened in 1885, before Murray came to Malawi. One cannot imagine that the Livingstonia leadership would have allowed another Presbyterian mission to open a station in the same place as theirs. It would have been regarded as a duplication, which missions of same identity tried to avoid through comity agreements in Africa and elsewhere.⁴⁰⁵ Hence, it can be argued that Murray did not go to Karonga to start a new mission, but rather to reinforce the existing mission staff. (A 145)⁴⁰⁶

However, as time passed, there were attempts by the two Murrays to have a separate mission. The first attempt was related to the handover of the Livlezi Station. The DRC historians indicate that the Livlezi Station was transferred to the DRC either in 1894 or on 26th July 1895 after the Malawi NGK missionaries failed to form one mission with other DRC missionaries working in Mashonaland, Zimbabwe.⁴⁰⁷ But in May 1895, Laws advised W.H. Murray, who came in 1894 and immediately headed Livlezi Station, that transfer of Livlezi was not feasible. Laws wrote, “Regarding your reference to Livlezi, and considering the question of its transference as still *subjudice*, I cannot help feeling that there is a great risk of damage and trouble in continuing to regard it in this light.”⁴⁰⁸ It seems that Laws wrote to clarify W.H. Murray’s position in regard to the Livlezi Station. It appears that Murray considered Livlezi as part of the NGK section of the

⁴⁰² W. A. Elmslie, *Among the Wild Ngoni*, Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1899.

⁴⁰³ J.L. Pretorius, “History of Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi”, 365; M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 10.

⁴⁰⁴ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 247; see J. L. Pretorius, “History of Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi”, 365.

⁴⁰⁵ J. Gathogo, “The Early Attempts at Ecumenical Co-operation in East Africa”, 79; R.G. Tiedemann, “Comity Agreement and Sheep Stealers: The Elusive Search for Christian Unity among Protestants in China,” in *International Bulletin*, 36:1, 2012, 3.

⁴⁰⁶ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 61.

⁴⁰⁷ J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 90; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 72, 73.

⁴⁰⁸ Dr Laws’ letter to William H. Murray dated 25th May, 1895, NGK Archives, St.

Mission.⁴⁰⁹ Laws' use of the word *subjudice* meant that the issue was still being debated. In his letter of 20th October 1895 to Murray, Laws still considered Livlezi Station as part of the Livingstonia Mission.⁴¹⁰ Hence, it can be said that Livlezi Station was not transferred when Rev and Mrs Vlok arrived at Livlezi.⁴¹¹ The transfer could have been effected later, possibly when the NGK missionaries had an executive committee as an opt-out in 1898 or thereafter.

Laws, in his letter of 1897 to Rev. W.H. Murray as a way of clarification, referred to the place where the NGK missionaries were working not as the DRC section of the Livingstonia Mission, but rather as "your mission".⁴¹² This may suggest that the Livingstonia missionaries were beginning to recognise the DRC section as somehow becoming a semi-autonomous mission [or it was an independent. However](#), the remarks made in *The Aurora* of 1 December 1899 raise a big question whether the NGK section was officially recognised as a semi-autonomous or an independent mission. It continued reporting to the Livingstonia Mission council. Prior to this, it [may be it](#) was not [yet](#) considered as a separate institution from the Livingstonia Mission. That explains why Dr Elmslie, the interim leader of the Mission when Laws was on furlough, responded by threatening to expel the NGK missionaries from the Livingstonia sphere of influence when they suggested having an independent mission council.⁴¹³ On the one hand, this threat had some political overtones, because it meant leaving Malawi, already declared a British Protectorate, which British citizens considered as their domain of influence.⁴¹⁴ [It could be possible that at the beginning, it was perceived as if it would form one mission with](#) the Livingstonia Mission. [\(A 146\)](#)

Again, Elmslie's reaction should not be taken lightly. Although Laws, in practical terms, was a leader of the Mission, he was not a *bona fide* member of the Free Church of Scotland as Elmslie was. Elmslie had more authority than Laws on policy issues, until 1900 when Laws' Church amalgamated with the Free Church of Scotland. It should be noted that this happened at the time when ethno-national tensions between Afrikaners and the British were mounting in South Africa, although they reached a climax during and after the Second Anglo-Boer War. Pauw downplays Elmslie's reaction that it was as a result of Elmslie's misunderstanding of the situation. However,

⁴⁰⁹ Dr Laws' letter to W.H. Murray dated 23rd April, 1895, NGK Archives, St.

⁴¹⁰ Laws' letter to W.H. Murray dated 20th October, 1895, NGK Archives, St.

⁴¹¹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 73.

⁴¹² Laws to W.H. Murray of Mvera dated 3rd February, 1897, NGK Archive, Ste.

⁴¹³ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 79

⁴¹⁴ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 104.

Elmslie's reaction to the NGK missionaries' suggestion requires to be read within the context of the political atmosphere that prevailed at that time.⁴¹⁵ It appears that Elmslie's reaction represented the general view of majority of the British people. Thompson, commenting on Fraser's visit to South Africa in 1896, states: "Though [Fraser] personally remained on good terms with Dutch Reformed Churchmen and missionaries throughout his career...he does not appear to have made any significant impact on British-Boer relations, or on the racial views of the Dutch Reformed Christians."⁴¹⁶ This relationship was worsened by the Second Anglo-Boer War.

Pauw, commenting on British-Boer relationships (A 147) in Malawi, reports: "The resentment of certain Government officials over the way in which missionaries involved themselves in such matters grew decidedly worse once the Anglo-Boer War broke out in South Africa in 1899."⁴¹⁷ During the Second Anglo-Boer War in South Africa, the churches were divided with each section supporting its ethnic group. For example, most English-speaking churches supported the British cause while the Dutch Reformed Church wholeheartedly supported the Afrikaner nationalists. The NGK missionaries working in Malawi took the same position. Although they did not openly show their support, they did protest indirectly. For example, W.H. Murray refused to attend the king's coronation festivities in 1902, arguing, "I'm mourning over the terrible affliction and suffering of the people of whom I am one".⁴¹⁸ The relationship between the Afrikaner and English missionaries in Nyasaland was worsened by the war.

Prior to 1903, it can hardly be claimed that the NGK missionaries were independent from the Livingstonia Mission. There are several reasons for this argument: Dr Elmslie's reaction to the NGK missionaries' suggestion to set up a separate executive cannot be explained if the NGK missionaries came to establish an independent mission.⁴¹⁹ The first NGK missionaries came to support the Livingstonia Mission. W. P. Livingstone observes: "It was with great relief that the Doctor, over-driven and harassed by want of men, heard of a movement in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa to assist in the work of the Livingstonia Mission."⁴²⁰ In fact, A.C. Murray and the first NGK missionaries were not sent by the NGK Synod, but rather by the MMU, which was formed in 1886 after the 1884-5 awakenings. It was a group of ministers interested in mission

⁴¹⁵ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 79.

⁴¹⁶ T.J. Thompson *Christianity in Northern Malawi*, 81.

⁴¹⁷ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 132.

⁴¹⁸ Quoted in C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 139.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid*, 79.

⁴²⁰ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 247.

work. This union was not fully supported by the NGK Synod although the Synod recognised its existence.⁴²¹ Between 1888 and 1903, none of the correspondence was between the NGK and the Livingstonia Mission, it was between Murray's uncle and the Livingstonia leadership.

The NGK Synod only supported the DRCM in 1903⁴²² when the MMU was replaced with the General Mission Committee.⁴²³ It was also in the same year that the constitution for the DRCM council of congregations was written. According to Bolink, the DRCM council of congregations could be considered a presbytery in some ways.⁴²⁴ The constitution was written a year after they stopped recording minutes in English, and sending them to the Livingstonia Mission Council.⁴²⁵ During data collection both in Malawi and Stellenbosch, the researcher made the same observation that all minutes were recorded in Afrikaans (A 148). That same year, the NGK missionaries stopped training their students at Livingstonia headquarters.⁴²⁶ And the DRCM stopped offering English as a subject and ceased (A 149) using it as medium of instruction in all its mission schools. English was replaced with Chinyanja, an indigenous language. Possibly, they could have introduced Afrikaans if Malawi was not a British Protectorate, as happened in South Africa between 1902 and 1910. When Lord Milner, the Governor, attempted to suppress Afrikaans through schooling, the Afrikaners reacted by establishing their own schools.⁴²⁷

Against this background, the decision taken by NGK missionaries to set up an independent mission could have influenced McCracken to state that the NGK came "partially disguised by the fact that the first agent, A.C. Murray, was instructed 'to form as far as possible one mission with that of the Free church' and collaborated closely with Laws and his colleagues from his base at Mvera." (A 150).⁴²⁸ While McCracken's assertion can hardly be disputed, it is important to note that the NGK missionaries did not detach themselves from the Livingstonia Mission for having their own executive committee in 1898. All activities were still controlled by the Livingstonia Mission Council with the exception of financial management.⁴²⁹ This could be the reason, Pauw

⁴²¹ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 81.

⁴²² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 83; J.L. Pretorius, "History of Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi", 365.

⁴²³ J. Du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa*, 379.

⁴²⁴ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 93.

⁴²⁵ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 80; P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 83.

⁴²⁶ Ibid, 80.

⁴²⁷ W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod," 74.

⁴²⁸ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 216.

⁴²⁹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 77, 79.

argues, that, despite the NGK missionaries having an autonomous executive, they did not immediately stop working with the Livingstonia Mission.⁴³⁰

The primary reason, then, for which the NGK missionaries sought autonomy was not necessarily the desire of financial independence, but because they had the intention of establishing a DRC indigenous church may be because of nationalistic attitude resulted from the effects of the South African war. W.H. Murray, in his letter of 4th January 1916, as quoted in Bolink, wrote that “his intention was first to form D.R. Bantu church in Central Africa, consisting of the three Presbyteries, viz, Nyasaland (DRCM of the Cape Synod), Northern Rhodesia (DRCM of the Orange Free State), and Portuguese East Africa (DRCM of Transvaal)”.⁴³¹ It appears that the Presbyterian identity did not appeal much to them, as they were more interested in retaining the Dutch identity along with its political undertones. Among white missionaries, the Dutch identity was not based on ecclesiastical tradition, but rather on a nationalistic ideology that arose in the DRC as a result of the Anglo-Boer Wars against the English. This explains why they sought independence and were reluctant to join the CCAP, which Chapter Four will interrogate.

In a nutshell, the work of the NGK missionaries at Mvera and other stations was still considered as an extension of the Livingstonia Mission with financial support from the MMU between 1889 and 1903.⁴³² Pauw explains that the misunderstanding mentioned by McCracken resulted from article XIII of the general rule introduced by the Livingstonia Council which specified that the NGK missionaries’ decisions were first to be confirmed by the Livingstonia Council. The NKG missionaries objected to the new rule. Pauw further reports that A.C. Murray argued that NGK missionaries must have a right to manage their own local finances without prior reference to the Livingstonia Council. Then he argues that this did not mean “that they wished to ‘disjoin’ themselves from Livingstonia”. He points out that the heading on all letters written at Mvera between 1889 and 1903 bore the name “Livingstonia Mission” and not “Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland” as happened after 1903.⁴³³ Pauw, in response to the question raised by McCracken, argues that it was a natural development. [Possibly, this gives a better explanation why the DRCM wanted to be independent.](#) However, the question remains as to why the DRC missionaries decided to form their own executive at the time when tensions, ultimately leading to

⁴³⁰ [Ibid](#), 78

⁴³¹ [Ibid](#), 197.

⁴³² [Ibid](#),58.

⁴³³ [Ibid](#), 77.

the Second Anglo-Boer War, were mounting. Why then did they make so many changes immediately after the end of the Anglo-Boer War? The explanation could be that at first they thought of working with the Livingstonia Mission, and later they gradually began to realise the need to have their own mission in Malawi. Or there were other forces [that \(A 151\)](#) made them to take that direction. However, the Livingstonia and DRCM missionaries' relationship, to a certain extent, was symbiotic, especially between 1888 and 1898, but the South African war seems to have strained their relationship.

2.2.4.3 The Growth of the DRCM in Malawi

As explained above, the DRCM grew as part of the Livingstonia Mission. Regarding the growth of the DRCM, A.C. Murray's comments on the DRCM expansion of mission work, as quoted by Pauw, is interesting. He said that mission work "in the Mvera region should be a matter between the missionaries and their home committee, but extension into new areas, e.g. into Chikuse or Mpezeni's land, would naturally be referred to the Livingstonia Council."⁴³⁴ This statement affirms the fact that the Livingstonia Mission had more jurisdiction pertaining to the area of extension for the DRCM.

And as indicated above, the policy of the two Scottish missions was that they should not be working far from each other and they agreed to share a boundary. In Ntcheu District, Livingstonia bordered with Blantyre Mission where Livlezi and Gowa stations ended. The southern part of the present Ntcheu District belonged to Blantyre Mission, its station was Panthumbi opened in September 1893 by a Malawian, Rev. Harry Kambwiri Matecheta. Soon the DRCM became an independent mission, all Livingstonia stations lying to the south of the Bua River were handed over to the DRCM. The primary purpose of the handover was to enhance cooperation among the three Presbyterian missions.

Immediately, the DRCM began to open other stations and schools in central Malawi. Between 1890 and 1960, it managed to open other stations in the Central Region and the northern part of the Southern Region of Malawi. Besides Mvera, which was opened in 1889 and the two stations taken from Livingstonia: Livlezi and Cape Maclear, they planted the following stations as follows: Kongwe (1894), Nkhoma (1896), Mlanda (1902), Mphunzi (1903), Malingunde (1907), Malembo (1904), Chintembwe (1910), Mchinji (1914), Dzenza (1921), Chitundu (1923), and Kasungu was

⁴³⁴ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 78

taken from Livingstonia Mission in November, 1924. All stations mentioned above lay [\(A 151\)](#) to the south of the Bua River, with the exception of Kasungu Station, which Chapter Three will re-examine.

2.3 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter has demonstrated that the first four missions respected one another's sphere of influence in the early years of their existence. However, later spheres of influence, created through comity agreements, were no longer respected, especially between the Presbyterian missions and the UMCA. Further details on comity agreement will be discussed in Chapter Three.

It further shows that missionaries played a big role to develop and put in writing indigenous languages that came to shape the ethnic identities of the evangelised people.

The chapter shows that DRCM missionaries in early years did not come to establish an independent mission. They were part of the Livingstonia Mission enterprise until when they had their own mission. This was largely influenced by effects of the South African war. It was the effect of the Second Anglo-Boer War [that \(A 152\)](#) influenced the DRCM missionaries to set up their own mission in 1903. This political situation contributed to the DRCM missionaries not to be part of initial negotiations towards a united African church.

It has observed that the way missionaries related members of other missions, including the evangelised, was determined by their ecclesiastical and ethnic identities. It was on basis of this that politics of inclusion and exclusion were engaged and practised.

Similarly, the affiliation of missionaries to colonial authorities brought in a politics of exclusion and inclusion. This was largely influenced by the political discourse of their home countries. A good example was the Second Anglo-Boer War. Its effects caused tension between those with an English identity and those with an Afrikaner identity. In this way, ethno-national cleavages defined *the ways of seeing and the structures of action* among missionaries. [\(A 153\)](#)

CHAPTER THREE

DEBATES ABOUT ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND ECCLESIASTICAL BOUNDARIES (1876-1956)

3.0 Introduction

Having discussed the beginning of Christianity in the Lake Malawi region, the study turns to respond to the question of whether the boundary between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods was re-established after the handover of the Kasungu and the Tamanda stations to the DRCM based on ethnic differences. It also examines whether ethnicity, regionalism and Christianity in Malawi are coterminous, as some scholars claim.⁴³⁵ Then it contends that Malawi ethnic identities are malleable constructs at the service of the hegemony of those in power. They were crafted through missionaries' activities, colonial policies and indigenous elite's politics.

To better understand this historical process, this chapter interrogates the extent to which colonial and ecclesiastical boundaries and colonial policies contribute to ethnic debates in light of the transfer of Kasungu Station to the DRCM. In this retrospection, this chapter considers the impact of the Indirect Rule and national language policies on ethnicities. It will also explore the extent to which church-state relationships could have contributed to ethnic debates [\(A 154\)](#).

3.1 Background to the Chapter

The argument of ascribing ethnicity, regionalism and Christianity as coterminous is often supported by the statement of some historians that the Livingstonia Synod established itself in the north, the Nkhoma Synod in the Central Region and the Blantyre Synod in the South Region.⁴³⁶ Kenneth Ross says,

When the history of Malawi's influential Presbyterian Church (CCAP) is told, it is often explained that the Livingstonia Synod in the north and the Blantyre Synod in the south have Scottish origins while the Nkhoma Synod in the Central Region originated from the Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. This is quite true but it can easily obscure the fact that the South African roots of the Nkhoma Synod in turn drew their roots from Scotland.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ I. Kayambazinthu and F.L. Moyo, "Hate Speech in the New Malawi," 92; B. Mkandawire, "Ethnicity, Language and Cultural Violence, 31; B. Osei-Hwedie, "The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia", 228.

⁴³⁶ J.M. Gronje, *Born to Witness*, 87.

⁴³⁷ K.R. Ross, *Malawi and Scotland: Together in the Taking Place since 1859*, Mzuni Press, 2013, 46.

While Ross is right on the Nkhoma Synod's connection to South African Scottish roots as discussed in Chapter Two, it is historically incorrect to give credence to the geographical myth of the three Synods, which in the view of the researcher is an ideological construct. Strictly speaking, no Malawian CCAP synod was and is geographically allocated to a specific region or province, because regional or provincial boundaries were later developments, and have been changing since 1921. Regional or provincial boundaries were only created in 1921, that is, thirty years from the date when Malawi was declared a state with its geopolitical boundaries. As the chapter will argue, synods' boundaries have never been coterminous to regional boundaries. It is this presupposition that is fostering divisions in the CCAP as each synod is aligned to a specific people and region, as the next chapters will argue. This distortion of historical facts is problematic for the unity of both the Church and nation-building.

As a result, the chapter will consider regional and ecclesiastical boundaries between 1876 and 1956. The year 1876 has been chosen because it was when the two Scottish missions established their artificial ecclesiastical boundaries, and for 1956 because it was when the first border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods was first discussed. It was also the same period (1876-1956) when several boundaries were created and redrawn by the church and colonial authorities. For instance, the first boundary between the Livingstonia and DRC missions was drawn in 1904, and the second boundary in 1923, just two years after the creation of the three provincial boundaries by the colonial administration. [Later the country was divided into two provincial boundaries in 1934, that is Southern and Northern provinces. In 1946, it was divided into three provincial entities that exist to the present day \(A 155\).](#) Hence, it is important to explore the extent to which ecclesiastical and political boundaries could have contributed to [the](#) ethnic debates.

As argued in the preliminary literature review, Posner's attribution to demographic size as a motivating factor for the Chewa and non-Chewa ethnic salient cleavages⁴³⁸ remains unimpressive. Kaspin might be right in arguing that the numerical preponderance of an ethnic group was not vital, regarding Malawian ethnicity, but rather it was the cultural salience that mattered most because "of the manipulations of language categories by colonial and post-colonial administrators

⁴³⁸ D.N. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," 531.

and the politicisation of ethnic consciousness during the period.”⁴³⁹ To what extent could cultural manipulation by colonial authorities be considered as a motivating factor for ethnic debates regarding the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute? Hence, in discussing boundary issues, the colonial language policy and other policies should be considered along the spheres of the three Presbyterian synods and relate it to the ongoing border dispute.

Recently, Adrian Hastings argued that missionaries and colonial administrators did not invent salient ethnic identities and ethnicity in Africa because they were part of African societies, prior to the colonial era.⁴⁴⁰ He further contends that the 1884 Berlin Conference was to unify the divided Africa along ethnic lines.⁴⁴¹ Similarly, Spear argues, “Far from being the unwitting creation of European administrators, then we see that ethnic concepts, processes and politics predated the imposition of colonial rule, developing in the context of conquest states, exchange networks, dispersion, migration and urbanization.”⁴⁴² But the question we must ask is whether ethnic groups in precolonial Africa had putatively distinct ethnic and territorial boundaries as both Hastings and Spear claim. Did ethnic groups define and mobilise themselves along ethnic identities? Did they show more loyalty to political or ethnic institutions? Were ethnic identities fixed? To respond to these questions, it is imperative to begin re-examining how African ethnic groups were related to each other in precolonial Malawi, and how later political developments in the colonial period impacted on their relationships. This will provide a better understanding on how *ways of seeing* and *structures of action* were defined among various ethnic groups in the country, prior to the arrival of Swahili Arabs and Europeans.

3.2 *Ethnic Boundaries in Colonial Malawi*

Let us begin the discussion by exploring European anthropological perception of African ethnic groups. McCracken says, “European travellers and missionaries entering the Malawi region in the second half of the nineteenth century believed that people were grouped into tribes, distinguished from each other not only by language, culture and political system, but also, physical

⁴³⁹ D. Kaspin, “Politics of Ethnicity in Malawi Democratic Transition,” 601.

⁴⁴⁰ A. Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 157.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid*, 161.

⁴⁴² T. Spear, “Neo-traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa,” in *Journal of African History*, 44:1, 2003, 24

appearance.”⁴⁴³ This perception, as the study will demonstrate, influenced most colonial authorities’ and missionaries’ decisions and policies, including the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border.

Classification of individuals racially remains a contested area for African ethnicities because of stereotypes attached to ethnic identities and certain groups of people. For instance, the Belgium colonial authorities are criticised for racially considering the Tutsi minority as superior to the majority Hutu, who constituted eighty-five percent of the Rwandese population. On the basis of a racial notion, it is said by most scholars that the colonial authorities bequeathed the Tutsi a special privilege to have access to education and occupy better positions in the public service.⁴⁴⁴ The Belgian colonial administration’s preference for the Tutsi was then institutionalised and internalised. The genesis of Rwanda ethnic cleavages emerged after WW2 when the Roman Catholic (RC) clergy were teaching democratisation. They emphasized on egalitarian values and spoke against racial discrimination. It was this teaching that brought ethnic consciousness among Hutu who began mobilising themselves against the Tutsi, considered as favoured by the Belgian colonial authorities. The ethnic consciousness carried out in the mid-1950s culminated into interethnic violence in November, 1959, mid-1960s, 1973 and 1994.⁴⁴⁵ This colonial anthropological perception was not unique for Rwanda but it was common for most countries in Africa, including Malawi. But to what extent could British colonial policies, through stereotyping, have contributed to Malawian ethnicity?

In contrast to Malawian discourse, language was not an issue in Rwanda because the three ethnic groups- Hutu, Tutsi and Twa- are linguistically homogenous with Kinyarwanda, as a language for interethnic communication.⁴⁴⁶ However, studies show that language manipulation by missionaries and colonial authorities was a potential area for ethnic salience and interethnic conflicts in other parts of Africa.⁴⁴⁷ To what extent could language manipulation have contributed to Malawian ethnic debates in the light of the on-going border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods?

⁴⁴³ J. McCracken *History of Malawi*, 18.

⁴⁴⁴ C. Newbury and D. Newbury, “A Catholic Mass in Kigali: Contested Views of the Genocide and Ethnicity in Rwanda,” in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 33:2-3, 1999, 297.

⁴⁴⁵ D. Mayersen, “Deep Cleavages that Divide: The Origins and Development of Ethnic Violence in Rwanda,” in *Critical Race and Whiteness Studies*, 8:2, 2012, 4.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

⁴⁴⁷ T. Ranger, “Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe,” in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, edited by Leroy Vail, London: James Currey, 1989, 137, 138.

3.2.1 Malawian Ethnic Groups

This subsection examines how Malawian ethnic [groups \(A 156\)](#) related to each other in [the \(A 157\)](#) precolonial and colonial era. It focuses on the three sociological process, namely acculturation, integration and intermarriage, as to how they influenced individuals in defining and negotiating their ethnic identities and social boundaries, in general.

To begin with, the first people to inhabit Malawi were the Bushmen who no longer live in this country. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, they were displaced by Bantu groups. The Bantu groups that immigrated to Malawi were the Tumbuka, Chewa, Nyanja, Tonga, Mang'anja, [\(A 158\)](#) Ngonde, Nyika, Ndale, Lambya, Sukwa, Yao, Sena, Ngoni and Lomwe. However, Malawian ethnic groups are more than the mentioned list. Some ethnic groups are often categorised with salient ethnic groupings. For example, the Kalanga, the Swazi, and the Sotho are categorised as Ngoni, though they retain their distinctive cultural characteristics.⁴⁴⁸ For example, the Kalanga have retained their burial rites and practices that distinguish them from other trans-Zambezi ethnic groups [\(A 160\)](#).

The first Bantu group was the Maravi, which came from Katanga area in the present Congo between the thirteenthth and sixteenthth centuries [\(A 161\)](#).⁴⁴⁹ Although Mkandawire suggests that the Chewa and the indigenous Tumbuka immigrated to Malawi in different groups,⁴⁵⁰ most historians agree that they came as a confederation of various ethnic groups under Kalonga Mazizi.⁴⁵¹ The Tumbuka and the Tonga were left in the north of the Dwangwa and Bua Rivers, while the Nyanja, Mang'anja, Chipeta and Chewa *inter alia* immigrated to the south of the two rivers.

3.2.1.1 The Nyanja and the Mang'anja

Some historians suggest that the names given to the Maravi people who crossed the Dwangwa River were geographical and functional. For example, it is said that a certain section was named Mang'anja because they were blacksmiths. Similarly, the other groups were named the Nyanja because they stayed along the Lake shore, and the Chipeta because they stayed in tall grass areas.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁸ M. Read, "Tradition and Prestige among the Ngoni," in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 9:4, 1936, 457.

⁴⁴⁹ P. Bachai, *History of Nation*, 4 [\(A 166\)](#).

⁴⁵⁰ B. Mkandawire, "Ethnicity, Language and Cultural Violence", 24.

⁴⁵¹ B. Pachai [Malawi: The History of Nation](#), 6, 15.

⁴⁵² J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 21.

However, this explanation is problematic regarding the distinctiveness and retention of these names in colonial and postcolonial periods. In 1921, the colonial government recorded that the central province, excluding the Kasungu District, had the following ethnic groups: Chewa, Chipeta, Ngoni, Yao, and Nyanja. Interestingly, the Lilongwe District was populated by both the Chewa and the Chipeta, retaining ethnic names, but living in the same space. How do we account for the retention of the ethnic names: Chipeta and Chewa if the names were geographical? Surprisingly, during the Banda era as Chapter Six will show, the Chipeta, Mangánja and Nyanja were categorised as Chewa yet they were independent of the Chewa in the precolonial and colonial periods. An early study done by Margaret Read in colonial Malawi indicates that people classified as Chewa rarely referred to themselves as Chewa, but rather they preferred to be called as Maravi or Nthumba.⁴⁵³ This confirms the hypothesis that ethnic groups on the periphery have a propensity of aligning with the serving hegemonic group. For example, some Nyanja changed their ethnic name to Ngoni for political and economic reasons, but later they returned to their former ethnic identity as Nyanja.⁴⁵⁴ Vail and White have made the same observation that the Tumbuka, who identified themselves as Ngoni after the Ngoni conquest, around 1930s began identifying themselves not as Ngoni but as Tumbuka.⁴⁵⁵ An interesting account is that given by Read on how individuals in [the \(A 162\)](#) diaspora defined their ethnic identities. It reflects how they defined themselves in their home country. She writes:

A group of Nyasaland men newly arrived on the Crown Mines in Johannesburg told me confidentially, 'Here we say only, "We are all Ngoni". You know that our clan names are Chewa or Tumbuka, but we are the people of Gomani or of M'belwa, and so we say we are Ngoni. And then people are respecting us.'⁴⁵⁶

This ascription was not unique for Malawians but it was also common in [other \(A 163\)](#) African countries. In colonial Zimbabwe, the Tsonga and Duma (a subgroup of the Karanga) and Shona Ndau, though not ethnically Shangaan [\(A 164\)](#), used to call themselves as the Shangaans in order to easily secure an employment because of the stereotypes the white colonials attached to the name 'Shangaan' as people of good reputation in regard to work ethics [\(A 165\)](#).⁴⁵⁷ Hence, it can be said

⁴⁵³ M. Read, "Tradition and Prestige among the Ngoni" 456.

⁴⁵⁴ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, London: Crown Agents of the Colonies, 1922, 44.

⁴⁵⁵ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 160.

⁴⁵⁶ M. Read, "Tradition and Prestige among Ngoni," 456.

⁴⁵⁷ K. Manganga, "A Historical Study of Industrial Ethnicity in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe and its Contemporary Transitions: The Case of African Harare," PhD diss., Stellenbosch University, 2014, 92.

that ethnic identities are malleable constructs. People change their ethnic identities to serve the interest of those in power at that period or for economic and political reasons.

Politically, the section of the Maravi kingdom, which moved south of the Dwangwa River, had a centralised organisation under Kalonga Masula although some Chewa groups were independent of him. However, after the death of Kalonga Masula, the kingdom was fragmented into two camps around the seventeenth century. A group named as Chewa was led by Undi while Lundu led the Mang'anja. The devolution of political power led to a fragmentation in which each subordinate chief was independent (A 167).⁴⁵⁸ Undi's people settled in Mozambique and Zambia. In 1831 (A 168), the Portuguese explorer Gammito described the Undi kingdom as politically declining.⁴⁵⁹ What he implied by declining is that all subordinate chiefs were independent of Undi. Most subordinate chiefs immigrated to Malawi and settled in the districts of Dowa, Ntchisi, Lilongwe, Dedza, Mchinji and Kasungu. The first Maravi group to settle in central Malawi was the Chipeta before the Chewa.⁴⁶⁰

Both the Mang'anja and the Nyanja immigrated to southern Malawi while the Nyanja settled in the (A 169) districts of Dedza and Ntcheu.⁴⁶¹ It is the Mang'anja that Andrew Ross describes as a 'peaceful and fairly homogenous' ethnic group before the arrival of the Yao ethnic group in the 1850s.⁴⁶² However, this description does not imply that the indigenous Mang'anja leaders were not involved in other vices such as slave trade. McCracken reports that Dr Livingstone noted that the Mang'anja chiefs were selling fellow Mang'anja, especially those considered as unwanted because of their unbecoming behaviour and activities.⁴⁶³ Similarly, the Nyanja were also peace loving people. Both groups politically and militarily were not in a position to defend themselves against foreign invasion. This was why they became victims of violence of (A 170) the Yao slave traders who immigrated to their area and, later to the Ngoni and Makololo.

The Yao did not only prey on the Mang'anja and Nyanja people but also became overlords over them. The Yao were middlemen for the Arab slave traders from the Indian Ocean coast. It was these Yao middlemen brought Islam to Malawi (A 171), which most Yao people embraced

⁴⁵⁸ H.W. Langworthy, "Chewa or Malawi Political Organization in the Precolonial Era," in *Early History of Malawi* edited by Bridglal Pachai, London: Longman, 1972, 104.

⁴⁵⁹ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi in Malawi*, 19.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, 21.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, 30.

⁴⁶² A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 14.

⁴⁶³ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 37.

before the coming of Christianity.⁴⁶⁴ Slave trade brought socio-political conflicts between the Yao and the indigenous Mang'anja and Nyanja people. However, it was not every Yao who was involved in slave trade. It was the Yao elite that also preyed on fellow Yao, and owned them as domestic slaves or sold them to Swahili Arab or Portuguese slave traders.⁴⁶⁵ It was this situation that led Livingstone to appeal to the British community to introduce legitimate trade to replace the slave trade, and Christianity to bring stability. In 1875 at Cape Maclear, the Livingstonia missionaries found the Yao of Mponda and the Nyanja people who were subjects to the Yao.⁴⁶⁶ Despite slave trade, the Yao intermarried with the Nyanja and Mang'anja and coexist (A 172). Some Nyanja and Mang'anga identified themselves as Yao. But from a primordialist perspective, they cannot ethnically be described as Yao.

3.2.1.2 *The Chewa and the Chipeta of central Malawi*

The present Central Region has the following ethnic groups: Chewa, Chipeta, Ngoni, Nyanja, Yao and Tumbuka. However, this subsection focuses on the Chewa and Chipeta. With the exception of the Ngoni and Tumbuka, listed ethnic groups are matriarchal and matrilineal.⁴⁶⁷ However, some Chipeta group, like indigenous Tumbuka, adopted patriarchal and patrilineal systems through interaction with patrilineal ethnic groups such as Swahili Arabs, the Ngoni and Balowoka people.⁴⁶⁸ Most Chipeta have retained patrilineal practices to the present day though they have common cultural practices with the Chewa.

The most notable Chewa chief who broke away from Undi was Chief Mwase of Kasungu with whom Dr Livingstone, the Livingstonia and DRC missionaries came into contact in that order. It was Mwase who invited the Livingstonia missionaries to work in his area in September 1884.⁴⁶⁹ Colonial administrators at times mistakenly described Mwase as a Ngoni. Sir Harry Johnston, the Consul-General and Commissioner of Nyasaland considered Chief Mwase as one of the Ngoni chiefs may be because of how the two ethnic groups co-existed in 1870s. Johnston's view was

⁴⁶⁴ I.D. Dicks, *An African Worldview: The Muslim Amacinga Yawo of Southern Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2012, 13.

⁴⁶⁵ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 31.

⁴⁶⁶ E.A. Alpers, "The Yao in Malawi: The Importance of Local Research," in *The Early History of Malawi* edited by Bridglal Pachai, London: Longman, 1972, 173.

⁴⁶⁷ H.W. Langworthy, "Chewa or Malawi Political Organisation in the Precolonial Era", 107.

⁴⁶⁸ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 34.

⁴⁶⁹ H.W. Langworthy, "Central Malawi in the 19th Century" in *From Nyasaland to Malawi*, edited by Roderick J. Macdonald, Nairobi: East African Publishing house, 1975, 30.

shared by the later British colonial administrators. For example, Swann, the District Resident of the Nkhotakota District, a neighbouring district with Kasungu is quoted in Pachai to have said, “Mwasi himself is a stranger and an alien, of Zulu extraction.”⁴⁷⁰ Although Mwase had no ethnic link to the Ngoni, it appears he had certain common features with the Ngoni, which incited Swann to describe him as of Zulu origin. The interaction between Mwase whose area was to the south of the Dwangwa River and the Ngoni in the north, made the people of the two chiefs to integrate, intermarry and co-existed peacefully for centuries.

The question of how Mwase rose to power has divided the scholarly world. According to oral history sources contacted during field work, it was said that Mwase lived in Dowa and later immigrated to Kasungu on the invitation of the Chewa chief Chulu to kill a troublesome animal in his area. It was his hunting skills that made him to become powerful over the indigenous Chewa of Chief Chulu’s area.⁴⁷¹ Langworthy seems to hold a different view. He says that Chief Mwase was first a tributary chief of Chief Chulu before coming to power.⁴⁷² But in an excerpt written by a Roman Catholic priest at Tete, Mozambique in 1624, as quoted in Pachai, Mwasi was described as one of the principal kings in the Lake region when Kalonga Musula was ruling the Maravi kingdom.⁴⁷³ On the other hand, Stephen S. Murray, the colonial Chief Secretary, explains that ‘Mwase...superseded the original chief of the neighbourhood, Chulu, who resigned in Mwase’s favour owing to his ability in withstanding the Ngoni.’⁴⁷⁴ Murray’s view is supported by those who claim that Mwase consolidated political power through economic ties and military prowess.⁴⁷⁵ While oral history testimonies claim that Chulu was a senior chief of the area before Mwase, it appears Mwase’s military skills gave him supremacy over other Chewa chiefs, especially with the guns he obtained from Sultan Jumbe of Nkhotakota. This would support the view that Mwase was made king because he had the potential to repel the Ngoni.⁴⁷⁶ In 1863 when Dr Livingstone visited Kasungu, Mwase was principal chief.⁴⁷⁷ If Chief Mwase took the area that belonged to Chief Chulu, then the latter was a chief for [the \(A 173\)](#) area that was to the south of the Dwangwa River,

⁴⁷⁰ B. Pachai “Ngoni Politics and Diplomacy in Malawi,” in *The Early History of Malawi* edited by B. Pachai, London: Longman, 1972, 201.

⁴⁷¹ Interview sub-Traditional Authority (STA) Mphomwa, and Edgar Kamanga on 24/01/2015 in Kasungu.

⁴⁷² Langworthy, “Chewa or Malawi Political Organisation in the Precolonial Era”, 106.

⁴⁷³ B. Pachai *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 65.

⁴⁷⁴ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 34.

⁴⁷⁵ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 40, 41.

⁴⁷⁶ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 44.

⁴⁷⁷ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 139.

because that was the area which was under Chief Mwase's jurisdiction. As the chapter will show later, colonial records show that Chulu was a subordinate of Chief Mwase in colonial Malawi. Whether the records reflect the later development, the topic is open for debate.

This takes us to consider how M'belwa Ngoni related to the Chewa of Mwase. S.S. Murray indicates that the M'belwa Ngoni continued raiding Mwase Chewa until 1897.⁴⁷⁸ However, the Livingstonia missionaries, who settled among the Ngoni in 1879, tend to differ with his view. Elmslie categorically states that when M'belwa accepted Christianity, he never allowed his people to engage in raids by mid-1880s.⁴⁷⁹ Similarly, Harry W. Langworthy pointed out that M'belwa's Ngoni made raids on Mwase Kasungu people in the 1860s, but they did not succeed, which resulted in forming alliance with Mwase.⁴⁸⁰ It appears Murray confused Mpezeni Ngoni with M'belwa Ngoni. It was Mpezeni Ngoni who raided Chewa chiefs including Mwase, and stopped raiding in December, 1897.⁴⁸¹ Thompson is on record that Mwase Chewa formed an alliance with M'belwa Ngoni to fight the Henga-Tumbuka in 1881 who sought asylum among the Ngonde.⁴⁸² Beside the 1860s wars, Mwase fought with the M'belwa Ngoni, there is no record stating that the M'belwa Ngoni raided the Mwase Chewa after the Ngoni-Chewa alliance besides Murray's claim. Hence, it can hardly be held that the Ngoni attacked Mwase after 1880. They co-existed, intermarried and integrated. They never distinguish themselves by ethnic identities but by political identities. Chibambo, the M'belwa Ngoni historian says, "The Ngoni often speak of the Chewa as the people of Chulu or [Mwase]."⁴⁸³ People were not identified by their ethnic identity but political identity. It was the missionaries and colonial authorities that put indigenous people in perceived categories according to ethnic identity of the incumbent chief of the area.

At the advent of colonialism, the central Malawi, excluding Kasungu north of Dwangwa River, had four main ethnic groups namely, Chewa, Chipeta, Ngoni and Yao. In 1921, Murray, the Government Chief Secretary, recorded that Dedza District had four Ngoni chiefs, three Yao and one Chipeta.⁴⁸⁴ This indicates that no ethnic group in the district was referred to as Chewa. In Lilongwe, he recorded a population of 108, 075 people of which 92, 458 were Chewa, 4,073

⁴⁷⁸ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 34.

⁴⁷⁹ W.A. Elmslie, *Among Wild Ngoni*, 288.

⁴⁸⁰ H.W. Langworthy, "Central Malawi in the 19th Century", 18.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid*, 40; B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 34.

⁴⁸² J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 26.

⁴⁸³ Y.M. Chibambo, *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1942, 22.

⁴⁸⁴ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 121.

categorised as Chipeta and 11, 544 Ngoni. Similarly, Mchinji had a population of 18, 630 people of which 12, 626 were categorised as Chewa, 3, 480 as Ngoni and 2, 474 Chipeta.⁴⁸⁵ However, the Dowa District was different. It had a population of 55,842 people categorised as Ngoni, 30, 787 as Chipeta, 4, 209 as Yao and 3,264 as Nyanja. With the exception of the Ngoni, Murray reports that the rest of the ethnic groups in Dowa retained their mother-tongue.⁴⁸⁶ This does not account for the commonly held assumption in the scholarly world that the Central Region was predominantly Chewa, but the Chipeta never identified themselves as Chewa, though they had so much in common. However, the commonly spoken language in the area was Chichewa, in contrast to Chinyanja which was spoken in Ntcheu and most parts of southern Malawi. Adoption of Chichewa was due to integration, intermarriage and demographic size of Chichewa speakers.

3.2.1.3 *The Tumbuka of Malawi*

The indigenous Tumbuka inhabited the area between the Songwe River in the north and the Dwangwa River in the south prior to arrival of the other ethnic groups.⁴⁸⁷ But like the Chewa, they had a decentralised political system until Chikulamayembe assumed authority over one section of the Tumbuka between 1770s and 1780s.⁴⁸⁸ Chikulamayembe, whose name was Mlowoka Gondwe, brought a centralised system. From the primordialist perspective, the Balowoka were ethnically not Tumbuka but they were only assimilated into Tumbuka when Mlowoka⁴⁸⁹ ruled a section of the indigenous Tumbuka. The other groups remained independent under clan leaders. The Balowoka were Nyamwezi from Tanzania, who were dealers in hoes and ivory.⁴⁹⁰ Mlowoka never engaged in slave trade but his kingdom became prey to the Bemba and other slave traders until the coming of the M'mbelwa Ngoni. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Chikulamayembe dynasty began declining politically and militarily.⁴⁹¹ Chikulamayembe VIII was defeated by the M'mbelwa Ngoni in 1880 and, his people were made part of the Ngoni kingdom.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁵ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 130.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid, 134.

⁴⁸⁷ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 11.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid, 12.

⁴⁸⁹ The Balowoka were followers of Chikulamayembe.

⁴⁹⁰ B. Morris, "The Ivory Trade and Chiefdoms in Pre-colonial Malawi," in *Society of Malawi Journal*, 59: 1, 2006, 11.

⁴⁹¹ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 12; J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 22.

⁴⁹² J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 36.

The rise of Tumbuka ethnic consciousness was associated with the appointment of Chilongizi Gondwe to be the next Chikulamayembe. In 1907 the colonial authorities recognised him as a chief. Despite the Ngoni power, he was reinstated as the Chikulamayembe IX. However, his area remained part of the Mzimba District until the 1950s when it became a separate district.⁴⁹³ But it is interesting to note that the ethnic identities of the prominent figures driving the Tumbuka ethnic consciousness, none of them was Tumbuka if this question is understood from the primordialist-essentialist approach. Chilongizi Gondwe and Saulos Nyirenda were the descendants of Nyamwezi immigrants, and Edward Boti Manda, a Lakeshore Tonga but they identified themselves as representatives of Tumbuka-ness or Tumbuka consciousness.⁴⁹⁴ They were manipulating the ethnic identities and history of Tumbuka to seek support from indigenous Tumbuka in their political campaign against the Ngoni hegemony, with the purpose of establishing their hegemony.⁴⁹⁵ Hence, it can be argued that ethnic identities are not fixed as primordialists and essentialists believe, but they are redefined by their bearers to respond to or fit a particular socio-political context within time and space.

The M'belwa Ngoni did not only become overlords (A 174) of the indigenous Tumbuka but they also protected them from foreign threat, and incorporated them (A 175) into their structures. After subjugating the Tumbuka, the Ngoni allowed the Tumbuka to co-exist and govern the area with them.⁴⁹⁶ They integrated, intermarried with them and learnt Chitumbuka as some Tumbukas also learned Chingoni, the language of their rulers.⁴⁹⁷ However, they did not force them to become Ngoni. Hence, McCracken is not right to say that Tumbuka resented Chingoni.⁴⁹⁸ Chingoni lost to Chitumbuka because the majority people in the kingdom were Chitumbuka speakers. The Ngoni's primary goal in military activities was state-building.⁴⁹⁹

The reinstatement of Chikulamayembe IX was not the only factor that stimulated the Tumbuka ethnic consciousness but also Livingstonia missionaries' activities, and the political development that was created by the colonial administrators among the Ngonde, played a major role. The

⁴⁹³ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 155.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid, 156, 159.

⁴⁹⁵ B. Pachai, "African Initiatives in Local Administration in Colonial Malawi: The Case of the M'belwa African Administrative Council of Mzimba District," in *From Nyasaland to Malawi*, edited by Roderick J. Macdonald, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975, 207.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid, 211.

⁴⁹⁷ Y.M. Chibambo, *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*, 39, 40.

⁴⁹⁸ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 230.

⁴⁹⁹ H.W. Langworthy, "Central Malawi in the 19th Century," 21.

reinstallation of Chikulamayembe, according to Vail and White, was an ideological construct for political mobilisation,⁵⁰⁰ both for social control and social emancipation to use Mamdani's terms.⁵⁰¹ The Tumbuka ethnic groups emerged as opposed to the other, particularly the Ngonde and Ngoni. However, the Tumbuka who were under M'belwa continued co-existing with Ngoni (A 176) and other ethnic groups, including the Chewa.⁵⁰² Despite this political development, there had never been any ethnic tension between Tumbuka and Ngoni, because the Ngoni society were a mixed bag, comprising different ethnic groups who still retain their distinctive ethnic identities and cultural elements.⁵⁰³ Linguistically, M'belwa Ngonis speak Chitumbuka as their mother tongue but have retained most of their cultural beliefs and practices.

3.2.1.4 *The Tonga of the Lakeshore*

The Tonga found along the Lakeshore are not the same as the Zambian Tonga, who were part of the Makololo immigrants in southern Malawi. The two Tonga groups are not ethnically and linguistically related. Although they share the same name, the most salient Tonga in Malawi are those of Lakeshore districts of Nkhata Bay and the north of Nkhotakota.⁵⁰⁴ Chief Kanyenda, nephew of Kalonga Mazizi, ruled the Tonga who settled in the area stretching from the Bua River to the Dwambazi River, while the other Kalonga's nephew, Kabunduli and other chiefs, reigned over the Tonga who immigrated to the north of the Dwambazi River.⁵⁰⁵ The Tonga, like other Maravi stocks, are matriarchal and matrilineal though some are adopting patriarchal practices, gradually. Culturally, it is difficult to distinguish the Tonga from the Tumbuka and Chewa people because of common history, culture and the integration that they have had for centuries. McCracken states,

Despite their sense of ethnic identity, the Tonga and Tumbuka are both mixed people with variegated cultures. The Tonga are an amalgam of at least four different groups, some of Chewa origin, some from the north, while the Tumbuka likewise have been influenced both by the matrilineal Chewa to the south and patrilineal peoples from western Tanzania.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁰ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 155.

⁵⁰¹ M. Mamdani, "Indirect Rule, Civil Society and Ethnicity: The African Dilemma," in *The World Today*, 23:2, 1996, 147.

⁵⁰² B. Pachai, "African Initiatives in Local Administration in Colonial Malawi," 211.

⁵⁰³ M. Read, "Tradition and Prestige among the Ngoni," 457-9.

⁵⁰⁴ L. Vail, "Ethnicity, Language and National Unity," 6.

⁵⁰⁵ B. Pachai *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 15-16.

⁵⁰⁶ J. McCracken *History of Malawi*, 21-22.

McCracken is right in saying that the Tonga and Tumbuka have rainbow cultures, but it is not proper to say that the Tumbuka were influenced by the Chewa. Cultural elements they have in common are product of common origin and history. It would be proper to say that the Balowoka and the Ngoni culturally and politically changed the Tumbuka socio-political and cultural set-up through acculturation, intermarriages and integration. Phiri rightly states that it is difficult to distinguish a Tonga from a Chewa and Tumbuka person ethnically, including their complexion. While he admits that Chewa, Tonga and Tumbuka have considerable similarities, he also concedes that their language variation is a better element to differentiate people of these ethnic groups.⁵⁰⁷ However, considerable similarities in languages could be attributed to multiple interpretation ranging from having a common history, integration, interaction of various groups and other social factors. The only underlying factors are that they belong [\(A177\)](#) to one larger group- Maravi and have integrated, intermarried and interacted for a long period. Hence, they are likely to have certain cultural elements in common.

However, adoption of the ethnic name “Tumbuka” by the Balowoka tends to indicate that ethnic identity cannot be treated as a primordial entity. It is dynamic, contingent and malleable. Indeed, members of a group could retain certain characteristics that define them as a distinct group from the other groups but this alone does not mean ethnic identity is a fixed phenomenon. For example, the indigenous Tumbuka have retained group name “Tumbuka” but politically and culturally they have become patriarchal and patrilineal. Hence, in precolonial Malawi, ethnic identities were not fixed but it would be reasonable to argue that each ethnic group continued to retain certain elements while it was redefining itself socially, culturally and politically. This process does not mean that in the end ethnic groups will completely lose their distinct identities and cultural elements, as some scholars and politicians suggest that modernisation can wipe out ethnicity and ethnic identities.⁵⁰⁸ Ethnicity and ethnic groups are realities that keep on defining themselves to suit a particular context in history. The process of negotiating one’s ethnic identity operates in a give-and-take situation.

Interestingly, Tumbuka, Tonga and Chewa have common family names or surnames. For instance, Banda, Mwase, Mwale, Chirwa and Nkhoma are common surnames found among the Chewa, Tumbuka and Tonga people of Malawi in all the three administrative regions. To establish

⁵⁰⁷ D.D. Phiri, *History of Malawi*, 57.

⁵⁰⁸ B. Neuberger, “Ethnic Groups and State in Africa,” 297.

that X belongs to Y ethnic group by clan name or surname is not easy unless through systematic and rigorous means. For example, through ethnic registration it is possible because individuals are asked to which ethnic group they belong, but this did not happen during precolonial period. Hence, it was difficult to determine to which ethnic group one belonged to. McCracken is right in saying that “ethnic categories were thus subject to fluidity and change although it did not imply that they have no explanatory value.”⁵⁰⁹ To a certain extent, people are prone to modify some cultural aspects while retaining other distinct cultural elements, as already noted above.

3.2.1.5 *The Ngulube: Ngonde, Nakyusa, Ndale, Lambya, and Nyika of Malawi*

The ethnic groups, namely, Ngonde, Nakyusa, Ndale, Lambya, Sukwa, Nyiha and Nyika fall under one group name “Ngulube”. The former two ethnic group settled in Karonga District while the latter four, in Chitipa District.⁵¹⁰ According to Owen Kalinga, these ethnic groups were linguistically and politically independent from each other in precolonial Malawi until 1933 when they fell under Kyungu, the Ngonde principal chief, through manipulation of Ngonde history by Ngonde elites, the Royal family, the colonial administrators and some missionaries of the Livingstonia Mission, especially Matthew Faulds.⁵¹¹ The imposition of the Ngonde chief on other ethnic groups’ chiefs, who enjoyed the same status prior to 1933, attracted resentment from those derided, leading to ethnic consciousness among them. Elevating [the \(A 178\)](#) Kyungu over other chiefs meant the Ngonde people were superior to other ethnic groups.⁵¹² The action taken by the British colonial authorities was not different from what the Belgian colonial administrators did in Rwanda between the Hutus and Tutsis. Prior to colonial era, people in this area did not know each other by salient ethnic identities but political identities. To illustrate this point, it is important to examine the relationship between the Ngonde and the Henga-Kamanga (Tumbuka).

The Ngonde are said to have immigrated to Karonga in Malawi around 1600.⁵¹³ They were led by Kyungu Syora. He became the ruler of the indigenous Ngonde people who preceded him

⁵⁰⁹ J. McCracken, [A History of Malawi](#), 20.

⁵¹⁰ L. Vail, “Ethnicity, Language and National Unity,” 13; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 32; R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 132-133.

⁵¹¹ O.J.M. Kalinga, “Colonial Rule, Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District,” in *African Studies Review*, 28: 1, 1985, 62, 65.

⁵¹² *Ibid*, 65.

⁵¹³ B. Pachai, [Malawi: The History of Nation](#), 13; O.J.M. Kalinga, “Colonial Rule, Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District,” 58.

because [of \(A 179\)](#) his economic and religious endeavours.⁵¹⁴ In 1880, the Henga-Kamanga, who were expelled by the M'belwa Ngoni after they rebelled against them, immigrated to the Ngonde area seeking asylum. The Henga-Kamanga people, with their military skills learnt from the Ngoni, protected their host-Ngonde against the Nakyusa from Tanzania who kept on raiding the Ngonde people.⁵¹⁵

The Henga-Kamanga and Ngonde lived side by side peacefully until the Swahili slave trader Mlozi invaded their area. During the 1887 Swahili-Ngonde War, the Henga-Kamanga allied with the Swahili-Arabs against their former hosts. The Ngonde were supported by the British settlers led by Captain Fredrick D. Lugard, later Governor of Nigeria.⁵¹⁶ The war came to an end when the Swahili-Arabs were defeated later by the British contingent force composed of white settlers and Tonga from Livingstonia Mission.⁵¹⁷ This war degenerated into ethnic animosity between the Henga-Kamanga and Ngonde.⁵¹⁸ Though no ethnic conflict or violence had occurred, its impact was still haunting memories of the people of the two ethnic groups. One hundred twenty-six years later the Ngonde paramount Chief Kyungu XXIV told the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia to consider not sending Chitumbuka-speaking clergy to his area of influence.⁵¹⁹ He argued that only those who speak Kyangonde should be preferred instead, yet people in his area including himself are multilingual and descendants of both Ngonde and Tumbuka parents.⁵²⁰ An average Ngonde or Henga-Kamanga speaks more than three languages. It was the Swahili-Arabs who brought ethnic polarisation between the two ethnic groups that used to live side by side. In discussing the impact of indirect rule and language policy on ethnicity, we shall come back to how Ngonde and Tumbuka relationship was ideologically and politically constructed by exogenous forces and [continue to impact on people's relationships in modern Malawi, as illustrated above.](#)

3.2.1.6 *The Yao of Malawi*

In discussing the history of the Mang'anja and the Nyanja, the chapter referred to the Yao immigration to Malawi and how they related to the other ethnic groups that preceded them. They

⁵¹⁴ *ibid*, 13, 14.

⁵¹⁵ O.J.M. Kalinga, "Colonial Rule, Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District," 59.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid*, 52; L. Vail, "Ethnicity, Language and National Unity," 124.

⁵¹⁷ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi* 139.

⁵¹⁸ L. Vail, "Ethnicity, Language and National Unity" 142.

⁵¹⁹ Kyungu Mwakawanga IV spoke during the burial ceremony of late Rev. T.A.G. Mwambila on 02/05/2013.

⁵²⁰ Interview Kyungu's brother Rev. B.R.C. Mwakasungula on 28/08/2015 in Mzuzu.

settled in southern Malawi in the eighteenth century. They came in two groups of the Mangochi and Machinga Yao. Some Yao immigrated to central Malawi and settled in the Dedza and Salima Districts. While the Yao ethnically and linguistically have retained their distinctiveness,⁵²¹ they also have integrated with other ethnic groups such as the Chewa, Nyanja and Lomwe through integration and intermarriages. McCracken is right to observe that “many of the Yao who spread east to the southern shores of Lake Malawi were proud [descendants \(A 180\)](#) of Nyanja and Lomwe people who had become assimilated into Yao society.”⁵²² This affirms the fact that ethnic groups immigrated to Malawi integrated with other ethnic groups either through conquest or other peaceful means. The fact is that we cannot categorically state that ethnic groups at the emergence of colonisation had clear territorial and social boundaries, because their social boundaries were fluid.

3.2.1.7 *The Lomwe of Malawi*

When the Yao came into Malawi, they were [\(A 181\)](#) followed by another ethnic group from Mozambique called Lomwe. They settled among the Nyanja, Mang’anja and Yao since they immigrated into the area after the other ethnic groups were already well established. However, the Lomwe did not flood into Malawi at the same time. They came at different times. A considerable influx of the Lomwe immigrated to the Shire Highlands in 1903.⁵²³ As stated earlier, the Lomwe were made victims of the Yao slave traders. However, after [the \(A 182\)](#) slave trade was suppressed by the colonial administration, they lived as subjects of the Mang’anja, Ngoni and Yao who preceded them.⁵²⁴ The Lomwe were pejoratively nicknamed Nguru to mean slaves. This is the name that dominated other history books.⁵²⁵ In 1943, through the Lomwe Tribal Society, the Government replaced the name Nguru with Lomwe. This was a defining moment for Lomwe identity⁵²⁶ because they succeeded to remove the imposed ascription that was stigmatising them as an ethnic group.

⁵²¹ J.D. Dicks, *An African Worldview: The Muslim Amacinga Yawo of Southern Malawi*, 14.

⁵²² J. McCracken *History of Malawi*, 20.

⁵²³ B. Pachai [Malawi: The History of Nation](#), 120.

⁵²⁴ E. Green, “Indirect Rule and Colonial Intervention: Chiefs and Agrarian Change in Nyasaland, ca 1933 to the Early 1950s,” in *International Journal of Africa Historical Studies*, 44:2, 2011, 258.

⁵²⁵ T. Galligan, “The Nguru penetration into Nyasaland,” in *From Nyasaland to Malawi*, edited by Roderick J. Macdonald, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975, 108 – 123.

⁵²⁶ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 234.

However, when the indirect rule was introduced in 1930s, the Yao, Ngoni and Mang'anja continued to make the Lomwe as subjects. Some Lomwe lost their language to Chiyao or Chinyanja because of assimilation and subjugation but the majority retained their distinctiveness, linguistically and ethnically. In a research he conducted in the Thyolo District with a high population of Lomwe, Green said that population census of 1931 reveals that the district was populated by Mang'anja, Ngoni, Yao and Lomwe but there were no clear-cut boundaries among the ethnic groups, as many European colonialists perceived at that time. People from various ethnic groups were so integrated and intermarried.⁵²⁷

3.2.1.8 Maseko Ngoni

The Maseko Ngoni was another ethnic group that came from Natal in South Africa, running away from Shaka of the Zulu stock. They permanently settled in the present Ntcheu and Dedza Districts among the indigenous Nyanja/Mang'anja, after they defeated the Nyanga and Mang'anja around 1867 or 1868.⁵²⁸ Although the Maseko Ngoni posed as a threat to both Yao and Mang'anja people,⁵²⁹ they did not subdue them at the time when the UMCA missionaries were working in Shire Highlands. Unlike the Yao-Mang'anja relationship, the Ngoni, as lords over indigenous inhabitants, lived [together \(A 183\)](#) with them. They did not even impose their way of life on them, but rather they co-existed. The indigenous Nyanja people were not fully assimilated into Ngoni culture because of the Ngoni liberal policy on cultural aspects. They learned the indigenous language-Chinyanja which became a language for daily use.⁵³⁰ The Ngoni, as observed by Chibambo and Kishindo, did not force their subjects to learn their culture.⁵³¹ The indigenous ethnic groups under the Ngoni authority were culturally independent though they politically remained under the Ngoni.

As noted above, the Maseko Ngoni did not come into contact with the UMCA during their first stay. Hence, their political activities did not contribute to the UMCA withdrawal. It was the Yao's activities and unhealthy conditions that played a part in their withdrawal. However, the Maseko

⁵²⁷ E. Green, "Indirect Rule and Colonial Intervention", 256.

⁵²⁸ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 37.

⁵²⁹ A.C. Ross *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 15.

⁵³⁰ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 37.

⁵³¹ P.J. Kishindo, "Flogging a Dead Cow? The Revival of Malawian Chingoni" in *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 11:2, 2002, 209; Y.M. Chibambo, *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*, 39, 40.

Ngoni raided the Yao, the Nyanja and the Mang'anja when the Blantyre Mission occupied the Shire Highlands. However, they stopped raiding them by the 1880s.

Phiri reports that the Maseko Ngoni did not instantly engage into slave trade, as some historians say. He says that it was the defeat that they encountered during the battle with the Mponda Yao who had guns that humiliated and prompted them to engage in slave trade with the view of purchasing guns either from the Arabs or Portuguese slave traders. However, the Ngoni did not accomplish their plan because it was the time that the Scottish missionaries and colonialists entered the country. They were stopped to fight other ethnic groups through the Blantyre missionaries' diplomacy.⁵³² In this sense, it can be said that the Maseko Ngoni were forced to engage in slave trade. They engaged in raids for political supremacy and economic reasons, and not ethnic grounds. It is worth noting that they also formed an alliance with some Yao and have since lived together.

3.2.1.9 The Chiwere Ngoni

The Chiwere Ndhlovu Ngoni, a breakaway of the Zwangendaba Ngoni, settled among the Chewa of Dowa and Ntchisi Districts.⁵³³ Like other Ngoni groups, they subjugated the indigenous people [\(A 185\)](#) and lived side by side with them. They intermarried and integrated, and the Ngoni learnt the language of their subjects. However, through the influence of the Swahili-Arabs, the Chiwere Ngoni were also involved in slave trade. They acted as middlemen to the Swahili Arabs. Prior to this economic development, they carried raids [against \(A 185\)](#) the indigenous Chipeta and Nyanja for political supremacy and economic reasons.⁵³⁴ Once the indigenes were subdued, they were taken as part of them. The Chiwere Ngoni stopped preying on their subjects when the DRCM and UMCA missionaries came into contact with them.

3.2.1.10 The M'mbelwa Ngoni

The Ngoni of M'mbelwa, a successor of Zwangendaba, who led the Ngoni out of Zululand in South Africa, immigrated to Malawi around [the 1850s \(A 186\)](#).⁵³⁵ The Zwangendaba Ngoni were spread in three countries, namely the Zulu Gama were left at Songea in Tanzania⁵³⁶; the Mpezeni

⁵³² D.D. Phiri, *History of Malawi*, 86.

⁵³³ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 36.

⁵³⁴ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 35.

⁵³⁵ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 7.

⁵³⁶ Y.M. Chibambo, *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*, 31.

Ngoni, the first son of Zwangendaba but not an heir apparent to his throne, settled among the Chewa and Senga of the Chipata District in eastern Zambia; the Zulu Ngoni in Mchinji and the Chiwere Ngoni in Dowa and Ntchisi Districts while M'mbelwa Ngoni settled in the present districts of Mzimba in Malawi and Lundazi in Zambia. They were divided after the death of Zwangendaba at Mapupo in 1848.⁵³⁷ Although historians are divided over the rightful heir to Zwangendaba's throne, a recent view affirms that M'mbelwa was a rightful heir.⁵³⁸ It is the Ngoni of M'mbelwa to which the researcher belongs. However, the section will not provide a lengthy detail of M'mbelwa Ngoni relationship to the Livingstonia Mission because a detailed account of their interaction has already been given by Elmslie, Fraser, Read, and Jack Thompson, among other historians of the Ngoni people.

Prior to the arrival of the Livingstonia missionaries, the M'mbelwa Ngoni raided [against \(A 187\)](#) the Lakeshore Tonga as the Tonga also did on Ngoni of Chiputula Nhlane⁵³⁹. However, unlike other Ngoni, the M'mbelwa Ngoni did not involve themselves into slave trade despite Jumbe's and Mlozi's persuasions. For example, in April 1879, Sultan Jumbe of Nkhotakota [tried to \(A 188\)](#) persuade M'mbelwa to join him to fight the Tonga but M'mbelwa and his council refused. The Ngoni saw Jumbe playing politics of rule and divide. They did not succumb to his politics.⁵⁴⁰ Sir Harry Johnston, as quoted in Thompson, wrote, "The Ngoni however discourage the slave trade and are not very partial to the Swahili traders, with whom and with the Swahili chieftains of the Lake they are constantly fighting."⁵⁴¹ William Koyi in his letter to Laws advised him that "I have no doubt that the Ngoni would be friendly enough with [you] ... the white man is well known among the Ngoni to have nothing to do with fighting or buying people."⁵⁴² However, this does not imply that the M'mbelwa Ngoni, like other Ngoni groups, were [not](#) involved in raiding other ethnic groups [\(A 189\)](#). They engaged in [the \(A 184\)](#) raids for two reasons: the first was for economic reasons and for political supremacy, as their aim was state building.⁵⁴³ As soon as they subdued the inhabitants, they co-existed with them and protected them from external threats. As said above,

⁵³⁷ M. Read, "Tradition and Prestige among the Ngoni", 453; B. Pachai, "Ngoni Politics and Diplomacy in Malawi", 179.

⁵³⁸ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 13, 181; W.H.J. Rangeley, "Mtwalo" in *Nyasaland Journal*, 5:1, 1952, 68.

⁵³⁹ Chiputula Nhlane was a sub-chief of M'mbelwa.

⁵⁴⁰ Kaning'ina Journal, entry of 29th April, 1879, entries of 2nd and 9th May, 1879, Livingstonia Papers, NLS.

⁵⁴¹ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in Northern Malawi*, 103.

⁵⁴² A letter of William Koyi to Dr Laws, dated 6th August, 1883, Livingstonia papers, NLS.

⁵⁴³ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 17, 28.

wherever the Ngoni immigrated, they never imposed their cultures on indigenous inhabitants. They co-existed and learnt indigenous cultures, specifically the indigenous language.⁵⁴⁴ (A 190; C6)

From the 1850s, the M'belwa kingdom stretched from Dwangwa River and bordered with North Nyasa District (present Chitipa and Karonga Districts) in the north (figure 3.3). To the west, it covered the present Zambian District of Lundazi under Chief Magodi Ndhlovu. In 1946, chief Kaluluma's area was made part of the Kasungu District at the time when Kasungu also amalgamated with Dowa to form one district.⁵⁴⁵ The Zambian part of M'belwa kingdom, under Chief Magodi Ndhovu, was separated after the British imperialist government arbitrarily divided it when creating a territorial boundary between Zambia and Malawi.

Although various ethnic groups and chieftaincies came under British rule in 1891, the M'belwa Ngoni remained independent from the colonial rule for thirteen years.⁵⁴⁶ Both the colonial administration and the missionaries considered the M'belwa Ngoni politically well organised and governed. Sir Harry Johnston, as quoted in Elmslie's book *Among the Wild Ngoni*, wrote,

You will observe that in the new Regulations extending the Hut Tax to all parts of the protectorate, I have exempted only one district, viz., that portion of the west Nyasa District which is occupied by the Northern Ngoni. My reason for doing so are these: Hitherto, the Ngoni chiefs have shown themselves capable of managing the affairs of their own country without compelling the interference of the Administration of the Protectorate.⁵⁴⁷

Despite the fact that the M'belwa kingdom was ethnically heterogeneous, it was politically stable. Prior to the creation of the 1921 provincial boundaries, people of Mwase Kasungu and M'belwa did not distinguish each other by ethnic identities but by political identities such as *wakwaMwase* (people of Mwase) rather than saying Chewa or Ngoni or Tumbuka.⁵⁴⁸ It was the British notion that African ethnic groups were distinguished from the others through an ethnic chief that brought a salient ethnic identity among people of different chieftaincies to distinguish each other by ethnicity.⁵⁴⁹ The regional border, as it will be argued later, never divided people

⁵⁴⁴ P.J. Kishindo, "Flogging a Dead Cow? The Revival of Malawian Chingoni" in *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 11:2, 2002, 209; Y.M. Chibambo, *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*, 39, 40

⁵⁴⁵ Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part II Central Africa: Zanzibar, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia*, London: His Majesty's Stationery office, 1950, 38.

⁵⁴⁶ A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, 85.

⁵⁴⁷ W.A. Elmslie, *Among the Wild Ngoni*, 288.

⁵⁴⁸ Y.M. Chibambo, *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*, 22.

⁵⁴⁹ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subjects*, 86.

along ethnic lines or ethnic homogenous categories. Rather, it drew a clear political boundary between two regions.

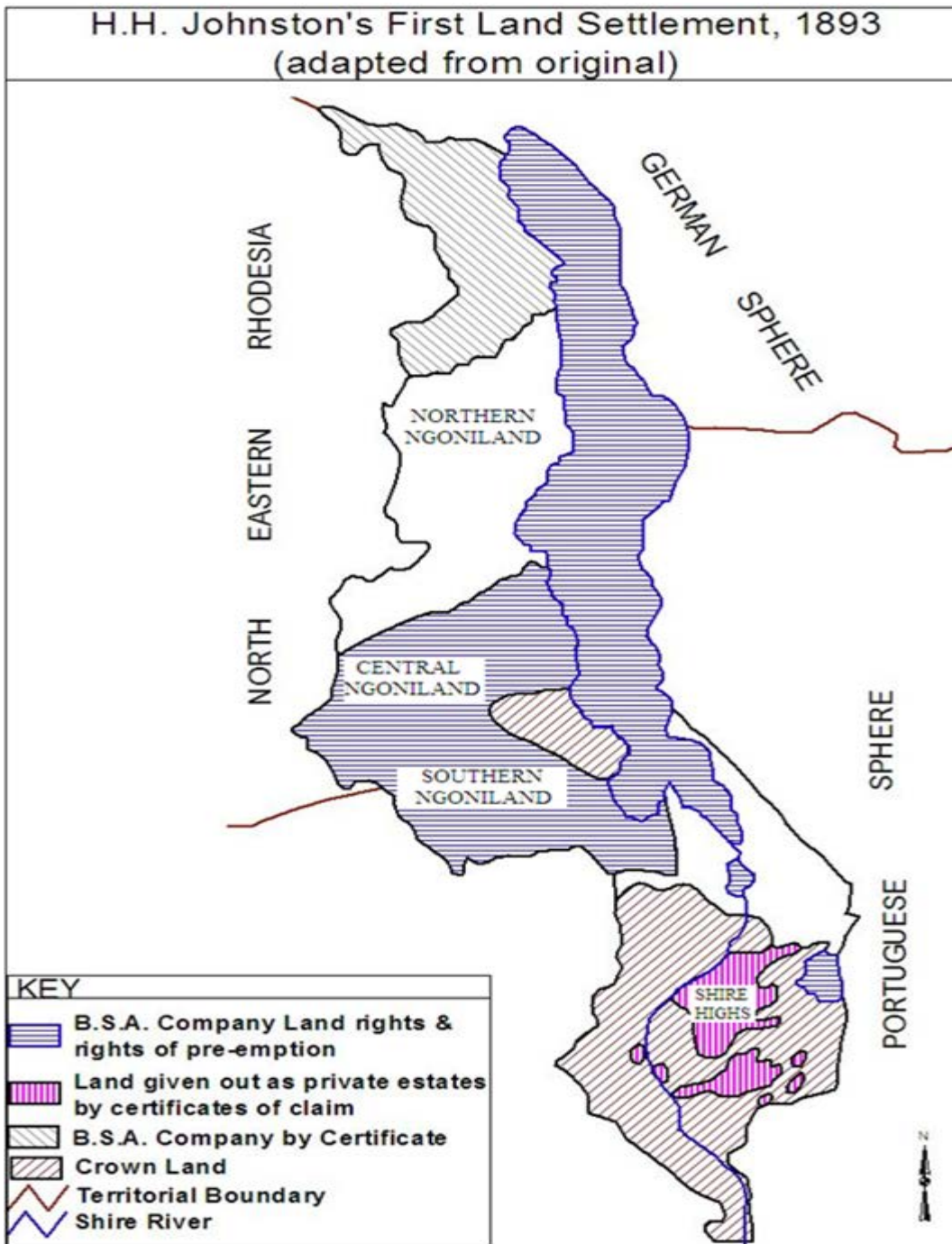


FIGURE 3.3. the first map of Nyasaland showing the area, which was under Paramount Chief M’mbelwa of the Ngoni, Tumbuka and Chewa until the mid-1940s. M’mbelwa bordered with Mwase of Kasungu and the boundary was the Dwangwa River. (Source: adopted from B. Pachai, *History of the Nation*, London: Longmann, 1973, 101)

Under the 1921 provincial boundary, Chewa chief Kaluluma, now in Kasungu District, continued to be under paramount Chief M'mbelwa (in figure 3.3).⁵⁵⁰ In 1934 when the whole Central Region was made part of the Northern Region, Chief Kaluluma continued to be part of M'mbelwa kingdom.⁵⁵¹ It was the regional boundary of 1946 that separated Chief Kaluluma from M'mbelwa's jurisdiction. He was placed in Kasungu District. This development led some quarters to ascribe Kasungu as a Chewa district, yet Chief Kaluluma's area including other parts of Kasungu have been ethnically heterogeneous. Hence, it remains enigmatic how some scholars link the 1921 regional boundary to regionalism and ethnicity, and presuppose that regionalism is coterminous to ethnicity and religion.⁵⁵² There is no regional boundary that was created along ethnic lines. All regions, whether the 1921 regional boundaries that divided the country into three regions (in figure. 3.4), or the 1935 that divided the country into two regions: southern and northern regions⁵⁵³, or the 1946 division that reflects the current regional boundaries had/have never divided the country along ethnic lines, they were divided for administrative reasons. Above all, Malawi regions are ethnically heterogeneous. Hence, to say that regionalism, religion and ethnicity are coterminous is an ideological construct of the academia, media and politicians. Even though the said communities are ethnically heterogeneous, some quarters have considered them to be Chewa and/or Tumbuka, because they have been conceived in history to have been clearly defined both by social and territorial boundaries. It is for this reason this study maintains that the Chewa and Tumbuka-Ngoni identities, as portrayed in church records, media and literature on the CCAP border dispute, are "imagined communities", as espoused by Benedict Anderson,⁵⁵⁴ for political mobilisation.

⁵⁵⁰ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 138.

⁵⁵¹ L. Vail, "Ethnicity, Language and National Unity," 137.

⁵⁵² P.J. Kishindo, "Politics of Language in Contemporary Malawi", 253; B. Osei-Hwedie, "The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia", 228; L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 163-173, 179; W.C. Chirwa, "Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism," 55; B. Mkandawire, "Ethnicity, Language and Cultural Violence," 31; R.M. Chirambo "Mzimu wa Soldier", 115; I. Kayambazinthu and F.L. Moyo, "Hate Speech in the New Malawi," 92; R.M. Chirambo, "Corruption, Tribalism and Democracy", 47.

⁵⁵³ In 1934, the Northern Region covered the present northern and central regions as a single region or province.

⁵⁵⁴ B. R. O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: VERSO, 1991, 7.

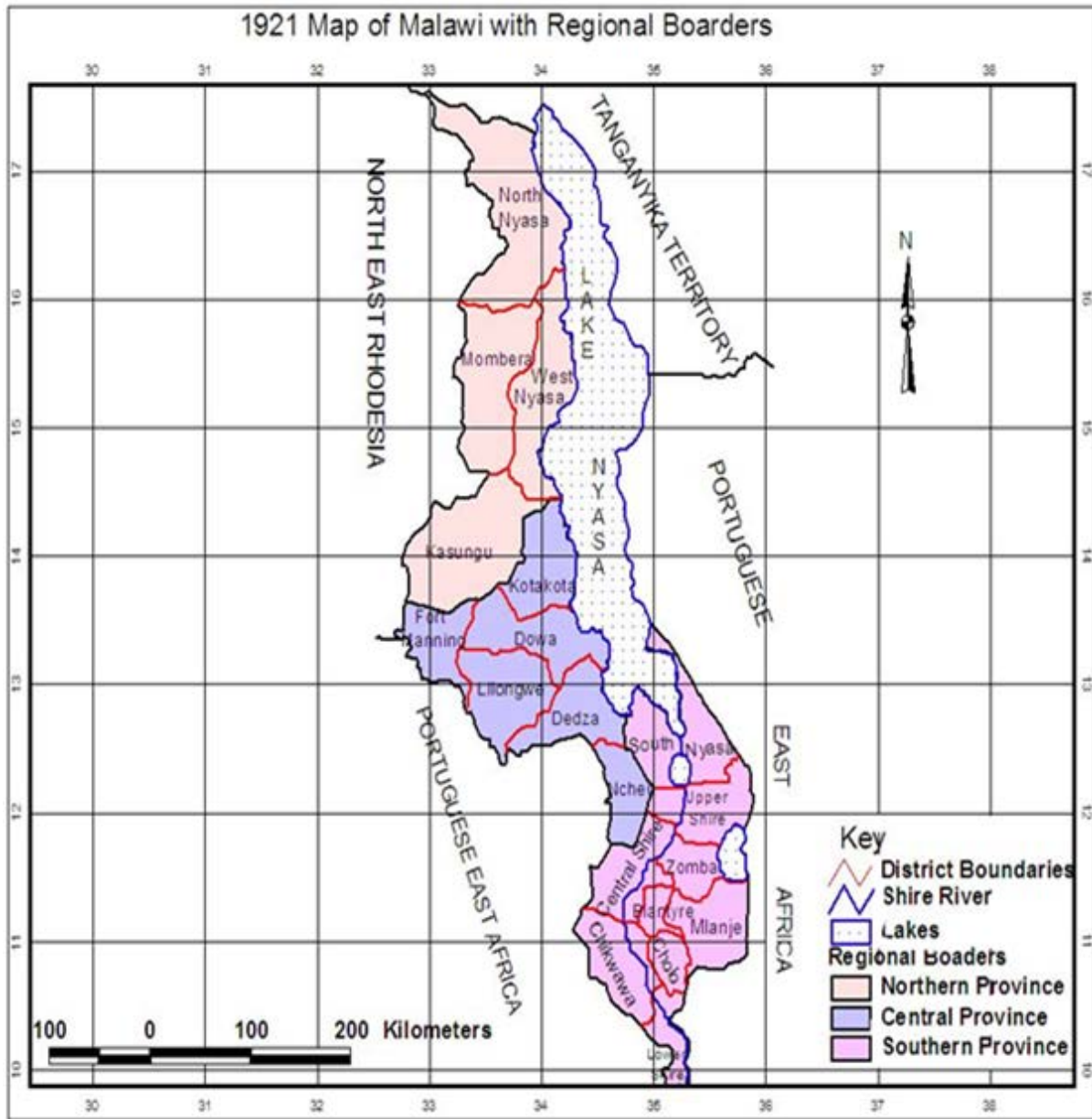


FIGURE 3.4 Map of Nyasaland showing provincial (regional) boundaries and districts, at the time when they were established in 1921. (Source: adopted from Stephen S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, Zomba: The Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1922)

3.2.1.11 The Makololo and the Sena

Another ethnic group that came with Dr Livingstone was the Makololo. The Makololo was of the Sotho stock who settled in the lower Shire River among the Mang'anja.⁵⁵⁵ Immediately, they

⁵⁵⁵ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 15.

emerged as a dominant ethnic group and exercised [\(A 191\)](#) the hegemony over the indigenous Mang'anja people, because of the firearms that Livingstone supplied to them. Rowley, one of the UMCA members in 1862, later wrote, "It was a great mistake on part of Dr Livingstone to leave the Makololo at Chibisa's [not] provided with everything but arms."⁵⁵⁶ The Makololo used these firearms to destabilise other ethnic groups, before assuming political power over them. At times, they also engaged in [the](#) slave trade [\(A 192\)](#), which contrasted Livingstone's position. However, they also used the same firearms to protect the indigenous Mang'anja from the Yao slave traders. Makololo had a self-designation as "sons of the English" because of their identification with Dr Livingstone.⁵⁵⁷

The Makololo were followed by the Sena. In historical texts, the Sena were pejoratively called "Chikunda". Chikunda means a slave soldier of the Portuguese. They emigrated to Lower Shire in Malawi in the nineteenth century from the Zambezi Valley in Mozambique.⁵⁵⁸ Of course, Pachai categorised them as part of the Maravi stock.⁵⁵⁹ But S.S. Murray said that they are a trans-Zambezi ethnic group. He grouped them together with the Tonga of Zambia.⁵⁶⁰ A recent study done by Barnes and Funnel concurs with Murray's view that [the \(A 193\)](#) Sena are the "Zambezia" ethnic group.⁵⁶¹ The Sena linguistically and ethnically are not related to any of the Maravi groups, despite being one stock of the Bantu groups. The Sena were hunters, goldsmiths and silversmiths. They were peace loving people. They integrated and intermarried with indigenous Mang'anja and Makololo neighbours.⁵⁶² Though they still retain their language Chisena, it has been punctuated with Chinyanja elements in Malawi.

3.2.2 Analytical perspective for precolonial Malawi

From the discussion above, it appears that new immigrants to Malawi did not identify with ethnic groups or develop ethnic identities. Rather, it was the political identity that was salient. However, each group, regardless of being under a particular ruler, kept its distinctive ethnic and cultural elements. In this view, it can be argued that it was the exogenous forces that played a big

⁵⁵⁶ H. Rowley, *The Story of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 277.

⁵⁵⁷ K.M. Mufuka, *Mission and Politics in Malawi*, 10.

⁵⁵⁸ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 20.

⁵⁵⁹ B. Pachai *Malawi: The History of Nation*, 6.

⁵⁶⁰ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 31.

⁵⁶¹ L. Barnes & B. Funnel, "Exploring the Cross-border Standardisation of Chisena," in *Language Matters: Studies in the Languages of Africa*, 36:1, 2005, 43, 44.

⁵⁶² S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 31.

role in bringing socio-political instability in the Lake Malawi region for political and economic gains. The role of the Swahili-Arabs, Portuguese colonials and later the British colonial administrators for colonial Malawi was dysfunctional to the society. It contributed to the strengthening of salient ethnic identities, which led to ethnic consciousness among the indigenous people. To what extent colonial administration shaped the indigenous identities?

McCracken observes that “from mid-nineteenth century, [ethnic] identities in Malawi region tended to become more distinct at precisely the time that cultural intermingling intensified.”⁵⁶³ Ethnic immigration did not bring salient ethnic identities. But it was the colonial administrators and missionaries’ activities that created distinct social and territorial boundaries. Of course, there were certain cultural elements that distinguished one group from the other group, as stated above, but greater identification and ethnic polarisation were outcomes of later socioeconomic and political activities either by missionaries, colonial administrators or the African elites, as the next chapters will show.

At the time when European missionaries and colonials were coming to Central Africa, particularly Malawi, they found ethnic groups living side by side. The major factors shaped the political terrain in precolonial Malawi were: immigration, economic enterprise, and political supremacy in the interest of state-building. However, the indigenous political instability was exacerbated by external forces especially the slave trade brought into the area by the Swahili-Arabs who collaborated with some chiefs of indigenous inhabitants. Most ethnic groups who assumed power over the indigenous inhabitants, they demonstrated a considerable tolerance towards each other. Ethnic intolerance is a social product of colonial and post-colonial era as the study continues to expose.

3.3 *Emergence of Colonialism (1891-1953)*

3.3.1 *Making of Malawi a British Protectorate: A Scottish initiative*

Chapter Two demonstrated that the first British missionaries to establish hegemony to the west of Lake Malawi were Scottish missionaries. This enabled them to influence the imperial British government to declare the area a British protectorate. Ross is right to say that the campaign of making the area a British protectorate was an “exclusively Scottish affair”.⁵⁶⁴ Scottish

⁵⁶³ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 20.

⁵⁶⁴ A.C. Ross *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 14.

missionaries, like other missionaries in Africa, played a part in the colonisation of the continent. For example, the British missionaries invited the colonial authorities to protect the interest in the area around Lake Malawi.⁵⁶⁵ [\(A 194\)](#)

By the 1880s, the Swahili Arabs immigrated to the northern part of the Lake, while the Portuguese started occupying the southern part. This development posed a threat to the Scottish missionaries' hegemony.⁵⁶⁶ In the interest of protecting their hegemony, the Scottish missionaries appealed to the British imperial government to colonise the area. The missionaries wanted to keep away the Portuguese influence. There was growing fear among Blantyre missionaries about the Portuguese influence. They feared that if Portugal colonised the area, they might be expelled from the country. In *Life and Works* magazine, in July 1889, Scott wrote, "It seems to us impossible for Portugal to fulfil any of the duties of annexation. She would simply swallow up all our power and efforts here without making herself one whit better or richer."⁵⁶⁷ The missionaries feared that if Portugal colonised their sphere of influence, they would be expelled because Portugal was aligned with the Catholic Church. In Scotland, this drew a national interest. Scots unanimously joined together, regardless of their political and ecclesiastical differences, lobbying the British government to declare the area a British protectorate. The zenith of the campaign of declaring the area a British protectorate was reached in June 1889 when Lord Balfour of Burleigh, a church elder of the Church of Scotland and cabinet member of the Salisbury government, presented a petition signed by 11,000 prominent Scots.⁵⁶⁸

However, on account [of \(A 195\)](#) economic grounds, Lord Salisbury, as a British Prime Minister, was reluctant to commit his government to colonise Malawi. In July 1889, Cecil Rhodes approached the Prime Minister with a view of including Malawi [into \(A 196\)](#) his perceived Eastern Africa British empire: Cape to Cairo under the British South African Company (BSAC) and took the financial responsibility for the colony. He wanted to be granted [a \(A 197\)](#) Royal Charter of administering the area, now under Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Rhode's offer to support the colony financially changed the British government to adhere to the Scottish call. At this time, Harry Hamilton Johnston had been already appointed in November 1888 as the British consul of Mozambique. However, the draft agreement, which Johnston made with the Portuguese in April

⁵⁶⁵ K. N. Mufuka, *Mission and Politics*, 5; [J. McCracken, History of Malawi, 52 – 53.](#)

⁵⁶⁶ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 14.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 84.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 14.

1889, indicated that the whole southern Malawi should be under the Portuguese. This became a bone of contention.⁵⁶⁹ This did not go well with the Scottish missionaries and the Scotsmen and Scotswomen in Britain. However, this did not affect Johnstone's working relationship with Scottish missionaries in the early 1890s, but they remained suspicious of his actions and relation to Cecil Rhodes. Alexander Hetherwick acted as his interpreter until Johnston was appointed as the Commissioner and Consul-General for a would-be protectorate on 1st February 1891. After ratifying the Anglo-Portuguese Convention in June 1891, the area was declared a British Protectorate on 14th May 1891, and christened as British Central Africa. Johnston's successor Sir Alfred Sharpe (A 198) took the new title as Governor instead of Commissioner and Consul-General in July, 1907. On 6th July the same year, the British Central Africa was renamed Nyasaland.⁵⁷⁰

The role taken by the Scottish politicians and the Free Church of Scotland, and the Established Church of Scotland was decisive in defining the political status of Malawi. To use the words of the first Malawi President, Kamuzu Banda; whenever the moderators of the Church of Scotland were visiting Malawi, he used to say: 'Had there been no Church of Scotland, there would have been no Malawi'.⁵⁷¹ Hence, Malawi as a state owes more to the effort of the Scottish missionaries and people than any other institution. The declaration of Malawi as a British Protectorate was a Scottish initiative to protect their ecclesiastical, economic and political interests. Therefore, it was ethno-national politics that had a major role in defining the missionary enterprise (A 199). This is why the CCAP, which was founded by the Scottish missionaries, has been described as a midwife for the nation-state, Malawi.⁵⁷² (C2)

3.3.2 *Indirect Rule and Malawian ethnicity*

Scholars such as Vail have ascribed ethnicity and ethnocentrism occurring in postcolonial Africa to colonial policies, particularly indirect rule.⁵⁷³ Historians held that Indirect Rule consolidated the office of African chiefs impelling the in-group to begin defining itself against the other group.⁵⁷⁴ Kalinga says that the imposition of one chief over the other ethnic chiefs by the

⁵⁶⁹ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 15.

⁵⁷⁰ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 16, 17.

⁵⁷¹ K.R. Ross, *Malawi and Scotland*, 218

⁵⁷² [K.R. Ross, "Christain Faith and National Identity," 159.](#)

⁵⁷³ L. Vail, "Introduction: Ethnicity in Southern African History", 13,14.

⁵⁷⁴ O.J.M. Kalinga, "Colonial Rule Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District," 57.

colonial authorities roused resentment from the despised group leading to ethnic consciousness.⁵⁷⁵ Some historians say that the creation of political boundaries contributed to the visibility of distinct ethnic identities.⁵⁷⁶ Hence, it is important to explore the role played by Indirect Rule in ethnic identity construction or consolidation in Malawi.

Blanton, Mason and Athow observe that the ethnic conflicts in the Anglophone African states are largely a direct products of the British colonial policy of the Indirect Rule through a strategy of “divide and rule”.⁵⁷⁷ Under the Indirect Rule, the British anthropological model presumed that every African society had a precise political line of authorities running from a king or chief through headmen to a household.⁵⁷⁸ Based on this assumption, it was held that every African belonged to a distinct tribe as every European belonged to a nation.⁵⁷⁹ This notion led some European colonial authorities to categorise Africans into distinct units under an ethnic leader.⁵⁸⁰ Spear says that “Indirect Rule was premised on the existence of culturally homogeneous, territorial tribes ruled by chiefs”.⁵⁸¹ Yet this assumption was wrongly asserted and often generalised. The ethnic distribution in Nyasaland (Malawi) according to the 1945 Population Census, as quoted in the report authored by Lord William Hailey in his 1950 authoritative survey of the British colonial rule in Africa, reads:

Any study of the tribal distribution in Nyasaland is confused by the tendency to intermarriage. This is especially true in the Shire Highlands, where the Anyanja, Yao, Angoni, Alomwe and Achikunda live side by side in the same villages. Patriarchal and matriarchal tribes in this area mix and intermarry in a way that is probably unique in East Central Africa ... On more than one occasion parents who claimed to belong to different tribes, the one patriarchal and the other matriarchal, were unable to agree as to which tribe children should belong.⁵⁸²

Commenting on same report, Lee noted,

Yet this process of inter-group marriage was hardly new. The region of Malawi experienced the immigration, settlement and co-habitation of a number of different ethnic groups- the Ngoni, Chewa, Nyanja, Sena, Lomwe and Yao among them-prior to British colonisation in the late nineteenth century... The general outcome of these trends was a social complexity that complicated British attempts at creating legible ethnic groups.⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid 62, 65.

⁵⁷⁶ O. Abegunrin, *Africa in Global Politics in Twenty-first Century*, 91; M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 183; J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 222.

⁵⁷⁷ R. Blanton, T.D. Mason and B. Athow, “Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa,” 480.

⁵⁷⁸ J.C. Myers, “On Her Majesty’s Ideological State Apparatus: Indirect Rule and Empire,” in *New Political Science*, 27:2, 2005, 152.

⁵⁷⁹ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subjects*, 86.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid, 79; E. Green, “Indirect Rule and Colonial Intervention”, 251.

⁵⁸¹ T. Spear, “Neo-traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa,” 16.

⁵⁸² Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part II Central Africa*, 25.

⁵⁸³ C. Lee, “Do Colonial people exist? Rethinking ethno-genesis and peoplehood through the Lounge durée,” in *South-east Africa*,” in *Social History*, 36:2, 2011, 172.

Hence, not all African societies were ethnically homogeneous as British imperial-colonial authorities, white missionaries and anthropologists thought. Most precolonial and colonial African societies were ethnically heterogeneous because of immigration, integration, intermarriage, conquest and economic reasons [\(A 197\)](#).

Scholars often attribute the Indirect Rule to Lord Fredrick D. Lugard,⁵⁸⁴ but Lugard himself ascribes to Lord Alfred Milner, who was the Governor of the Cape Province in South Africa in 1897.⁵⁸⁵ However, the idea of indirect rule predated Milner and Lugard, as British officials in Africa. Although the native administration was proposed by Theophilus Shepstone, the British Diplomatic agent of Natal, South Africa in 1846, it could not be described as indirect rule in its orthodoxy use, because Jeff Guy has recently ruled out that assertion.⁵⁸⁶ Prior to Guy's position on Shepstone's native administrative policies, most scholars held that Shepstone was a creator of the Indirect Rule⁵⁸⁷ yet he was not, according to the evidence that Guy unearthed. However, it can be said that Shepstone's policies on native administration, particularly the recognition of African chieftainship, as a colonial administrative and political institution, could have set up a blueprint, on which the Indirect Rule was later modelled on.⁵⁸⁸ The Indirect Rule reached its zenith between 1930s and 1950s in most parts of Africa, including Malawi.⁵⁸⁹ However, its implementation varied significantly from one country to another.

In Malawi, the British system of native administration can be pigeonholed into three categories: the direct rule or that some quarters call "prefectural administration" in which the colonial administration ruled through direct government agents.⁵⁹⁰ This occurred between 1891 and 1932, while the Indirect Rule from 1933 to 1953 after enactment of the Native Authority and Native Courts Ordinances in 1933. Finally, it was the decentralisation, a British model, which was guided by the principle of devolution of power. This began in 1954 and ended in 1961.

Although Indirect Rule was formally implemented in 1933, it started following the promulgation of the District Administration (Native) Ordinance (DANO) in 1912 when the

⁵⁸⁴ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 222.

⁵⁸⁵ F.D. Lugard, *Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa*, Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1923, 194.

⁵⁸⁶ J. Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal*, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2013, 9-10, 502-3.

⁵⁸⁷ J.C. Myers, "On Her Majesty's Ideological State Apparatus: Indirect Rule and Empire", 154.

⁵⁸⁸ J. Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal*, 502-4.

⁵⁸⁹ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 104.

⁵⁹⁰ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 215.

country was divided into twelve districts under British officers.⁵⁹¹ However, as Ross noted, it was “applied in a piecemeal way”.⁵⁹² It was only among the M’mbelwa Ngoni and the Ngonde that the colonial authorities ruled through chiefs because no chief was politically organised to rule a large area in most parts of the county, as it was the case with the Buganda king in Uganda or the Emirates in northern Nigeria or the Zulu king in South Africa. In 1914 the Maseko Ngoni, Chief Gomani, was recognised, before they recognised the Yao chief Mponda in 1920s.⁵⁹³ Some chiefs were recognised later.

It was the recognition of the Ngonde king Kyungu, Kalinga says, that led to ethnicity among ethnic groupings living in North Nyasa District.⁵⁹⁴ He says that the imposition of Kyungu on chiefs created the Ngonde hegemony. The Ngonde hegemony was almost similar to the Nigerian model in which the rule of the northern emirates was imposed on other ethnic groups. The imposition attracted resistance and resentment from the despised ethnic groups.⁵⁹⁵ The despised groups began mobilising themselves to redefine and reinforce their ethnic group identities against the Ngonde hegemony. Unlike the Ngonde scenario, the two Ngoni chiefs were not imposed on other ethnic groups, but rather they continued ruling their areas of influence. This also implies that the rest of the country was still under the Direct Rule until 1933, when it was applied to a larger scale, with the exception of some southern Malawi districts where white settlers had established estates, like Thyolo District.⁵⁹⁶ The Indirect Rule failed to be implemented in some parts of southern Malawi because of white settlers, but the most important factor was the local political atmosphere. As explained above, there were no chiefs who could rule a large area or trusted by their subjects.

It should be noted that the Malawi Indirect Rule was not modelled on the Lugard system but on the experience they had in a few districts since 1912. Murray, the Chief Secretary of Nyasaland, said:

This system of administration is giving excellent results and is acceptable to the natives. It is to be preferred to [the \(A 198\)](#) old system in which the police were used for all purposes. It restores and regulates the power and authority of the chiefs, who under the old system had become mere nominal chiefs with no real part in the affairs of their country.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹¹ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 62. 63.

⁵⁹² A.C. Ross *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 21.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid*, 21.

⁵⁹⁴ O.J.M. [\(A17\)](#) Kalinga, “Colonial Rule, Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District,” 60.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 63, 65-68; L. Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria*, 25-26.

⁵⁹⁶ E. Green, “Indirect Rule and Colonial Intervention; Chiefs and Agrarian Change in Nyasaland,” 256.

⁵⁹⁷ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 63.

In this administrative system, traditional leaders were not only recognised but they were also grouped together with the bourgeoisie to form district councils. Mamdani describes these district councils as ethnically defined.⁵⁹⁸ However, he downplays the fact that most chiefs were ruling societies, which were ethnically heterogeneous.⁵⁹⁹ Indeed, the Indirect Rule made a considerable contribution to the strengthening of ethnic identities in some parts of Africa especially in countries that followed the Lugard system.⁶⁰⁰ McCracken argues that the system did not contribute to the consolidation of salient ethnic identities in Malawi. However, he noted,

It was in the northern Ngoni kingdom where belief in pre-colonial authority remained strong that tribal identity was first asserted in modern political form. Faced in the early 1920s by the removal of their paramount chief, the disintegration of their economy, the expansion of migrant labour and growing influence in their midst of the Tumbuka language and culture, it was not surprising the members of the Ngoni elite should seek to reassert Ngoni values through the campaign to restore the paramountcy.⁶⁰¹

McCracken is right in saying that the Indirect Rule never contributed to the visibility of ethnic identities. But his assertion that the M'mbelwa Ngoni were against the growing influence of Tumbuka ethnic consciousness raises a serious question. He is mixing up two unrelated things: the unity Ngoni-Tumbuka took after the overthrow of Inkosi-ya-makosi M'mbelwa by the colonial government, and the Chikulamayembe-Tumbuka ethnic consciousness. According to Kalinga, the Chikulamayembe ethnic consciousness began by the Henga-Kamanga in Karonga. It grew stronger there because of the treatment they encountered from the Ngonde.⁶⁰² This explains why Chilongozi Gondwe, a Henga-Kamanga of Karonga, ascended to Chikulamayembe's throne, yet he was not the legitimate heir to the throne.⁶⁰³ Furthermore, the M'mbelwa Ngoni, as it was the case with the South African Zulu kingdom⁶⁰⁴, was an amalgamation of various ethnic groups united under one political identity. It was composed of Sutu, Swazi, Karanga and other non-Trans-Zambezi ethnic groups incorporated on their way to the final destination in Malawi, whose majority were Tumbuka and Senga. A section of the Tumbuka people who were under M'mbelwa, as noted earlier, did not recognise and accept Chikulamayembe's authority.⁶⁰⁵ In fact, it is McCracken who says, "At a cultural level, [Malawian] tribes were dynamic organisms, not static institutions, regularly

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid, 63; M. Mamdan, *Citizen and Subjects*, 104.

⁵⁹⁹ P.J. Kishindo, "Politics of Language in Contemporary Malawi", 265.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid, 79.

⁶⁰¹ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 230.

⁶⁰² O.J.M. Kalinga, "Colonial Rule, Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District," 62.

⁶⁰³ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 155.

⁶⁰⁴ J. Wright, "Reflection on the Politics of Being Zulu," in *Zulu Identities* edited by Benedict Carton, John Laband and Jabulani Sithole, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2008, 36.

⁶⁰⁵ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 12.

incorporating people of diverse background, and, at times, redefining their social boundaries.”⁶⁰⁶ The Tumbuka ethnic consciousness had no significant impact in M’mbelwa’s area because of acculturation, integration and intermarriages. Hence, it was not an issue of great concern for the Ngoni.

The unified front the Ngoni-Tumbuka portrayed when the imperial British colonial administration unceremoniously deposed Inkosi-ya-makosi M’mbelwa, the Ngoni paramount chief, for not obeying its order in the interest of protecting his people from exploitation and repression by the colonialists, was political and not ethnic. For instance, outspoken figures against the overthrow of the Ngoni paramount chief such as Rev. Charles Chidongo Chinula and Mr Samuel Hara were not ethnically Ngoni. Ethnically, Chinula was a Tumbuka and Hara was a Karanga. Hence, it is not appropriate to refer the unison that the Ngoni took as an indication for being tribal or ethnical (A 199). The political mobilisation was not against the Tumbuka, but British imperialism. If it was against the Tumbuka, people like Chinula would not have taken the central stage campaigning for the restoration of Inkosi-ya-makosi. Chinula continued his political struggle against white supremacy until Malawi attained independence from Great Britain. The Ngoni did not intend to strengthen their ethnic identity because they were not against any indigenous group but the colonial authorities for having humiliated their chief who was a symbol of their political base. Andrew Ross notes that most indigenes saw their chiefs as agents for the colonial administration rather than as their leaders.⁶⁰⁷ Hence, there was no point to use the chieftaincy as locus on which to build their ethnic identities and mobilise themselves against other ethnic groups. This is the reason why people mobilised themselves, regardless of their ethnic identities, against the minority white supremacy as the section discussing church-state relationship will demonstrate.

To what extent could the Indirect Rule have contributed to ethnicities, especially among the Chewa and non-Chewa in Malawi? Blanton, Mason and Athow have pointed out that structural configuration of ethnic groups through Indirect Rule created a potential ground for members of a particular ethnic grouping to mobilise themselves for economic, social, and political reasons, with the purpose of excluding other groups which often culminates into interethnic tensions or conflicts.⁶⁰⁸ Most interethnic conflicts in some African countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and

⁶⁰⁶ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 20.

⁶⁰⁷ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 22.

⁶⁰⁸ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 475.

Uganda have been attributed to “divide-and-rule”, but it has not had the same impact on the history of individual countries on the continent.⁶⁰⁹ For instance, Zimbabwe, although it was a British colony, was not affected by the Indirect Rule. Yet it has experienced interethnic tensions and conflicts through language manipulation by colonialists and missionaries.⁶¹⁰ Hence, making a general conclusion that interethnic tensions and conflicts in African countries are a product of the Indirect Rule, is an overstatement because its causes and impact vary from place to place. However, this does not rule out the fact that the colonial administrators employed it as a strategy for “divide and rule” (A 200) to serve their interests.

As stated above, there is little or no significant impact on the indirect rule policy could have contributed to ethnicity in the country.⁶¹¹ Chirwa, discussing the “post-one party” ethnicities, made the general statement that colonial authorities promoted ethnicity in Malawi. He points out that since the 1890s, the British colonial administrators encouraged competition between ethnic groups and favoured certain ethnic groups which were friendly to them. He says that the colonial authorities preferred the Yao to the Lomwe people. Then he continues stating that the colonial authorities gave preference to some ethnic groups, which they deemed to have a centralised political system. He gives the examples of the Ngoni, the Yao and the Ngonde.⁶¹² However, it should be noted that colonial authority’s predilection for certain ethnic chiefs was not part of divide-and-rule but was based on the ability a chief had to govern a large area in the interest of order, tranquillity and stability. For example, in the early days most (A 202) Yao chiefs were not friendly to the colonial administration. They were hostile to it because they saw the British colonial authorities as enemies who had come to interfere with their slave trade. Suffice to say, the British colonial authorities did not favour certain ethnic groups in Malawi during Indirect Rule. The underlying reason for choice of chiefs to be included in Indirect Rule schema was the ability to govern a large political area. For example, the Tonga, whose political philosophy- *Fumu ndija* (I am a master of my own) had difficulty to choose a paramount chief to represent them⁶¹³ as it was

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid, 104.

⁶¹⁰ D. Jeater, “Imaging Africans: Scholarship, Fantasy, and Science in Colonial Administration, 1920s Southern Rhodesia,” 1.

⁶¹¹ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 268.

⁶¹² W.C. Chirwa, “Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism,” 55-57.

⁶¹³ Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part II Central Africa*, 32; A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 21.

the case with the M'belwa Ngoni or later the Yao chiefs who accepted Mponda to be their principal chief.

Chirwa's assertion that the Lomwe were despised in contrast to the Yao is contested. Lomwe were not despised as opposed to the Yao. There are two historical facts that require to be considered. Firstly, the Lomwe came later when the other ethnic groups had already established themselves and had no chief to signal loyalty to in contesting their ethnic identity.⁶¹⁴ Secondly, the British estate owners wanted newly immigrant Lomwe to work for them as a source of cheap labour.⁶¹⁵ In fact the Yao and Lomwe people integrated, as stated above. The Lomwe's demand for recognition in the 1930s was influenced by the exploitation that they encountered at the hands of British colonials. They did not contest their identity in contrast to any ethnic group, including the Yao. In fact, most Lomwes were given land for settlement by Yao or Mang'anja chiefs.⁶¹⁶ As explained above, they integrated and intermarried.

Though Chirwa said that the colonial authorities prioritised the Yao, Ngoni and Ngonde, it is doubtful whether this preference was a motivating factor to Chewa and non-Chewa ethnic debates. Kalinga notes that the British colonial administrators and some Livingstonia missionaries with the support of Ngonde elites contributed to the creation of salient ethnic identities in North Nyasa District. He explains that the Ngonde hegemony was constructed through a monopoly of education and colonial economic opportunities. He informs us that the Nkhonde hegemony was crafted by the Ngonde elite as a counterhegemonic tool against the Henga-Kamanga who occupied better positions in mission and public services because of the education they obtained from the Livingstonia Mission.⁶¹⁷ But this ethnic debate did not extend to other parts of the country.

There is no evidence so far that colonial administration favoured northern Malawi ethnic groups [at \(A 203\)](#) the expense of those found in the Central Region. If recognition of the Ngoni could be described as colonial administration's preference, then M'belwa Ngoni-Tumbuka were not favoured as opposed to central Malawi ethnic groups. It was the central Ngoni who were more recognised in the region than the Yao who immigrated there.⁶¹⁸ The colonial authorities preferred

⁶¹⁴ Ibid, 21.

⁶¹⁵ E. Green, "Indirect Rule and Colonial Intervention", 264.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid, 258.

⁶¹⁷ O.J.M. Kalinga, "Colonial Rule, Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District," 60-64.

⁶¹⁸ W.C. Chirwa, "Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism," 65.

the Ngoni because they were able to rule a large area.⁶¹⁹ Beside what a section dealing with church-state relationship states, no significant ethnic cleavages have been reported between the central Ngoni and the Chewa during the postcolonial era.

Another area which might have been affected by under Indirect Rule was education. Both Britain and Belgium employed 'divide and rule' through the creation of educational disparities among the ethnic groups. Blanton, Mason and Athow observe that "the British would often choose one of the smaller minority groups-one that had been relegated to subordinate status by the large ethnic groups in the territory- to receive British education. That group came to dominate the colonial civil service and police/military forces."⁶²⁰ Though colonial authorities employed this strategy in African countries such as Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya and Rwanda, this never happened in Malawi. Education in Malawi was largely in the hands of missionaries until the 1960s.⁶²¹ Hence, educational disparities between ethnic groups or regions or districts could not be attributed to colonial policies.⁶²² Lamba, like other historians, does not link educational disparities to colonial policies but to missionaries' educational discrepancies and Chewa Nyau culture.⁶²³ Neuberger rightly says that ethnic cleavages are likely to happen where one ethnic group is perceived to be more modernised than the other ethnic groups.⁶²⁴ However, the Malawian Indirect Rule did not create educational disparities because it was the missionaries' responsibility to provide education. Chapter [\(A 205\)](#) Four and Six will illustrate how missionaries' educational discrepancies contributed to the ethnic debates and polarisation between Central Chewa and non-Chewa groups in northern Malawi.

Kaspin says that post-Independence ethnicity could largely have influenced colonial stereotypes in which the Chewa were described as "unambitious, a bit backward, and easily controlled, while Tumbuka, Ngoni and Yao were proud, warlike and born to rule." She says that this could have propelled ethnic antagonism between the Chewa and non-Chewa groups.⁶²⁵ While stereotypes could have been the source of ethnic cleavages in post-colonial Malawi, it needs to be

⁶¹⁹ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 173; Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part II Central Africa*, 41.

⁶²⁰ R. Blanton, T.D. Mason and B. Athow, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa," 480.

⁶²¹ I.C. Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-War Education Policy*, 18.

⁶²² J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 343.

⁶²³ I.C. Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-War Education Policy*, 3 – 4; L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 174.

⁶²⁴ B., Neuberger, "Ethnic Groups and the State in Africa", in *Ethnic Challenges to the Modern Nation State* edited by Shlomo Ben-Ami, Yoak Peled and Alberto Spetorowski, Macmillan Press, 2000, 297.

⁶²⁵ D. Kaspin, "Politics of Ethnicity in Malawi Democratic Transition," 605.

noted that the Tumbuka, like the Nigerian Hausa, had never being associated with the ruling class by the British colonial administrators, as it was the case with the Tutsi in Rwanda. Both Tumbuka and Hausa were subjects of the Ngoni and the Fulani respectively, both during the precolonial and colonial periods.⁶²⁶ Indeed, M’mbelwa Ngoni like the Fulani of Nigeria, adopted the languages of the conquered people as their mother tongues. The Fuluni adopted Hausa⁶²⁷ while the M’mbelwa Ngoni, Chitumbuka. In fact, the Tumbuka and some Ngoni were under a Chewa chief Kaluluma at the time when he was subordinate to paramount Chief M’mbelwa. Chewa and non-Chewa ethnic groups in the north lived in harmony, integrated and intermarried, prior to and after the 1860s Chewa-Ngoni wars.⁶²⁸ As Vail and White say “virtually no Chewa intellectuals emerged from [western] educational milieu to serve as culture brokers either for a progressive ethnic ideology” as it was the case in the Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions’ domains.⁶²⁹ The Chewa elites only began to define their ethnic identity as opposed to the others in the 1940s and onwards, among their labour migrants, as Chapter Four will show.

Another area for consideration is whether the ascription made to the Chewa was imposed or self-assertive. It appears it was both, but the imposed ascription might have come from colonial records as stated by McCracken, while the latter was an outcome of the common experience the Chewa had as a result of not competing meaningfully on the job market because of the DRCM educational policy, as elucidated in Chapter Two and what Chapters Four and Six will demonstrate. McCracken says, “The 1922 Nyasaland Military handbook was solemnly listing the ‘Military Value of Tribes’, starting with the Yao who were considered ‘Excellent. Good physically, intelligent and amenable to discipline’ and ending [\(A 204\)](#) with the Chewa, whose military value was considered ‘only slight’.”⁶³⁰ But it is doubtful whether this was done to stereotype the Chewa people. S.S. Murray, the first Chief Secretary to Nyasaland government in 1922, describes the Kings Africa Rifles which was a protectorate force for Uganda and Nyasaland, as follows: “The native, of the tribes from which the African native soldiers is recruited, makes an exceptionally good soldiers.”⁶³¹ Then he listed the tribes from which the soldiers were recruited as follows: Yao, Tonga, Nyanja, Ngoni and Lomwe but the Tumbuka were not part of ethnic

⁶²⁶ F.D. Lugard *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 198.

⁶²⁷ L. Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria*, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1988, 21.

⁶²⁸ D. Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, London: Seeley, Service & co., 1914, 77

⁶²⁹ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 174.

⁶³⁰ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 232.

⁶³¹ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 258.

groups identified for military recruitment. In fact, according to Murray, successful Yao soldiers, promoted to the rank of N.C.O., were not ethnically Yao but Nyanja. Discussing on discipline and performance of the servicemen in military, Murray did not attribute to a single ethnic group but to all based on operations they carried out in Ghana, Gambia and Somaliland in 1905, and later operations.⁶³² Harry W. Langworthy noted, “Since many Chewa continued to call themselves Ngoni for reasons of prestige, it would not be surprising to find that many of the Ngoni, who were regarded as good workers by the Europeans, were in actual fact upwardly mobile Chewa.”⁶³³ Hence, it can be argued that the ascription was a self-assertive for economic and political reasons.

In contrasting the Sena to the Mang’anja, S.S. Murray states, “In fact, centuries of subjection to Portuguese has given [the Sena] a degree of refinement in contrast to the surrounding Mang’anja slovenliness. They are of quicker intelligence, and [are] cleaner and neater than the Amang’anja, whom they hold in some contempt.”⁶³⁴ It appears that comparisons were not intended to despise or stereotype a certain ethnic group, but it was basically reflecting the cultivated skills and behaviour through interaction with Europeans. Therefore, it can hardly be said that the colonial authorities deliberately labelled the Chewa as backward people. The ethnic cleavages between Chewa and non-Chewa appears to be a product of the postcolonial discourse. As Chapters Four will show, it was the Chewa who described themselves as backward people because of the type of education they acquired from the DRCM.

3.3.3 National language policy

As indicated in Chapter Two, the Livingstonia missionaries were the first to propose Chinyanja as *lingua franca* but the Tumbuka- Ngoni people refused to impose an alien indigenous language on them.⁶³⁵ As a result, the Livingstonia Mission developed indigenous languages to be used as media of instruction and communication alongside English. [\(A 206\)](#) Among the indigenous languages, it developed was Chitumbuka. Indeed, Chitumbuka did not only gain respect because the first Malawians to embraced it were Tumbuka but because it was also accepted by the ruling Ngoni, who were linguistically liberal.⁶³⁶

⁶³² Ibid, 258.

⁶³³ H.W. Langworthy, “Central Malawi in the 19th Century”, 42

⁶³⁴ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 31.

⁶³⁵ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 132.

⁶³⁶ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 154.

In the 1920s, the colonial administration wanted to impose Chinyanja, of which Chichewa is a dialect, as a *lingua franca* for the country. Governor Shenton Thomas contended that the adoption of a single indigenous language was economically viable and could promote unity in a country. The proposal to introduce Chinyanja as a medium of instruction in all Government and grant-aided schools (A 207) “no later than Class Four” was adopted by the Advisory Committee on Education. It was alleged that if schools were to receive government aid, they had to comply with this policy.⁶³⁷ However, the colonial government refuted this allegation that it was not its intention to force the teaching of Chinyanja under the threat of withdrawing the grants.⁶³⁸

The colonial administration was supported by the DRCM and RC missionaries working in central Malawi where people were speaking Chichewa. In 1933, the Livingstonia and UMCA missionaries, with support from educated Africans and chiefs from their spheres of influence, opposed the proposal of Chinyanja as a medium of instruction and communication.⁶³⁹ The Livingstonia Mission and the UMCA argued that Chinyanja did not have the same linguistic value as English. Further W.P. Young, head of the Livingstonia Mission, argued,

When the Livingstonia Mission began work the local people were under the domination of the Ngoni. The Tumbuka...were a scattered and subject people, whose was proscribed. (A 208) Yet they clung to it as the symbol of their identity as a people...to them in a peculiar sense, their language is their life.⁶⁴⁰

Young’s assertion that prior to the arrival of the Livingstonia missionaries Chitumbuka was “proscribed” is an exaggeration or hyperbole. It survived because of the Ngoni liberal policy regarding other people’s cultures, as explained above. Furthermore, it was only Tumbuka boys selected for military services by the Ngoni leadership who were proscribed to speak in any language other than Chingoni as a military requirement.⁶⁴¹ However, Young was against the adoption and imposition of Chinyanja because it eclipsed other living indigenous languages, which were symbols of people’s cultural identities and anti-multiculturalism.

In 1935, Sir Harold Kittermaster imposed Chinyanja amidst protest from indigenous intellectuals, and from the Livingstonia and UMCA missionaries.⁶⁴² At the end of the debate, the British colonial office upheld the Livingstonia’s position, and in 1947 Chitumbuka and Chinyanja

⁶³⁷ Ibid, 164; B. Mkandawire, “Ethnicity, Language and Cultural Violence”, 27.

⁶³⁸ Min. 6 of the Livingstonia Mission council of 9th July 1934, SLA, Box 13

⁶³⁹ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 287.

⁶⁴⁰ W.P. Young quoted in L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 164

⁶⁴¹ Y.M. Chibambo, *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*, 41, 42.

⁶⁴² L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 165.

alongside with English were declared official languages for the country. Chitumbuka was taught in the sphere of influence of the Livingstonia Mission or Presbytery of the CCAP and the Mzuzu Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church while Chinyanja was taught in all schools in the central and southern Malawi.

The position taken by the Livingstonia and UMCA missionaries was not against Chinyanja as a language but against the supremacy of one indigenous language over the others. Robert Phillipson states, “The establishment of a single dominant ‘national language’ has often been accompanied by systematic effort to eliminate other languages and dialects within the territory.”⁶⁴³ This is exactly what the colonial administration [with the support of](#) the DRCM missionaries wanted to do to the other languages in Malawi, [by promoting one indigenous language \(A 209\)](#).⁶⁴⁴ But for the DRCM this came as a contradiction to what they were advocating for in South Africa and Malawi. Chapter Four will illustrate how the DRCM, when they were joining the CCAP, emphasised the protection of indigenous languages as stated in Article seven of the DRCM terms of union into CCAP. Then one wonders whether the DRCM missionaries and the NGK were really interested in the promotion of indigenous languages.

Article seven was in line with what Horace Kallen had just argued in 1915 in the United States of America against English hegemony in his theory of cultural pluralism. Kallen emphasized mutual respect for all ethnic groups occupying the same space and for their languages.⁶⁴⁵ His theory aimed at preserving cultural diversity and questions the rationale behind the dichotomy of the self-and-other.⁶⁴⁶ It appreciates the salience of group differences and “legitimizes communally based social structures and political activity” as critical for the mutual coexistence of various ethnic groups in a particular space.⁶⁴⁷ As Kallen would argue no one chooses to be born where she/he is born. It is a divine design given to every person at birth and needs to be protected. Hence, the legalizing of Chinyanja as a *lingua franca* for the country by the colonial government intended to eliminate other individuals’ identities and histories in the interest of one group [\(A 210\)](#). It was this that prompted resistance from some sections of the population, led by the Livingstonia Mission and UMCA.

⁶⁴³ R. Phillipson, *English-Only Europe? Challenging Language Policy*, London: Routledge, 2003, 26.

⁶⁴⁴ [L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 165](#)

⁶⁴⁵ J.F. Healey, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class*, 51.

⁶⁴⁶ C. Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, 102; J.F. Healey, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class*, 49; O.U. Kalu, “Babel, Multiculturalism and Theological Education in Africa 1960-2000”, 479.

⁶⁴⁷ M.J. Esman, “Communal Conflict in Southeast Asia,” 404.

Vail and his co-author say that the policy contributed to the creation of the regional blocks of ethnicity labelled as “Tumbuka”, a common language the Livingstonia missionaries associated with their area of influence.⁶⁴⁸ As argued above, referring to a particular region as having a single ethnic identity, while in reality is heterogeneous, could be described as an ideological construct and an “imagined community”. Kaspin is right to say, “Unfortunately regionalism tends to be conflated with ethnicity and to disappear as a category when the analysis of Malawi’s political landscape requires that we address it directly as an alternative locus of identity.”⁶⁴⁹ The regional blocks of ethnicity were the creation of elites, for in-group mobilisation against the perceived others.

As noted above, the Northern Province covered both central and northern regions in 1935. Hence, Vail and White’s use of the term “regional identity” does not reflect the current regional borders because at the time of the language debate the current Central Region, which was predominantly Chichewa speaking area, was part the Northern Province. What Vail and White referred to as ethnic blocks were the the spheres of influence [of \(A 211\)](#) the two missions. It is against this premise that the researcher contends that regionalism and ethnicity are not coterminous because ethnic identities transcend the exiting regional borders. However, the language debate created an impression that the area occupied by the Livingstonia Mission was Tumbuka and that of the DRCM was Chewa.

3.3.4 Church-state relationship in colonial Malawi: Divided loyalties and ethnicity

Having discussed how national language contributed to the strengthening of ethnic identities, we shall now consider the church-state relationship in the light of ethnic debates. The subsection intends to examine whether the colonial authorities’ relationship to missionaries could have played role in ethnic identity construction and consolidation. It will begin by examining the Scottish missionaries’ relationship to colonial authorities, before the DRCM missionaries’ relation to the British colonial administrators.

⁶⁴⁸ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 164-5.

⁶⁴⁹ D. Kaspin, “Politics of Ethnicity in Malawi Democratic Transition,” 602.

The Nyasaland political landscape was problematic because it was the minority whites who had power to decide for the future of the majority indigenes. For instance, in 1945, the white population was at 1,948 people against the African majority estimated at 2,044, 707 people.⁶⁵⁰ Hence, the political debate was not against Africans, but against the white minority supremacy. So, missionaries, who acted as representatives of African indigenes, had to choose to side with 2,044, 707 African indigenes or their fellow countrymen.

3.3.4.1 *Soulmates or Antagonists: A case of English Presbyterians in colonial Malawi*

The relationship between the English missionaries and the British colonial authorities varied significantly depending on the missionaries' intimacy to the colonial authorities. Unlike the UMCA missionaries who were maintaining the status quo,⁶⁵¹ the Scottish missionaries were critical of the British colonial authorities on issues perceived as incompatible with their teachings or political aspirations.⁶⁵² A.C. Ross says that after the departure of Scott, the Scottish missionaries had cordial relationship with the colonial authorities.⁶⁵³ However, this did not stop them critiquing or engaging the colonial government. For example, issues of hut tax, land and labour became contested areas for the government and the missionaries, and at times, along ethnonational lines as the DRCM debate will also show.

Because the Malawi colonial government had a weak budget which depended on the meagre subvention from the colonial foreign office in London, it decided to finance its activities through the introduction of taxation. It was exorbitantly charged on impoverished indigenous population. As Mufuka observes, the imposition of the heavy tax on indigenous population by the British colonial authorities was strategically done to stimulate cheap labour recruitment in white owned corporates, companies and economic activities.⁶⁵⁴ Due to low wages and hazardous conditions of work in colonial Malawi, most men opted to work either in the Zambian Copperbelt, Zimbabwe or South Africa while leaving their families behind.⁶⁵⁵ This development generated several social

⁶⁵⁰ W.M.H. Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part II Central Africa*, 24.

⁶⁵¹ J. Tengtenga, *Church, State and Society*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2006, 56, 57.

⁶⁵² J. Thompson, *Ngoni, Xhosa and Scot*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2007, 137.

⁶⁵³ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 18.

⁶⁵⁴ K.N. Mufuka, *Mission and Politics*, 44.

⁶⁵⁵ Z. Groves, "Transnational Networks and Regional Solidarity: The Case of the Central African Federation, 1953-1963," in *African Studies*, 72;2; 2013, 158.

family vices. This became a source of concern for most missionaries in Malawi.⁶⁵⁶ For instance, in 1945, the CCAP Synod observed,

Synod views with grave concern the evil effects of emigration on the social, economic and family life of Nyasaland. The absence from their homes of large numbers of the male population is resulting in shortage of food production, deterioration of home discipline, decrease of legitimate birth rate and widespread disloyalty to the marriage vow.⁶⁵⁷

It forced the missionaries to engage with the colonial administration to create jobs at home in deterring the massive exodus of males into labour migration.

One of the missionaries who took a sharp critique on the colonial authorities was David C. Scott of Blantyre Mission. Scott and his colleagues became very critical of the colonial administration on the land issue and hut tax.⁶⁵⁸ Both Sir Harry Johnson and Sir Alfred Sharp did not like Scott and his Scottish missionaries for being critical of certain government policies. Although Hetherwick, a successor of Scott, became the first legislative member of the newly established Legislative Council in 1907, he was very critical against the colonial policies considered exploitative and suppressive ([A 212](#)). Both he and Scott became unpopular among the white settlers and colonial administrators.⁶⁵⁹ In November 1891, Scott wrote against the hut tax saying, “We can only express against our opinion that a tax of such an amount imposed in the present state of the country and at such an early stage in its Administration...will be accomplished only by use of force.”⁶⁶⁰ Of course, he was not against the taxation as such but how exploitative it was on the poor indigenous population, who could not afford to raise the money required. In most cases, they were forced to work in white settlers’ farms, as a means of paying taxes to the government. Ironically, this was not different from slave trade, which the missionaries and the colonial government came to eliminate in Africa.

While Laws was critical of the colonial administration, he opted to devise the alternative strategy of using the native elites through native associations, which turned to be vehicles for African grievances to authorities. The first native association was the North Nyasa Native Association formed in 1912, three years before the Chilembwe’s uprising in the southern Malawi. It was formed by ([A 213](#)) Livingstonia graduates who were instrumental in the national political struggle against the white minority supremacy until Malawi attained independence from Britain.

⁶⁵⁶ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 114.

⁶⁵⁷ Min. 30 of the CCAP Synod meeting held at Livingstonia from 7 to 11 October, 1948, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

⁶⁵⁸ B. Pachai, “Christianity, Colonialism and Commerce”, 53.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 60.

⁶⁶⁰ K.R. Ross, ed., *Christianity in Malawi*, 85.

One interesting thing with the Malawian native associations was that, contrary to what Vail and White insinuate, [they \(A 214\)](#) were not ethnic or tribal,⁶⁶¹ they pursued a broad political agenda for the nation. A.C. Ross categorically states that “associations were specifically non-tribal” and vehicles for Africans’ grievances to the colonial administration.⁶⁶² It was the same associations that provided a breeding ground for the first national political party: The Nyasaland African Congress (NAC). The NAC was inclusive for all people from different ethnic backgrounds. Unlike Nigerian or South African or Zimbabwean nationalist movements, which operated under the banner of particular ethnic groups, Malawi nationalist party had a unified agenda to oust the white supremacy and attain independence. Most importantly, the NAC was predominantly founded and led by graduates of the two Scottish missions, Chapter Six will show.

3.3.4.2 The DRCM and the colonial administration: Politicking ethnicity

The DRCM missionaries’ relationship to the government in Malawi during the colonial period was not rosy because of the English-Afrikaner politics in South Africa. The colonial administration was suspicious of the DRCM missionaries as much as they [in turn \(A 215\)](#) did not trust it. However, when the DRCM missionaries were part of the Livingstonia Mission, they were not suspected by the colonial government. Mistrust came as a result of the political developments in South Africa. Retief, commenting on the DRCM relation to the colonial administration, says:

In the early years and particularly during the Anglo-Boer War, the British Government was not too well disposed towards our Mission in Nyasaland. They strongly suspected the loyalty of our missionaries, and the same was true during the First World War. What saved the situation was, chiefly, the tactful attitude of Dr Murray as well as the fact he and our mission had been working together in such a friendly manner with the Scottish Mission in Nyasaland.⁶⁶³

Although Retief ascribed their being saved to W.H. Murray, it should be stated that in the early years they were saved because they were regarded as part of the Livingstonia Mission. However, as soon as they became autonomous, tension with the colonial government emerged largely because of the Second Anglo-Boer War. For instance, when the German Berlin missionaries requested the DRCM missionaries to look after their mission stations in Tanzania during the First World War, the British colonial administration asked them not to go into Tanzania. Instead, it asked the Blantyre Mission, the Livingstonia Mission and the UMCA to take over the

⁶⁶¹ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 175.

⁶⁶² A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 22.

⁶⁶³ M.W. Retief, *William H. Murray of Nyasaland*, 134.

responsibility of German missions' work.⁶⁶⁴ The colonial administration did not trust the DRC missionaries after the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902.

Most events which unfolded at this period and thereafter were interpreted by either the government or the DRC missionaries as deliberate attempts to sabotage the work of the other, yet each party did whatever it was doing for a particular purpose. For instance, there was the issue of tax and labour exportation. Government introduced a hut tax of six-shillings, which was equivalent to one month's wage for an indigene working on the white settlers' farms in [the \(A 216\)](#) Shire Highlands.⁶⁶⁵ At the same time, the indigenes did not have enough, or had no money to pay taxes. As a result, the colonial administration forced the indigenes to work on white settlers' land in Shire Highlands, a [hundred](#) miles away from their home [\(A 217\)](#), where they were also subjected to inhumane conditions, and in many cases, they lost their lives there. When these reports reached the DRCM missionaries, they tried to help the indigenes by keeping them close to the family by offering them some piece work, to raise money for taxes. Some colonial administrators interpreted this to mean that the DRCM missionaries were being disloyal to the government, yet they were doing their job. These unkind acts committed by the white settlers and the colonial government were vehemently condemned by all missionaries working in the country, including other individual government officials like Alfred J. Swann, who worked as Resident in Malawi, declared the conditions as inhuman.⁶⁶⁶

On the other hand, the DRCM missionaries deliberately meddled in public politics for whatever reasons they had. Most recorded issues took place at Kongwe, a DRCM station headed by Robert Blake and Frylinck between 1900 and 1903. Pauw has provided considerable detail of each event and its outcome. However, for the sake of this discussion, the study will only examine the Chimbalanga incident. Some indigenous leaders and missionaries protested because of the torture inflicted on those exported to white settlers' farms on the Shire Highlands. One of the indigenous chiefs or village headmen who protested was Chimbalanga. His village was within the sphere of influence of the DRCM. According to Pauw, it was Chimbalanga who instigated his people to resist going to work in the Shire Highlands, which the colonial administration considered as

⁶⁶⁴ United Free Church of Scotland, Report of the Deputy Secretary for Foreign Mission Committee prepared by Rev. Frank Ashcroft, 1923, Livingstonia papers, NLS.

⁶⁶⁵ B. Pachai, "Christianity, Colonialism and Commerce", 61.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid, 62-64.

disloyalty.⁶⁶⁷ Hence, the colonial government came and shot at the Chimbalinga people indiscriminately and used disproportional force, leading to the massacre of children, women and men. Pauw says that the District Collector used the soldiers and the Ngoni of Chikuse to carry out this operation.⁶⁶⁸ Both Pauw and Pachai say that according to evidence tendered by government soldiers, it was alleged by the government that the DRCM instigated the Chimbalinga people “not to sell their labour to the District Collector” but that they should work for the Mission which in return would pay taxes.⁶⁶⁹ On 19th January 1901, the Consular Court sitting in Blantyre charged the DRCM for incitement.⁶⁷⁰

While Pauw agrees that the DRCM missionaries engaged people’s labour to raise money for taxes as a way to prevent their going to Shire Highlands, he categorically denies the charge that this was a ploy to put the blame on the DRCM.⁶⁷¹ Considering the nationalistic attitude developed among the DRCM missionaries, it can hardly be denied that they contributed to the stand taken by the Chimbalinga people [\(A 218\)](#). In a different account, Pauw says that “it should be kept in mind that all of the [DRCM missionaries] were deeply concerned and could not help being affected by what was happening in their home country during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 [to] 1902 as the British ... reverted to more and more drastic action and scorched earth strategy,” while innocent Afrikaner women and children were forced into British concentration camps where conditions were bad.⁶⁷² Hence, the influence of the DRCM missionaries on the actions of the Chimbalinga people must be considered.

Most importantly in the Chimbalinga episode was the use of Ngoni from Chikuse, to punish the Chewa of Chimbalinga. Pauw does not hesitate to say that the Chimbalinga people were punished because they were Chewa. In this light, the action taken by the District Collector of Mlangeni to involve the Ngoni of Chikuse in the government expedition of 1900-1901 could have contributed to ethnic cleavages between the two ethnic groups, Chewa and Ngoni, who used to live side by side. [The evidence provided from the Chimbalinga case suggests that](#) the indigenes were involved in a fracas that [might have](#) originated from the hatred between the English and Afrikaners in the South Africa [\(A 219\)](#). It appears that the DRCM missionaries and the colonial

⁶⁶⁷ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 132.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid, 133.

⁶⁶⁹ B. Pachai, “Ngoni Politics and Diplomacy”, 61; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 133.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid, 62.

⁶⁷¹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 136.

⁶⁷² Ibid, 138.

administration exploited the local socio-political situation by drawing the two indigenous ethnic groups into their political vendetta.

The colonial administration and the DRCM continued antagonising each other for a considerable period, until the 1920s when their relationship became relatively better. Pauw, commenting on this relationship, notes, “When the Presbytery of Nkhoma joined the CCAP in 1926, this served to remove suspicion as to the motives and loyalty of the DRCM”. It was not joining the CCAP that mattered here but the new identity acquired. The government ceased to see them as Afrikaner agents but as members of the CCAP.⁶⁷³ Hence, it can be argued that the Second Anglo-Boer War also had far-reaching effects on the people living beyond the borders of South Africa (A 220). It did not only affect the relationship of the British and Afrikaner politicians but also permeated into ecclesiastical spheres and raised tension between indigenes who used to live side by side, as illustrated in Chimbanga saga. The British-Afrikaner tension was so evident in the CCAP, as the next section and Chapter Four will show.

3.4 *The Creation of Ecclesiastical Boundaries*

Primarily, this section responds to the question of whether the border between the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM were established after the handover of the Kasungu Station in 1924 and of how the transfer contributed to ethnic debates. It continues to answer the question whether regionalism, religion and ethnicity are coterminous in Malawi.

3.4.1 *Understanding Comity Agreement among Protestants*

This section examines how the missions’ spheres of influence were demarcated, and how politics of exclusion and inclusion among Christian missions became a contested terrain. The critical question is whether or not the creation of the church boundaries through the comity agreement was based on cultural boundaries.

⁶⁷³ [In the minutes of the CCAP from 1926 to 1960, there is no indication that the DRCM missionaries had serious problem with the colonial government after joining the CCAP. In 1925, the DRCM leader William H. Murray was appointed a members of the legislative council as it was the case with the leaders of other Presbyterian missions and the UMCA. See C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 144.](#)

Protestant missionaries often avoided overlapping and competing for resources by dividing their sphere of influence through a comity agreement. By definition, a comity agreement is a courtesy agreement between or among institutions working in the same space with similar objectives and activities in which they agree to avert competition and the duplication of activities, and maximise the use of resources. However, comity agreement had its own challenges, specifically where the geopolitical area occupied by a mission was coincidentally identical to an area inhabited by a single ethnic group.

One common characteristic of some African societies was not only that a particular ethnic group was conglomerated in one area, but it was also the denominational exclusivity to that specific area and its inhabitants. For example, in Kenya, the Central Province was identified with the Gikuyu, the Western province with the Luhya and Eastern Province with the Akamba.⁶⁷⁴ Along these lines, if a particular Christian mission established itself in an area which was predominantly inhabited by one ethnic group, it was possible that this mission would come to identify itself with that particular ethnic group. For example, the African Inland Mission identified with the Kamba ethnic group in Kenya.⁶⁷⁵ In this context, denominationalism could play an exclusionary role because it may be perceived that it was there to serve a particular ethnic group. Hence, it can be described as dysfunctional in areas where ethnic groups did not have perceived social boundaries because it divided people along ethnic lines.

Although Christian missions agreed to cooperate in the propagation of Christianity and Western civilisation through education, they were also perceived as rivals because they were competing for converts.⁶⁷⁶ Competing for converts had political and economic undertones. Although in Malawi, it is not clear whether competition for converts contributed to ethnic divisions, the question remains of whether it was not divisive. The question also remains as to whether the scramble for converts was not linked to competition over resources and political influence in the mission fields. Andrew Ross, commenting on the relationship the Blantyre Mission had with other Christian missions in southern Malawi before 1910, points out that as soon as all the missions agreed to recognise other missions' [integrity and that](#) competition over human

⁶⁷⁴ E. Kamara, "Towards Christian National Identity in Africa: A Historical Perspective to the Challenge of Ethnicity in the Church in Kenya," in *Studies in World Christianity*, 16: 2, 2010, 132.

⁶⁷⁵ J. Gathogo, "The Early Attempts at Ecumenical Cooperation in East Africa", 79.

⁶⁷⁶ J. Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, 25.

resources was reduced significantly.⁶⁷⁷ It implies that competition for converts also had economic implications that led missionaries to become rivals. This practice needs to be considered in the border dispute between the two CCAP Synods.

3.4.2 *Spheres of influence for the Four Missions*

This subsection re-examines how the domains of influence for the four Protestant missions were demarcated. How does this exercise provide a better understanding the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute?

3.4.2.1 *The UMCA area of influence*

Before 1894, the UMCA's sphere of influence was to the east of Lake Malawi. After the Berlin conference (1884-1885), its sphere of influence fell into the area of Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). At that time, the UMCA missionaries began [extending](#) their area of influence to the west of Lake Malawi ([A 221](#)).

After the Anglo-German and Anglo-Portuguese agreements, the UMCA began establishing stations to the west of the Lake as discussed in Chapter Two, especially in areas perceived to be unoccupied by the Blantyre and Livingstonia missions. Mostly, it was among a Muslim populated area. For example, the UMCA opened a mission station at Nkhotakota in the Muslim area south of Bua River.⁶⁷⁸ In 1897, it began expanding its activities to the west of the Nkhotakota District before it was divided into the Nkhotakota and Ntchisi Districts. By the 1920s, the UMCA did not start any mission work in the Kasungu and Dowa Districts of Malawi. As noted in Chapter Two, the UMCA and the Livingstonia Mission had a formal agreement on their areas of influence, from the account of Bishop John Edward Hine and W.P. Livingstone, who lived at that time.⁶⁷⁹

However, it appears that at certain times these agreements were no longer respected because of urbanisation, migration and other socio-political factors and missiological options.⁶⁸⁰ For example, by 1940 the UMCA had crossed the boundary that was between the Bua and Dwangwa Rivers into an area previously regarded as Livingstonia's, and planted stations at Dwangwa and

⁶⁷⁷ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre and Making of Modern Malawi*, 180.

⁶⁷⁸ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 90.

⁶⁷⁹ H. Mbaya, "Christianity, Colonialism and Islam," 104; W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 291; A.G. Blood, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 87.

⁶⁸⁰ J. Tengeranga, "Religious Pluralism in Malawi: A Challenge to the Church," 17; A.G. Blood, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 257.

Matiki. In 1951, an Anglican parish was also opened close to the Mzimba District's headquarters inside the Livingstonia's territory. In Mzimba, by 1951, the UMCA had only twenty members, most of them drawn from among government employees with an Anglican background.⁶⁸¹ It can be said that by 1940, comity agreements were no longer respected between the UMCA and the Presbyterian missions. However, the CCAP presbyteries continued to respect their borders until the beginning of the border dispute in 1950s.

3.4.2.2 The Blantyre domain of Influence

As stated in Chapter Two, the Blantyre Mission worked in the southern part of the country and not necessarily the Southern Region. Blantyre, contrary to the DRCM and Livingstonia Mission, did not have clearly defined boundaries with other Protestant missions working in southern Malawi. It can be argued that the comity agreement did not exist in the south. However, it can be said that after the 1910 Mvera Conference some tensions, especially resource grabbing, was mitigated among the Protestant missions, but encroachment continued. However, the Blantyre Mission had well-defined boundaries with its fellow Presbyterian missions, especially the DRCM with which it shared a boundary in 1904. It covered the whole of southern Malawi and some parts of central Malawi, particularly the Ntcheu District, where it shared a boundary with the DRCM (Fig. 3.5). Its boundary with the DRCM Nkhoma has never followed the regional boundaries created either in 1921 or 1934 or 1946.

3.4.2.3 The Livingstonia sphere of influence

The Livingstonia Mission shared a boundary with the Blantyre Mission until 1904. From this time, it shared a boundary with the DRCM. Livingstonia's sphere of influence stretched from the Bua River, going northwest into Zambia, particularly west of the present Eastern, Lwapula and Northern provinces among the Tumbuka, Senga, Namwanga and Bemba people (in figures 2.1 and 3.4). It also had some mission stations in the southern part of Tanzania after the First World War [which previously belonged to the Berlin Mission \(A 222\)](#).

Livingstonia, unlike Blantyre Mission, enjoyed a monopoly over its operating area without stiff competition from any mission, until the Roman Catholics began to penetrate into its sphere of influence in the 1930s. In the Nkhotakota District until the 1940s, the Livingstonia Mission

⁶⁸¹ A.G. Blood, *History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*, 256.

bordered with the UMCA alone. At first, the boundary in Nkhotakota between the UMCA and the Livingstonia Mission was the Bua River. In central Malawi, the Livingstonia Mission covered the area of Chief Kanyenda in Nkhotakota and the whole of the Kasungu District, before the Kasungu Station was finally handed over to the DRCM in November 1924. In Zambia, it worked in Mwenzo, Mambwe, Ikomba, Chitambo, Chinsali, Malambo, Chiponda, and Serenje (in figure 2.2 and appendix A). Full details of the Livingstonia Mission's work in Zambia are given by Bolink and Chilenje in their respective works.⁶⁸² The boundary of the Livingstonia Mission and/or Presbytery after 1924 will be discussed when examining the handover of the Kasungu and Tamanda stations to the DRCM. If the Livingstonia Mission or the Synod, like its sister synods, worked beyond the borders of Malawi, it will be an erroneous conclusion to identify it with a particular region of the country. It is called an ideological construct because the CCAP Livingstonia Synod's work in Zambia continued until the establishment of the CCAP Synod of Zambia in 1984.

After the DRCM became autonomous in 1903, the boundary between the Livingstonia Mission and itself was as stipulated in the Chinkwiri Agreement of 29th July 1904, as stated in Chapter Two.⁶⁸³ It was not in the north of the Kasungu District as Bolink, Pauw and Cronje say but to the south of the district. The 1904 church boundary did not follow the 13th degree latitude as claimed by Bolink and Pauw, but rather it followed the Bua River which is in the south of Kasungu District (in figures 2. and 3.5). Pauw even goes on to describe this boundary as that "just north of Kasungu".⁶⁸⁴ The 1904 boundary between the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM was not north of the 13-degree latitude but rather it was between the 13 and 14 degree latitudes. Again, this boundary did not separate the Chewa and Tumbuka people as Bolink reports, rather it put the whole Kasungu District in the area of the Livingstonia Mission.

Bolink continues to say, "This meant that roughly the whole Chewa people fell within the area of the Dutch Reformed [Church Mission], and the Ngoni-Tumbuka people would be within that of the Livingstonia Mission."⁶⁸⁵ What both Bolink and Pauw fail to mention, or perhaps did not know, was that one part of the Kasungu District, especially the area south of the Dwangwa River,

⁶⁸² P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 21 -32; V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882-2004," 49 – 57.

⁶⁸³ Chikwiri 20th July, 1904 boundary between the Livingstonia Mission and DRCM, Livingstonia Synod Office.

⁶⁸⁴ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 83; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 79.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 83.

was predominantly Chewa ethnically and linguistically while the area to the north of it was ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous, as explained above.⁶⁸⁶ The Tumbuka kingdom stretched from the Dwangwa River in the south to the Songwe River in the north.⁶⁸⁷ As discussed above, the southern boundary of M'mbelwa's kingdom was the Dwangwa River. However, this does not override the fact that the area was ethnically heterogeneous. It was comprised of the Chewa, Tumbuka and Ngoni people. Each ethnic group retained its culture and language with the exception of the Ngoni who stopped speaking their language and began to use Chitumbuka. However, for inter-ethnic communication, people of this area, interchangeably speak Chitumbuka or Chichewa, particularly north of the Dwangwa River. During ethnographical studies, the researcher found it difficult to distinguish a Chewa from other non-Chewa persons by the everyday language use. The Tumbuka people freely speak Chichewa just as the Chewa are free to speak Chitumbuka. This is the result of the long period of acculturation, integration and intermarriage among the people, for over a century.

⁶⁸⁶ D. Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, 77.

⁶⁸⁷ B. Pachai, *Malawi The History of the Nation*, 9.

3.4.2.4 *The DRC Nkhoma sphere of influence*

As stated above, the DRCM was formerly part of the Livingstonia Mission. When it became autonomous, it occupied the area which previously belonged to the Livingstonia Mission. This means that [to \(A 366\)](#) the south it shared boundary with the Blantyre Presbytery: from Cape Maclear in the Mangochi District, the boundary ran through to the north of Ntcheu District to where Malawi borders with Mozambique (in figure. 3.5). Before 1966, the DRCM shared a boundary with the UMCA in the Ntchisi District, where the border was the Chia River as per the comity agreement made by the two missions through Murray and Bishop Trower.⁶⁸⁸ However, in 1907, Rev. Fr. J.P. Clarke, the UMCA missionary, began opening schools across the Chia River. This prompted Rev. Liebenberg of the DRCM to complain to W.H. Murray because he also had plans to open schools in the same area, especially in the Matunya area. In his response, Murray told him to continue with his plan of opening schools because it would not breach the agreement.⁶⁸⁹

Following up the complaint, Murray wrote to Bishop Trower who responded that he unilaterally terminated the earlier agreement because he felt the UMCA did not have enough space for expansion.⁶⁹⁰ Hence, the DRCM and UMCA border in Nchisi was somehow fluid as each of them was free to build schools at will. However, the DRCM Nkhoma kept working in Ntchisi and did not extend its work to the present Nkhotakota District. The Nkhoma Synod started to work in Nkhotakota District in 1966.⁶⁹¹ This explains why the 1904 Chinkhwiri boundary between the Livingstonia and the DRCM did not extend to the Nkhotakota side. From 1966, it confined its work in the south of Bua River until 1979 when the Nkhotakota border dispute started, which will be discussed in Chapter Six.

3.4.3 *The transfer of Kasungu and Tamanda stations: The boundary after 1924*

One area of concern in the border dispute, which led to ethnic debates in the CCAP, is the transfer of the Kasungu Station to the DRCM, because it is not fully explored, on the one hand, and how its history has been told, on the other hand. The first record for the border dispute between the two Presbyteries or Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma appeared in the 1956 Minutes, soon

⁶⁸⁸ W.H. Murray's letter to Liebenberg dated 1st October, 1907, NGK Archive, St.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid

⁶⁹⁰ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 83.

⁶⁹¹ I.M. Kainja, CCAP Nkhoma Synod General Secretary to Faiti, Seniro Clerk of the CCAP General Synod, dated 31st October, 1979, CCAP General Assembly Office, Lilongwe.

after the three CCAP Synods became autonomous. Minute eight of a Joint Theological Committee reads, “As some difficulty has arisen about the boundaries between these two congregations, the Synods⁶⁹² in the concerned area asked to send a commission to investigate and recommend to the synodical committee.”⁶⁹³ The genesis of the border started in the late 1940s when the DRCM built prayer-houses, which acted as schools, across the 1924 designated boundary between the two Presbyteries at Chizungu (1949) and Chamatowo (1952), to the north of the Dwangwa River.⁶⁹⁴ It appears the DRCM attempt to start building schools to the north of the Dwangwa River was prompted by the 1946 regional boundary, which contributed to the crafting of an ideology that the Synod of Livingstonia was to be in the Northern Region, the Blantyre Synod in the Southern Region while the Nkhoma Synod in the Central Region.⁶⁹⁵ As explained in Chapter Two, when missionaries first entered the region of Lake Nyasa, there were no geopolitical boundaries. Secondly, the ecclesiastical boundaries were not created on basis of regional boundaries. The incorporation of the Kasungu District in the Central Region made certain quarters to consider the district as a Chewa District. The DRCM missionaries, whose missiological understanding was to serve the Chewa people, could unilaterally have understood the incorporation of Kasungu District meant that the whole Central Region was their domain of influence. This is clearly indicated in Cronje’s map (in figure.3.6) in which the DRCM boundary with the Livingstonia Presbytery follows the 1946 regional boundary.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹² Kasungu was now under the Nkhoma Synod while Loudon was still under the Synod of Livingstonia.

⁶⁹³ Minutes of the Synodical Committee of the CCAP General Synod held at Nkhoma in 17 May, 1956, SLA, Box 49

⁶⁹⁴ Interview Rev. L.A. Tembo at Chatoloma, 23/01/2015, who attended DRCM schools opened in this area.

⁶⁹⁵ All congregations established by the CCAP Nkhoma Presbytery to the north of Dwangwa River dated after 1946.

⁶⁹⁶ J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 91

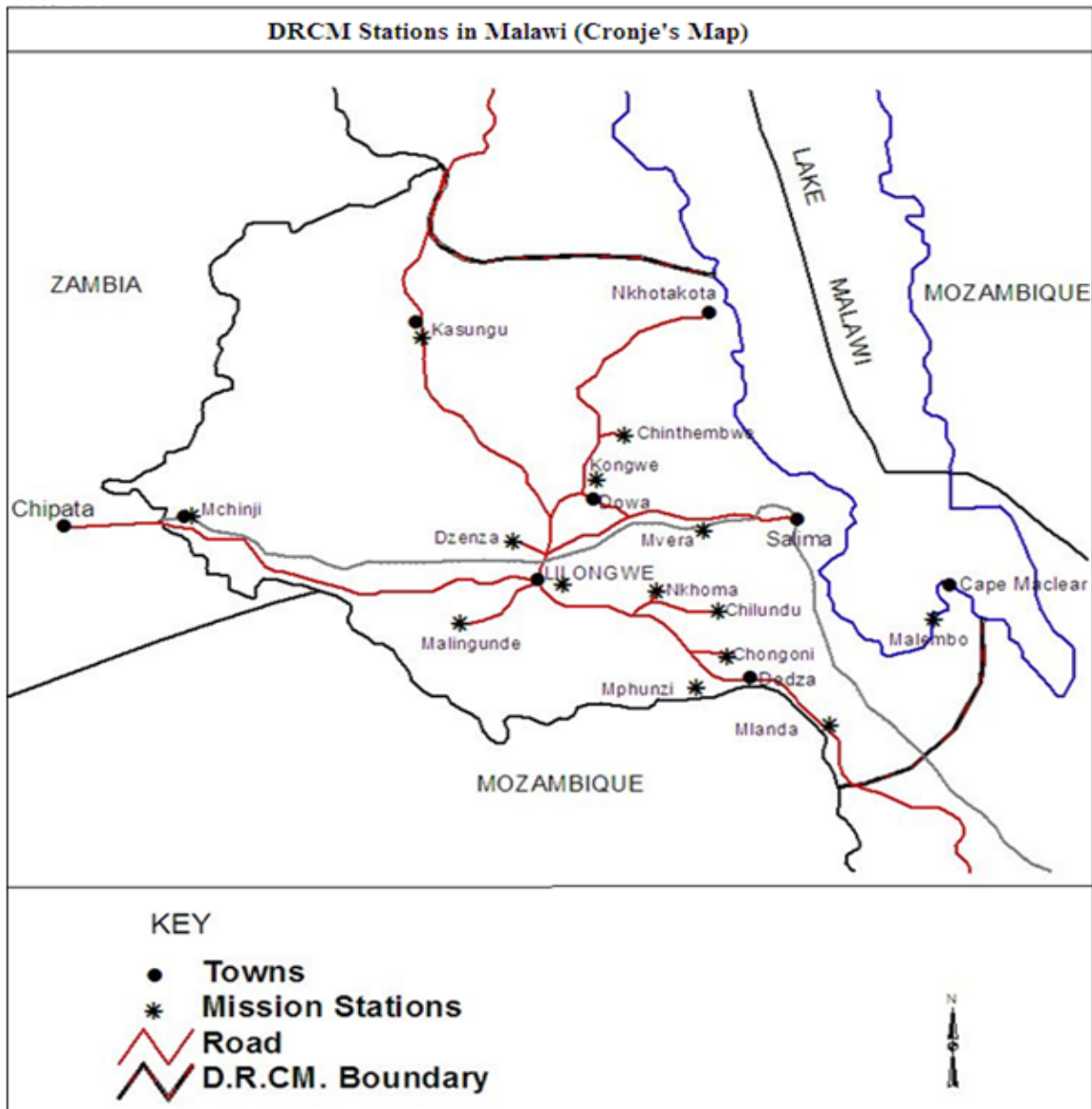


FIGURE 3.6. Map, according to the DRCM's version, showing their extent in Malawi (Source: Adopted from J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, Pretoria: I.S.W.E.N., 1982, 91)

The question we must ask is why some historians crafted ecclesiastical borders as if they were identical with regional or provincial boundaries. To respond to this question, we are compelled to explore how the boundary between two Presbyteries or synods was established after the Kasungu transfer in 1924.

3.4.3.1 *Reasons for the transfer*

To have a better perspective on how the border was established, this subsection begins exploring how the history of the transfer of Kasungu is written and the reasons that prompted the transfer. The first person to write about the history of the transfer was Pretorius, a former DRC missionary to Malawi from the 1950s to 1970s. He wrote,

In 1898 Dr W.H. Murray accompanied Dr George Prentice of Livingstonia on an ulendo [journey] to look for a site for the station in Mwase's area. They found a suitable site and the work [was] started by the Livingstonia Mission, but, because the language of Mwase's people was the same as that spoken in the DRCM, the work was handed over to the DRCM the following year, the African teachers from Mvera took [the] place of the teachers from Livingstonia. The Home Committee of the Livingstonia Mission did not approve of this arrangement and, after occupying the area for a year, the DRCM moved out in 1900 and Dr Prentice took over and remained at Kasungu until 1923, when Kasungu station and all its schools finally became the responsibility of the DRCM. This was the final stage of a movement to assign all the Chewa people to the DRCM and the Ngoni/Tumbuka to Livingstonia.⁶⁹⁷

Pretorius' account was a gross misrepresentation of historical facts concerning the transfer of Kasungu Station. It remains an enigma where he got this information. To begin with, the year was not 1898 when Dr Prentice went for the site survey but it was 1897, after thirteen years when Chief Mwase Kasungu asked the Livingstonia Mission to open a station in his area of jurisdiction.⁶⁹⁸ Secondly, Prentice was not accompanied by W.H. Murray of the DRCM but William Murray, the carpenter, and three Malawians namely, Joseph Kofeya, Esau Macheu, Yoramu Mkopeka Chirwa and Nashon Nyirenda, the first of whom were Tonga by ethnicity and the fourth, Tumbuka.⁶⁹⁹ Prentice, who joined the Livingstonia Mission in 1894, became the head of Kasungu Station in 1900. He served this station for twenty-five years until its transfer.⁷⁰⁰ Kasungu had not been handed over to the DRCM before November 1924 because Prentice was still the head of it until his retirement on 17th October, 1925.⁷⁰¹ But the way Pretorius presented the history has influenced other later DRC historians. Pauw also says that W.H. Murray accompanied Prentice for the site selection of the station at Chief Mwase Kasungu's area.⁷⁰² It appears that Pretorius and Pauw have confused William Hoppe Murray of the DRCM with William Murray, the carpenter from Scotland, who joined the Livingstonia Mission in 1888. It was the same year Andrew C. Murray of the NGK

⁶⁹⁷ J.L. Pretorius, "The Story of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland," 11.

⁶⁹⁸ H.W. Langworthy, "Central Malawi in the 19th Century" 30.

⁶⁹⁹ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 208.

⁷⁰⁰ Min. 7161 of the FMC of the United Free Church of Scotland, 21st October, 1924, NLS.

⁷⁰¹ Min. 48 of 17th Oct., 1925, the Livingstonia Mission Council, MNA, LIM/47/3/17; Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 271.

⁷⁰² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 96.

also joined the Livingstonia Mission. Murray, the carpenter, was later posted to the Kasungu Station in 1907 after working at the Bandawe Station. He died in February 1923.⁷⁰³

W.H. Murray, who joined the mission in 1894, never lived at the Bandawe Station, as Pauw claims. When he arrived in the country, he went straight to the Livlezi Station, and in 1895 when A.C. Murray was attacked by the leopard, he temporarily relocated to head the Mvera Station. After A.C. Murray returned, he went back to Livlezi. When A.C. Murray resigned, it was W.H. Murray who took over the leadership of the mission. He moved from the Livlezi Station to the Mvera Station.⁷⁰⁴ It was W.H. Murray who transferred the DRCM headquarters to Mazengera area at Nkhoma where he spent the rest of his life until his retirement in 1937. It is difficult to understand why both Pretorius and Pauw link W.H. Murray to the history of Kasungu Station before 1924.

It is interesting to note Pauw's account on the transfer of Kasungu. He says, "An initial agreement by the two Mission Councils in 1900 for the work to be handed over to the DRCM was vetoed by the FMC in Scotland and it was only by 1919 that negotiations were resumed".⁷⁰⁵ It is questionable whether there was such an agreement. Prentice became the head of the station in 1900. Again, between 1897 and 1900, the Livingstonia Mission Council minutes do not discuss the transfer of Kasungu. The issue of the Kasungu transfer was only discussed in the Livingstonia Mission Council (LMC) in 1912 when its financial status was declining. This was a result of the death of their chief donor Lord Overtoun in 1908.⁷⁰⁶ However, the Livingstonia Mission received the sum of £5,000 in 1913 from Glasgow businessmen before the transfer was considered by the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC). As a result, the decision of transferring Kasungu and Tamanda station was rescinded.⁷⁰⁷

After the First World War broke out, the Livingstonia Mission had inadequate staff to operate all the stations, as it was also geographically expanding into Zambia and Tanzania. In addition, when the Berlin and Moravian missionaries vacated their stations following WW1, some Livingstonia missionaries were assigned to look after them and others joined the war [\(A 223\)](#).⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰³ Livingstonia Mission Staff Records, p 99 Livingstonia Papers, NLS.

⁷⁰⁴ M.W. Retief, *William of Nyasaland*, 23, 26, 28, 31-33, 39.

⁷⁰⁵ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 96.

⁷⁰⁶ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 208-209; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 273; Min. 83, Livingstonia Staff Records, p 38, Livingstonia papers, NLS.

⁷⁰⁷ Min. 54 of the Livingstonia Staff Records, p 39, Livingstonia papers, NLS; Min.45, 53/4 of 1913 Livingstonia Mission Council, Livingstonia Synod Archive; T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 209.

⁷⁰⁸ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 273; T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 209.

Hence, the FMC asked the NGK to lend its expatriate missionaries to work at the Kasungu and Tamanda stations. In August 1919, A.C. Murray, who was then the NGK Secretary for the General Mission Committee (GMC), accepted to lend the Livingstonia Mission one or two missionaries. He wrote,

Sometime ago the question whether the mission committee of the D.R. Church would be able to assist the Livingstonia Mission with a loan of one or two men, in case you are called upon to take over some of the German Mission stations in north Nyasaland, was unofficially brought before our attention. It was suggested that we might temporarily help with carrying on the work at Kasungu Station and possibly lend a worker for the new field. We felt that under the circumstances we would like to assist your church.⁷⁰⁹

Further, he stated in the letter that Prentice had told them that the FMC proposed handing over the Kasungu Station to the DRCM. Then he said, “We do not feel at liberty to come to you with a definite request or proposal but thought that it might facilitate matters if you knew how we felt about it. As you are aware, the people at Kasungu speak the same language as that used on all our stations.”⁷¹⁰ Murray’s letter suggests that the transfer of Kasungu was not yet referred to the NGK until 1919. Again, the FMC minutes state that the proposal of the Kasungu transfer came from the DRC in Cape Town, as Murray’s letter insinuates, the DRCM had the intention of occupying Kasungu magisterial area.⁷¹¹

Further, Pauw says that Prentice was worried about the continuity of the work after his retirement and that is why he proposed the transfer to the DRCM.⁷¹² Allocation of the staff to stations was a prerequisite of the Foreign Mission Committee in collaboration with the LMC. Hence, there was no point why Prentice could have been worried about the future of the Kasungu Station. Writing to Ashcroft on the transfer in 1923, Prentice writes, “When the Dutch Church asked me for this area as being one way of helping us to bear the fresh responsibilities in what was German East Africa, I laid the matter very fully before our Council, and Rev. A.C. Murray of Cape Town laid the matter very fully before you.”⁷¹³ It is clear that the proposal of transfer came from the NGK because they were looking for areas of expansion after they were under pressure to leave the Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique).⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁹ A.C. Murray letter to the Secretary of FMC of UFS, dated 28th August, 1919, MNA, 47/LIM/3/17.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹¹ Min. 4758 of 20th October, 1919, Foreign Mission Committee (FMC), Liv. Papers, NLS.

⁷¹² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 96.

⁷¹³ G. Prentice to A.C. Murray, letter of 5th July, 1923, Liv. Paper, NLS.

⁷¹⁴ FMC of the UFCS report of 1923 by Rev. F. Ashcroft, Deputy Secretary, page 14, Liv. Papers, NLS; Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 96.

It should be noted that the LMC did not raise the issue of language as a reason to transfer the Kasungu Station, as the report for the 2006 Commission of Inquiry and Zgambo claim.⁷¹⁵ What the LMC wanted was missionaries who could temporarily support them during the time when the Mission did not have staff to run its stations. But A.C. Murray, again, mentioned language as an added advantage to support their proposed move to take over Kasungu Station. It was Pretorius, Bolink and the authors of the Commission of Inquiry who cited language as a reason for the transfer.

In 1919, the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) referred the Kasungu transfer to the Livingstonia Mission Council (LMC) for its input. After discussion, the LMC reluctantly accepted the transfer of the stations because all parishioners refused to be transferred to the DRCM on two grounds. First, they objected to the DRCM's paternalistic attitude, and second, the nature of the education they offered was considered to be of low quality compared to that of the Livingstonia and Blantyre missions.⁷¹⁶ From the side of the Livingstonia Mission, it was Rev. Frank Ashcroft, the Deputy Secretary for the FMC, who was pushing for the transfer. He might have done so because he had the tough task of addressing financial issues and the shortage of staff. The FMC minute of 1921 reads, "The Council transfers work there, with great regret that our Church is unable to supply the men and women needed to carry it on, and deeply sympathises with Dr Prentice and Mr Henderson on leaving fields in which they have seen so much progress and a people so deeply attached to them."⁷¹⁷ It is also possible that he was looking for ways to solve the problem raised by the Kasungu congregants on the future of the ecclesiastical identity, as indicated in his report.⁷¹⁸

Faced with the latter situation, he proposed to the General Mission Committee (GMC) in Cape Town that the transfer could be effected only if the DRCM joined the CCAP, an indigenous church formed by the two Scottish missions as agreed in 1910, and sanctioned by the two Assemblies of the United Free Church of Scotland and Established Church of Scotland in 1914.⁷¹⁹ When the GMC received the proposal from the FMC, it referred the matter to the DRCM who also refused

⁷¹⁵ CCAP, "Report for the Commission of Inquiry," 9; H.F.C. Zgambo, "Conflict within the Church," 41.

⁷¹⁶ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 209, 210.

⁷¹⁷ Min. 5664 (5) of the FMC, 20th September, 1921, Liv. Papers, NLS.

⁷¹⁸ Report of the FMC Secretary, Rev. F. Ashcroft of 1923, Liv. Papers, NLS.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

the transfer of the Kasungu and Tamanda stations.⁷²⁰ The DRCM turned down the offer because of the financial implications involved in the transfer.⁷²¹ This is also inferred in Ashcroft's report which he stated that he removed the barriers to the DRCM's accepting the offer by transferring the stations without any compensation.⁷²²

While the LMC was aware of the financial challenges and understaffing, it did not propose the Kasungu transfer. As observed above, it was Ashcroft who had an interest in it. James Reid of the Blantyre Mission, writing to Laws in 1923 said, "Dr Fraser told me that the DRC Committee in Cape Town are willing to take over your Kasungu and Tamanda stations ... I'm not so sure however that the Dutch people will come in with a Presbytery as Mr Ashcroft anticipated. They move slowly in matters of church government."⁷²³ The same view was expressed by the LMC in the same year in which its Minute reads,

The Livingstonia Mission Council having heard from Rev. F. Ashcroft, the Deputy from the FMC visiting the Livingstonia Mission that it is the desire of the Committee on whom the final responsibility for the staffing and finance of the work rests, that the question of transferring Kasungu and Tamanda to the Dutch Reformed Church Mission should be opened and that the DRC authorities at the Cape desire the same. Therefore, the Livingstonia M.C. agree to re-open negotiations.⁷²⁴

It was not the desire of the LMC to hand over the two stations but it came from the FMC, especially Rev. Ashcroft. The LMC did not sanction the transfer of Kasungu Station, as McCracken says, but they were forced by Ashcroft.⁷²⁵

Again, Pauw says that it was only teachers who protested against the transfer of Kasungu Station.⁷²⁶ He has also influenced the 2006 CCAP Commission of Inquiry to report that it was only the elites who protested.⁷²⁷ As explained above, the LMC was not in favour of the transfer. Prentice, who had no problem with the transfer, is quoted in Thompson to have said that "the ladies here threaten to make a protest."⁷²⁸ The kirk session also protested.⁷²⁹ Even former President of Malawi, Dr H.K. Banda, continually made it publicly known that he was not in favour of the

⁷²⁰ A.C. Murray to the Secretary FMC of UFCS, Liv. Papers, NLS; Min. 5911 and Min. 5770 of the FMC of UFCS, Livingstonia papers, NLS.

⁷²¹ Min. 6097 (8) of FMC, 19th September, 1922, Liv. Papers, LNS.

⁷²² Report of the FMC Secretary, Rev Ashcroft of 1923, Liv. Papers, NLS.

⁷²³ James Reid to Dr Laws, Malawi National Archive (MNA), LIM/3/17.

⁷²⁴ Livingstonia Mission Council minutes of August, 1923, (MNA), LIM 47/3/17.

⁷²⁵ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 209; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 274.

⁷²⁶ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 97.

⁷²⁷ CCAP, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry," 9.

⁷²⁸ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 210.

⁷²⁹ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 274.

transfer because the coming of the DRCM hindered the Chewa of his area from having equal access to quality education that would lead people into the world of opportunities.

Pauw further reports that, “finally agreement was reached and on 8th October, 1923 delegations from the two missions met at Kasungu to hand over the work and map out the terms of transfer.”⁷³⁰ His conclusion also influenced the authors of the 2006 report for the commission of inquiry which states that negotiations of transferring Kasungu to the DRCM “lasted until 1923, the year the transfer was effected”.⁷³¹ While it is true that the discussion of the transfer by white delegates from both missions took place on 8th October 1923, the transfer was not effected in 1923. A.C. Murray, in his letter dated 12th January 1924, wrote

The two minutes regarding the transference of Kasungu and Tamanda were forwarded to us...The sub-committee was very much impressed by the liberality of the Livingstonia Mission in regard to the transfer of mission property ... When the Mission Committee meets again in the beginning of February, we hope to write you more fully.⁷³²

In Murray’s words, it is clear that by January 1924, the transfer was not yet effected as the negotiations were still being held at a higher level. Even his counterpart from the Foreign Mission Committee, Ashcroft, who was attending the LMC in September 1924, is quoted to have argued, “If Kasungu and Tamanda had been transferred to the DRCM, then the LMC will save the money”.⁷³³ The official transfer only happened on 8th November 1924.⁷³⁴

In nutshell, it can be argued that both Pretorius and Pauw said on the transfer of the Kasungu Station and the boundary of the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM are in contradiction to the evidence unearthed in this subsection. It is historically inaccurate to link the DRCM missionaries to the Kasungu Station before its transfer in 1924. Secondly, the proposal to transfer the Kasungu Station did not come from the Livingstonia Mission, but from the DRCM. Lastly, the Kasungu Station was not transferred on the basis of language, but rather it was because the Livingstonia Mission had inadequate resources and was heavily understaffed. Yet, it is the same Pauw who the authors of the 2006 CCAP Commission of Inquiry Report of the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods have relied on as their main source. No wonder its findings were seriously questioned, as sheer guess work and misleading. Hence, the writing of history, if not

⁷³⁰ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 97.

⁷³¹ CCAP “Report for the Commission of Inquiry,” 9.

⁷³² A.C. Murray to Laws in letter of 12 January, 1924, MNA, LIM/47/3/17.

⁷³³ Min. 30 “Finance”, Livingstonia Mission Council, September, 1924 MNA LIM/47/3/17.

⁷³⁴ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 210.

properly documented and relied on historically incorrect facts, could be a terrain for creating socio-political tensions. It is against this background the study suggest to reread the history of the CCAP. The writing should not rely on hyperbolic narratives but on historical facts.

3.4.3.2 The Livingstonia-Nkhoma boundary after the Kasungu transference of 1924

At this point, it is imperative to determine whether the border between Livingstonia and DRCM Nkhoma Synods was established after the transfer of Kasungu Station. The two congregations sharing the boundary between the two CCAP Synods were the Kasungu and Loudon congregations. It was the boundary of the two congregations that became the border for the two Synods. The boundary was agreed in 1923. Part of Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) minute 6717 on the 1923 boundary agreement reads, “That between Kasungu and Loudon will follow the approximate tribal boundary as represented by the schools occupied by Kasungu and Loudon.”⁷³⁵ One problem with the clause is the interpretation of the word “tribal line”. Since 1956, there has been no proper interpretation of the clause, leading some to generalise it while others consider it to be ambiguous, yet it is a straightforward issue.⁷³⁶ This is why this study argues that the problem was the politics attached to the Livingstonia-Nkhoma boundary by white missionaries and post-missionaries church leaders.

To begin with, the key issue in determining what the boundary was after the transference of Kasungu Station to the DRCM is the notion “tribal line”. Pretorius, Bolink, Pauw and Thompson, who discuss the transference of Kasungu, have not suggested where the boundary was or what “tribal line” meant. However, Pauw, citing the clause mentioned above in his email sent to the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as evidence to the Commission of Inquiry on the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods, confirms that tribal line was the notion captured in the “Memorandum of Deputations sent by the Livingstonia Mission Council and the Dutch Reformed Church Mission Council: Kasungu 8 October, 1923”. Further, in giving his interpretation of what ‘tribal line’ referred to, Pauw concluded that the Milenje Stream, which is in the north of the

⁷³⁵ Min. 6717 of the FMC of UFCS, 18th December, 1923, Liv. Papers, NLS; Minutes of the Commissioners from the DRCM and Livingstonia Mission to deal with the transfer of the stations of Kasungu and Tamanda from the Livingstonia Mission to the Dutch Reformed Church Mission held at Kasungu on 8/10/1923 in CCAP, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry,” 58.

⁷³⁶ J. Weller & J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 123; P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 83; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 96.

Dwangwa River, was the boundary.⁷³⁷ He did not deduce his conclusion from what ‘tribal line’ had meant to the commissioners in 1923. Rather, he relied on what he claims to be Prentice’s opinion than on what both missions agreed as the official boundary on 8th October 1923 and affirmed in 1958 by the General Synod.

One problem with the reference to ‘tribal line’ is the ethnic ascription historians have attached to the spheres evangelised by the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM - as Ngoni-Tumbuka or Tumbuka and Chewa, respectively. Most readers familiar with the 1946 regional boundaries of Malawi would conclude that the Central Region is Chewa and the Northern Region Ngoni-Tumbuka, as mostly held in the media and academia. However, it is wrongly ascribed because there was no clear-cut ethnic boundary in this area. As discussed above, the area to the north of the Dwangwa River was under Chief M’mbelwa. In 1923, the commissioners of two missions did not think of the 1946 regional boundary.

What did “tribal line” mean to the Commissioners in 1923? Lentz, commenting on the situation in Ghana, observed that the British colonial administrators and missionaries had the notion that African ethnic groups were clearly distinguished by a tribal chief and that ethnic groups were divided by rivers.⁷³⁸ Mamdani states that boundaries were created on the basis of this British notion because it was held that each African ethnic group was under the rule of a certain ethnic chief.⁷³⁹ A tribe was conceived as being linguistically, physiologically and culturally distinguished from another [tribe \(A224\)](#).⁷⁴⁰ As explained above, this was the general view of the British colonists and missionaries working in Africa. Hence, there is a need to determine which chiefs shared a boundary in this area and what their boundary was. A better description is that provided in the *Handbook of Nyasaland* authored by Murray, the chief secretary to Nyasaland [Malawi] government at the time when a decision about the Kasungu and Loudon boundary was made. Murray describes the Kasungu magisterial area as follows,

It forms one section under Chief Mwase, with Chiefs Chiloa and Chulu as councillors in charge of their own sub-sections. It is bounded by Rhodesia on the west, Fort Manning and Dowa districts on the south, Kota-Kota district on the east and Momberas on the north... Between Rusa and Bua rivers, which form the southern boundary, and Dwangwa, which forms the northern, there are no permanent rivers of any size, and the bulk of the water is obtained from wells or dambo pools.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁷ CCAP, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry,” 47.

⁷³⁸ C. Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana*, 80, 82.

⁷³⁹ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 86.

⁷⁴⁰ C. Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana*, 75.

⁷⁴¹ S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 138.

From Murray's description, the two chiefs sharing a boundary were Chief Mwase of the Chewa and Paramount Chief M'mbelwa of the Ngoni/Tumbuka/Chewa. Chief Kaluluma, who was now chief of Kasungu District, was a subordinate of Paramount Chief M'mbelwa until 1946.⁷⁴² M'mbelwa sphere of influence stretched from Dwangwa River in south where it bordered Chief Mwase to (A 225) Karonga in the north.⁷⁴³ Hence, the tribal line referred to here was the Dwangwa River because it separated Chiefs Mwase and M'mbelwa representing Chewa and Tumbuka/Ngoni.

All schools which were supervised from Loudon Station fell under the Livingstonia Mission and those schools under Kasungu Station were put under the DRC Nkhoma Mission. Figure 2.2 and appendix A show that schools under Kasungu Station were on the south of Dwangwa River while schools in the north of the Dwangwa River were under the Loudon Station such as Lisituzi (2 Feb, 1967) and Chenjewazi (1954). The 1958 General Synod meeting affirmed the recommendation made by a special commission⁷⁴⁴ which states that the boundary between Loudon and Kasungu stations was the Dwangwa River⁷⁴⁵ and not the Mpasadzi and Milenje streams as the 2006 Commission of Inquiry and Pauw claim, in that order. Minute 26 affirming the findings of the special commission on the boundary between two Synods, reads, "The General Synod approved the report of the special commission appointed at the request of the Standing Committee and warmly recommend its findings for acceptance by the Synod of Mkhoma."⁷⁴⁶ There is no minute of the General Synod that shows that the Nkhoma Synod did not accept this resolution until the resurfacing of the border debate in 1967, which Chapter Six will explore.

3.5 *Summary of the Chapter*

The chapter shows that precolonial and colonial Malawi had no distinct ethnic boundaries, and that people from various ethnic backgrounds were not known by their distinct ethnic identities, but by their political identities. Hence, it can be said that Malawian societies were ethnically fluid and integrated. It has also been observed that ethnicity, religion and regionalism are not coterminous

⁷⁴² S.S. Murray, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, 138.

⁷⁴⁴ A Special Commission had a meeting on 10th January 1958.

⁷⁴⁵ Min. 26 of the CCAP General Synod meeting held at Livingstonia from 18 to 21 April, 1958, Livingstonia Synod Archive, box 69; also see letter of Rev I.M. Kainja, CCAP Nkhoma Synod General Secretary to Rev. Faiti, Senior Clerk of the CCAP General Synod, dated 31st October, 1979.

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

but it was the media, academia, political and ecclesiastical circles that crafted them as coterminous. Therefore, the ethnic and regional constituencies as espoused by the media, academia and other fora are just “imagined communities”. They do not have fixed social boundaries.

The chapter shows that no colonial policy significantly contributed to ethnic cleavages between Chewa and non-Chewa besides the contested language policy. Hence, the ethnic polarization is not purely a direct product of colonial policies such as the indirect rule or the colonial stereotyping. In precolonial and colonial Malawi, individuals were at liberty to affirm new ethnic identities voluntarily, through acculturation, intermarriage and integration. They also resisted the imposition of ethnic and cultural elements on them.

The chapter has demonstrated that the way history of the transfer of Kasungu Station was told became a potential source of ethnic tension and divisions. It was also observed that the telling of the CCAP history that missionaries agreed that the Livingstonia Synod should be in the Northern Region, the Nkhoma Synod in the Central Region and the Blantyre Synod is the Southern Region, consolidated ethnic salience and fostered ethnic and regional divisions. This telling of history is a crafted ideology. If history is poorly told and is based on historically incorrect facts, it can mislead and lead to ethnic divisions among people of different ethnic backgrounds, who used to live side by side.

Finally, it has concluded that the border between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma, after the transfer of the Kasungu Station, was the Dwangwa River in Kasungu District. However, the problem leading to the border dispute was largely contributed to by the politics of the parties involved as the next chapters will unfold.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHURCH POLICIES AND ETHNIC CLEAVAGES (1924-1960)

4.1 Introduction

While chapter two dealt with the four Protestant missions, this chapter concentrates on the three Presbyterian missions working in Malawi (Nyasaland), namely the Livingstonia, Blantyre and Dutch Reformed Church missions that formed the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). This chapter answers the question, How the uncertainty surrounding the formation of the CCAP contributed to the current border dispute between the Synod of Livingstonia and the Nkhoma Synod?

Most studies discussing the CCAP concentrate on church's contribution to political transition, from the colonialization of Malawi to the present day, and to evangelisation.⁷⁴⁷ All these studies focus on the functional aspect of religion, in this context Christianity, without considering the dysfunctional dimension of it, such as consolidating the visibility of ethnic identities that could result into perceived ethnic constituencies. The role played by missionaries in the consolidation of ethnic identities, leading to ethnic cleavages is not fully explored. Hence, this chapter explores how ecclesiastical and ethno-national politics shaped the unity of the CCAP from 1924 to 1960, with regard to the politics of inclusion and exclusion in the light of the English and Presbyterian hegemony. Hence, this chapter questions how certain groups among Presbyterian missions intended to impose their *ways of seeing* and their *structures of action* on the other missions or churches, and how the other missions resisted the hegemony. How did this historical process reinforce ethnic and ecclesiastical identities in the CCAP?

4.2 Understanding the CCAP Union: Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion

The primary purpose for this section is to examine the formation of the CCAP, as a united church, and how the politics of inclusion and exclusion were engaged in and contested, in the light of the Presbyterian hegemony. Hence, the section begins by examining CCAP as an indigenous church, before discussing how it was formed as a united church [\(A 226\)](#).

⁷⁴⁷ C.M, Pauw; *Mission and Church in Malawi*; J, McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*; J. Thompson, *Christianity in Northern Malawi*; K.R. Ross, *Malawi and Scotland*.

4.2.1 *The CCAP as an indigenous church: A Scottish initiative*

This sub-section interrogates the nature of the church that the Scottish missionaries were intending to establish in Central Africa. It begins by examining the origin of the idea of an indigenous church and its name, before examining how CCAP as a united indigenous church ([A 227](#)) came to be.

Andrew C. Ross ascribes the idea of an indigenous church to Dr Scott⁷⁴⁸ while W.P. Livingstone, McCracken, and Pauw attribute it to Dr Laws.⁷⁴⁹ Alexander Hetherwick, Scott's lieutenant, commenting on the formation of the CCAP, ascribes the formation of the indigenous church to Laws.⁷⁵⁰ Thompson attributes it to both Laws and Scott.⁷⁵¹ While it is important to trace the origin of the idea of the indigenous church, it is worth noting that the idea was not peculiar to Nyasaland and the CCAP. It was commonly held and practised in most mission fields by various protestant missionaries. It was likely that both Scott and Laws got the idea from other Scottish missionaries working in South Africa or Asia with whom they came into contact before coming to Malawi. The idea of establishing a Bantu or indigenous church in Africa was first mentioned and started in South Africa following the establishment of Lovedale Institute in 1824 which began as a training institution for indigenous clergy.⁷⁵² This could have influenced both the Livingstonia and Blantyre missions to establish the Overtoun Institute (1894) and Henry Henderson Institute (1908), respectively.

Similar developments happened in India and China.⁷⁵³ At the time both Laws and Scott were contemplating the establishment of an indigenous church for Central Africa, missionaries working in China and India began negotiations towards establishing an indigenous church that was free from the socio-political differences existing in their home countries. But it should also be noted that in Britain, the same idea was discussed by different missionary bodies. For example, the Liverpool missionary conference of 1860 “affirmed that [the] supreme object of the missionary enterprise was the establishment of churches which should depend, not upon distant and foreign

⁷⁴⁸ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Morden Malawi*, 174.

⁷⁴⁹ C.M. Pauw *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 265; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 293; W. P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, 247.

⁷⁵⁰ A. Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre*, 247.

⁷⁵¹ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in Northern Malawi*, 211.

⁷⁵² J. W. De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, Cape: David Philip Publisher, 1982, 14-15.

⁷⁵³ R.G. Tiedemann, “Comity Agreements and Sheep Stealers”, 3, 4.

churches, but upon their own exertions and their own spiritual graces.”⁷⁵⁴ A similar statement was issued in 1901 at the first Missionary Conference held in Malawi. It reads, “That the orderly development, the organisation and establishment of a self-supporting and self-propagating Native Church be a chief aim in our mission work.”⁷⁵⁵ Hence, it can be stated that both Scott and Laws learnt about it before embarking on their missionary enterprise. The guiding principle for their missionary enterprise was based on the [Three Selves’ Theory](#).

The idea of an indigenous church was not embedded in racism but on a concern for ecclesiastical independence. This idea was shaped by the [Three Selves Theory](#), as propagated by Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson. Venn was the secretary for the Church Missionary Society and one of the key figures for nineteenth century missionary and evangelical movement. He had an objective of establishing “in each district and especially where there are separate languages, a self-supporting, self-governing and self-expanding native [church \(A 227\)](#).”⁷⁵⁶ Anderson, the American Congregationalist administrator and theorist, had a similar view. He held that missionary’s primary objective was not to civilise the evangelised people but to establish indigenous churches based on [Three Selves Theory](#).⁷⁵⁷ This includes: *self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating (C 8; A 228)*. In Chapter Two, it was noted that Scottish missionaries envisaged an inclusive church that was not based on ecclesiastical or social differences. Of course, paternalistic tendencies portrayed by missionaries brought incongruity in understanding what really constituted an indigenous church. Indeed, most decisions leading to the formation of an indigenous church were made by white missionaries, without indigenes being at the centre of the negotiations.

By the 1890s, Scott and Laws had the idea of an indigenous church.⁷⁵⁸ The first indigenous church was realized when the Livingstonia mission council formed the Livingstonia Presbytery in 1899, which was independent from the sending Church of the founding missionaries.⁷⁵⁹ In 1895, prior to the establishment of the Presbytery, Laws approached the Blantyre missionaries and asked whether they could jointly form an indigenous church, but Hetherwick turned down Laws’

⁷⁵⁴ B. Stanley, “The Church of the Three Selves: A Perspective Conference, Edinburgh, 1910,” in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 2008, 36:3, 435.

⁷⁵⁵ Quoted in B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 203.

⁷⁵⁶ B. [\(A 17\)](#) Stanley, “The Church of the Three Selves”, 436.

⁷⁵⁷ W.R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, 78.

⁷⁵⁸ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, 175.

⁷⁵⁹ World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission VIII: Co-operation and Promotion on Unity*, Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910, 95.

proposal.⁷⁶⁰ In Chapter Two, it was said that Laws' intention was to include the NGK section of the Mission in the indigenous church, and called that section South Livingstonia Presbytery.⁷⁶¹ That is why in 1895 Laws approached the Blantyre missionaries and wrote to W.H. Murray on the possibility of the Presbyterian missions forming an indigenous church.⁷⁶²

At the formation of the Presbytery, Livingstonia missionaries categorically stated that the next step was to form a united Church. In 1901, an article appearing in a monthly journal for missionary work titled *Oliver Treasures*, and believed to have been authored by Laws himself, reads, "On 9th November, 1899, the Presbyterian Church was formed, and that day the Presbytery of North Livingstonia held its first sederunt."⁷⁶³ But it was on 15th November 1899 that Elmslie, MacAlpine and Dewar constituted an indigenous church. The Council minute reads, "The Council approve of the early organisation of the native Church into congregations and regularly constituted court, viz: Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and Synod."⁷⁶⁴ Ironically, the CCAP, though not yet formed as a united church, began by forming the Livingstonia Presbytery which planned to form a union with other churches. The Council minutes read, "From the beginning the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa should look forward to federation or union with other Christian communities in the country."⁷⁶⁵ That is why the Livingstonia missionaries later did not hesitate to welcome Hetherwick's suggestion to begin negotiations about forming a united church, like the LMS in South Africa.⁷⁶⁶

In Chapter Two, it was stated that Scott and Fraser wanted an inclusive indigenous church that was [disregarding \(A 229\)](#) ecclesiastical differences. While Laws, Elmslie and Hetherwick had a similar view of a church as Scott and Fraser, they grappled with the nature of the polity that it should follow.⁷⁶⁷ They underscored that the church should be Presbyterian. Their insistence on Presbyterian polity was inconsistent with their effort to have a united and inclusive church because no one enters into a union unarmed, as Gramsci points out:

⁷⁶⁰ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 293.

⁷⁶¹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 267

⁷⁶² Laws to W.H. Murray dated 25th May, 1895, Murray W.H, 1895-1918-1918 Malawi Korrespondensi, NGK Archive, Stellenbosch,

⁷⁶³ R.S. Summerville (ed.), *Oliver Tress*, New York: J.W. Sproul, 1901, 374

⁷⁶⁴ Quoted in J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 289

⁷⁶⁵ Quoted in T.J. Thompson, in *Mainstream Christianity*, 211

⁷⁶⁶ J.W. de Gruchy, "Remembering a Legacy" in *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa* edited by John W. de Gruchy, Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1999, 2

⁷⁶⁷ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 211; A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission*, 174

The individual does not enter into relations with other men by juxtaposition, but organically, in as much, that is, as he belongs to organic entities which range from the simplest to the most complex. Man does not enter into relations with the natural world just by being himself part of the natural world, but actively, by means of work and technique. Further: these relations are not mechanical. They are active and conscious.⁷⁶⁸

According to Gramsci, the rulers should seek the spontaneous consent of the ruled. The insistence that those seeking to join their CCAP union should conform to the Presbyterian polity or be Presbyterian defeated the whole purpose of having an all-inclusive united church. To this effect, the negotiations leading to the CCAP union, according to the Gramscian hegemonic theory, did not have the consent of all parties intending to take part in the union. It appears that some sections wanted to impose their ecclesiastical polity on others. For example, the rephrasing of the name from the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa (PCCA) to the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), reflects how the politics of identity were contested to exclude those who were outside the Presbyterian hegemony, particularly other Protestant churches working in Malawi and Zambia.

The rephrasing of the name was an outcome of the debate that followed on the nature of the church and its polity. The PCCA was the name the Livingstonia Council chose. However, as negotiations for the united church progressed, other names were suggested. The joint-subcommittee of the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) in Scotland, in order to retain Presbyterian identity in the name, renamed the united church as “Presbyterian Church in Africa”. But this name was rejected because it was considered to be “emphasizing the non-African”, in contrast to the type of indigenous church that the missionaries envisaged. Fraser’s choice, “Church of Central Africa”, which was proposed to avert denominationalism, was rejected because it utterly ignored the Presbyterian element, which his colleagues considered to be critical to its identity. In 1910, it was rephrased as “Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian” (CCAP)⁷⁶⁹ without necessarily removing a single word, as the Livingstonia Council proposed. McCracken says that the rephrasing of name CCAP was a compromise of all parties involved. He states that the inclusion of “Presbyterian” was for exclusionary purposes [\(A 230\)](#). It was intended to disallow non-Presbyterians from entering into the union, especially the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Moravians.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁸ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebook*, 669-670

⁷⁶⁹ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 212-13.

⁷⁷⁰ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 294.

However, Thompson says that the comma was put before the word “Presbyterian” because it was held that if a non-Presbyterian church could join the union, then the word “Presbyterian” would be dropped, and it would read “Church of Central Africa”.⁷⁷¹ This would be in line with the view of Scott and Fraser, which Presbyterians opted for in China in 1922. They chose a neutral name without denominational connotations in order to allow non-Presbyterians to join the indigenous church.⁷⁷² Retief says the word “Presbyterian” was included because the type of church government opted for was Presbyterian.⁷⁷³ Of course, it was obvious for Presbyterian missions to take that direction, but what is contested is why they emphasised on Presbyterian. How do we explain the debate that followed after 1926 if the Presbyterian identity was binding at all? Did it imply non-Presbyterian church were to surrender their identities?

People like Laws were not ready to abandon the Presbyterian identity.⁷⁷⁴ This could be why he used to write the name “Church of Central Africa Presbyterian” without inserting a comma before “Presbyterian” in most of his writings, unlike his contemporaries and those who came after him.⁷⁷⁵ As stated above, the discussion will show that the Presbyterian identity turned into a site for a politics of inclusion and exclusion, and became contentious terrain in the CCAP. Every party had its own idea of an indigenous church. For instance, while Hetherwick was for an indigenous church, to a greater degree he was seeking ecclesiastical independence from home interference. This was why he wanted the home churches to deal solely with mission councils, without interfering with the running of the CCAP Synod.⁷⁷⁶ This is clearly stipulated in the preamble for the terms of union for two Presbyteries as per 15th August 1913, which reads, “The Presbyteries of Blantyre and Livingstonia being persuaded that it will make for the extension of the kingdom of God and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ that the Presbyteries should be formed into a Synod, to be meantime the Supreme Court of a United Church.”⁷⁷⁷ The Livingstonia Presbytery, unlike the Blantyre and Nkhoma Presbyteries, was not formed by sending churches of the white missionaries but was formed by its Mission Council that gave it semi-autonomy.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷¹ T.J. Thompson in *Mainstream Christianity*, 119.

⁷⁷² R.G. Tiedemann, “Comity Agreements and Sheep Stealers,” 4.

⁷⁷³ M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 157.

⁷⁷⁴ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 294.

⁷⁷⁵ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 144.

⁷⁷⁶ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, 175.

⁷⁷⁷ Terms of Reference for the Proposed Union of the Blantyre and Livingstonia Presbyteries as agreed on 15th August, 1913, Livingstonia Papers, NLS.

⁷⁷⁸ World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission VIII*, 96.

However, Hetherwick's insistence on ecclesiastical independence raises a serious question as to whether they had a clear understanding of what an indigenous church meant. A better explanation could be that ecclesiastical independence was more appealing to the missionaries than the establishment of an indigenous church. This explains why both mission councils and presbyteries were dominated by whites without giving much space to the indigenous leadership.⁷⁷⁹ Indeed, it was the Scottish missionaries who took the initiative in establishing an indigenous united church but the church was meant to be indigenous.

4.2.2 *The birth of the CCAP as a united church*

The formation of the CCAP as a united indigenous church happened at the time when different Protestant missions were holding similar negotiations for the purpose of forming a united indigenous church. In most cases, Christian unity was critical to this missionary enterprise. Christian unity often superseded ecclesiastical, political and doctrinal differences. For example, in China and India, Protestant Christians drawn from different traditions were working together to form a united church regardless of socio-political and ecclesiastical differences.⁷⁸⁰ Interestingly, it was the Presbyterians who were taking the lead in China. In 1906, two years after the Livingstonia and Blantyre missions had entered into serious negotiations for union, the Presbyterians in China held similar discussions. The names of churches involved were as follows: the Presbyterian Churches in the USA, from both northern and southern states, the Reformed Church in America, the United Free Church of Scotland, the Established Church of Scotland, and the Presbyterian Churches in Canada, Ireland and England. In 1922, they named the church the "Church of Christ in China" (CCC) without attaching the word Presbyterian in order to allow non-Presbyterian churches join the union.⁷⁸¹ However, Merwin, as quoted in Tiedemann, describes the CCC:

[It] lived a double life. On the one hand, it was a national church representing a variety of denominational traditions and carrying on programs in the name of the total church. On the other hand, it was a group of regional churches in loose associations with a central staff and not very close relations with each other.⁷⁸²

Merwin's description of the CCC is quite intriguing because it follows the pattern adopted by the CCAP union after 1956, in which a synod was regarded as a *de facto* regional church ([A 231](#)).

⁷⁷⁹ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 290.

⁷⁸⁰ R.G. Tiedemann, *Comity Agreements and Sheep Stealers*, 1.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid*, 4.

⁷⁸² *Ibid*, 4.

Yet, they were not *de jure*. Synods' constitutions, as adopted in 1956, never defined a synod as the church, but as a court of the CCAP.⁷⁸³ This regional characteristic feature and mission identity could be described as a divisive legacy that missionaries exported to new mission fields. Other chapters will demonstrate this further as the argument unfolds.

Ross and other historians have said that in 1902, it was Hetherwick who reinvigorated [the idea of Laws of forming a united church \(A 232\)](#).⁷⁸⁴ Why did Hetherwick reject Laws' proposal? Although not explicitly stated, it appears that there were other factors [that \(A 233\)](#) forced him to do so. At the time, when Laws approached the Blantyre missionaries, both missions did not have presbyteries, which was an important structure within the Scottish Presbyterian system.⁷⁸⁵ After the Blantyre Mission had its own presbytery, Laws persuaded Hetherwick to have a united church during the first General Missionary Conference held in 1900.⁷⁸⁶ This was the reason why Hetherwick did not hesitate to ask the Livingstonia Mission to begin negotiations for the united church.⁷⁸⁷ In 1902, Hetherwick wrote the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland seeking permission to enter into negotiations with the Livingstonia Presbytery.⁷⁸⁸ The permission was granted in the same year.⁷⁸⁹ In the same year, preliminary discussions were held between the Livingstonia and Blantyre Presbyteries for the union. Hetherwick wanted to expedite the formation of the united church even if it meant the Blantyre and Livingstonia presbyteries formed it alone.⁷⁹⁰ This did not imply excluding the DRCM but at this time, the DRCM had not yet expressed interest in joining the union. Again, the DRCM had an intention of forming its own church whose missions identified with the Dutch.⁷⁹¹

In 1904, a serious discussion on union took place between the Livingstonia and Blantyre Presbyteries and a tentative proposal for union was made.⁷⁹² During the 1910 Mvera Missionary Conference, the two presbyteries informally agreed to form a synod while waiting to rectify certain

⁷⁸³ Appendixes VI, VII, VIII and IX-individual Constitutions of each CCAP Synod as appended in the CCAP General Assembly Minutes of CCAP held at Chongoni from 16th to 17th August, 1977, SLA, Box 49.

⁷⁸⁴ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, 169.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 169.

⁷⁸⁶ Hetherwick, *Romance of Blantyre* 246.

⁷⁸⁷ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, 174-5.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 175.

⁷⁸⁹ Min. 4 of the CCAP First Synod Meeting, 17th to 22nd September, 1924, Box 94, NGK Archive, St.

⁷⁹⁰ J.T. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 211; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 293; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 267.

⁷⁹¹ M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 154.

⁷⁹² J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 293; A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Morden Malawi*, 175; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 267.

issues. These included: the theological basis of the new indigenous church; the type and number of missions to enter into union with; the relation between the mission and the indigenous church; and the disciplinary code, especially concerning which court Europeans would be subject to for disciplinary issues.⁷⁹³ On 15th August 1913, it was formally agreed to after the Terms of Union were accepted by both presbyteries.⁷⁹⁴ On 10th February 1914, the joint sub-committee of the Foreign Mission Committees for the Established Church of Scotland (ECS) and United Free Church of Scotland (UFCS) gave consent to the union. In the same year, the union was sanctioned by Assemblies of both ECS and UFCS.⁷⁹⁵ However, the actual ceremony for the union was delayed because of the effects of the First World War.⁷⁹⁶ The two presbyteries officially joined together and formed the CCAP as a united Church on 17th September 1924, during the meeting held at Livingstonia Mission headquarters. Laws, as the force behind its formation, was duly elected as Moderator of the CCAP Synod.⁷⁹⁷ It should be noted that CCAP Synod became the ultimate authority in all matter concerning the governance of the Church [\(A 234\)](#).⁷⁹⁸

Although Africans were not at the centre of negotiations for their church, they valued the idea of establishing a united indigenous church.⁷⁹⁹ Thompson pointed out that Africans were for an indigenous church that was free of denominationalism.⁸⁰⁰ Pauw, commenting on later developments in the CCAP, made a similar observation that the DRC indigenous members did not understand why white missionaries were interested in denominational differences.⁸⁰¹ Denominational differences were compounded by missionary paternalistic tendencies, which became problematic in defining the nature of an indigenous church. Stanley is right to say that missionaries failed to establish an indigenous church [\(A 235\)](#) “instead denominational affiliation

⁷⁹³ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 293.

⁷⁹⁴ Min. 2979 of 15th August, 1913, Minutes of the FMC of the UFCS, Liv. Papers, Dep. 298 (129), NLS.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid; T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 211.

⁷⁹⁶ Min. 3704 of 15th February, 1916, Minutes of FMC of the UFCS, Liv. Papers, Dep. 298 (129), NLS.

⁷⁹⁷ Min. 8 of the CCAP Synod meeting held at Livingstonia from 17 to 22 September, 1924, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

⁷⁹⁸ [According to Presbyterian system the ultimate authority is derived from the Church and not from individual officers. Although the office of the General Secretary is seen as being at the centre of running the church, it only came to be in 1960. This was before the formation of the CCAP Synod, which was established in 1924. Secondly, it is not correct to say that Moderator is the highest legal authority in the CCAP. He/she is just the first among the equal. In the CCAP, following a Presbyterian system, the ultimate legal authority is not invested in an office or individual but the courts of the church or the church itself. Therefore, General Secretary or Synod Moderator should not be seen as ultimate legal authority.](#)

⁷⁹⁹ C.W. Mapala “A Critical Reflection and Malawian Perspective on the Commemoration of Edinburgh 1910,” 74; T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 212.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid, 212.

⁸⁰¹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 343.

of the sending mission defined the ideal and method of the emerging local church organisation with depressing predictability.”⁸⁰² Missionaries did not foresee the implications of not involving the indigenes in the process of forming an indigenous church (A 236). This is the cause of all the problems that the indigenous churches are grappling with now. They had a narrow understanding of the Three Telves Theory. To them, the Three Selves Theory meant use of indigenous language, raising finances locally, and allowing Africans to live a semi-European lifestyle, without considering other aspects of indigenous life. This was the reason why missionaries’ home identities became the yardstick for setting up an indigenous church. Instead of establishing a system that was free from their European differences, they went on reinforcing them. Hence, the insertion of the (A 237) word ‘Presbyterian’ in the name of the indigenous Church (CCAP) not only reflects the church polity, it also exposes the politics of exclusion. The insertion of the word ‘Presbyterian’ in the name of the church was meant to exclude the non-Presbyterian churches in the CCAP union, and retain the Presbyterian hegemony.

4.2.3 *The DRCM joins the CCAP: Presbyterian identity?*

This sub-section examines the question why the DRCM, formerly part of the Livingstonia Mission, delayed joining the CCAP. Pauw says that one main reason was “fear that modernistic teaching would be brought into the CCAP by certain missionaries from Scotland.”⁸⁰³ However, it should not be forgotten that the DRCM’s original plan was to form an indigenous church with other DRC missions and not the CCAP, regardless of the persistent persuasion from Laws that the DRCM should join the CCAP. This was largely influenced by the South African political landscape and relations between the DRC Afrikaners and English population. In 1923 when Laws persuaded the DRCM to join the CCAP, the DRC Mission Council, composed of whites alone, responded,

The Mission Council learns with great interest of the approaching founding of the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa by the Blantyre and Livingstonia Missions. We accept the ideal of a Native Church of Central Africa. After a mature discussion of the desirability of sharing in the founding and becoming part of such a church, we realise that we are not immediately ready to take such a step.⁸⁰⁴

Although reasons were not stated in this response, the letter of A.C. Murray, then (A 238) Secretary of Mission Board in South Africa, to Laws, provides a clue what these reasons could be.

⁸⁰² B. Stanley, “The Church of the Three Selves,” 438.

⁸⁰³ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 273.

⁸⁰⁴ Quoted in M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 154.

He wrote, “In regard to the London Missionary Society joining the Central African Church, if that will imply any sacrifice of Presbyterian principles, there may be difficulty with our Synod.”⁸⁰⁵ But, it is interesting that when the Blantyre and Livingstonia Presbyteries agreed to maintain the Presbyterian principles to exclude the non-Presbyterian churches from the union, including the LMS, the DRCM representatives were in attendance as observers. Then one wonders why the NGK considered the inclusion of the LMS in the CCAP union as problematic.

However, Pauw says, “The DRC was very concerned about the preservation of the principles of the Presbyterian Church order and the effect of such a union on the doctrinal position of the CCAP.”⁸⁰⁶ However, A.C. Murray, in his letter to Laws mentioned above, did not link the LMS to modernist teachings. Rather he raised the question of modernist teachings as a separate issue that also required some consideration before the DRCM could join the CCAP. The whole question of modernist teachings related to issues pertaining to the Christain doctrines of inspiration, the Virgin Birth and the resurrection.⁸⁰⁷ Nevertheless, among Scottish missionaries in Malawi, no one tolerated such teachings.⁸⁰⁸ Jacobus Arnoldus Retief, a NGK missionary in Malawi during this period, categorically refuted the allegation of modernist teachings in the CCAP. He went on to [say \(A 239\)](#), “There is little or no difference between our church and the Scottish Presbyterian Church either as regard our confessions, our preaching and practices in general.”⁸⁰⁹ What is interesting in this allegation is that it was the NGK, in the 1860s, which protested against the Cape colonial administration for charging that its three church ministers were theological liberals.⁸¹⁰ One wonders whether the NGK and its missionaries were really concerned with the preservation of the Presbyterian principles and the need to guard against liberalism. In fact, as Hermann Gilomee has demonstrated, liberalism was present in the DRC in the Cape among its young ministers.⁸¹¹ If they were interested in preserving Presbyterian principles, why then did they prioritise Dutch identity over Presbyterian identity when they were asked to join the CCAP before 1926? Possibly Pauw’s second reason provides a better explanation. He says,

Moreover, the unhappy history of the relationship between the Dutch Colonists and certain missionaries of the LMS which started more than a century before with actions and attitudes of men

⁸⁰⁵ A.C. Murray to Laws dated 12th January, MNA, 1924, 47/LIM/1/1/46.

⁸⁰⁶ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 342.

⁸⁰⁷ A.C. Murray to Laws dated 12th January, 1924, MNA 47/LIM/1/1/46.

⁸⁰⁸ A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission*, 170.

⁸⁰⁹ R. Muller “War and ‘racial feeling’ in the Writing of an Afrikaner missionary,” 81, 78.

⁸¹⁰ J. de Gruchy, *Church Struggle in South Africa*, 21.

⁸¹¹ H. Gilomee, “The Beginning of Afrikaner Ethnic Consciousness, 1850-1915,” 27-28.

like James Read, Dr J.T. van der Kemp and particularly Dr John Philip had led a general atmosphere of suspicion between Afrikaners and the LMS in South Africa.⁸¹² [\(A240\)](#)

Hence, it can be argued that the theological reason was just a pretext. The real reasons were political and economic. It should be noted that the hostility that emerged between Philip and the white settlers, mostly Afrikaners, including the NGK was more political rather than doctrinal.⁸¹³ Philip politically disagreed with the white settlers and the NGK on the question of racial discrimination. Indeed, Philip was a Scot and not a member of the Church of Scotland.⁸¹⁴ The Afrikaners and the NGK hated Philip because they believed he was the one who championed the legislation popularly known as “Ordinance 50”, which granted equal rights to all people, including African indigenes, which in the DRC social teaching was anathema.⁸¹⁵ Donaldson says, “In the eyes of the Dutch settlers of the frontier districts Ordinance 50 symbolised British concern to protect the blacks at the expense of the Whites.”⁸¹⁶ Hence, the theological argument put forth as a reason restraining the DRC Nkhoma from joining the CCAP could be described as a lame excuse. The real reason was political differences between the English and the Afrikaners following the British colonisation of the Cape Colony in 1815, and the devastating effects of the Second Anglo-Boer War on the Afrikaner population. [\(C 7\)](#)

It should be noted that the DRC’s reluctance to join the CCAP was largely influenced by the South African political landscape.⁸¹⁷ De Gruchy notes, “The years after 1910 were years of intense struggle for the Afrikaner people, a struggle for identity in a land which they had lost through war but which they regarded as their own, [and] a land dominated by a foreign government, economy, and culture.”⁸¹⁸ This explains why in 1910 the DRCM failed to join the [anticipated united church \(A 241\)](#).

In 1914, the National Party, which was a nationalist party for the Afrikaners, agreed that it had to regain its lost glory by establishing a separate *nation*⁸¹⁹ within the Union, putting emphasis on “its own distinct language, traditions, religion, and institutions.”⁸²⁰ It was the same period that the

⁸¹² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 342.

⁸¹³ H. Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers, 2003, 152.

⁸¹⁴ M. Donaldson, “Christianity in the period of English Colonisation,” 54.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid*, 56; J. de Gruchy, *Church Struggle in South Africa*, 18-19.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid*, 57.

⁸¹⁷ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 197; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 271.

⁸¹⁸ J. de Gruchy, *Church Struggle in South Africa*, 28.

⁸¹⁹ The word nation as used here does not refer to a political entity with diverse ethnic groups but in exclusive way, referring to Afrikaner ethnic group. When it is italicized, it will carry the same meaning.

⁸²⁰ J. de Gruchy, *Church Struggle in South Africa*, 28-29.

DRCM wanted to form an indigenous church comprising missions with Dutch identity. Secondly, in 1926 when the DRC Nkhoma was joining the CCAP, the NGK stressed recognition of the right of indigenous languages in [the \(A 242\)](#) terms of union. Ironically, this was intended to discourage the English influence. This is the reason why the DRCM continued recording minutes in Afrikaans and Chinyanja, and employed Chinyanja to take the space that Afrikaans occupied in South Africa, as opposed to [the](#) English language [\(A 243\)](#).

After the DRCM joined the CCAP, the political differences became more divisive in the Church. Even Laws, who was more sympathetic to the DRC, had this to say,

Both of these churches approached the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian with a view to further union. The former made certain stipulations with regard to training their own native ministers and teachers: these were agreed to. The latter, however, raised points which, if conceded, would have given them the right to dictate the policy of the Mission of our Scottish Churches.⁸²¹

Laws' description evokes what, in [the \(A 244\)](#) United States, they call a *melting-pot*. The term *melting-pot* implies a certain loss of identity into the whole. The Americans of the British descent wanted to impose their Anglo-Saxon culture on other ethnic groups in order to assimilate them into their culture. The Anglo-Conformity's guiding principle was cultural integration or unison.⁸²² Although the position taken by the DRC did not intend to execute the principle of *melting-pot* per se, it was geared to impose the DRC hegemony on the CCAP, as the Anglo-Americans wanted to impose their Britishness on other ethnic groups in [the](#) United States. Kallen, arguing against the English hegemony in United States in his Cultural Pluralism Theory, contends, "The general notion, 'Americanization,' appears to denote the adoption of English speech ... It connotes the fusion of various bloods ... into beings similar in background, tradition, outlook, and spirit to the descendants of the British colonists, the Anglo-Saxon stock."⁸²³ Kallen was not against a *melting-pot* as popularised in America but against British dominance. Similarly, it can be argued that the CCAP's resistance to some DRC suggestions was not with the intention of retaining Scottish hegemony, but rather, to create an environment suitable for the indigenous church, as [an \(A 245\)](#) all-inclusive church. For example, Laws was against importing European creeds, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith or the Heidelberg Confession or the Canon of Dort for the indigenous church.⁸²⁴ That is why he opted for universal creeds such as the Apostles' Creed, and

⁸²¹ R. Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, 144.

⁸²² J.F. Healey, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class*, 44.

⁸²³ *Ibid*, 3.

⁸²⁴ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 274.

a simple Statement of Faith for the CCAP that captured most basic Christian teachings as contained in universal Christian creeds.

It should also be noted that the CCAP accepted the NGK suggestion that each mission should continue training its own ministers, because, in 1924, A.C. Murray had already indicated that training for indigenous clergy by each mission was a temporary measure in anticipation of [\(A 246\)](#) harmonisation. Murray wrote, “Our Mission committee will retain the right of the training and ordaining of native pastors, at any rate in the beginning.”⁸²⁵ It should be noted that jointly training indigenous clergy was not strange to the three Presbyterian missions. Before 1904, the DRCM indigenous teacher-evangelists were trained at Livingstonia by the Livingstonia staff. Then why this was assumed impossible after the amalgamation of the Presbyterian churches. The basic reason why the DRCM did not allow their indigenous Christians to be trained together with other missions’ students will be discussed in a later section examining the possibility of setting up a joint CCAP theological college as a symbol of the church unity.

After considerable discussion, the DRCM [agreed \(A 247\)](#) to joining the CCAP in 1926. What prompted the DRCM to join the CCAP? The simple answer to this question is that since it was the political atmosphere that made them to leave the Livingstonia Mission and become autonomous, it was the same political atmosphere that brought them back into the CCAP. Pauw says that “the termination of the work in Mozambique in 1922 and the negotiations which led to the handing over of the Kasungu Station to the DRCM in October 1925 were factors which swung the pendulum in favour of the Nkhoma section of the DRCM joining the CCAP.”⁸²⁶ Why does Pauw link the termination of the DRCM work in Mozambique to their joining the CCAP? Besides the Roman Catholic monopoly over Mozambique, the DRCM missionaries were ousted from the country on political grounds relating to occurrences between 1915 and 1922, which were also connected to the relationship between South Africa and Portugal. Pauw notes that “Portuguese suspicion and mistrust of South African politicians rubbed off on the DRC Mission.”⁸²⁷ Considering the growing mistrust and hostility between the colonial government and the DRCM Afrikaner missionaries in Malawi, and lessons they had from their expulsion from Mozambique, the DRCM missionaries had no other option than to join the CCAP, thereby going under the

⁸²⁵ A letter from A.C. Murray to Laws dated 12th January, 1924, MNA, 47/LIM/1/1/46.

⁸²⁶ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 271.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid*, 107.

umbrella of the CCAP with an English identity. This explains why hostility between the Nyasaland colonial administration and the DRCM lessened significantly after the latter joined the CCAP.

Prior to 1926, the DRCM made several excuses that made the Livingstonia and Blantyre Presbyteries proceed alone in forming a united indigenous church that would cover Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Kenya. Writing on the position of the DRCM to join the CCAP, James Reid of the Blantyre Mission wrote, “[The DRCM missionaries] move slowly in matters of Church Government, but, if they did, it would strengthen the Synod greatly, and with Tanganyika and later on our P.E.A. [Presbyterian Church in East Africa] place, the vision of a Central African Assembly.”⁸²⁸ The members of the two presbyteries wanted the DRCM to join the CCAP without considering socio-political and denominational differences. However, the politics of identities that emerged before and after the DRCM joined the CCAP eclipsed the whole vision of having an indigenous church that would cover the said countries, because of socio-political differences.

It should also be noted that the politics affecting the DRCM missionaries was not of their making; it was largely influenced by South African politics and the tensions between English and Afrikaans speaking population. Although A.C. Murray, W.H. Murray and J.A. Retief supported the union, the home political landscape forced them into a difficult situation whereby they found it hard to please both sides. In 1924, it was Retief who persuaded the General Mission Committee of the NGK to allow the DRCM to join the CCAP.⁸²⁹ M.W. Retief says that “the Synod’s consent was a matter of great joy in Nyasaland.”⁸³⁰ South Africa’s political terrain, divided along ethno-national lines, had a far-reaching impact on the CCAP.

However, joining the CCAP did not imply the end of antagonism between the English population and the Afrikaner missionaries in Malawi. At the time of union, several grey areas were left unattended. For example, Article nine, one of the terms of union added by the NGK, was problematic. It stated, “In the event of any changes made to these terms ‘the Presbytery of Nkhoma of the DR Church in Nyasaland reserves the right of withdrawing from the Synod.’” (A 249) Pauw wonders whether the CCAP was aware of this discrepancy set up by Article nine in which it was lobbied its power over its Presbyteries. (A 248) He goes on questioning why the CCAP failed to protest against Article nine that would make the NGK effect the withdrawal of its mission. Why

⁸²⁸ James Reid to Laws, dated 12th September, 1923, MNA, LIM/47/3/17.

⁸²⁹ M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 155, R. Muller, “War and ‘racial feeling’ in the Writing of an Afrikaner missionary,” 77.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid*, 155.

the CCAP failed to protest against the Article as it did when a similar proposal (A 250) was made by the DRC Synod of the Orange Free State? Furthermore, he observes that the NGK asked the Nkhoma Presbytery to withdraw from the CCAP in 1945 on the basis of the same Article.⁸³¹ While the observation is valid, it should be noted that the withdrawal was not prompted by the clause. It was effected as a result of the mistrust that the NGK had towards the English section of the CCAP. Further consideration of the Article will be discussed when examining the 1956 CCAP Constitution. However, it should be noted that the union of the CCAP and the DRC Nkhoma Presbytery was *matrimonium utilitate*. (A 251)

4.3. *Uncertainty of the CCAP Unity in the Formative Years (A 252)*

This section examines the uncertainty surrounding the CCAP unity in its formative years as a church. How did this process contribute to the ongoing border dispute along ethnic lines? Hence, this section re-examines issues that seem to be linked to the border dispute.

4.3.1 *Organic or federal church: The ambivalence of the CCAP unity*

One area that (A 253) requires consideration is whether the CCAP was an organic or federal church. Pauw and other historians seriously question (A 254) whether the CCAP could be described as an organic or a federal church.⁸³² Bolink says that “at times the history of the CCAP gave the impression that it was moving more in the direction of a federated Church than of a united one.” He cites Article three as a signpost that raises this question. It states: “each Presbytery shall retain its present constitution.” While he acknowledges that the Scottish and DRC Presbyteries had common understanding in areas of church governance and doctrine, he quickly points out that Article three suggests that the church was not organically united.⁸³³ However, it should be noted that the Article referred to was not problematic as reported, but Bolink’s wording is a problem because his wording is inconsistent with the wording of the Article in terms by which the CCAP union was established and revised, in 1913 and 1926 respectively. The original wording reads, “That each Presbytery shall meantime retain its present constitution.” This clause meant that each Presbytery should retain its constitution for the period of transition until the CCAP Constitution

⁸³¹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 278, 279.

⁸³² Ibid, 339; Also see A.C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission*, 194; T.J. Thompson in *Mainstream Christianity*, 122.

⁸³³ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 207.

would be written. The period referred to was between 1926 and 1958. During this period, the Church reviewed and amended the Constitution with a view of harmonizing the operation of the Church. The first Constitution was unanimously adopted in 1956, and later amended in 1958. To avert constitutional discrepancies among its presbyteries, paragraph 28 (f) of the CCAP 1956 Constitution as amended in 1958 was inserted and it states, “The Constitution, laws, regulations and provisions of each Synod shall be made in conformity with this constitution.”⁸³⁴ Hence, it can be argued that retention of individual constitutions did not mean [that \(A 255\)](#) the CCAP was a federal church.

Taking the same argument, Pauw has reasoned that following the union of 1926, the CCAP was made a consultative body because it did not have legislative powers. It must be stated that the Church, from its inception, was a *de facto* and *de jure* church, with basic legislative powers as stipulated in the Synod Standing Orders and adopted at the 1926 Synod meeting.⁸³⁵ It was not a consultative body as Pauw says. As argued above, retention of presbyteries’ constitutions and training indigenous ministers separately did not imply that the Church had no legislative power over its presbyteries. Two clauses were put in place as part of the transitional process. The Barrier Act as proposed in 1926 did not intend to unify the Church or make it a church as Pauw claims. It was meant to protect the Constitution from arbitrary amendments as it required a three-quarters majority to pass an Act into law for the Church.⁸³⁶ Hence, the Barrier Act should not be considered as part of the problem that the CCAP is undergoing. The root of the problem is ethnic differences within the structures of the Church.

As noted above, the terms of union were not a problem for the Church but the problem was structural. It was also noted that presbyteries were sometimes considered to be *de facto* regional churches, yet they are not. This was compounded by Church structure. It is important to begin by understanding the church structure as an institution. Those who considered the CCAP to be a federated union fail to distinguish a synod from the Church, in the first place. A ‘synod’ is not synonymous with the word ‘church’ because it is part of the Church structure. During fieldwork, the researcher observed that both the Church hierarchy and ordinary members considered the ‘church’ as synonymous with a ‘synod’. A synod is part of the CCAP structure, as an institution.

⁸³⁴ The 1956 CCAP Constitution as amended in 1958, SLA, Box 47.

⁸³⁵ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 278.

⁸³⁶ Min. 27 of 2nd CCAP Synod meeting held at Blantyre from 13 to 15 October, 1926, NGK Archive, box 94, St.

For example, the Blantyre or Livingstonia or Nkhoma Synod, although mistakenly considered as church, [are](#) either courts or geographical sections of the Church [\(A 257\)](#). Article one of the 1956 CCAP Constitution, as amended in 1958, clearly stipulated, “The name of the Church is ‘The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.’ (Hereinafter referred to as ‘The Church’). Wherever in this Constitution the term ‘Synods’ is used without the qualification ‘General’, it shall be taken to indicate the court(s) of the Church defined in paragraph 28 in the amended Constitution.”⁸³⁷ However, there have been attempts by individual synods to pose as if they were *de facto* churches because of structures, which comprised: kirk session and presbyteries, and synod, in that order. This could be [the](#) reason there [were](#) attempts to reduce the powers of the General Synod in 1956 [\(A 258\)](#), in order to become a coordinating body. This was as a result of structural politics, because other presbyteries were seeking autonomy. A later section dealing with [the](#) 1956 Constitution will demonstrate this. Hence, the CCAP problem was and is partly structural. [\(A 256\)](#)

4.3.2 *Divided loyalty: DRCM Nkhoma and the CCAP union (1936-1945)*

By 1945, another problem emerged within the CCAP when other non-Presbyterian churches wanted to join the CCAP. The sub-section examines why DRCM Nkhoma wanted to withdraw from CCAP in 1945.

The Livingstonia Presbytery had some congregations in Zambia. In August 1945, because of distance, it was agreed that the three congregations, Mwenzo, Chitambo and Lubwa, would form their own presbytery.⁸³⁸ Between 1928 and 1931, the DRC Orange Free State Mission was also working in Zambia. After the Nkhoma Presbytery joined the CCAP, the DRC in Zambia also decided to join the CCAP.⁸³⁹ During this period, there were a series of events. At the 1932 CCAP Synod meeting, the Synod listed the names of churches with whom to relate. These churches were: the UMCA, the Church of England in South and Central Africa, the Baptist, Wesleyan [and](#) Congregational Churches of South Africa and Rhodesia, the French and Swiss Protestant churches, the Berlin Mission, the Moravian Mission, the Lutheran and Plymouth Brethren, but the LMS was missing on the list.⁸⁴⁰ In 1936, the Zambian LMS through Rev. R. Moore asked the CCAP whether it could join the CCAP union. In response, the CCAP said “that the doors are open, and that the

⁸³⁷ Article 28 of the 1956 CCAP Constitution, SLA, Box 59.

⁸³⁸ Min. 28 of the 5th CCAP Synod meeting held at Nkhoma from 22 to 26 August, 1945, NGK Archive, box 94, St.

⁸³⁹ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 202.

⁸⁴⁰ Min. 29 of the CCAP 3rd Synod Meeting held at Nkhoma from 3rd to 7th August, 1932, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

Synod would cordially welcome any proposal in terms of the letter, and give it full and sympathetic consideration at next Synod.”⁸⁴¹ At the next Synod meeting, the issue of admitting the LMS⁸⁴² into the CCAP was tabled and was supported by the North-Eastern CCAP Zambian Presbytery, because of the cooperation that various missions, including the LMS, had in the Copperbelt Province where they formed one church to serve the population that had migrated to urban centres, not only from Zambia but also Malawi. However, Rev. J.J.D. Stegmann, the leader of the DRC Nkhoma, informed [the \(A 259\)](#) plenary of the CCAP Synod meeting that their Mission was not ready to accept the LMS. No reason was recorded for the refusal in the minutes. However, Weller and Linden said that the DRC Nkhoma Presbytery refused because they “were very doubtful of the orthodoxy of the LMS.”⁸⁴³ As already argued, the doctrinal issue was just a pretext, because the reasons were beyond doctrinal difference.

Commenting on this development, Pauw says, “All along the contention of the DRC and the Nkhoma missionaries had been that organic union was not advisable. For geographical, ethnological ...theological reasons, a form of federal union was regarded as more suitable.”⁸⁴⁴ Referring to Pauw’s work, it is interesting to note the group refusing the LMS. Pauw states that it was the NGK and its missionaries who argued in favour of a federal rather than an organic union, although in the Synod’s minutes it was Synod that suggested a federal union after the DRC Nkhoma refused to allow the LMS to join the CCAP.⁸⁴⁵ No indigenous leaders were involved because the DRCM missionaries had no trust in indigenous leadership. The DRCM missionaries’ attitude toward indigenous leadership is expressed in a response Rev. J.J. Ferreira of the DRCM gave to the Commissioners of inquiry after the Chilembwe uprising of 1915. The Commissioner asked Ferreira, “What is the object of ordaining a native minister, is it not to make them quite independent?” He replied, “Oh no, it is only to get assistance, that is all. To tell you the honest truth, it is very doubtful we will ordain a native here. We are South Africans and we are dead against natives.”⁸⁴⁶ [\(A 257\)](#) This reveals the extent of the white missionaries’ paternalistic and

⁸⁴¹ Min. 30 of the 4th Synod meeting held at Blantyre from 20th to 22nd Oct. 1936, NGK Archive Box 94, St.

⁸⁴² Min. 9 (a) of the FMC of the Church of Scotland, 17th February, 1948, SLA, Box 26; J. Weller and J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 147-8.

⁸⁴³ J. Weller and J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 148.

⁸⁴⁴ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 354.

⁸⁴⁵ Min. 12 and 36 of 6th CCAP Synod meeting held at Livingstonia from 7 to 11 October, 1948, NGK Archive, box 94, St.

⁸⁴⁶ K.N. Mafuka, *Missions and Politics in Malawi*, Kingston, Ontario: Limestone, 1977, 199; [K.R. Ross, *Malawi and Scotland*, 82.](#)

patrimonial attitudes that the Church had suffered from. This mind-set made Lamba, a DRC Nkhoma graduate, to lament over how the DRC viewed indigenous leadership development. He says,

But nor can it be denied that besides introducing most Malawians to semi-literacy under thousands of semi-qualified teachers, the system contributed to underdevelopment, not many Africans who passed the DRCM system later distinguished themselves in any notable way as sufficiently literate public figures, probably until the 1950s ... unlike the situation in Livingstonia and Blantyre, Malawians trained in Dutch schools led a politically docile life.

The question is why the NGK considered the church union to be only their concern, without seeking the views of the indigenous leadership. If the indigenous Christian leadership was consulted properly, it is unlikely that they could have held the same position as the NGK and its missionaries. For example, Patrick R. Mwamlima, a Malawian Livingstonia indigenous minister and a missionary for the DRCM Nkhoma Presbytery in Zimbabwe, said that it would more desirable if the Synod had “a corporate union embracing all Central Africa”.⁸⁴⁷ Mwamlima’s view was generally upheld by all indigenous delegates from the three CCAP presbyteries, including those of the Zambian DRC.⁸⁴⁸

Secondly, how do the reasons Pauw cited explain the DRCM Nkhoma’s presence in Zimbabwe? The DRCM Nkhoma, whose headquarters were in Malawi, had three congregations in Zimbabwe. Considering the distance, it can hardly be argued that Zambia congregations were too far, especially when compared to the distance to Zimbabwe’s congregations.

Thirdly, if the DRCM Nkhoma was part of the 1936 CCAP Synod meeting that agreed to enter into negotiations with the LMS, why did it change its mind at this time? Although Pauw does not respond to this question, his view sheds light on why DRCM Nkhoma refused. He says,

Although there is nothing in the minutes of this Synod to show that Nkhoma Presbytery made any objection to the resolution to start church union negotiations with the LMS Churches, there can be little doubt that the DRC missionaries realized that with the discord about CCAP already existing in some quarters of the DRC it was hardly likely that it would respond favourably to such a move. The DRC was very concerned about the preservation of the principles of the Presbyterian Church order and the effect of such a union on the doctrinal position of the CCAP.⁸⁴⁹

As argued above, the DRC Nkhoma’s position on the LMS joining the CCAP had nothing to do with preserving the Presbyterian principles. Why then did it accept to relate with other non-Presbyterian churches in 1932 when W.H. Murray was the Moderator of the CCAP? Interestingly,

⁸⁴⁷ Min. 35 of the 5th Synod meeting held at Nkhoma from 22nd to 26th Aug., 1945. NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

⁸⁴⁸ Appendix A of GAC minutes of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia held from 23rd to 27th August, 1979, Synod office, J. Weller and J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 148.

⁸⁴⁹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 342.

during the Synod meeting at which the DRC Nkhoma opposed the admission of the LMS, the minute 37 reads, “A letter was received from the representatives of the Zambezi Mission, the Nyasa Mission and South Africa General Mission, placing on record their thanks for the work of Nkhoma Presbytery and Rev. J. Jackson in shepherding their members and adherents in Southern Rhodesia.”⁸⁵⁰ Again during the First World War, it was the DRCM that accepted to temporarily take over the Berlin and Moravian Missions in Tanzania.⁸⁵¹ If it had worked with non-Presbyterian churches, why did it insist on Presbyterian identity as an exclusionary basis for not accepting the LMS? A better explanation remains political difference along ethnic lines that the DRC had in relation to the LMS.

During the 1930s and 1940s union negotiations, another issue that emerged was the label the DRC attached to CCAP, as English church. This assertion was championed by Prof. C.F. Keis and Rev. Johannes Gerhardus Strydom of the DRC. In 1933, during his inaugural speech, Keis attacked the CCAP union, saying that it has “countless characteristics and qualities of the Scottish Church”. He argued that there was nothing in it that reflected the qualities of the DRC. He cited English as an example because it was “the official language of the Church and that the hymn book was entirely of foreign origin.”⁸⁵² Strydom took a similar view. Bolink describes Strydom as “a staunch Afrikaner nationalist who sometimes found relations with the British difficult.” One of his objections to the CCAP was that English would dominate everything in the Synod. Then Bolink argues that it was the theological issue which turned the scale.⁸⁵³ Although Bolink says that they were influenced by doctrinal difference, there is no doubt that the positions taken by Keis and Strydom were based on nationalistic attitudes; this shaped their *ways of seeing* and their *structures of action*. As already argued, the theological differences were used as an excuse.

This could be why Pauw does not hesitate to lay blame on Strydom as a source of the problem. He says, “This was largely due to the machinations of Rev. J.G. Strydom, the Orange Free State Mission Secretary, who saw no good in a union with this foreign Church”⁸⁵⁴ But it was not Strydom alone who objected to the LMS’s admission into the CCAP. Again, Strydom’s position was not very strange for the NGK. [Pauw continues to say that “no secret was made of the fact that](#)

⁸⁵⁰ Min. 37 of the 5th Synod meeting held at Nkhoma from 22nd to 26th Aug. 1945, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

⁸⁵¹ FMC of the UFCS report of 1923 by Rev. F. Ashcroft, Deputy Secretary, Liv. Papers, NLS.

⁸⁵² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 341.

⁸⁵³ *Ibid*, 342-3; P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 203.

⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 340.

[there was great resentment towards the Cape which had allowed its Mission Council to join. The OFS views found support amongst certain ministers in the Cape Synod as well.” \(C 9\)](#)⁸⁵⁵ Then Pauw states that Murray and Retief protested against Keis’ insinuation that the CCAP was predominantly English.⁸⁵⁶ Yes, it is possible that the two protested but it can hardly be denied that Strydom and Keis represented the general position of most DRC members, [as said above \(A 258\)](#). The year that Keis attacked the CCAP union was the same year the Livingstonia opposed Chinyanja becoming a *lingua franca* for the country.⁸⁵⁷ Keis’ emphasis was not on theological differences, but socio-political and ethno-national differences. This raises the larger question as to whether the DRCM missionaries in Malawi held a different view from Keis and Strydom. For example, Retief, whom Pauw says protested against Keis’ remarks, is quoted to have said, “The English were never defeated nor humiliated, nor did they ever lose their independence as we did. They never endured such suffering.”⁸⁵⁸ Is it true that he did not share Keis and Strydom’s nationalistic views against what was English? It can hardly be disputed that Keis and Strydom’s view represented the general view held by most Afrikaner missionaries in Malawi and Zambia towards what was English after the Second Anglo-Boer War. It was ethno-national politics that dominated the whole discourse in Malawi rather than theological differences.

When the debate reached its zenith, the NGK asked the DRCM and DRC Nkhoma Presbytery to pull out the CCAP.⁸⁵⁹ This was partly induced by the decision of the CCAP Zambia Presbytery, in October 1945, to enter into union with the other missions in Zambia in the interest of Zambia’s indigenous people. However, the Livingstonia and Blantyre Presbyteries, which were at this time dominated by indigenous leadership,⁸⁶⁰ asked the DRC Nkhoma not to withdraw from the CCAP. Of course, some DRCM missionaries did not agree with the idea of withdrawing against the decision taken by the NGK. Pauw reports, “There was no doubt in the mind of the Nkhoma people that the situation in the DRC was such that, unless a solution could be found, their future as part of the CCAP was at stake.”⁸⁶¹ To avert the situation, the [other \(A 259\)](#) two presbyteries decided

⁸⁵⁵ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 340 – 1.

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 341.

⁸⁵⁷ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 341; Vail and White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi”, 164.

⁸⁵⁸ R. Muller, “War and ‘racial feeling’ in the Writing of an Afrikaner missionary”, 81.

⁸⁵⁹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 340.

⁸⁶⁰ Livingstonia had 4 White clergy, 8 indigenous clergy, and 11 elders; Blantyre had 1 White clergy, 17 indigenous clergy, 17 elders and DRC Nkhoma had 7 White clergy, 8 indigenous clergy and 17 elders attending the 1945 Synod meeting.

⁸⁶¹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 346.

to take bold steps to ensure that the Nkhoma Presbytery remained in the CCAP. The first was to separate the CCAP from the Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia (CCAR). The only option the Livingstonia Mission was left with was to detach its Zambia Presbytery so that it could continue negotiations with other Zambian churches for the union.

The step to be taken by [\(A 260\)](#) Livingstonia was largely influenced by debates surrounding Article 15, which was highly contested by the Nkhoma Presbytery. Both Livingstonia and Blantyre Presbyteries, in consultation with the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) of the Church of Scotland, painfully resolved to detach the CCAP Zambia Presbytery from the CCAP. The CCAP Synod Min. 9 (a) (ii) reads, “That the Synod recognises with regret that this decision involves the withdrawal of the presbytery from the Synod but acknowledges that the union in Rhodesia [Zambia] is for the best interests of the kingdom of God in that territory.”⁸⁶² This meant that the CCAP was only composed of the CCAP Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma Presbyteries. In another related development, the Nkhoma Presbytery also asked the Zambia DRC to establish its own church.⁸⁶³ This meant that Malawi CCAP, with congregations in Zimbabwe and eastern Zambia, continued as a united Church.

4.3.3 *Uncertainty as to the 1956 CCAP Constitution as a unifying tool* [\(B 14\)](#)

[Many](#) historians and the CCAP hierarchy [see \(A 261\)](#) the 1956 CCAP Constitution as the root cause of the CCAP wrangle.⁸⁶⁴ At the 2000 CCAP General Assembly, the same observation was made in the Senior Clerk report. It says:

The 1956 constitution which was adopted at the establishment of CCAP General Synod and which is still in use to date is discovered to be one of the sources of the problems CCAP General Assembly is facing... The 1956 constitution made individual Synods very powerful each with veto powers over resolutions of the General Synods. Thus the General Synod has not implemented most of its decisions as the implementation depend[s] solely on the goodwill of the Synods themselves. This state of affairs explains why we have failed to solve disputes between Synods such as the unpopular Dwangwa issue.⁸⁶⁵

The researcher has a different view on this question. The 1956 CCAP Constitution *per se* was not the source of the problem but the politics behind the formation of the three CCAP Synods,

⁸⁶² FMC of the Church of Scotland held on 17th February, 1948 Appendix II, SLA, Box 26.

⁸⁶³ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 344-5.

⁸⁶⁴ V. Chilenje, “The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia,” 38; W.L. Brown, “The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church During the First Years of Autonomy,” 258; K.R. Ross, “After Freedom: Christ’s Kingdom and Malawi’s Second Republic,” in *Here Comes Your King*, edited by K.R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998, 175.

⁸⁶⁵ CCAP, General Synod Minutes of 19th General Synod Assembly, held at Blantyre, 1st -5th Nov., 2000, 40-41.

which also reduced the powers of the CCAP General Assembly at the 1956 Synod meeting. To have a better understanding of this, we shall begin by examining Article 15 that discussed the question of integration of the mission and the church. As already stated in Chapter One, the CCAP had a two-fold structure. By the 1940s, there was a proposal to integrate the mission and the church in order to have one administrative body to run the Church rather than having two parallel structures. This was inconsistent with the hierarchical Presbyterian structure: the [Kirk session \(A 262\)](#) – Presbytery – Synod - General Assembly, in that order. The mission council was alien to this structural organisation.

To begin with, the genesis of the problem was the attempt, between 1945 and 1956, to harmonise the CCAP presbyteries' constitutions and formulate a single constitution of the Church. In 1945, the Synodical Standing Committee was asked to continue drafting the Constitution of the CCAP with the purpose of harmonising its structure and operations.⁸⁶⁶ After drafting the constitution, copies were sent to foreign mission committees of the Church of Scotland and the NGK for further input and scrutiny.⁸⁶⁷ At the 1948 Synod meeting changes, suggestions and amendments were received, discussed and sent to presbyteries for further consideration.⁸⁶⁸ This included Article 15, which was drafted by the Livingstonia Presbytery in September 1948. Part of it reads,

To secure effective cooperation, all such missionaries who have been ordained as ministers of the Church of Scotland or of the Dutch Reformed Church, provided that they have promised before the Presbytery of which they are to be members to maintain the Constitution and laws of the Church, shall have seats in the Synod and in the Presbytery within whose bounds they are stationed, in the capacity as assessors with full voting powers. Their membership of Kirk Sessions shall be determined by the Presbyteries of which they are members. Such missionaries shall be eligible to hold office in any Court of the Church in which they have a seat under this rule. Any complaints regarding their faith or conduct shall be made by the Synod or the Mission Councils.⁸⁶⁹

At the May 1951 Synodical meeting, Article 15 did not take prominence because missionaries were to play an advisory role. However, the Blantyre Presbytery, possibly influenced by Dr Scott's view on the indigenous church, deleted the word "assessors". Deleting the word "assessors" meant that white missionaries, if they made the Article into a law, would be full members of the indigenous Church and subject to its authority and disciplinary code. That is why in the 1952

⁸⁶⁶ Min. 13 of the 1945 CCAP Synod Meeting, NGK Archives, Box 94, St.

⁸⁶⁷ Min. 22 of 6th CCAP Synod meeting held from 7th to 11th October, 1948, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.; Min. 9469 of Foreign Mission Committee minutes of 20 April, 1948, SLA, Box 26.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁹ Quoted in C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 352.

Synod meeting, when the final draft constitution was presented for further discussion and approval, Article 15 became a contested issue. After discussion it was amended and then read,

The Church welcomes as full partners in its work all missionaries duly appointed by the Church of Scotland and by the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa to work within its bounds. Ordained missionaries shall undertake before the Presbytery of the Church, and missionary elders before the Kirk Session of the Church, to maintain and uphold the Constitution and laws of the Church, and shall have seats as assessors in the Synod, the Presbytery and the Kirk Session within the bounds they are stationed. They shall have full voting powers and shall be eligible to hold office in any Court of the Church. With regard to faith and conduct they shall stand under the disciplinary jurisdiction of the Church of Scotland or the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa of which they are members.⁸⁷⁰

What is interesting with the amendment was the outcome of the vote. Although missionaries were answerable to their home churches on disciplinary issues, they were still under the oversight of the indigenous Church. This made the DRCM missionaries oppose the amendment because they wanted to maintain the status quo. Interestingly, when this Article was put to the vote, 72 delegates voted for the amendment while 43 were against. The review of the Constitution continued and nearly all amendments and changes were accepted with the exception of the controversial Article 15. When the whole draft Constitution was put to the vote, 72 delegates voted for while 35 voted against the approval, and the Constitution failed to pass. However, it should be noted that the second vote was largely influenced by the outcome of the first vote over the question of integration. It failed to pass because they failed to reach three-quarters majority as was required.⁸⁷¹ The review was postponed to the next Synod meeting.

Why did the DRCM missionaries oppose Article 15? In its first version of the Article, white missionaries were required to come under the oversight of the indigenous Church and be subject to its disciplinary code. Similarly, the second version retained the principle of integration, putting white and black members at par and under the oversight of the indigenous Church, though they were to come under their home churches' disciplinary code. Both versions sharply contradicted the Apartheid policy in South Africa. The DRCM missionaries opposed this Article because it propagated the integration of people of different races, and positioned them as equals. But this was what the indigenous Christians were looking for. It should be remembered that this happened at a time when Malawians were fighting against the imposition of white supremacy in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

⁸⁷⁰ Min. 14 of the 1952 CCAP Synod meeting held from 16th to 21st May, 1952, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

⁸⁷¹ Min. 43 of 7th CCAP Synod meeting held at Blantyre from 16 to 21 May, 1952, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

Reporting on the voting outcome, Pauw says, “Evidently some of the Nkhoma delegates either abstained or voted for the constitution since there were twenty-seven elders and twenty-seven ministers of whom twenty were white missionaries.”⁸⁷² The total number of delegates from the three CCAP Presbyteries was 130. The composition of delegates was as follows: the Nkhoma Presbytery were as stated above, but it had a total of 54 delegates; the Livingstonia had a total of 30 delegates with 15 elders and 15 ministers, of whom five were white missionaries, while the Blantyre had 46 delegates - 23 elders and 23 ministers of whom seven were white missionaries. The statistics provided show that (A 263) Nkhoma Presbytery had the most missionaries, more than the Blantyre and Livingstonia Presbyteries combined. At all costs, the Blantyre and Livingstonia Presbyteries were in favour of both the Article and the Constitution, as the number of delegates would show. Both presbyteries had a total of 76 delegates but two of their commissioners were not constitutionally entitled to vote because of the nature of the office they occupied at this meeting. This left a total of 74. Considering that it was only 72 who voted for, there is a possibility that the remaining two could have either abstained or something else stopped them from voting. But on the Nkhoma side, based on Pauw’s statement, 20 missionaries no doubt voted against, as did twenty-three Malawians, in sympathy with their missionaries.⁸⁷³ Eleven of the Nkhoma delegates did not participate. The question is why?

Pauw’s remarks are very interesting and helpful to the question above. He concludes, “In connection with ... membership and integration of missionaries, it will be remembered that the Malawian members of Nkhoma Presbytery unanimously supported the DRCM in their view and almost all voted against this matter at the CCAP Synod of 1952.”⁸⁷⁴ However, it is difficult to understand why Pauw claims that Malawians “unanimously supported the DRCM” yet eleven delegates, possibly elders, abstained from the vote. In fact, quoting Rev. Hugo, the NGK missionary in Malawi, Pauw says, “Malawians probably voted the way they did in 1952 partly out of respect for their missionaries.”⁸⁷⁵ This was echoed in a letter Watson of Livingstonia wrote Rev. Charles Watt of the Blantyre Presbytery. Watson wrote,

The Nkhoma approach is paternal and feudal...Their African members of the Standing Committee were very silent. In discussion outside the meetings, with Africans from Blantyre and Livingstonia, they encouraged our men to take the independent line they did, saying that they themselves dared not speak; that they had not been taught English so as to debate freely; that the unity in Christ much spoken of by

⁸⁷² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 356.

⁸⁷³ *Ibid*, 363.

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 362.

⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 363.

DRC missionaries might be inside the wall of a church but did not extend socially outside; that they saw the difference in relations between missionaries and Africans in the other Synods; but that they owed so much materially to the large DRC Mission organisation that there was no hope of a 'rebellion'.⁸⁷⁶

One of the Nkhoma indigenous delegates who could have informed the Livingstonia and Blantyre Malawian delegates might be none than Samuel Ntara, because he was a member of the CCAP Standing Committee, representing the Nkhoma Presbytery from 1952 to 1960, alongside J.W. Minnar. It is fascinating that Hugo made these remarks based on the conversation he had with Samuel Ntara. Possibly, Ntara was among those who abstained from voting as a protest against the position taken by the DRCM missionaries. It was Ntara and his group who formed the Nkhoma Teachers Association in 1960 as a pressure group to push for integration and Africanisation. They categorically stated that if the DRCM missionaries did not meet their demand for Africanisation, they would leave the Nkhoma Synod to join the Livingstonia Synod.⁸⁷⁷ Pauw says that the Africans resented the DRCM missionaries' paternalistic attitude.⁸⁷⁸ This explains why eleven Malawians did not vote in favour of the DRCM missionaries' position. Hence, it can be argued that Nkhoma Malawian leaders did not unanimously support the NGK position but they were forced to do what they did.

Furthermore, Pauw, concluding his discussion on Article 15, says that "it can rightly be said that it sought the highest of the Church in Malawi because it knew that an acceptance of the controversial Article 15 could have had disastrous results for the unity of the CCAP."⁸⁷⁹ Given the socio-political background behind the DRCM's argument over the said Article, one wonders how that could have been disastrous to the unity of the CCAP because it did not intend to promote the welfare of the indigenous church, but to protect white missionaries' interests. Hence, it is important to explore the impact of Article 15 on the unity of the Church.

Being dissatisfied with the voting outcome over Article 15, and suspecting that Nkhoma indigenous Christians were likely to join the Livingstonia and Blantyre Presbyteries in voting for the constitution, the DRCM missionaries devised a strategy which was to have serious consequences for the unity of the CCAP. Labuschagne, whom [\(A264\)](#) the study calls one of the chief architects of the CCAP disunity, executed his strategy by proposing the transformation of the CCAP presbyteries, to borrow Pauw's words, into "Synods with full legislative, judicial and

⁸⁷⁶ W.M. Watson to Charles Watt dated 1st July, 1957, SLA, Box 49.

⁸⁷⁷ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 390.

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 396.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 362.

administrative powers under one General Synod with limited powers delegated to it by respective Synods and laid in a general constitution.”⁸⁸⁰ To execute his strategy, he proposed to waive the Barrier Act⁸⁸¹ because a simple arithmetic calculation would have informed him that if 74 delegates of the two presbyteries plus 13 from Nkhoma join together, they would meet the three-quarters majority needed to adopt the Constitution. Secondly, he worded a clause that became Article 30 (1) of the 1956 Constitution as amended in 1958, which stipulates, “Decisions of the General Synod shall become acts governing the Church only after they have been agreed by all Synods.” Contrary to the three-quarters majority doctrine, which is democratic and universally practiced in many organisations and institutions, Article 30 (1) gave more powers to individual synods and reduced the powers of the General Assembly. When the Synod met in 1956, Article 15 was deleted. Labuschagne and his colleagues managed to convince the plenary to accept his proposal. Without understanding the politics behind his proposal, 130 delegates unanimously voted in favour of the Constitution without sensing the bomb inserted in it.⁸⁸² Given this background, it can be seen how the politics between the Afrikaner and English missionaries, which dominated the Church from 1926, left a divisive legacy on the CCAP. Instead of consolidating the unity of the Church, Labuschagne and his colleagues balkanised the CCAP, by giving powers to individual Synods. Since [the](#) Barrier Act was removed [from \(B 13\)](#) the CCAP Constitution has never been reincorporated in it. In 1977, the General Synod only proposed to include it in the CCAP Constitution, but it was not included.⁸⁸³ This contradicts the claim the Commission of Inquiry report made that the problem leading the General Synod not to have power over its synods was the Barrier Act.⁸⁸⁴ Therefore, the Barrier Act was not the problem, but it is the politics within the Church hierarchy.

The decision taken to reduce the powers of the General Assembly gave more powers to regional blocs under the identities of the evangelisers. The sphere of Nkhoma became Dutch while Blantyre and Livingstonia spheres of influence were identified as Scots. The root cause is embedded in the nationalistic attitude that emerged among Afrikaners after the Second Anglo-Boer War. Hence, it can be said that Labuschagne’s role in upgrading the CCAP presbyteries to Synods with an

⁸⁸⁰ *ibid*,358.

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid*, 360.

⁸⁸² Min. 33 of the CCAP 8th Synod held at Nkhoma from 25th to 29th April, 1956, SLA, Box 49.

⁸⁸³ Min. 21 of the CCAP General Synod meeting held at Chongoni from 16 to 17 August 1977, SLA, Box 49.

⁸⁸⁴ CCAP, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry,” 22.

intention of disempowering the General Assembly was not only divisive but his role was also obstructive to the aspirations of indigenous Christians. It betrayed the spirit of a united CCAP, which both Scott and Laws cherished, and was a betrayal of the sacrifices of A.C. Murray and his ecumenical ideas.

4.3 *Mission Education: A Divisive or Unifying Tool*

The previous chapter pointed out that the Second Anglo-Boer War influenced the DRCM to stop using English as medium of instruction and communication. This sub-section examines how the differences in educational policies between the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM contributed to ethnic consciousness and cleavages. Primary attention will be paid to language as a symbol of ethnicity and how it can be divisive or unifying.

As stated in Chapter Two, the Livingstonia Mission was the first Christian mission to offer formal education to Africans in 1876.⁸⁸⁵ When the NGK missionaries were part of the Livingstonia Mission, they used a school curriculum designed by the Livingstonia missionaries in which English, [alongside indigenous languages \(A 265\)](#), was both the medium of instruction and a subject.⁸⁸⁶ In 1903, the DRCM became independent and developed its own curriculum, with Chinyanja as a medium of instruction for its schools. [Adoption of Chinyanja, as medium of instruction in its schools, was not a problem but it is the discontinuation of English, as a medium of instruction in a British colony, that raises more questions \(A 266\)](#). As noted in Chapter Two, if Malawi was not a British Protectorate, the DRCM would have substituted Afrikaans for English. Instead, they employed Chinyanja as a substitute for Afrikaans, to obstruct English, which was the language for the imperialist.

4.4.1 *Livingstonia education policy*

Livingstonia's educational policy, like that of the Blantyre Mission, was not only to evangelise Africans but also to prepare them to be prospective leaders for their nation-states.⁸⁸⁷ McCracken notes, "For over forty years, Laws had succeeded in moulding the educational policies of Livingstonia to his belief that one of the prime duties of the mission was to educate Africans to a

⁸⁸⁵ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 69.

⁸⁸⁶ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 68-69, 152; Vail and White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi", 156.

⁸⁸⁷ R. Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, 96.

level where Christians would be able to take a major role in the administration of their own country.”⁸⁸⁸ To emphasize the significance of education, the Mission built the Overtoun Institute, a centre for excellence and progressive education, to serve Central and East African [\(A 267\)](#) countries.⁸⁸⁹ Laws emphasized that English taught at the Institute should be for both academic and social purposes. He held that a broader knowledge of English “was a necessary precondition of colonial stability.”⁸⁹⁰ While he emphasised English because of its neutrality, he also promoted the development of indigenous languages.

Because of this policy, Livingstonia produced graduates who became influential figures in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, Clements Kadalie, a Livingstonia graduate, spearheaded the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union in South Africa in 1919.⁸⁹¹ Among the influential graduates were the father to Kenneth Kaunda, the first Zambian president, and Malawi’s first president, Banda. However, Banda did not complete his education after being suspended on suspicion of cheating during his examinations.⁸⁹² Nonetheless, his interest in education was inspired by Kadalie’s achievement. As a youth, he had longed to be like Kadalie after getting the education offered at Overtoun Institute.⁸⁹³ But he got higher academic qualification than he would have obtained from the institute. Banda, like his contemporaries, was motivated by the education offered by the Livingstonia Mission through the English language, as both a medium of instruction and as a subject.⁸⁹⁴ It was held that the English language was a key to the world of opportunities. This made the education offered by the Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions so attractive.

Contrasting the DRCM education system with that of the Livingstonia, Lamba, who went through the DRCM educational system, says, “Unlike Livingstonia, the DRCM educational policy excluded the teaching of English in village schools, a factor resented by many Africans who saw English as the gateway to social and economic success.”⁸⁹⁵ Because of this difference, the educated indigenes from the DRCM sphere of influence threatened to pull out of their mission to

⁸⁸⁸ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 277.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid, 279; R. Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, 90.

⁸⁹⁰ J. McCracken, “Church and State in Malawi: The Role of the Scottish Presbyterian Missions 1875-165,” 181.

⁸⁹¹ J. de Gruchy, *Christianity and Modernisation of South Africa*, 126-7; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 190.

⁸⁹² P. Short, *Banda*, 12.

⁸⁹³ G. Shepperson, *Myth and Reality in Malawi*, Evanston: North-western University Press, 1966, 5

⁸⁹⁴ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 312.

⁸⁹⁵ I.C. Lamba, “The Cape Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi: A Preliminary Historical Examination of its Educational Philosophy and Application, 1889-1931,” in *History of Education Quarterly*, 24:3, 1984, 378.

join Livingstonia Mission where English was taught.⁸⁹⁶ They argued that the DRCM education did not grant them opportunities to compete meaningfully in the labour market as was the case with other missions' graduates.⁸⁹⁷ For example, in 1940 when the first secondary school was opened in Malawi, it was students from Livingstonia's sphere of influence who disproportionately filled most places. Similarly, when the University of Malawi was opened in 1965, two-thirds of the students came from the same area.⁸⁹⁸ Students from the Livingstonia were advantaged because the type of education offered was academically oriented and the English language was offered, beginning at the lower-level classes. As a result, the majority of the Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions' graduates were marketable not only in Malawi but also in other countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and they secured white-collar jobs. However, their fellow countrymen from the DRCM's sphere who could [have \(A 268\)](#) had the same opportunity were denied to have it, because of the type of education they obtained from DRCM schools.

Another area for consideration is literacy development. As observed in Chapter Two, Christian missionaries in Africa were proponents of literacy. The development of literacy was intended to inculcate the cultural values and practices of the evangeliser. Missionaries standardised indigenous languages not only for Bible reading but also for schooling. Of course, as Gray observes, most Protestant Christian missionaries "insisted that the acquisition of literacy was a prerequisite for baptism."⁸⁹⁹ But some missionaries' policy transcended Bible reading, it also stressed [\(A 269\)](#) academic excellence, and encouraged the indigenous graduates to write their ethnic histories, over and against colonial hegemony.

It was the writing of ethnic histories that led to the birth of ethnic and political consciousness among the African indigenes. [For instance, Saulos Nyirenda, considered as father of Tumbuka history, published the history of Tumbuka history in 1909, two years after the reinstating of Chilongozi as Chikulamayembe IX, after the M'mbelwa Ngoni desposed his predecessor. According to Vail and White, the writing of Tumbuka history was intended "to glorify the history of the Chikulamayembe chieftainship and denigrate the Ngoni for having 'spoiled our](#)

⁸⁹⁶ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 375.

⁸⁹⁷ I.C. Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-War Education Policy Formulation and Application in Colonial Malawi 1945-1961*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2010, 18; L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 166.

⁸⁹⁸ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 288.

⁸⁹⁹ R. Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, 95.

country’.”⁹⁰⁰ This history was not only directed at the Ngoni but it also provoked the wrath of other ethnic groups. Reacting to the same history that was produced by Nyirenda, the Ngonde, in their Memorandum, argued that the history written by Nyirenda intended “to glorify and exalt Nkhamanga⁹⁰¹ at the expense of Ngonde, in using Mlowoka, a mere trader attached to Nkhamanga by the report of herds of elephants there, who admittedly died without the honour of [being] a chief.”⁹⁰² (A 270) However, Vail has noted that these histories were the result of the elite’s self-consciousness from a particular ethnic group through which the indigenes retained, redefined and recaptured cultural or ethnic identity.⁹⁰³ Kalinga has further pointed out that most of these ethnic histories were written for self-glory by elites and royal families.⁹⁰⁴ Hence, we need to read these ethnic histories with cautious in order to understand the motives of the writers.

Phipps, commenting on role of mission education in Africa, states, “Vernacular publications accelerated the pace of African nationalism even as they had influenced the rise of nationalism in Renaissance Europe.”⁹⁰⁵ This development not only brought a spirit of ethnic consciousness and nationalism, but it made ethnicity a terrain for the politics of inclusion and exclusion (A 271). For example, the Livingstonia missionaries, especially Thomas Cullen Young, encouraged indigenous graduates of the Mission, such as Saulos Nyirenda and Edward Manda, to write their ethnic histories. Kalinga and Vail and White have attributed Tumbuka ethnic consciousness to Livingstonia educational work and Tumbuka elites’ willingness to strengthen chiefly authority. Individuals formerly identified as Ngoni began to affirm their old identities as Tumbuka or Senga. The Tumbuka consciousness was to challenge the M’mbelwa Ngoni and the Ngonde hegemonies, as explained in Chapter Three.⁹⁰⁶ However, this ethnic consciousness did not culminate in ethnic tension because the majority of indigenous Tumbuka were already integrated into the Ngoni and have continued to live side by side harmoniously. However, it developed salient ethnic identity. Of course, the media and political circles wrongly ascribe to the people from the Northern Region as Tumbuka, yet not everyone is ethnically a Tumbuka. The region, as already stated, is ethnically

⁹⁰⁰ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi,” 155

⁹⁰¹ The word Nkhamanga refers to the Tumbuka of Chikulamayembe in the present district of Rumphi.

⁹⁰² The Ngonde Memorandum submitted by Amon Mwakasungula (who became paramount Kyungu), Mark Mwakawanga and Rev. Patrick Mwamlima as quoted in T. Cullen Young, *Notes on the History of the Tumbuka-Kamanga People*, London: The Religious Tract Society, 1932, 75.

⁹⁰³ L. Vail ed., *Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, London: James Currey, 1989, X.

⁹⁰⁴ O.J.M. Kalinga, “Colonial Rule, Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District (1891-1938),” 61, 62.

⁹⁰⁵ W.E. Phipps, “Christian and Nationalism in Tropical Africa,” 94.

⁹⁰⁶ O.J.M. Kalinga, “Colonial Rule, Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District (1891-1938),” 62; L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 156.

and linguistically heterogeneous. The identity “Tumbuka” as portrayed in media and [political circles \(A 272\)](#), refers, to use Benedict Anderson’s term, to an “imagined community”. It is either an imposed or self-assertive ascription by few elites for the purpose of political mobilisation against the other. Yet not everyone in northern Malawi accepts [\(A 273\)](#) to be Tumbuka as everyone is comfortable to be identified with his ancestors’ ethnic identity.

4.4.2 The DRCM’s educational policies

Having discussed the Livingstonia educational policy, it is imperative to compare it with the DRCM educational policy so that we can understand how educational discrepancies contributed to ethnic cleavages between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia spheres of influence. To have a better understanding of these discrepancies, it is important to begin by examining the DRCM educational policy.

A summary of the DRCM educational policy is made by Pretorius, a former Educational Secretary for the DRCM, who says,

While it is correct to say, as the Phelps-Stokes Commission said in 1924, that the main object of the DRCM schools was ‘to instil a thorough knowledge of the Word of God into minds of the scholars...and to raise a Bible reading people’, it should also be added that the DRCM regarded the Christian family as the only true basis for a truly indigenous church ... in the years 1900 to 1914 (and after).⁹⁰⁷ [\(A 274\)](#)

If the policy’s primary goal was to inculcate religious knowledge and raise a Christian family, there is no way the education offered could have been academically oriented. Furthermore, it was offered through Chinyanja as medium of instruction, as English was not allowed in its schools.⁹⁰⁸

This policy was influenced by three main factors: first, the segregation policy in South Africa based on racial supremacy did not allow African indigenes to get the same education as white South Africans so that Africans should remain at the service of the whites.⁹⁰⁹ According to Pauw, the DRCM did not offer English because there “was the fear that if English was introduced sooner than necessary the Mission would lose too many of their trainees to higher paid Government jobs, as was happening to Livingstonia Mission.”⁹¹⁰ Secondly, from a DRCM perspective, English was considered as the language of the imperialist and the enemy. Mgawi, the first Malawian General Secretary of the Nkhoma Synod, says,

There were several reasons why white South Africans did not teach English. The first was the war between the British and Afrikaners. That time Nyasaland was a British Protectorate and because of this,

⁹⁰⁷ J.L. Pretorius, “Introduction to the History of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi”, 372.

⁹⁰⁸ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 157.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 341.

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 157.

the Afrikaners could not teach the language of their enemies. To the Afrikaners, anyone speaking English, the language of their enemies, was a traitor and someone they considered boastful.⁹¹¹

The third reason was lack of knowledge of the English language among the DRCM Afrikaner missionaries sent to Malawi in 1900. Most Afrikaner missionaries sent to Malawi were prisoners of war; they were mostly farmers without a formal education grounded in the English language.⁹¹² Even when the colonial government forced the DRCM to teach English, there were enormous challenges. Lamba states, “English was taught only at the central and station schools by Europeans, although some of these, especially the Afrikaans-speaking DRC missionaries from South Africa proved poor teachers.”⁹¹³ While some Afrikaner missionaries had university education, they were few compared to the need. Lamba’s lament represents the common view of most Malawians from the DRCM sphere of influence.

The policy, compounded by other socio-political factors, meant that children from the DRCM sphere did not get the quality of education offered by other missions, especially the two Scottish-oriented missions. Vail and White, commenting on education in Central Malawi, said,

Many Chewa desired Western education, but they had a well-founded fear that mission teachers would assail Chewa culture in the classroom and consequently hesitated to send the children to mission schools. All education...was controlled by...Afrikaans-speaking members of South Africa’s Dutch Reformed Church, both committed to policies that de-emphasized the use of English because they feared that its use would encourage labour [migration].⁹¹⁴

While Chewa culture played a role, it was the educational policies adopted by the missionaries that mostly contributed to educational disparities between Nkhoma’s sphere and that of other missions.⁹¹⁵ Because of the DRCM educational policy, people in their sphere were left with two options: to leave the Mission in search of good quality education where English was offered or have no quality education at all.⁹¹⁶ In relation to the job market, this policy disadvantaged Malawians who were under the DRCM’s sphere of influence.⁹¹⁷ In the British colonies, the English language and quality education were critical for entry into the job market, as well as the opportunity to occupy a good and well-paid job.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹¹ K.J. Mgawi, *Tracing the Footsteps of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda*, Blantyre: Dzuka Publishing Company, 2005, 16.

⁹¹² Ibid, 16; Vail and White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 160, 174.

⁹¹³ I.C. Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-War Education Policy*, 18.

⁹¹⁴ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in Political History of Malawi,” 174.

⁹¹⁵ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 343; Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 400.

⁹¹⁶ I.C. Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-War Education Policy*, 20.

⁹¹⁷ Ibid, 18.

⁹¹⁸ McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 344.

In Chapter Three, it was noted that Kasungu Christians resented the handover of the station to the DRCM because the DRCM were not teaching English. Dr Banda interpreted the handover as a deliberate ploy to deny his fellow Chewa access to quality education. Commenting on the handover, Thompson remarks,

The impression left by the transfer was so deep, that fifty years later, as Life President of Malawi, he was still referring to the event in some of his public speeches. In one of these he described his opposition to the transfer as being 'because [the DRCM missionaries] did not teach English, and they despised Africans even more than the British missionaries [would do].'⁹¹⁹

Banda's reaction was based on what he was told about the impact of the transfer by his kinsmen while he was in diaspora. Most Chewa considered the education offered by the DRCM to be one of the factors that caused them to lag behind socioeconomically and politically, and the transfer of the Kasungu Station worsened the situation. Lamba also says, "When the Livingstonia handed the Kasungu Station over to the DRCM, the Dutch stopped the teaching of English: this was a factor in Dr H. Kamuzu Banda's sponsorship of Hanock Msokera Phiri's A.M.E.C independent schools in Kasungu and elsewhere, which would teach English."⁹²⁰ Richard Chidzanja, a Member of Parliament from the Central Region, as quoted in Vail and White, bluntly expressed a similar view but now he shifted the blame to northerners and southerners, declaring that they despised the Chewa from the Central Region.⁹²¹ The blame directed toward southerners and northerners came because employers, inside and outside Malawi, were looking for persons with better academic qualification and high level of oral proficiency in English. And most of the academically qualified people came from the Scottish missions' graduates, the majority being hired from southern and northern Malawi where English [\(A 275\)](#) was offered alongside vernacular languages.

However, it must also be noted that, in 1946, the Chewa Improvement Association (CIA) was formed by Kamangeni in Johannesburg as a response to the educational disparity created by the DRCM. Its primary goal was to secure the same opportunities as those enjoyed by the people who underwent the Scottish education. Kamangeni visited Chief Mwase and requested him to ask Dr Banda in London to secure bursaries for deserving Chewa youths to pursue education elsewhere in order that they might compete with others on the job market.⁹²² A similar grouping was also

⁹¹⁹ T.J. Thompson, *Christianity in northern Malawi*, 210.

⁹²⁰ I.C. Lamba, "The Cape Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi", 378.

⁹²¹ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in Political History of Malawi," 176.

⁹²² J. McCracken, "The Ambiguities of Nationalism: Flax Musopole and the Northern Factor in Malawian Politics," in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28:1, 2002, 71.

formed in Zomba, the capital city of colonial Malawi in 1952. It was named Achewa Welfare Association (AWA). Its primary task was “trying to discover the causes of the backwardness of the Chewa people and how to get rid of such causes.”⁹²³ The objectives of CIA and AWA reveal the degree of frustration the Chewa had concerning the impact of the DRCM educational policy. When Banda arrived in Malawi, this was one of the priorities of his political career.

Lamba reports, “Contending against Margaret Wrong’s assertion in praise of the village school, Dr Banda spoke against the retrogressive system of education in Malawi which under-emphasized English, but tenaciously maintaining the undesirable Vernacular Teacher’s Certificate whose abolition Congress ferociously called for.”⁹²⁴ When Banda became the state president, he purposely discriminated against Malawians from the Southern and Northern regions. Banda’s policies were prompted by modernisation gaps. Neuberger points out,

Modernization brought about increased ethnic tensions because it created ‘modernization gaps’ between ethnic groups. Competition broke out between groups for the scarce goods of modernization... Where there were large modernization gaps between the ethnic groups, the competition was ‘subjective’ in the sense that the less modernized groups felt that they could not compete because they were discriminated and unfairly treated by the more modernized.⁹²⁵

The educational discrepancies created by the DRCM triggered ethnic cleavages. Considerable discussion on Banda’s discriminatory policies will be held in Chapter Six on how they fostered ethnic cleavages.

4.4.3 Church official language: Mission by ethnic identity

The English (A 276) has been cited previously as a site for politics of ethnicity. This subsection continues with the same topic, examining how English was contested as an official language of the Church.

In Chapter Two, it was said that the Blantyre and Livingstonia Missions chose English as their official language alongside indigenous languages, while in the DRCM it was Chinyanja. When Nkhoma Presbytery was admitted to the CCAP in 1926, one of the conditions which it wanted the CCAP to recognise Chinyanja. Article seven of the Terms of Union states, “As far as possible the rights of the Native language shall be maintained in the Church Courts.” It was not stated as an imperative but as a desired practice. Article seven needs to be read within the context of South

⁹²³ J. McCracken, “The Ambiguities of Nationalism: Flax Musopole and the Northern Factor in Malawian Politics,” , 71.

⁹²⁴ I.C. Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-War Education Policy*, 22.

⁹²⁵ B. Neuberger, “Ethnic Groups and the State in Africa,” 297.

African politics before and after the Second Anglo-Boer War. Language policy became a contested terrain between English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. Afrikaans speakers sought for and supported the recognition of their language in the public spaces against the English language's hegemony.⁹²⁶ The discourse and tensions around language predated the Second Anglo-Boer War but this was aggravated by the war.⁹²⁷ It must be noted that English language was not allowed in the public spaces in the Afrikaner republics before the war. Kruger's policy was utterly against the use of the English language in the public space.⁹²⁸ Although Afrikaans, alongside English, was recognised as one of the official languages in South Africa in 1910, it was not a language of public use until 1925.⁹²⁹ It was only recognised after pressure was exerted from the Afrikaner nationalists, who considered it as a symbol of the Afrikaner ethno-national aspirations and identity.⁹³⁰

As part of the political struggle for recognition, the Afrikaner nationalists refused to use English as medium of instruction in public schools. They argued that English was employed in schools as a strategy for British imperialists to incite South Africans to remain loyal to British imperial authorities.⁹³¹ As a result, English language was regarded as opposed to Afrikaans.⁹³² Since Afrikaner nationalism had roots in the Church, the DRC did not accept the English language in public worship, as indicated in Chapter Two. Safran observes that "the Afrikaner identity that began in South Africa at the end of the seventeenth century was associated with a variant of the Dutch language, as well as the Dutch Reformed Church."⁹³³ The DRC played a significant role in resisting English hegemony both in church and the public spaces, especially as a medium of instruction and communication.⁹³⁴ For example, between 1902 and 1910 when Lord Milner, the Governor of the Cape, attempted to suppress Afrikaans through schooling, Afrikaners reacted by establishing their own schools, in which Afrikaans was offered as a subject and the medium of

⁹²⁶ H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 356.

⁹²⁷ J. de Gruchy, *Church Struggle in South Africa*, 55, 63.

⁹²⁸ L.S. Amery, *The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1900*, London: Sampson Low, Moeston and Company, 1900, 18, 150.

⁹²⁹ N. Alexander, *Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa*, 14.

⁹³⁰ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 157.

⁹³¹ N. Alexander, *Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa*, 13; J. de Gruchy, *Christianity and Modernisation of South Africa*, 120.

⁹³² R.K. Herbert, "Language in a Divided Society," in *Language and Society in Africa* edited by Robert K. Herbert, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1992, 14.

⁹³³ W. Safran, "Language, Ethnicity and Religion: A Complex and Persistent Linkage in *Nations and Nationalism*, 14:1, 2008, 176.

⁹³⁴ J. de Gruchy, *Church Struggle in South Africa*, 61.

instruction.⁹³⁵ The DRC's intimacy with Afrikaner nationalists in 1918 influenced the policy of Christian National Education with support from the Broederbond, a strong arm of Afrikaner nationalism, to "ensure that Afrikaner children were educated in their mother tongue according to the religious convictions and cultural traditions of the [people]".⁹³⁶

Given this political context, one could easily trace the *ways of seeing* and the *structures of action* of the DRCM missionaries, regarding language policy. At the second CCAP Synod meeting, it was resolved that the official language for the Church would be English.⁹³⁷ But during the same meeting, W.H. Murray proposed, "There shall be a Translation Committee for the translation of the Synodical Minutes and Resolutions into the different languages in different Presbyteries, each Presbytery so desiring appointing two members to this Committee for each language concerned."⁹³⁸ He was seconded by Rev. C.J.H. Van Wyk of the DRCM. The idea behind this proposal was to enable African indigenous delegates from the DRC Presbytery to follow the deliberations, because they did not understand English. But it was also to counterattack the English influence. As a response, Patrick Mwamlima, the Livingstonia indigenous minister, made an amendment to Murray's proposal, which reads, "It should be left to each Presbytery, as it may desire, to make a translation or translations of Synodical Minutes and Resolutions into the languages of congregations under its jurisdiction." He was seconded by Rev. Stephen Kundecha, a Blantyre indigenous minister. When it was put to the vote, 28 of the 38 delegates voted in favour Mwamlima's amendment [\(A 278\)](#).⁹³⁹ Because the voting met the two-thirds majority, English was retained as the official language in which [Synod \(A 279\)](#) minutes were recorded. However, the DRC Nkhoma Presbytery continued to record its minutes in Chinyanja while the DRCM continued to record its Mission Council minutes in Afrikaans.

During the 1952 CCAP Synod meeting, the DRCM sent a proposal through Rev. Amon Ndiwo, an Nkhoma indigenous minister, to consider Chinyanja as an official language for the Church, in contrast to English. The proposal was put to the vote and was rejected by the Synod.⁹⁴⁰ Since then

⁹³⁵ D. Brown, "Language and Social History in South Africa: A Task Still to be Undertaken," in *Language and Society in Africa*, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1992, 74.

⁹³⁶ J. de Gruchy, *Christianity and Modernisation in South Africa*, 124.

⁹³⁷ Min. 25 (12) of the Second CCAP Synod Meeting held at Blantyre from 13th to 15th October, 1926, Box 94, NGK Archive, St.

⁹³⁸ Min. 26 of the CCAP Synod Meeting held at Blantyre, 13th -15th Oct. 1926, Box 94, NGK Archive St.

⁹³⁹ Min. 26 of the CCAP Synod Meeting held at Blantyre, 13th -15th Oct. 1926, Box 94, NGK Archive St.

⁹⁴⁰ Min. 33 of the CCAP General Synod held at Blantyre 16th to 21st May, 1952. The DRCM missionaries now used Rev Ndiwo as if the idea came from the indigenous Christians yet it was their idea.

English has been the official language for deliberation and minute recording in the CCAP General Assembly and other CCAP Synods, with the exception of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, which still records its minute not now in Chinyanja, but in Chichewa.

Laws chose English as the language of instruction and communication in the CCAP along with vernacular languages for reasons of both unity and academic opportunity. But considering his reasons and the politics that emerged over languages, we can conclude that language can be both unifying and divisive, not only in secular politics but also in the church. Hence, policy about language for public use should always choose a language that does not have political undertones rooted in a history of hostility, but one that is neutral in terms of ethnic politics.

4.4 A Joint Theological College or a Contested Site for Ethnic Politics?

Earlier, it was stated that the 1926 decision for each presbytery to continue training indigenous clergy was a temporary measure for a transitional period. The original plan of the Livingstonia and Blantyre presbyteries was to train indigenous ministers at one place, in order to foster the unity of the Church. Considering how ethno-national cleavages were developed between the English and Afrikaner missionaries, [it was the view of Blantyre and Livingstonia](#) presbyteries that a united theological college could [help to unify the church \(A 280\)](#). However, the proposal of a joint theological college further exposed how language and perceived theological differences remained divisive to the unity of the Church.

4.4.1 A joint theological college as a symbol of church unity

In line with the process of harmonisation for the CCAP operations, in 1956 the Blantyre and Livingstonia Presbyteries proposed to the Synod that they have a joint theological college and suggested Nkhoma or a nearby site as an appropriate place.⁹⁴¹ The Synod accepted the idea and referred it to a Synodical Joint Theological College Committee (JTCC) for further discussion. In 1957, the report for the Joint Theological College Committee reads, “The Synod of Livingstonia would reiterate the desirability of a single Theological College for the CCAP. It would be a symbol of the unity of the Church, and a sign of the independence, enterprise and responsibility of the CCAP.”⁹⁴² It was noted that the divisions the Church was experiencing were a result of

⁹⁴¹ Min. 36 CCAP Synod meeting held from 25th to 29th April, 1956, SLA, Box 49.

⁹⁴² Joint Theological College Committee of January, 1957.

missionaries' perceived differences. Hence, they wanted the college to be independent from foreign influence and to be managed by Malawians themselves with missionaries' support as partners.⁹⁴³ However, the challenge was that, at Nkhoma, the buildings where a theological college could be housed were still in the hands of the DRCM. The DRCM, on behalf the CCAP, asked the NGK to authorise the use of its mission infrastructures. In response, the NGK approved the request and accepted the responsibility for the accommodation and administration of the school.⁹⁴⁴

However, the acceptance came with three recommendations that became a contested site for ethnic politics and theological views. The recommendations were as follows:

- (i) "that the Articles declaratory of the fundamental principles (of the section II of the Constitution of the General Synod of the CCAP) be strictly maintained;
- (ii) that the school remain under the auspices of the DRC until such time as the CCAP can assume full responsibility; and
- (iii) that all tutors conform to the existing practices of the local congregation and community."

When the Nkhoma Synodical Committee received a response, it also added one recommendation based on an old problem. It proposed "that the language medium will be mainly Chinyanja."⁹⁴⁵ The first and third recommendations were based on the mistrust the NGK and DRC missionaries had towards that which was English. In a conversation he had with Watson of the Livingstonia Mission, Labuschagne admitted that the DRCM did not trust [\(A 281\)](#) English missionaries. He said that they did not trust the "Blantyre because of loose discipline" and the "Livingstonia because of theology and pro-Africanism."⁹⁴⁶ If fact, the mistrust for the Livingstonia missionaries was that they taught their students to be independent thinkers in order that they might challenge colonial white supremacy, as observed by Lamba.⁹⁴⁷ The theological mistrust did not dominate the debates in the CCAP, but it was one of the divisive legacies the NGK missionaries exported. When a joint theological college was opened at Zomba in 1977, the Nkhoma Synod also sent its students for training with other Synods. However, in 1993 the CCAP Nkhoma Synod resolved that after completing a three-year programme at Zomba Theological College, its students

⁹⁴³ Letter of W.M. Watson to Willy Petty of 18 August, 1957, SLA, Box 49.

⁹⁴⁴ Joint Theological College Committee of 17 May 1957, SLA, Box 49.

⁹⁴⁵ Synodical Committee on Joint Theological College, 17th May, 1957.

⁹⁴⁶ W. M. Watson to Charles Watt dated 1st July, 1957

⁹⁴⁷ I.C. Lamba, "The Cape Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi", 379

are asked to undergo a one-year programme at Nkhoma headquarters to perfect their education and ensure that they conform to NGK tradition.⁹⁴⁸ This decision was based on perceived mistrust among the Synods.

4.4.1 Contesting the theological college's site along ethnic lines

Because of mistrust, both Livingstonia and Blantyre Synods sensed that building or starting a school would make the DRCM impose their *ways of seeing* and their *structures of action* on students of other Synods, as inferred in points (ii) and (iii), as well as resuscitate old language conflicts. This prompted the two presbyteries to opt for Lilongwe Township despite the fact that it still was within the DRC Nkhoma spheres of influence. It was a growing urban [settlement \(A 282\)](#) with a population drawn from all parts of the country. The idea was to establish the college on neutral ground, which was away from the DRCM missionaries' sphere of dominance and influence.⁹⁴⁹

However, the Nkhoma Synod maintained that the college should be at the Nkhoma Synod's headquarters. Both Blantyre and Livingstonia Synods argued that it was suitable "to build a new theological college at or near Lilongwe. It [was] a big and growing township, with easy communication."⁹⁵⁰ To justify their argument, Minute eight of the JTCC reads, "Chitumbuka is spoken quite a bit in Lilongwe, which is useful in training students from the North".⁹⁵¹ This proposal was against the acceptance of the site suggested by the DRC, because the Nkhoma headquarters was allocated in the rural area where the dominant language spoken was Chichewa. What aggravated the debate was that missionaries from both sides failed to understand that language is acquired. Any person has the potential to learn a new language. [From the discussion above](#), the researcher argues that missionaries from both sides of the dispute exploited the language difference, maintaining this issue as a site where they would continue politicking based on socio-political differences. It is missionaries who crafted the Chewa-Tumbuka dichotomy based on their home socio-political differences, by preying on ethno-linguistic differences [\(A 283\)](#).⁹⁵² However,

⁹⁴⁸ W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod," 120

⁹⁴⁹ Min. 1 (F) of the Joint Theological College Committee of 1956, SLA, Box 49

⁹⁵⁰ Min. 3, 4, 8 of the Synodical Committee for Joint Theological College, 1957, SLA, Box 49.

⁹⁵¹ Min. 3, 4, 8 of the Synodical Committee for Joint Theological College, 1957, SLA, Box 49.

⁹⁵² [The ongoing debate over the appropriate language for medium of instruction was central to whether a joint theological college should be established or not. This comes mostly from white missionaries, as indicated in the discussion above.](#)

the discussion over the site for the theological college continued until the church leadership was fully handed over to the African leadership in all CCAP synods, and also became a terrain for ethno-politics, as Chapter Six will show.

4.4.2 *English or Chinyanja: The old divisive discourse*

While the site for the Joint Theological College was highly debated, the most contested terrain was the medium of instruction. To the DRCM missionaries, the possibility of having a theological school at their headquarters presented an opportunity to accomplish the long-awaited goal of introducing Chinyanja to all students in the country, as indicated in Chapter Three. As already stated, the primary goal of making of Chinyanja a medium of instruction was to deter the English influence and to inform their adherents that Chinyanja was equally important as English.

At a meeting on 17th May 1957, the JTCC resolved that “English would be the medium of instruction, supplemented by explanations and discussions in the vernacular of the students. If there were a two-level course, the balance of English and vernacular would vary. Practical training would be largely in the vernacular of the students.”⁹⁵³ Why did they make this ambiguous resolution? If English was chosen for its neutrality and intelligibility, as argued by some missionaries, why did they bring in vernacular languages as part of the school curriculum? Which vernacular language was to be used since students were drawn from various parts of the country? Does this not contradict the suggestion of using English as the medium of instruction? Does this not reflect the language politics that dominated the period from 1919 to 1947?

According to missionaries’ correspondence after this meeting, the DRCM missionaries did not agree with the proposal of making English the medium of instruction. Watson, writing to Willy Petty of Blantyre Synod, said, “As I said to Charles Watt, if the DRC have really been daft enough to lay it down as something to be formally accepted in writing that we sign on to all the implications of apartheid, then the only possible thing to do is tell them to go alone.”⁹⁵⁴ Then he proposed that the Blantyre and Livingstonia Synods should open their own theological college, either in Blantyre’s sphere or Livingstonia’s. It appears that he was against the exclusive approach taken by their colleagues at Nkhoma. He went on to say that “one would love to see a genuine Church

⁹⁵³ Min. 3. Joint Theological College Committee of 17th May, 1957, SLA, Box 49.

⁹⁵⁴ W.H. Watson to Willy Petty dated 18th August, 1957, SLA, Box 49.

of Central Africa, which includes all three countries, all races and all Protestant denominations.”⁹⁵⁵ Reading Watson’s views, one is tempted to say that the decision not to allow other English denominations to join the CCAP was still haunting some Scottish missionaries. In October 1957, there were indications that the two would start their own theological college in early 1958 at Livingstonia.⁹⁵⁶ But the decision to have a separate theological college for the two also defeated the spirit of unity that they were advocating. The Joint Theological College was not realised because of ethno-national politics of the missionaries.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter has demonstrated that although CCAP was a Scottish initiative, it was intended to be an indigenous church based on the [Three Selves Theory](#) - self-governing, self-supporting [and](#) self-propagating. However, the [Three \(C 8\) Selves Theory](#) was appropriated by white missionaries’ paternalistic and patrimonial tendencies in which English and Afrikaner ethnic cleavages became a dominant factor shaping the nature of the Church. Although founding missionaries such as Scott, Fraser and Laws, did not bring European historical confessional divisions into the Church, denominational differences based on European confessions shaped the *ways of seeing* and the *structures of action* in the CCAP. The DRCM employed the Presbyterian identity to prevent the other churches from joining the CCAP, not primarily because of theological differences but because of socio-political differences. It was ethno-national differences that determined the politics of inclusion and exclusion between the English and Afrikaner missionaries. These in turn dominated the politics of the CCAP from its inception – all resulting from the Second Anglo-Boer War [\(A 283\)](#).

The original idea of establishing a united indigenous church was appropriated by missionaries’ [in a effort to](#) retain their hegemony. Instead of establishing an indigenous church, they mobilised themselves to exclude the other churches because of socio-political differences. This was compounded by the 1956 decision that reduced the powers of the General Assembly over its synods. It was championed by the NGK and DRCM missionaries, in which CCAP Synods were turned into regional blocs and *de facto* churches under the identity of the mission that evangelised that area. This decision balkanised the CCAP and the whole country along ethnic lines inherited

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁶ W.H. Watson to Charles Watt dated 3rd October, 1957, SLA, Box 46.

from ecclesiastical structures. This contrasts the 1924 decision that gave the General Assembly the ultimate authority in all matters concerning the governance of the CCAP and to act as a unifying force not only for the Church but also the whole nation ([A 285](#)).

This chapter has shown that Afrikaner missionaries introduced apartheid-based church concepts in Malawi. It was these concepts which contributed to divisions that the CCAP was undergoing by creating educational discrepancies. It was Protestant missionaries, more especially apartheid-minded Afrikaner missionaries, who exported their home socio-political differences to mission fields, although the indigenous Christians wanted a church that was free from denominational and ethnic differences ([A 286](#)). It is, then, argued that the Chewa-Tumbuka ethnic dichotomy was a missionaries' crafted ideological creation. It left a divisive legacy. It crafted ethnic identities that created "imagined communities", designed for the purposes of political mobilisation against the other out-groups.

While most studies indicate that religion and ethnicity are used as resources for political mobilisation, this chapter presents a different perspective. It is religion that employs politics and ethnicity as resource for in-group mobilisation and evangelisation, as Chapters Six and Seven will also illustrate.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEBATES ABOUT ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND ECCLESIASTICAL DIVISIONS IN THE MALAWIAN DIASPORA (1912 and 2010)

5.0 Introduction

Before we pursue further the border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods, along ethnic and ecclesiastical lines, we need to turn to the ethnic and ecclesiastical debates in the urban centres of Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa where the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) also established congregations to serve the Malawian migrant labourers. In Chapter Four, it was stated that the Chewa migrant labourers working in South Africa and Malawi urban centres were networking with their kinsmen in their homeland of emigration on how they could end their backwardness. It is the purpose of this chapter to interrogate how diaspora ethnic and ecclesiastical debates impacted on, and correlated to the CCAP border dispute between the two aforementioned synods in Malawi.

5.1 Away from Home: Defining the Identity(ies) of the Malawian Diaspora

Most Malawians migrating to South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia came from the Livingstonia Mission, Blantyre Mission and Dutch Reformed Church Mission's (DRCM) spheres of influence. We should also bear in mind that it was the same three missions, through their respective presbyteries, that jointly formed the CCAP as an autonomous indigenous church, as explained in Chapter Four. Since the establishment of the CCAP, its members acquired a single religious identity [\(A 287\)](#). It is this religious identity that brought the Malawian migrant Christians to worship together in the host countries, regardless of their social origins. Adogame and his co-author have noted that "religious identity is not only a vital resource for cultural identification, building and reconstruction of communities; it is also a source of discrimination and distinction in

the host context”.⁹⁵⁷ This aspect makes religion, as explained in previous chapters, to be functional and/or dysfunctional depending (A 280) the role played by its members in any society. It is against this background that the chapter intends to explore the extent to which diasporic debates about ethnic and ecclesiastical identities among Malawian migrant labours in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa could correlate to Malawi ethnic debates in respect to the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the CCAP. For the sake of clarity and consistency, Malawian migrant labourers in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa who belonged to the Board of the Federated Missions⁹⁵⁸ (and later the CCAP) shall be referred to as Malawian migrant Christians in the discussion.

There is a proliferation of literature that discusses the Malawian Diaspora contribution to cultural, social, political and economic life in the hosting countries.⁹⁵⁹ However, the existing literature rarely shows how religious and ethnic identities interface. For example, Zoë Groves has given a detailed account of urban migration and the religious network of Malawians residing in Zimbabwe, but throughout her article she did not refer to the ethnic debates in the Malawian diaspora.⁹⁶⁰ Similarly, Kudakwashe Manganga, in his doctoral thesis, provides a well-detailed account of industrial ethnicity which characterised the Malawian migrant labourers, but he again does not refer to the role played by religion in ethnic identity construction, consolidation and other related debates.⁹⁶¹ This does not imply that there is no literature discussing on the role that Malawian migrant labourers played in the spread of Christianity in the hosting countries. It is only that the available literature focuses on ecclesiastical debates in regard to church union and related ecclesiastical debates without interrogating the interplay between religion and ethnicity in the light of the ongoing debates on the border dispute between the CCAP Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods in Malawi.

⁹⁵⁷ A. Adogame and C. Weissköppel, “Locating Religion in the Context of African Migration,” in *Religion in the Context of African Migration*, Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies Series, No. 75, 2005, 12.

⁹⁵⁸ The Consultative Board of Federated Missions was established by some protestant missions working in a country now known as Malawi and parts of Zambia. There were the Livingstonia Mission, the Blantyre Mission, the Dutch Reformed Church Mission, Nyasa Industrial Mission, Zambezi Industrial Mission and the General Mission in South Africa.

⁹⁵⁹ T. Yoshikuni, “Linking Urban history with precolonial and rural history: From the Zimbabwean Experience,” in *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 36-37:1, 2001, 156-167.

⁹⁶⁰ Z. Groves, “Urban Migrants and Religious Networks: Malawians in Colonial Salisbury, 1920 to 1970,” 156.

⁹⁶¹ K. Manganga, “A Historical Study of Industrial Ethnicity in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe and its Contemporary Transitions”.

The existing literature on the Malawian diaspora shows how the ecclesiastical debates that occurred in Zimbabwe had a link to ecclesiastical divisions at home.⁹⁶² For instance, when the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) entrusted the Malawian migrant Christians to the DRC of the Orange Free State in Zimbabwe as a way of solving their dispute, the Malawian migrant Christians opposed joining the latter on the grounds that it was the same church (the DRC of the Orange Free State) that had rejected entering into union with the CCAP.⁹⁶³ Nevertheless, these ecclesiastical differences had no link to the later ethnic cleavages that happened in the CCAP Harare Synod between the Chewa and non-Chewa Malawian Christians, because it was the Malawian migrant Christians who refused to be handed over to the DRC of the Orange Free State.⁹⁶⁴ Therefore, it is important to investigate whether the diaspora debates had an impact on the home border dispute or vice versa.

On the other hand, some historians have claimed that the Malawian diaspora were not known by their specific ethnic characteristics but rather by their single territorial or national identity as Nyasas (Malawians). It is said that the Nyasa identity was considered as a single ethnic identity for people from Nyasaland (Malawi).⁹⁶⁵ This has led some historians to argue that the salience of ethnic identities and ethnic polarisation were products of the post-independence discourses. Ross is one of those historians who take this view. He says,

Banda's absence from the country from 1915 until 1958 meant that he had not been part of the community of people who experienced the growing sense of Nyasa identity. He was not one of the ten thousand who came to feel that they were Nyasa rather than Chewa or Tumbuka, Nyanja, Ngoni or Yao. Kamuzu never escaped a deep sense of being Chewa.⁹⁶⁶

While Banda's attitude towards Chewa-ness cannot be disputed, this chapter questions whether the salience of ethnic identities and ethnic polarisation does not predate Banda's era, especially through missionaries' activities among Malawian migrant labourers. It interrogates the extent to which diaspora Malawians showed loyalty to particular home missions, and to their ethnic identities in defining their *ways of seeing* and their *structures of action*.

In the previous chapters, it was indicated that the missionaries perceived members of their churches as exclusively belonging to their mission even though they were living outside their

⁹⁶² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 112; J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 111.

⁹⁶³ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 114; J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 111.

⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 114.

⁹⁶⁵ Z. Groves, "Urban Migrants and Religious Networks: Malawians in Colonial Salisbury, 1920 to 1970," 498; J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 373.

⁹⁶⁶ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 48.

spheres of influence. It appears that this propensity continued in Zimbabwe. It was largely influenced by language manipulations. Hence, it is imperative to explore how language manipulation could have contributed to diaspora ethnic and ecclesiastical discourses, and how they impact on home debates through social networking. It cannot be disputed that social networking between migrant labourers and their home kinsmen had a bearing on home politics and religious movements both in hosting and sending countries.⁹⁶⁷ But there is a scarcity of literature exposing how these social networks contributed to ethnic debates among the CCAP members in the diaspora. It is the purpose of this chapter to interrogate how ethnic debates were imported or exported from/to home and hosting countries, and how they impact on the ongoing Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute.

It should be noted that ethnic identities are not only critical to how individuals ponder over the question of belonging, but also to how they show preference to certain identities, rather than other identities, in defining their *ways of seeing* and their *structures of action*. Ascertaining how individuals define and navigate their identities helps in determining how they understand and contest their *ways of seeing* and their *structures of action* as an in-group against others. This will provide a better explanation and understanding on why individuals mobilise themselves against the other groups. Hence, it is important to explore the extent to which the politics of inclusion and exclusion among Malawian migrant Christians impacted on the border dispute in Malawi. In return, the chapter shall explore how home ethnic and ecclesiastical debates shape diaspora discourse through social network.

5.2 Labour Migration in the Light of Ethnic and Ecclesiastical Identities

To better understand the relationship between ethnic and ecclesiastical debates in diaspora, it is important to begin exploring reasons that led Malawians into cross-border migration and to the birth of the CCAP in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The genesis of the CCAP in the urban centres of Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa was not necessarily the work of the white missionaries, but was an outcome of Malawian migrant labourers who wanted to identify with their home missions or churches.⁹⁶⁸ Hence, it is imperative to interrogate how both ethnic and

⁹⁶⁷ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 38; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 243, 244.

⁹⁶⁸ J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 109.

ecclesiastical identities were contested, navigated, defined and negotiated among Malawian labour migrants in the hosting countries.

Malawians began to engage in informal and formal labour migration across the borders of the country [in search of greener pastures \(A 288\)](#) much earlier before the beginning of cross-border labour migration. Though it is still uncertain when Malawians first engaged in cross-border migration as migrant labourers, McCracken shows that both missionaries and colonial policies contributed to the exodus of men in search of green pasture.⁹⁶⁹ Pachai reports that some Malawians worked in diamond mines at Kimberley as early as the 1880s.⁹⁷⁰ However, massive cross-border labour migration only happened after the imposition of the hut tax on the impoverished indigenous population in 1902.⁹⁷¹ Just a year later, [several \(A 289\)](#) men left the country in search of greener pastures. Prior to this, there was the poll tax, introduced in 1892, whereby each adult was compelled to pay six shillings annually.⁹⁷² However, this did not have much impact on labour migration, as compared to later colonial policies. It was the hut tax that contributed to the influx of male migrant labourers in other countries.⁹⁷³ The hut tax was purposely designed to raise funds for the colonial government and to force indigenes to work for the white settlers, as indicated in Chapter Three. The British government turned Nyasaland into a labour producing country for other colonies. McCracken is right to say:

After 1905, the British metropolitan government regarded Nyasaland as being more important as a producer of labour for the southern Africa mines than a producer of raw material and hence showed little interest in helping to finance a development which would have the indirect effect of raising the price of labour by providing migrants with a viable alternative in their own country.⁹⁷⁴

While the British government policy significantly contributed to labour migration, it should be noted that the transnational labour migration began after the local labour migration had started. Local labour migration started by the African Lakes [Company \(A 290\)](#) associated with the Scottish missions. In 1886, thirty Tonga porters were salaried employees for the African Lakes Company. By 1894, there were 5000 Tonga working in the Shire Highlands under the same company. In 1897, men from the Central Ngoni were also recruited in the Shire Highlands [\(A 291\)](#) - estimated

⁹⁶⁹ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 152.

⁹⁷⁰ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 119.

⁹⁷¹ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 85; J.M. Cronje, 109; B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 119.

⁹⁷² B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 111.

⁹⁷³ P. Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalization and Inequality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 63.

⁹⁷⁴ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 151.

between 4000 and 5000 men.⁹⁷⁵ However, working conditions in the Shire Highlands were very poor compared to British colonies in Southern Africa. As a result, some Malawians decided to engage in informal trans-border labour migration to Zambia, Zimbabwe, the Belgium Congo and South Africa.⁹⁷⁶ This was because salaries and wages outside Nyasaland (Malawi) were comparatively higher and [more \(A 292\)](#) attractive.⁹⁷⁷ Trans-border labour migration attracted most Malawians with or without formal Western education as they sought greener pastures.

While motives for the labour migration varied from district to district, the main cause for informal transnational labour migration in colonial Malawi, as stated above, was largely a result of colonial policies, particularly the imposition of hut tax by the colonial administration in 1902.⁹⁷⁸ If anyone failed to comply with the taxation obligation, his/her hut was burnt or they were imprisoned or even killed, which dismayed most indigenes and Christian missionaries, as explained in Chapter Three.⁹⁷⁹ As a result, thousands of indigenous men were forced to engage in transnational migration to other African countries in order to raise enough money, to meet government tax obligations and fend for their families, as well as [meet \(A 293\)](#) other social obligations.⁹⁸⁰ It was this informal labour migration that significantly contributed to the creation of small Malawian immigrant communities in host countries, who, in turn, began identifying with home churches.

Those who ventured into labour migration had three major identities, namely, religious, ethnic and national. Among Malawian migrant labourers, the religious identity was the most conspicuous [\(A 294\)](#). Mbiti rightly says, “Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it...Wherever the African is, there is his religion.”⁹⁸¹ Most Africans are fond of identifying themselves with a set of beliefs and practices that are similar to their home beliefs and practices wherever they go. This is because religion brings a sense of belonging and unity among Africans of the same or similar confession. Commenting on the place the CCAP played in urban Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Groves says that the church

⁹⁷⁵ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 84.

⁹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 84.

⁹⁷⁷ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 84; B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 110, 114; Z. Groves, “Urban Migrants and Religious Networks: Malawians in Colonial Salisbury, 1920 to 1970,” 494-5.

⁹⁷⁸ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 85.

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 114.

⁹⁸⁰ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 119.

⁹⁸¹ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd Ed. Oxford: Heinemann, 1990, 2.

provided space for the new migrant labourers from Malawi to make contact with those already established, enabling the new arrivals to establish themselves in a host country.⁹⁸² Hence, as Mbiti puts [it \(A 295\)](#), “Therefore, to be without religion amounts to a self-excommunication from the entire life of society, and African people do not know how to exist without religion.”⁹⁸³ Though what Mbiti expresses is beyond social networking, religion, according to Groves, was considered a vital conduit through which most African migrants found ways of coping with urban, socioeconomic and political life in the host countries.⁹⁸⁴ This might be the reason why most Christian Malawians who migrated or immigrated to urban centres, whether inside or outside the countries, carried their Christianities from their home communities to new places or host countries. However, it should be noted that most African migrant labourers joined or formed churches which were multi-ethnic, as discussed in Chapter Two.

Critical to the churches joined or established by Malawian migrant Christians were the decisions taken by the white missionaries. It was these decisions that contributed to ethnic awareness and to the visibility of ethnic identities. As stated above, most African migrant Christians showed religious exclusivity by aligning themselves with their home missions or a church that had similar ecclesiastical characteristics as their home mission or church. There is little or no doubt that ecclesiastical exclusivity and manipulation of languages by missionaries might have contributed to ethnic and ecclesiastical divisions, particularly in Zimbabwe, as this chapter will show.

It should also be noted that it was not only returning migrant labourers who brought ethnic debates to their respective homes,⁹⁸⁵ but it was also ministers (both missionaries and indigenes) assigned to serve among Malawi diasporas.⁹⁸⁶ For example, the retired ministers of the CCAP Livingstonia Presbytery, Revds. Thomas Nyirongo, Aram Mwesongole and Yobe Nthara, were accused by the Church of Central [Africa \(A 296\)](#) in Rhodesia (CCAR) of encouraging the Malawian migrant Christians, who broke away from it (CCAR), to not rejoin it after the home Church (CCAP Livingstonia Presbytery) had asked the breakaway Christians to rejoin the

⁹⁸² Z. Groves, “Urban Migrants and Religious Networks: Malawians in Colonial Salisbury, 1920 to 1970,” 505.

⁹⁸³ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religious and Philosophy*, 2.

⁹⁸⁴ Z. Groves, “Urban Migrants and Religious Networks: Malawians in Colonial Salisbury, 1920 to 1970,” 505; K. Manganga, “A Historical Study of Industrial Ethnicity in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe,” 109.

⁹⁸⁵ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 273.

⁹⁸⁶ V. Chilenje, “The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia,” 117,124.

CCAR.⁹⁸⁷ The role of individual ministers is crucial in understanding how ethnic and ecclesiastical divisions among diaspora Christians were promoted and negotiated.

5.3 Problematizing Ethnic and Ecclesiastical Identities: The CCAP Christians in Zambia

The beginning of the CCAP in Zambia was twofold and contradictory. First, it started through the mission stations established by the Livingstonia Mission in some parts of Zambia as mentioned in Chapter Four. The second phase was started by the CCAP Malawian and Zambian migrant labourers working in the urban Copperbelt towns of Zambia between the late-1920s and the 1980s. They took a lead in the establishment of the United Missions, and later the Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia (CCAR). It was this group of Malawians migrant Christians who set a foundation for the establishment of the CCAP in the urban settlements of Zambia.⁹⁸⁸ While the two movements contributed to the establishment of the CCAP Zambia Synod, the formation of the CCAP Zambia Synod is largely attributed to Zambians themselves.⁹⁸⁹

In the previous chapter, it was said that the CCAP Synod allowed the three Livingstonia stations of Lubwa, Mwenzo and Chitambo in Zambia to enter into negotiation with other Protestant missions towards the establishment of a united church.⁹⁹⁰ It should also be noted that the 1945 CCAP Synod's decision did not contribute to the establishment of the CCAP Zambia Synod, but it only encouraged the three Zambian Livingstonia stations to enter into negotiations with non-Presbyterian churches. The intended purpose was to confine the CCAP activities to Malawi, and to prepare the ground for a future union between the CCAP and a church to be established in Zambia.⁹⁹¹ However, this did not happen because [of \(A 297\)](#) the reasons explained in Chapter Four. Nevertheless, the Zambian Livingstonia stations entered into negotiations with other Protestant missions towards the establishment of the United Missions in the Copperbelt in mining centres. The United Mission in Copperbelt was formed in 1936, and later culminated into a united

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid, 124; A letter of A. Hugh Fielder of the United Mission in the Copperbelt to W.H. Watson of the CCAP Livingstonia Presbytery dated 12th October, 1952, SLA, Box 58.

⁹⁸⁸ V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 90.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid, 181.

⁹⁹⁰ These protestant missions included the Livingstonia Mission, the London Missionary Society, the Methodist Missionary Society, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, the United Society for Christian Literature and the South African Baptist Mission.

⁹⁹¹ Min. 12 of the CCAP Synod meeting held Livingstonia from 7 to 11 October 1948, NGK Archive, box 94, St.

church called the Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia (CCAR).⁹⁹² On 26 July 1958, the CCAR was joined by other Protestant missions and renamed the United Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia (UCCAR).⁹⁹³ When the UCCAR was joined by the Methodist and Parish missions, the name was changed to the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) and inaugurated in January 1965.⁹⁹⁴ Weller and Linden attribute the establishment of the UCZ to African initiatives.⁹⁹⁵ Full details of negotiations towards church union in Zambia are given by Bolink, Chilenje and Weller and Linden.⁹⁹⁶ Hence, this chapter will not go into detail about the church union in Zambia, but it will continue interrogating whether the ecclesiastical divisions that occurred in Zambia, in which Malawian migrant Christians were involved, had a link to the ongoing border dispute between the two CCAP synods in Malawi.

By the 1930s, some Malawians began migrating to Zambia in search of jobs in mining towns. They were employed in the Copperbelt mines and other companies.⁹⁹⁷ Between 1940 and 1944, it was estimated that there were 15.03 percent non-Zambian employees working in the Zambian mining industry, drawn from Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania and other African countries. Among these migrant labourers, 37.87 percent were Malawians. Also between 1960 and 1966, there were more than 50 per cent Malawian migrant labourers working in mines alone.⁹⁹⁸ Most of the Zambian mine workers were unskilled labourers. This made the mine owners to recruit Malawian experienced workers, who had previously worked in South African mines, in 1935.⁹⁹⁹ Malawian migrant workers played a big role in shaping social, cultural, religious, economic and political life in the Copperbelt townships. Among them there were members of the CCAP, some of whom were mission school graduates. It was the Presbyterian migrant labourers who played a crucial role in the spread of Christianity in the urban Copperbelt.¹⁰⁰⁰

⁹⁹² P. Bolink, *Towards the Church Union in Zambia*, 178, 209, 170; V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 103.

⁹⁹³ J. Weller and J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 149.

⁹⁹⁴ J. Weller and J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 152.

⁹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 151.

⁹⁹⁶ P. Bolink, *Towards the Church Union in Zambia*, 210 – 365; V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 98 – 127; J. Weller and J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 141 – 153.

⁹⁹⁷ J. Weller & J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 145.

⁹⁹⁸ P.O. Ohadike, *Development of and factors in the Employment of Africa Migrants in the Copper Mines of Zambia 1940-66*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969, 5.

⁹⁹⁹ P. Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalisation and Inequality*, 64.

¹⁰⁰⁰ J. Weller & J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 146.

Most Malawian migrant Christians, especially those from the Livingstonia Mission's sphere of influence, joined the CCAR. According to Bolink, denominational and theological differences were not issues of contention among these African migrant Christians working in the Copperbelt townships of Zambia.¹⁰⁰¹ He also reports that Africans who were instrumental in the formation of the CCAR were Presbyterian migrant Christians from Nyasaland (Malawi) and other parts of Zambia under the Livingstonia Mission's sphere of influence.¹⁰⁰² The Foreign Mission Committee's minutes on the Copperbelt ministry reads: "One notable feature was the number of Nyasaland men whom we met acting as leaders in these activities, many of them trained at the Overtoun Institution...In these Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationists and Baptists worship together in complete harmony."¹⁰⁰³ In addition to the ecumenical nature of the urban Copperbelt church established by Protestant Christians, the church was multi-ethnic, with its membership drawn from various ethnic groups from Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania.¹⁰⁰⁴ However, this unity did not last long because of the reasons this section discusses.

To begin with, the CCAR divisions were interrelated and multifaceted. In some places, the divisions were caused by ethnic and/or ecclesiastical differences, while in other places ecclesiastical and personal differences among church members caused the problems. One of the divisions occurred in Ndola. It largely affected members originally from the CCAP Blantyre and Nkhoma Presbyteries. Most of these migrant members were Chinyanja or Chichewa speaking Christians. When they broke away from the CCAR, they joined the Zambezi Industrial Mission.¹⁰⁰⁵ Reasons that led to the Ndola schism, according to Chilenje, included segregation practiced by sister churches in Zambia;¹⁰⁰⁶ that Malawian migrant Christians were dissatisfied with the discipline, immorality and liturgy as practiced particularly with those in the CCAR union; and that they were longing to retain their Presbyterian way of worship and identity.¹⁰⁰⁷ However, it is questionable whether the last reason was genuine for the Presbyterian Christians who resorted to join another a non-Presbyterian church, such as the Zambezi Industrial Mission. What they had in

¹⁰⁰¹ Ibid, 182.

¹⁰⁰² P. Bolink, *Towards the Church Union in Zambia*, 178.

¹⁰⁰³ Min. 10 of the Foreign Mission Committee of 17 February, 1948, Appendix II, SLA, Box 26.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid, 178, 190; V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 104; J. Weller & J. Linden, *Mainstream Christianity*, 147.

¹⁰⁰⁵ V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 171.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Though Chilenje does not specify the type of segregation, it is likely that it was based on ethnic line, because Bolink says the real issues causing divisions were tribalism and difference in church discipline (P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, 182).

¹⁰⁰⁷ V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 173.

common with the members of the Zambezi Industrial Mission was not an ecclesiastical identity, but rather territorial and ethnic identities, including a common language, that is, Chinyanja or Chichewa. The motivating factors leading to the breakaway, then, were territorial and ethnic.

However, this does not downplay the role of ecclesiastical identities in influencing how diasporic Malawians Christians defined and contested their identities in urban areas of Zambia. In 1977, some CCAP members preferred to identify themselves as members of the Free Church of Scotland CCAP, particularly those from the Livingstonia Mission's sphere of influence, and other identified as the CCAP Blantyre Synod.¹⁰⁰⁸ Kawale, former General Secretary of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, is quoted in Brown to have said that some members of his Synod preferred to be referred to as the "Dutch", as opposed to CCAP.¹⁰⁰⁹ But diaspora Malawian Christians from its sphere of influence appear to favour being called the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. This is why they continued to administer the disjunction certificates under the name of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod in Zambia, because they were aware that there was the Reformed Church in Zambia which bears the same name "Dutch". In 1981, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod resolved that:

As Synod has been informed that this congregation [Lusaka] has now been put under the Livingstonia Synod of the CCAP, their disjunction certificates area acceptable. However, the General Secretary should inform them that they should no longer use Nkhoma Synod's certificate, but those of the Livingstonia Synod.¹⁰¹⁰

From the ongoing discussion, it is evident that ecclesiastical identities, particularly home church identities, had a major role in the manner that the migrant CCAP members came to define themselves in relation to other missions' members. On the other hand, the CCAP, as a unifying identity, was somehow fluid and ambiguous in certain instances. For example, when Malawian migrant Christians were affirming their identity against the non-Presbyterian members, they showed loyalty to CCAP. But when they were contesting their identity or mobilising themselves against fellow Presbyterians, they preferred to identify themselves with the founding missions of their respective synods. Ecclesiastical identities played an important role in the schisms that occurred in Zambia, as well as in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Nevertheless, ethnic identities took prominence in church debates. In Ndola, the Malawian migrant Christians [\(A 298\)](#) broke away from the CCAR (now UCZ) and from the Presbyterian

¹⁰⁰⁸ V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 173; Min. 27 of the CCAP General Synod held at Chongoni from 16 to 17 August, 1977, SLA, Box 49.

¹⁰⁰⁹ W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod," 249.

¹⁰¹⁰ Min. S 1489 of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod meeting held from 6-14 April, 1981, NGK Archives, Box 94, St.

Church of Zambia: a member church of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa¹⁰¹¹; and also from the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) associated with the DRC of the Orange Free State in South Africa.¹⁰¹² In Lusaka, Malawian migrant Christians broke away from the RCZ on account of personal differences with the newly posted minister to their congregations. They formed the CCAP Matero Congregation. The majority were Chichewa speaking Christians who were former members of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, with a few from the Blantyre and Livingstonia Synods.

The Chitumbuka speaking Christians (those originally from the Synod of Livingstonia) decided to join the Presbyterian Church in Zambia (PCZ) at Columbus, Lusaka. However, the Chitumbuka speaking Christians did not stay long in the Columbus congregation of the PCZ because its parish minister asked them to stop congregating in that church, arguing that it was only meant for white members. This racial remark forced the Chitumbuka speaking Christians to leave the PCZ and join the African Reformed Church.¹⁰¹³ Again, they just stayed for a short time because it coincided with the time when the CCAP General Synod officially planted congregations in urban Zambia in 1973. The CCAP decision stifled the 1948 resolution of forming a united church with the UCZ, as explained above. Most members, originally from CCAP Blantyre, Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods, joined the newly constituted CCAP congregations. However, some members with the CCAP background continued worshipping with the RCZ, PCZ and UCZ. The researcher, though now a minister of the CCAP, used to be a member of the UCZ until the time his family returned to Malawi where he joined the CCAP.

Other reasons that led to CCAR schisms included differences on church discipline.¹⁰¹⁴ Chilenje reports that the first ecclesiastical division happened because the CCAP migrant labourers wanted to retain their CCAP identity.¹⁰¹⁵ While differences on ecclesiastical discipline could have played a vital role in the schisms that happened in the Copperbelt townships, it was language differences between Chibemba speaking Christians and non-Chibemba speaking Christians that fostered ecclesiastical divisions, especially at Luanshya and Wusakile (Kitwe) in the 1950s.¹⁰¹⁶

¹⁰¹¹ The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa was formed in 1999 after the amalgamation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of South Africa and the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

¹⁰¹² V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 171.

¹⁰¹³ V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 166.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ibid, 118.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid, 91.

¹⁰¹⁶ Min. 55/19 of the July 1955 CCAR Presbytery meeting, SLA, Box 69.

Linguistically, the Copperbelt CCAR, even though multi-ethnic, was predominantly a Chibemba speaking church. During Sunday worship service, the whole service was conducted in Chibemba alone. The domination of Chibemba contributed to the ecclesiastical divisions in the CCAR Copperbelt.¹⁰¹⁷ This led some Chitumbuka speaking Christians, originally from the CCAP Livingstonia Presbytery, to break away from the CCAR, and form a CCAP congregation.¹⁰¹⁸ Bolink reports how ecclesiastical divisions that occurred at Luanshya and Wusakile spread to other urban centres and mine compounds.¹⁰¹⁹ This was [\(A 299\) the](#) result of social networking among CCAP migrant Christians.

When the Livingstonia Presbytery heard about the ecclesiastical divisions in the Copperbelt townships, it resolved to urge Malawian migrant Christians, originally from its sphere of influence, to rejoin the CCAR.¹⁰²⁰ As part of the solution to the problem, the CCAR Presbytery asked the CCAP Livingstonia Presbytery to send a Chitumbuka speaking church minister or an elder to the Copperbelt for a period of three months to help the CCAR settle differences. Further, the CCAR Presbytery instructed the Copperbelt DCC and minister “to have a special conference about admission of such people, and the question of language and related questions”.¹⁰²¹ In response to the CCAR appeal, the Livingstonia Presbytery sent Wilfred Chiumia to work with the CCAR, and Anyigulile Mwakalukwa was sent to work among the Nyakyusa speaking Christians from the southern Tanzania.¹⁰²²

During the July 1955 Presbytery meeting of the CCAR, Chiumia reported that the “new immigrants from Nyasaland were joining the CCAR”.¹⁰²³ During this Presbytery meeting, the following recommendations were made:

- a) that the main Sunday service be in Chibemba;
- b) that one item of praise be in the appropriate non-Bemba language;
- c) that sermons in another language should be interpreted into Chibemba;
- d) that readings from the Psalms and New Testament should be in Chibemba;
- e) that at special services other languages may be used freely; and

¹⁰¹⁷ P. Bolink, *Towards the Church Union in Zambia*, 266.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid, 266.

¹⁰¹⁹ P. Bolink, *Towards the Church Union in Zambia*, 266.

¹⁰²⁰ V. Chilenje, “The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia,” 121.

¹⁰²¹ Ibid, 122; Min. 57/27 of the July, 1955 Presbytery of the CCAR, SLA, Box 69.

¹⁰²² Ibid, 123; Min. 55/19 of the July, 1955 Presbytery of the CCAR, SLA, Box 69.

¹⁰²³ Min. 55/19 of the July, 1955 Presbytery of the CCAR, SLA, Box 69.

f) that in every service at least one hymn common to the hymn books of either the BaNyakyusa or the BaTumbuka should be used when the session feels that by so doing the worship would be enriched.¹⁰²⁴

It appears that doctrinal and disciplinary differences were not prominent in the Copperbelt schisms, but rather ethnic differences. This explains why some breakaway CCAP members were reluctant to reintegrate the CCAR after persuasion from their home churches. They continued congregating as a breakaway group, CCAP.¹⁰²⁵ Hence, it can be argued that, to a large extent, ethnic differences contributed to the CCAR schism in the Copperbelt townships. However, the Zambian church ethnic cleavages had no connection to Malawian ethnic divisions between the Chewa and non-Chewa ethnic groups because it occurred between the Bemba of Zambia and non-Bemba ethnic groups from Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania. Nevertheless, the experience that the Malawian CCAP Christians had in Zambia could have contributed to how migrant Christians began to display their identities within the ecclesiastical circles based on ethnolinguistic identities if their mother tongues were not accommodated in a service of worship. Ethnic and ecclesiastical identities eclipsed the original intention of the CCAP to establish a united church covering most countries in Central and East Africa, as its pioneer missionaries and indigenous Christians had envisaged.¹⁰²⁶

5.4 *The CCAP Harare Synod and Ethnicity: The Unfinished Agenda*

In order to understand the link between ethnic debates among Malawian migrant labourers in Zimbabwe and the CCAP Nkhoma-Livingstonia Synod's border dispute, the section explores how the CCAP began in Zimbabwe. The focus will be on ecclesiastical and ethnic identities among Malawian migrant Christians, originally [came \(A 300\)](#) from the DRCM, Blantyre Mission and Livingstonia Mission spheres of influence.

5.4.1 *To belong or not to belong: The birth of the CCAP Harare Synod in Zimbabwe*

Unlike the CCAP in Zambia, the CCAP in Zimbabwe did not start with one mission working in Malawi but by Malawian migrant Christians working in the country. Samuel Gunde, a church

¹⁰²⁴ Min. 55/20 of the July, 1955 Presbytery of the CCAR, SLA, Box 69.

¹⁰²⁵ V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 124.

¹⁰²⁶ C.W. Mapala, "A Critical reflection and Malawian Perspective on the Commemoration of the Edinburgh 1910 International Missionary Conference," 75, 76.

minister of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Harare Synod, though he acknowledges that the beginning of the CCAP Harare Synod is traced from the encouragement of the Consultative Board of Federated Missions in Nyasaland (Malawi), states, “At the onset of this section, it is very important to point out that from 1912 to 1965 all missionary work in Zimbabwe was the Nkhoma Presbytery, which later became a Synod in 1956”.¹⁰²⁷ What Gunde fails to tell us, or perhaps he did not know, is that the beginnings of the CCAP Harare Synod must be attributed to the Consultative Board of Missions in Malawi, then Nyasaland, following the appeal made by Nyasaland (Malawian) migrant labourers working in Zimbabwe.¹⁰²⁸

The history of the CCAP Harare Synod, when told by church historians, begins with the visit of a delegation of four Malawian migrant Christians to the DRCM Mvera station in 1905.¹⁰²⁹ The delegation comprised Messrs Yonamu originally from Makande, Joseph Mandovi from Livingstonia, Jeremiya from Zambezi Industrial Mission and one person from Blantyre Mission.¹⁰³⁰ Among the four members of the delegation, no one came from the DRCM Nkhoma Presbytery’s sphere of influence. However, this does not rule out the possibility that among the Christian migrant workers who sent the four-man delegation to Malawi, some might have been originally from the DRCM Nkhoma Presbytery. Rather, it shows the ethnic and ecclesiastical diversity of the migrant Christians who contributed to the establishment of the CCAP in Zimbabwe between 1912 and 1954, and continued to be part of it.

According to Pauw, the majority of Malawian migrant Christians residing in Salisbury (Harare) were from the DRCM Nkhoma sphere of influence with few from Blantyre Mission, Livingstonia Mission, and the three industrial missions.¹⁰³¹ However, Pauw does not support this claim with statistics. It appears that this claim was based on the failure to distinguish between being a Chewa and being a Chichewa speaker. From 1890 to the mid-1950s, the *lingua franca* for Salisbury (colonial Harare) was not Chishona but Chinyanja, of which Chichewa is one of the dialects.¹⁰³² Most Malawian, Zambian (particularly from eastern Zambia) and some Mozambican migrant labourers had no difficulties speaking Chinyanja. Secondly, Malawian migrant workers formed

¹⁰²⁷ S. Gunde, “A Church Historical Enquiry Regarding Growth of Membership in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian- Harare Synod,” MTh Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2013, 30.

¹⁰²⁸ J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 109, 111.

¹⁰²⁹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 110; J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 109.

¹⁰³⁰ V. Chilenje, “The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia,” 26.

¹⁰³¹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 112.

¹⁰³² K. Manganga, “A Historical Study of Industrial ethnicity in urban colonial Zimbabwe,” 70; T. Yoshikuni, “Linking urban history with precolonial and rural history: From the Zimbabwean experience,” 162.

the largest population of the African residents in Salisbury. The 1921 government census, done eight years after Vlok's arrival, indicates that Salisbury had a population of 8,139 Africans. Out of 8,139 African residents, 3219 were categorised as Nyasalanders (Malawians), representing 40 percent of the population; 1,149 were Mozambicans, representing 14 percent; 366 were Zambians, representing four percent; and 52 were South Africans, representing one percent. And there were 3346 Zimbabweans, drawn from different ethnic groups, who were also not permanent residents of the town.¹⁰³³ This made Chinyanja a language for inter-ethnic communication in the public space, particularly among the African migrant labourers. This explains why members of the Consultative Board of the Federated Missions in Nyasaland chose Chinyanja as the official language for the church in colonial Harare, and later for the CCAP Harare Synod.

The use of Chinyanja, as a *lingua franca* in the public spaces, could have influenced some missionaries to conclude that the majority migrant Malawians were from the DRCM. At the time when Vlok arrived in Salisbury, there were different Malawian ethnic groups in colonial Harare such as the Chewa, the Ngoni, the Mang'anja, the Yao, the Sena, the Tonga and the Tumbuka.¹⁰³⁴ During fieldwork, Juma and other research participants, aged seventy years and above, confirmed that the Malawian migrant workers, residing in colonial Harare, were composed of all Malawian ethnic groups.¹⁰³⁵ The church Vlok found was composed of all Malawian ethnic groups.

It should also be noted that some migrant Christians from the Scottish missions' spheres of influence opted to continue worshipping with the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa in Salisbury.¹⁰³⁶ Attending the CCAP General Synod meeting in 1987, H.P. Chikomo, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa is quoted to have said that:

His Church and the CCAP were not strangers to each other since they have their foundations in the Church of Scotland...He explained that when Malawians went to Zimbabwe in colonial days, they used to join the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, and this is still the practice today where there is no CCAP Church.¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³³ T. Yoshikuni, "Linking urban history with precolonial and rural history: From the Zimbabwean experience," 162, 167; There were 272 people classified as Shona, 403 as Manyika, 294 as Bazedzulu, 101 as Babudya, 7 as Bahera, 211 as Vahungwe, 21 as Banjanja, 13 as Shangaan, 25 as Karanga, 38 as Basutu, 4 as Banyai, 3 as Batonka and 102 as Ndebele totalling to 3346 indigenous Zimbabweans.

¹⁰³⁴ T. Yoshikuni, "Linking urban history with precolonial and rural history: From the Zimbabwean experience," 162.

¹⁰³⁵ Interview Joseph C. Juma, long serving African General Secretary of the CCAP Harare Synod at Mbare CCAP Parish, Harare on 17 October, 2015.

¹⁰³⁶ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 112.

¹⁰³⁷ Min. 17 (b) of the CCAP General Synod held at HHI in Blantyre City from 26 August to 3 September 1987, General Synod office, Lilongwe.

The question we must ask is, why some migrant Malawian Presbyterians, particularly those from the Livingstonia Mission, opted to worship with the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa rather than that of Vlok.

It should also be remembered that Vlok was in Salisbury on behalf of the Consultative Board of Federated Missions in Nyasaland (CBFMN) and not the DRCM or NGK. In 1926, attending the CCAP Synod meeting at Blantyre, he was described as “formerly of [the] Mkhoma in Nyasaland, and now missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church at Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia”.¹⁰³⁸ This implies that he was not working in Zimbabwe as a DRCM Nkhoma missionary, but as a NGK’s (the Cape DRC) missionary seconded to the CBFMN to work among Malawian migrant Christians residing in Zimbabwe.¹⁰³⁹ This is the reason why the NGK refused to hand over Malawian migrant Christians under the oversight of Vlok to the DRC Synod in Orange Free State in 1936 when the latter requested so.¹⁰⁴⁰ According to Cronje, the handover did not happen because Vlok was not a representative of the NGK but because he was a representative of the CBFMN.¹⁰⁴¹ At the fourth Synod meeting held at Blantyre from 20th to 22nd October 1936, it was Richard Chechamba, former evangelist of the Blantyre Presbytery, who attended the synodical meeting on behalf of Malawian migrant Christians residing in Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁴² Furthermore, there was no specific congregation that belonged to one of Malawian Presbyterian missions until the mid-1940s.

It was on 28th October 1944 that the CCAP Synod recognised Salisbury as its congregation, and put the congregation under the care of the Nkhoma Presbytery.¹⁰⁴³ The recognition of the Salisbury congregation did not imply that all Malawian migrant Christians were put under the oversight of the Nkhoma Presbytery immediately. Some Malawian migrant Christians continued being under the pastoral care of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, especially those from Blantyre and Livingstonia Presbyteries in most towns, including in Salisbury. It was only on 9th July 1954 that the majority of CCAP migrant Christians and congregations came under the Nkhoma Presbytery.¹⁰⁴⁴ Hence, the establishment of the CCAP in Zimbabwe cannot be attributed

¹⁰³⁸ Min. 26 of the CCAP 2nd Synod Meeting held at Blantyre from 13th to 15th October, 1926, Box 94, NGK Archive, St.

¹⁰³⁹ Min. 26 of the CCAP 2nd Synod Meeting held at Blantyre from 13th to 15th October, 1926, Box 94, NGK Archive, St.

¹⁰⁴⁰ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 113, 114.

¹⁰⁴¹ J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 111.

¹⁰⁴² Min. 22 of the CCAP Synod Meeting held at Blantyre from 20th to 22nd October, 1936, Box 94, NGK Archive, St.

¹⁰⁴³ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 116; Min. 14 of the CCAP Synod meeting held at Nkhoma from 22nd to 26th August, 1945, Box 96, NGK Archive, St.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 117.

to one CCAP Presbytery in Malawi. This is attested to by the memorial triangle pillar erected [\(A 301\)](#) at Mbare congregation of the CCAP Harare Synod in Harare, which states that the CCAP Harare Synod is a product of the three Malawian CCAP Synods: Nkhoma, Blantyre and Livingstonia.¹⁰⁴⁵

However, this does not downplay the role played by the NGK and its white missionaries in the establishment of the CCAP in Zimbabwe. But it should also be noted that from the beginning the church was multi-ethnic and ecumenical. Both the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Presbyteries used to send Malawian ministers, as missionaries to Zimbabwe through the CCAP Synod.¹⁰⁴⁶ The first Malawian minister to be posted to Zimbabwe was Patrick Mwamlima from the CCAP Livingstonia Presbytery in 1948.¹⁰⁴⁷ In 1956, it was reported that [\(A 263\)](#) Nkhoma Presbytery had three congregations: Salisbury, Gwelo and Bulawayo with three ministers, of which two were white missionaries from the NGK, and Thomas P. Nyirongo seconded by the Synod of Livingstonia through the General Synod.¹⁰⁴⁸ The CCAP Harare Synod delegate to the 1996 CCAP Synod of Livingstonia biannual meeting, I.M. Banda, emphasized that the CCAP Harare Synod is an autonomous synod. Today, as then, all the three Synods in Malawi have influence on the establishment and growth of the CCAP Harare Synod, and that no one Synod should claim parenthood over it.¹⁰⁴⁹ Hence, it was not proper to attribute the establishment of the CCAP Harare Synod to a particular CCAP Presbytery or mission. The CCAP Harare ought to be considered as autonomous synod of the CCAP.

What we need to underscore is that the first missionary to go to Zimbabwe was Vlok of the NGK in mid-1913,¹⁰⁵⁰ as a representative of the Consultative Board of the Federated Missions in Nyasaland (Malawi).¹⁰⁵¹ He began ministering to Malawian migrant Christians residing in Salisbury, who originally were under the DRCM Nkhoma, Livingstonia Mission, Blantyre Mission, Zambezi Industrial Mission, Nyasa Industrial Mission and South Africa General Mission

¹⁰⁴⁵ The researcher read these words during fieldwork in Harare Zimbabwe at Mbare CCAP congregation.

¹⁰⁴⁶ V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 27.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Min. 33 of the CCAP Synod held at Livingstonia from 7th to 11th October, 1948, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Min. 11 (a) of the CCAP Synod held at Nkhoma from 25 to 29 April, 1956, SLA, Box 26.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Min. 1153/96 (4) of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia held at Ekwendeni from 1 to 4 October, 1996, Synod office Mzuzu.

¹⁰⁵⁰ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 112.

¹⁰⁵¹ J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 111; V. Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia," 27.

in Malawi.¹⁰⁵² However, the CBFMN did not extend its work to migrant Malawians living in Bulawayo, because it was the area assigned to the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.¹⁰⁵³

Pauw, responding to the question why Malawian migrant Christians were neglected in Bulawayo by the CBFMN, says, “Part of the problem was that although work was much appreciated by the other Missions in Malawi, none ever got so far as to offer any support or assistance. The DRC in the Cape had to bear the full responsibility”.¹⁰⁵⁴ This statement is far from being accurate. Minute 6097 (2) of the Livingstonia Mission Council reads,

Under Minute 5770, the Council approves of a grant of £30 to the Dutch Reformed Mission at Salisbury in recognition of work done amongst Livingstonia natives working there. The Council recommends that the grant be for one year only as they have other proposals in view as to aid for both the Dutch Reformed Mission and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa.¹⁰⁵⁵

Based on this minute, it is evident that besides the NGK, there were other missions supporting the same work in Zimbabwe. The Livingstonia Mission did not only support the work in Salisbury under the oversight of the NGK missionaries, but it also supported the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa work in Bulawayo where Malawian migrant Christians were also working. However, an interesting part of the council’s minute is that the Livingstonia Mission, like other missions working in Malawi and Africa, continued looking at Malawian migrant Christians from its domain of influence as belonging exclusively to it, although they were living far from its sphere of influence. This nature of exclusivity is problematic when it comes to how individual Christians came to construct, navigate and define their ecclesiastical identities in light of home missions or presbyteries, as the Bulawayo scenario will show.

The preference, which the NGK took to serve the Chewa Christians in Salisbury,¹⁰⁵⁶ had a profound effect on the history and development of the CCAP in Zimbabwe and Malawi. This preference created the impression that Vlok was in the country to continue the work of the DRCM in Malawi, and not that of the Consultative Board of Federated Missions, as requested by Malawian migrant Christians and agreed to by all Protestant missions at Mvera in August 1910. This decision underestimated the fact that before Vlok arrived in Salisbury, most Malawian Presbyterian migrants were under the oversight of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa without clear ecclesiastical boundaries based on home missions. Groves rightly says, “Nyasas did not come from

¹⁰⁵² Min. 37 of the CCAP Synod meeting held at Mkhoma from 22 to 26 August 1945, NGK Archive, Box 94, Ste.

¹⁰⁵³ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 112.

¹⁰⁵⁴ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 113.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Minute of Livingstonia Mission Council of 19 September 1922, Dep. 298 (131), NLS.

¹⁰⁵⁶ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 112.

a monolithic society... but outside of Nyasaland migrant labourers drew on their territorial unity and often came to be regarded as a single ethnic group”.¹⁰⁵⁷

Pauw’s assertion that most Malawian migrant Christians worshipping with the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa were from the Blantyre and Livingstonia Missions appears to be a later development.¹⁰⁵⁸ Most research participants that the researcher interviewed said that some Malawian migrant Christians, including those from the DRCM sphere of influence, used to attend the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa until the CCAP was fully established in most of the townships.¹⁰⁵⁹ Therefore, clear social boundaries might have developed following the arrival of Vlok in Salisbury. This could be the reason why [\(A 302\)](#) Chikomo in 1987 urged to the CCAP leadership that his church and the CCAP should cooperate to avoid duplication of the work in the same area. He further pointed out that “the concept of oneness in Christ should help our Churches to see themselves as servants of Christ beyond tribal, national and linguistic barriers. The names of our churches, CCAP and PCSA should not be barriers to our oneness in Christ”.¹⁰⁶⁰ His speech suggests that tribal difference could have contributed to ecclesiastical divisions in Zimbabwe in both churches, the CCAP and PCSA.

However, prior to Vlok’s arrival, Robert Laws advised him to cooperate with the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. Laws wrote:

Already there is a church under the care of the Rev. Simpson of the SA Presbyterian Church which was built I believe chiefly by the lads from here [Nyasaland]. I wonder if you are going to be in it. I trust at any rate that our SA Presbyterian Church will be united in the work for the natives of Nyasaland. Anything else in the shape of denominational rivalry it seems to me would be suicidal, and was not, I think, contemplated by anyone at the Mvera Conference when speaking of the need for some European to work among our Nyasaland natives.¹⁰⁶¹

Vlok’s missiological approach of preferring to work among people from DRCM Nkhoma¹⁰⁶² was in contradiction to what was agreed at the 1910 Mvera missionary conference - that one white missionary, representing the Consultative Board of Federated Missions in Nyasaland, should [\(A 303\)](#) go to Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). It also appears that he did not adhere to the advice that Laws gave him. It seems that Vlok was largely influenced by what the DRCM missionaries had

¹⁰⁵⁷ Z. Groves, “Urban Migrants and Religious Networks: Malawians in Colonial Salisbury, 1920 to 1970,” 498.

¹⁰⁵⁸ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 111.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Among them were Maxwell Kutematu at his house in Harare-Mabvuku interviewed on 18 October 2015 and Timothy Kalinji at Mabvuku CCAP parish in Harare on 18 October, 2015.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Min. 17 (b) of the CCAP General Synod held at HHI in Blantyre City from 26 August to 3 September 1987, General Synod office, Lilongwe.

¹⁰⁶¹ Robert Laws to Vlok of 29 February, 1912 as quoted in C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 112.

¹⁰⁶² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 112.

agreed. Pauw, responding to the question why the DRCM was not interested in working among all Malawian migrant Christians, says that “the problem [W.H. Murray] saw was that the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa working in Salisbury was fast organising their work so as to move in amongst the Malawians and already some elders had been appointed who were unfit for the eldership when in Malawi”.¹⁰⁶³ This indicates that the DRCM had no interest in working with the PCSA. In Chapter Four, it was argued that theological reasons did not justify the DRCM’s refusal to allow the London Missionary Society in the CCAP union. If the DRCM’s concern was to preserve the Presbyterian doctrine or identity, why then did they not want to cooperate with fellow Presbyterians as advised by Laws? It seems that politics of “who belongs and who does not belong” were at work in the DRCM and/or NGK missiological approach in Zimbabwe.

Another reason Pauw gives for Vlok’s preference to work among the Chichewa speaking Christians from DRCM Nkhoma was that he (Vlok) was not sure whether other missionaries would hand over the migrant Christians residing in Bulawayo.¹⁰⁶⁴ As indicated in Chapter Four, the mistrust between the DRCM missionaries and other white missionaries, with an English background, continued in Zimbabwe. But Vlok’s preference to work among Chewa Christians¹⁰⁶⁵ appears to have consolidated or contributed to the salience of ethnic identities among Malawian migrant workers, residing in Salisbury and Bulawayo. To what extent would Vlok’s preference have contributed to the consolidation of ethnic identities among migrant Malawians?

Manganga observed that most African migrant workers used social networks, such as ethnic clusters and other institutions, to cope with social and economic life in colonial Harare and engaged them as strategies through which they could secure jobs.¹⁰⁶⁶ Although it is not clear when African migrant labourers started to live in ethnic clusters, evidence shows that clusters, to a certain extent, contributed to ethnic cleavages because people belonging to a particular ethnic grouping preferred to help their members in the job market, as opposed to those who belonged to other ethnic groups.¹⁰⁶⁷ Manganga further points out that colonial stereotyping fuelled industrial ethnicity. Colonials considered certain ethnic groups to be better than other groups. One example is that African migrant labourers from Nyasaland (Malawi) were ranked more highly than the indigenous

¹⁰⁶³ Ibid, 111.

¹⁰⁶⁴ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 111.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ibid, 112.

¹⁰⁶⁶ K. Manganga, “A Historical Study of Industrial ethnicity in urban colonial Zimbabwe,” 66, 78.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Interview Rev Juma at Mbare CCAP Parish in Harare, Zimbabwe on 17 October, 2015.

Ndebele, who were in turn considered ethnically superior to the Shona and other Zimbabwean ethnic groups.¹⁰⁶⁸ Among the Malawian ethnic groups, the Rhodesia colonists ranked the Ngoni high as opposed to the Chewa because of the former's military prowess.¹⁰⁶⁹ As a result, some ethnic groups had high chances of being employed because of the stereotypes attached to their ethnic groups. Efficiency and effectiveness at work were not considered as merits for recruitment, but it was the candidate's ethnic identity that was most important.

Was industrial ethnicity extended to the CCAP in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe? There was no evidence so far in the published literature consulted on ethnicity in Zimbabwe to substantiate whether Malawians were divided along ethnic lines in Zimbabwe. What comes forth is the ethnic polarisation between Zimbabwean ethnic groups themselves, on one hand, and on the other, Zimbabweans against African foreign nationals, including Nyasas (Malawians).¹⁰⁷⁰ In a nutshell, the CCAP Harare Synod was established by the three CCAP Synods in Malawi to serve their migrant Christians working and residing in Zimbabwe. From the onset, the CCAP Harare Synod was multi-ethnic and ecumenical. Ecclesiastical and ethnic divisions were the outcome of white missionaries' politics of inclusion and exclusion through language manipulations.

5.4.2 *Contradictory identities: Scottish or Dutch or Nyasa*

It is important to begin this subsection by restating that ethnic and ecclesiastical differences were not an issue of concern among Malawian migrant Christians prior to Vlok's arrival. Pauw, commenting on the beginning of the CCAP in Zimbabwe, observes:

An estimated 5,000 Malawians were in or near Salisbury. The Malawians, particularly those from Blantyre and Livingstonia were being cared for by the Rev. Simpson, minister of the white congregation of the Presbyterian Church and it seemed to Vlok at that time that Simpson and his colleague at Bulawayo would be reluctant to handover the work to him, preferring to see him working only amongst the Nkhoma people.¹⁰⁷¹

Pauw does not tell us in which church the migrant Christians from the DRCM were worshipping prior to Vlok's arrival. As explained above, it seems that Presbyterian Malawians, residing in Salisbury, used to go [to](#) the same church ([A 304](#)). Most important in Pauw's remarks is the expression 'the white congregation'. This expression was not referring to a European church

¹⁰⁶⁸ K. Manganga, "A Historical Study of Industrial ethnicity in urban colonial Zimbabwe," 90.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ibid, 91; T. Stapleton, Extra-Territorial African police and Soldiers in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) 1897-1965 in *Scientia Militaria, Southern African Journal of Military Service*, 38:1, 2010, 109.

¹⁰⁷⁰ K. Manganga, "A Historical Study of Industrial ethnicity in urban colonial Zimbabwe," 77-114.

¹⁰⁷¹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 111.

as it may imply, but to the English-speaking church with a Presbyterian identity. The congregation to which Simpson was ministering had a close tie with the Scottish Missions working in Malawi, as already noted.

Another critical issue is the distinction that the DRCM missionaries were consciously or subconsciously creating based on ethnic identity. As stated above, the Malawian migrant Christians asked for European missionaries to work among them, and Vlok went to Southern Rhodesia as a representative of the Board of Federated Missions in Nyasaland. By choosing to serve the Chewa migrant Christians alone from the DRCM sphere of influence, he not only contradicted the aspirations of the Board of Federated Missions in Nyasaland, but he also created a dichotomy of *we-and-them* among Malawian migrant Christians, who used to worship together.

The dichotomy of *we-and-them* was conspicuous in the ecclesiastical wrangle between the NGK and the DRCM of the Orange Free State on who should be in charge of the Zimbabwe mission work, for over forty years.¹⁰⁷² As an attempt to solve the DRC dispute, on 9 April 1936 the NGK handed over the Malawian migrant Christians to the DRC mission of the Orange Free State.¹⁰⁷³ However, Malawian migrant Christians opposed the handover. Pauw says:

One of the main reasons for [the opposition staged by Malawian migrant Christians] was the fact [that] the Orange Free State Synod had in 1931 rescinded its decision, taken in 1928, to allow the congregations of its Mission in eastern Zambia to join the CCAP - a union which both the Zambian Church and the local missionaries desired. This refusal and the motives behind it should be regarded as the underlying cause of the entire controversy in Zimbabwe. The matter was made worse when a later request by the Council of Congregations of the Zambian Church to join the CCAP was again turned down in 1939. To the Malawian Christians it was unthinkable that they should be handed over to a church which had rejected union with their Church. This was the case with the Christians but even more with those from Blantyre and Livingstonia. In fact, at a later stage a large group at Bulawayo broke away from the congregation being cared for by the Orange Free State Mission.¹⁰⁷⁴

Pauw raises an important question that requires thorough consideration in the light of the breakaways that occurred at Bulawayo by Malawian migrant Christians of the CCAP. Contrary to the general assertion provided by the CCAP minutes regarding the Bulawayo breakaway: that it was started by some Chitumbuka speaking Christians, the breakaway was largely influenced by white missionaries' differences. In Chapter Four, it was explained that the DRC Synod of the Orange Free State rejected joining the CCAP union because of the South African political landscape caused by the effect of the Second Anglo-Boer War. Although Pauw fails to tell us why

¹⁰⁷² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi* 113-117.

¹⁰⁷³ *Ibid*, 114.

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 114.

the CCAP Livingstonia and Blantyre Presbyteries' migrant Christians strongly opposed the handover compared to their colleagues from the CCAP Nkhoma Presbytery, the fact remains that they showed more loyalty to their home missions.

No wonder when Chitumbuka-Chitonga speaking Christians, originally from the Synod of Livingstonia, broke away from the CCAP Harare Presbytery of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod in the 1960s, they also opted to name the Bulawayo breakaway group of the Harare Presbytery as the Free Church of Scotland.¹⁰⁷⁵ Failure of the white missionaries to subdue their home ecclesiastical and socio-political differences in the interest of church unity contributed to future ecclesiastical and ethnic divisions among Malawian migrant Christians, as the next subsection will uncover.

5.4.3 The CCAP Nkhoma Synod and the Bulawayo breakaway

The majority of the CCAP migrant Christians who broke away from the DRC of Orange Free State Mission in Bulawayo reintegrated [into \(A 305\)](#) the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. In 1951, Malawian migrant Christians, residing at Bulawayo, also decided to establish their own church after breaking away from the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, with the purpose of identifying with their home church. The majority, as stated above, were from Livingstonia Presbytery. Interestingly, among the leaders were Zimbabweans. For example, Elijah Maphosa was a Zimbabwean and a Ndebele by ethnicity. The group sent three letters to the three CCAP Presbyteries' headquarters asking the CCAP Synod to recognise the newly formed church and that it be a congregation of the CCAP. The Blantyre Presbytery responded that they should meet Whitton Makwalo,¹⁰⁷⁶ who was seconded by the Livingstonia Presbytery through the CCAP Synod to work with the Cape DRC in Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁷⁷ Makwalo asked them to seek the help of Alfred Aramson Chirwa who was an evangelist of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. In July 1951, Chirwa terminated his service and membership with the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and joined the newly formed congregation of Malawian migrant Christians.¹⁰⁷⁸

¹⁰⁷⁵ A letter of the CCAP Harare Synod dissenters to the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary dated 21 October 1981, SLA, Box 70.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁷ S. Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry Regarding Growth of Membership in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian- Harare Synod," 31.

¹⁰⁷⁸ A letter of the CCAP Harare Synod dissenters to the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary dated 21 October 1981, SLA, Box 70.

As a follow-up to the letters [they \(A 306\)](#) wrote to Malawian Presbyteries, the Malawian migrant Christians at Bulawayo and Wankie sent a four-man delegation to the 1952 CCAP Synod biannual meeting held at Blantyre. The delegation was led by Elijah Mphosa and Phillip Kumwenda from Bulawayo and two delegates from Wankie.¹⁰⁷⁹ It was at the same Synod meeting that J. Manod Williams of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa at Gwelo launched a complaint that Alfred Aramson Chirwa was splitting the Church (PC) at Bulawayo.¹⁰⁸⁰ Having heard from Williams and the delegation from Bulawayo and Wankie, the CCAP Synod resolved that it would not take part in ecclesiastical disputes happening in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). It went on to say that “it greatly regrets the difficulties which Nyasaland Christians are finding in these places, and urges them to associate themselves with one of the Churches in the area recognised by the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian”.¹⁰⁸¹ However, this resolution did not solve the problem that was raised by both parties to the dispute until the CCAP Bulawayo congregation was established under the CCAP Nkhoma Synod in 1955.¹⁰⁸²

In 1956, when the Nkhoma Presbytery became a synod, the three Zimbabwe CCAP congregations formed a presbytery called Salisbury, and in 1965, the Salisbury Presbytery grew into a synod.¹⁰⁸³ At the time when the Salisbury Presbytery was constituted as a presbytery of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, the Bulawayo congregation began to construct a second church building at the township of Sizinda in Bulawayo. With the purpose of maintaining unity of the three Malawian presbyteries, the names of the three Malawian CCAP presbyteries were inscribed on the wall of the church: CCAP Livingstonia Presbytery, Nkhoma Presbytery and Blantyre Presbytery.¹⁰⁸⁴ This was to indicate that the Church was founded by the three Malawian presbyteries.

In 1955, the Nkhoma Presbytery posted H.M.L. du Toit and Thomas Nyirongo to Bulawayo.¹⁰⁸⁵ It was du Toit who unilaterally removed the names of Livingstonia and Blantyre Synods and left that of the CCAP Nkhoma Presbytery. Some members of the CCAP Bulawayo congregation interpreted the removal of the names as an attempt to discriminate against the

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Min. 12 of the CCAP Synod meeting held at Blantyre from 16 to 21 May 1952, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

¹⁰⁸¹ Min. 40 of the CCAP Synod meeting held at Blantyre from 16 to 21 May 1952, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

¹⁰⁸² J.M. Cronje, *Born to Witness*, 112.

¹⁰⁸³ Ibid, 112.

¹⁰⁸⁴ A letter of the CCAP Harare Synod dissenters to the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary dated 21 October 1981, SLA, Box 70.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Min.11 (a) of the CCAP Synod held at Nkhoma from 25 to 29 April 1956, SLA, Box 49.

Scottish presbyteries.¹⁰⁸⁶ Between 1957 and 1968, church members, especially those originally from Livingstonia Synod, noticed that du Toit was favouring members who were originally [came \(A307\)](#) from the missions of the DRC in Malawi and eastern Zambia.¹⁰⁸⁷ This led some members to break away from the CCAP Harare Synod. In 1967, the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary reported that some Christians from Malawi dissented from the CCAP in Bulawayo (Rhodesia) and formed their own church, namely the Free Church Presbyterian, Synod of Livingstonia Mission. T.J. Chipeta, first African General Secretary of the CCAP Salisbury (Harare) and a Tumbuka by ethnicity from Mzimba District, confirmed this development. After discussion, the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia resolved that “the Synod of Salisbury should find ways and means by which it could bring the dissenters back to the CCAP”. It further stated that “the Synod of Livingstonia does not recognise the church which the dissenters have formed”.¹⁰⁸⁸ Some attempts were made to reconcile the breakaway group with the CCAP Harare Synod and they reintegrated [into \(A308\)](#) the church.

In 1969, another church was built at Sizinda in Bulawayo which became a centre of controversy. The construction of [the \(A 309\)](#) church was completed in 1975, and was officially opened on 8 July 1973.¹⁰⁸⁹ Coincidentally, the Bulawayo ethnic debates started soon after the 1968 Malawi political debates over the banning of Chitumbuka in the public spaces. It is difficult to rule out that the banning of Chitumbuka in Malawi had an influence on how the diaspora Malawians in Zimbabwe began to assert their identities, along ethnic lines. The resistance that the Bulawayo Tumbuka and Chitumbuka speakers portrayed to Chichewa suggests that ethnicity among diaspora was not primordial, but rather it was an outcome of ethnic consciousness through language manipulation and political development at home over language issue. If ethnicity among diaspora Malawians was a primordial phenomenon, how do [one \(B 15\)](#) account the acceptance of Chinyanja in colonial Harare by Tumbuka and Chitumbuka speakers?

This would explain why the action taken by du Toit was not perceived by the breakaway group as propagating ethnic discrimination, but rather that it was seen to be an attempt to favour a certain European mission, in this case the DRCM. The discourse was centred on belonging to the DRC or

¹⁰⁸⁶ A letter of the CCAP Harare Synod dissenters to the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary dated 21 October 1981, SLA, Box 70.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Min. 431 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia meeting held at Ekwendeni in 1967, Synod office Mzuzu.

¹⁰⁸⁹ A letter of the CCAP Harare Synod dissenters to the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary dated 21 October 1981, SLA, Box 70.

the Free Church of Scotland. Hence, it can be argued that the early Zimbabwean schisms did not divide Malawian migrant Christians along ethnic lines, but according to the missions that started the work among migrant Christians in their respective homes. However, this development set up precedence for future ecclesiastical and ethnic cleavages, because of the ethnic constituencies that missionaries attached to their mission fields in Malawi, as discussed in Chapter Three. The Livingstonia area was labelled as Tumbuka-Ngoni and DRCM domain as Chewa. Again, the CCAP's decision to accept the breakaway group from the Presbyterian Church of South Africa set up a blueprint for other schisms, as the next subsection will illustrate.

5.4.4 The emergency of ethnic debates: The case of the CCAP Harare Synod

As explained above, the genesis of ethnic debates in CCAP Harare Presbytery or Synod began with what happened at Sizinda but was rooted in divisions started by white missionaries. This subsection centres the discussion on what transpired at the CCAP Sizinda congregation of the CCAP Harare Synod in Bulawayo with the purpose of ascertaining whether diasporic ethnic debates in the church had an impact on the ongoing border dispute in Malawi.

The ethnic debates started in 1973 at Sizinda. The Chitumbuka-speaking Christians alleged that the Bulawayo resident church minister Maseko connived with fellow Chewa Christians, originally from the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, to discriminate against other church members from the Livingstonia and Blantyre synods. They said that Maseko accused non-Chewa church members of practising witchcraft in the church.¹⁰⁹⁰ They also reported that the Chitumbuka-speaking Christians broke away from CCAP Harare Synod because of ethnocentrism. They formed their own church.¹⁰⁹¹ In July 1974, the Bulawayo breakaway Chitumbuka-speaking Christians sent two delegates: P. Khonje and J. Yiwombe, to the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi during its General Administrative Committee (GAC) meeting, to ask the Synod leadership to recognise the breakaway group.

During the GAC, the delegates from the Bulawayo breakaway group explained that they broke away from the CCAP Harare Synod because of misunderstandings that happened at the Sizinda congregation. The delegates of the breakaway group further reported that on 20th January 1974, 20

¹⁰⁹⁰ A letter of the CCAP Harare Synod dissenters to the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary dated 21 October 1981, SLA, Box 70.

¹⁰⁹¹ Ibid.

members from northern Malawi were suspended because they disagreed on issues which were ethnic-related. Then suspended members and their sympathizers decided to form their own congregation as part of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia. This was why they came to ask the Synod of Livingstonia to consider sending a minister to serve among them. In response, the Synod of Livingstonia GAC referred their request to the Standing Committee of CCAP General Synod.¹⁰⁹²

In August 1974, Daneel of the CCAP Harare Synod wrote to the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia's leadership informing it that since Khonje and Yiwombe returned to Zimbabwe, the situation at the Sizinda congregation had worsened. He wrote that they had been telling the Chitumbuka speaking Christians that the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia had accepted to send a minister without consulting the CCAP Salisbury (Harare) Synod. In response to Daneel, the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia said: (a) "that the Synod of Livingstonia still recognise the Synod of Salisbury as before," and (b) "that the Synod could not send a minister without the authority of Salisbury Synod through the General Synod."¹⁰⁹³ On 18 September 1974, Chipeta and Daneel informed the Standing Committee of the CCAP General Synod that the Chitumbuka-speaking Christians were planning to secede from the CCAP Harare Synod, and that they were intending to call a minister from the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia. The Synod of Livingstonia, through its General Secretary Patrick C. Mzembe, disassociated itself from the Bulawayo CCAP dissenters. After discussion, the Standing Committee agreed that:

- i) the Standing Committee of the General Synod affirms that the dissident Christians are under the discipline of the Synod of Salisbury;
- ii) the Standing Committee of the General Synod recommends that the Synod of Salisbury should make provision for the worship of the Tumbuka Christians in Chitumbuka; and
- iii) the Synod of Salisbury should report at the next meeting as to how matter has been stood with this group.¹⁰⁹⁴

Point (ii) of the Standing Committee's agreement shows that one of the core problems that prompted the Bulawayo dissent Christians was the use of language in the service of worship. This

¹⁰⁹² Min 866 of the CCAP GAC held at Ekwendeni from 23 to 27 July 1974, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹⁰⁹³ Min. h of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia Executive Committee held at Ekwendeni on 21 August, 1974, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Standing Committee of the CCAP General Synod of 18 September 1974, SLA, Box 58.

was largely because the official language in the Church was Chichewa.¹⁰⁹⁵ It was the dominance of Chichewa that led the Chitumbuka speakers to break away.¹⁰⁹⁶ Since language did not dominate the previous ecclesiastical schism among the Malawian migrant Christians in Zimbabwe, the question is why it became an issue in the 1970s and thereafter. Was it related to the banning of Chitumbuka in the public space in Malawi in 1968? One explanation could be that Chichewa was not a dominant language in Bulawayo as it was the case with Salisbury before the mid-1950s. The other reason was the one Gunde gave in his Master's thesis. He observed that language remains a barrier to the growth of the CCAP Harare Synod. He said that most indigenous Zimbabwean Christians were leaving the Church on account of language.¹⁰⁹⁷ He reported that not only Ndebele and Shona failed to understand Chichewa but even children born in Zimbabwe to Malawian migrant Christians. This forced the Harare Synod to pass a resolution to use IsiNdebele and Chishona alongside Chichewa at the 1999 Synod meeting.¹⁰⁹⁸

However, the attempts taken by the Synod of Livingstonia and the General Synod made the majority of the Chitumbuka-speaking dissenting Christians to reintegrate the CCAP Harare Synod in 1981.¹⁰⁹⁹ Nevertheless, some members of the group continued congregating as the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia although they were not recognised by the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia.¹¹⁰⁰ This group prolonged the debates for a couple of years. The Harare Synod, the General Synod and the Synod of Livingstonia persuaded the breakaway group to return to the Harare Synod, but their efforts yielded nothing. For example, when the breakaway group sent a gift of K 14.50, which was equivalent to US\$ 5.37,¹¹⁰¹ to the Synod of Livingstonia, the Synod refused to accept the gift on the grounds that acceptance would mean encouraging the breakaway group. It maintained that the dissenting Christians should remain under the care of the CCAP Salisbury Synod.¹¹⁰²

¹⁰⁹⁵ S. Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry regarding Growth of Membership in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian- Harare Synod," 110.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Telephone Interview with Vinji Mwafulwa (CCAP Synod of Livingstonia-Bulawayo Congregation on 18 October, 2015, and Personal Interview with J.C Juma at Mbare CCAP Manse, Harare on 17 October, 2015.

¹⁰⁹⁷ S. Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry regarding Growth of Membership in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian- Harare Synod," 111.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Ibid, 109.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Standing Committee of the General Synod held in Sindiza Township Hall, Bulawayo from 5 to 6 December 1981, SLA, Box 47.

¹¹⁰⁰ Min. 21 (b) of the CCAP General Synod held at Ekwendeni from 5 to 10 August, 1987, Lilongwe Office

¹¹⁰¹ In 1981, the Malawi Kwacha was trading at MK 2.70 to US\$ 1.

¹¹⁰² Min. 903 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia GAC meeting held at Ekwendeni from 11 to 16 March 1975, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

The Synod of Livingstonia maintained its position throughout until the zenith of the Nkhoma-Livingstonia border dispute in the 1990s. It had considered the Bulawayo CCAP schism to be an in-house issue for the Harare Synod. It is interesting to note how the Synod of Livingstonia began gradually changing its tone towards the Bulawayo breakaway group at the dawn of multiparty politics in Malawi. In August 1992, the Synod of Livingstonia agreed to send its Synod Moderator and General Secretary to Zimbabwe to ascertain the state of affairs.¹¹⁰³ This decision was reached at the meeting after the CCAP made a strong political statement in unison with the Roman Catholic pastoral letter. It sent Lloyd A. Tembo, the Synod Moderator, and Overtoun P. Mazunda, the General Secretary.

[In 1994 \(B 16\)](#), they reported that the cause of the breakaway was that the Harare Synod was imposing Chichewa on the non-Chichewa-speaking Christians, which was the Synod of Livingstonia's concern¹¹⁰⁴ and the issue needing to be addressed in a multiparty dispensation,¹¹⁰⁵ as Chapter Six will illustrate. As a result, the Synod of Livingstonia resolved that: either one of its ministers should be posted to Zimbabwe to help Chitumbuka-speaking Christians or suitable candidates be identified from the Harare Synod who should be trained as ministers to avoid the problem of seeking employment permits for foreign ministers in the hosting country.¹¹⁰⁶ The first option diverged from the Standing Committee of the CCAP General Synod's resolution made in December 1981, which states that "a minister from Malawi posted to them [the breakaway group] by General Synod should be for all members of CCAP in Bulawayo".¹¹⁰⁷ In fact, the posting of a Chitumbuka-speaking minister to serve the Chitumbuka-speaking Christians was not a solution to the problem but rather it could have just fostered divisions, along ethnic lines. During the fieldwork in Harare, the researcher was told by research participants that the Harare Synod was dismayed with the Synod of Livingstonia's recognition of the Chitumbuka-speaking breakaway group, and, most importantly, by its decision to post Chitumbuka-speaking ministers to serve to the congregations which the Harare Synod considered to be a breakaway.¹¹⁰⁸ For this reason, the study

¹¹⁰³ Min. 1003/90 of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia meeting held at Livingstonia from 18 to 23 August, 1992.

¹¹⁰⁴ Min. 1284/94 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia General Assembly meeting held at Bandawe Station from 10 to 14 August 1994.

¹¹⁰⁵ P.J. Kishindo, "Politics of Language in Contemporary Malawi," 265.

¹¹⁰⁶ Min. 1284/94 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia held at Bandawe from 10-14 August 1994, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹¹⁰⁷ Standing Committee of the General Synod held in Sindiza Township Hall, Bulawayo from 5 to 6 December 1981, SLA, Box 47.

¹¹⁰⁸ CCAP Harare Synod members accepted to be interviewed on condition of anonymity.

contends that the debate on the Bulawayo schism was skewed in favour of ethnicity rather [than \(A 310\)](#) ecclesiastical difference.

In 1995, the Synod of Livingstonia's General Secretary informed the Synodical meeting that although the Synod's decision was to post a minister, this would not be implemented because the CCAP General Synod suggested a visit to Zimbabwe to reconcile the breakaway group with the CCAP Harare Synod.¹¹⁰⁹ During the 1996 Synod of Livingstonia biannual meeting, the CCAP General Synod senior clerk informed the Synod of Livingstonia that most members of the breakaway group had reintegrated the CCAP Harare Synod with the exception of 200 members. Despite the information provided on the Bulawayo schism, the Synod of Livingstonia resolved to recognise the breakaway group. It also agreed to stop referring to the Bulawayo CCAP dissident Christians as a breakaway congregation, but rather it was called the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia congregation in Zimbabwe.¹¹¹⁰ It should also be noted that it was the same year that the Synod of Livingstonia withdrew from the CCAP General Synod, because the Nkhoma Synod was not ready to comply with the 1990 CCAP General Synod's resolution to withdraw from Livingstonia's territory,¹¹¹¹ which Chapter Six will explore. However, the Synod of Livingstonia did not post a minister to Zimbabwe until 2004, when Joshua N. Mhone was finally posted to serve the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia congregation in Bulawayo.¹¹¹² It appears that Mhone was sent to Bulawayo because the Synod of Livingstonia had lost trust in the manner the Nkhoma Synod (which was associated with the CCAP Harare Synod, albeit an autonomous synod) was handling the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute. The Synod of Livingstonia, through its General Secretary, wrote to the General Synod: "What I am presenting to you, sir is not just about [the] border dispute, but 'obvious and deliberate' encroachment by our colleagues [Nkhoma Synod]."¹¹¹³ However, the sending of a minister to the Bulawayo breakaway group was a departure from the stand the Synod

¹¹⁰⁹ Min. 1461/95 of the GAC meeting of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia held at Ekwendeni from 8 to 11 August 1995, Synod Office Mzuzu.

¹¹¹⁰ Min. 1142/96 (a) of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia held at Ekwendeni from 1 to 4 October 1996, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹¹² Min. 21/2004 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia meeting held at Loudon Station from 17 to 22 August 2004, Synod Office Mzuzu; Min. 42/90 of the CCAP General Synod held at Henry Henderson Institute Hall in Blantyre from 26 August to 3 September, 1990, General Synod Office Lilongwe; J.J. Mphatso, General Synod Senior clerk letters to the General Secretaries of Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods and copied to the General Secretaries of Blantyre, Harare and Zambia Synods dated 17 August 1995, General Synod office, Lilongwe.

¹¹¹³ H.M. Nkhoma, CCAP Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary letter to the Secretary General of the CCAP General Assembly, and copies to the General Secretaries of Nkhoma and Blantyre Synod, General Assembly Office, Lilongwe.

of Livingstonia took with other synods, including General Synod, in order to maintain the CCAP unity.

It is likely that the 1990s Malawian political landscape could have influenced the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia to change its stand on the Bulawayo schism, [as the next sections will illustrate \(A311\)](#). It began to change its tone towards Zimbabwe CCAP breakaway immediately after the winds of political change started, following the issuance of the Roman Catholic Church pastoral letter on 8 March 1992. The Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre unanimously supported the Catholic pastoral letter and turned it into “political action”, to use the words of Schoffeleers.¹¹¹⁴ On 2 June 1992, the CCAP General Synod, in conjunction with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), issued an open letter to President Banda in support of the Catholic pastoral letter. Schoffeleers says, “As expected, the clergy of Livingstonia Synod were the first officially to endorse the WARC/CCAP statement of 2 June and assured the General Synod that they would read it to all congregations”.¹¹¹⁵ However, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod allied with Dr Banda’s regime and openly opposed the Catholic pastoral letter.¹¹¹⁶ It can be argued that diasporic ethnic and ecclesiastical debates in Zimbabwe have a link to the ongoing border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods, as the next sections will illustrate.

5.4.5 A divided church and language policy: Striving towards a multi-ethnic church

As this subsection will show, it appears that both the Harare Synod and the Synod of Livingstonia congregation in Zimbabwe began to understand why it was necessary to re-examine the language issue in order to improve their missional approaches in a multilingual society. Hence, this subsection re-examines how the language policy has been debated in the two Zimbabwean CCAPs, in order to retain a multi-ethnic church.

What is interesting was that the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia congregation in Bulawayo did not only use Chitumbuka in its Sunday services, but it also adopted a multilingual approach. This affirms that ethnicity was consciously crafted among diaspora Malawians in Zimbabwe. How do

¹¹¹⁴ M. Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1999, 184, 211; K.R. Ross, “Not Catalyst but Ferment: The Distinctive Contribution of the Churches to Political Reform in Malawi 1992-93”, in *Church, Law and Political Transition in Malawi 1992-93*, edited by Matembo S. Nzunda & Kenneth R. Ross, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1995, 32.

¹¹¹⁵ Ibid, 211, 212.

¹¹¹⁶ M. Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice*, 190; K.R. Ross, “Not Catalyst but Ferment: The Distinctive Contribution of the Churches to Political Reform in Malawi 1992-93”, 38.

we account for the Livingstonia Bulawayo congregation use of Chitonga, Chichewa, IsiNdebele and Chitumbuka in the Church? During fieldwork in Zimbabwe, the Livingstonia Bulawayo Kirk session clerk, Mwafulirwa and parish minister W. Gama said that the congregants were free to use any language of their choice. In order to enable everyone to participate in the worship service, an interpreter was engaged.¹¹¹⁷ It also happened at the Mabvuku Congregation of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in Harare. Although the Mabvuku congregation is under the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, it did not secede from the CCAP Harare Synod on ethnic grounds. It seceded because of the disagreements the parish minister had with a certain section of his congregation. Almost 98 percent of members of the Mabvuku congregation were those who originally were members of the Nkhoma and Blantyre Synods in Malawi. They joined the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia through the Bulawayo Congregation of the Synod of Livingstonia, after the CCAP Blantyre Synod refused to recognise it as one its congregations.

What the Bulawayo breakaway group advocated was exactly what the CCAP Harare Synod adopted at its 1999 Synod meeting as noted above. The language problem for the CCAP Harare Synod was rooted [in \(A 312\)](#) its history. Gunde says that “many people understand the denomination [CCAP Harare Synod] as a Chewa Church. Hence to be a full Christian member is to be a Chewa”.¹¹¹⁸ This perception is exclusive because the church is identified with a particular ethnic group. Therefore, it can be argued that the decision taken by the NGK and DRCM to minister to and prefer a particular ethnic group had a direct impact on later ethnic debates in the CCAP Harare Synod.

But what was of particular interest regarding language at Bulawayo and Mabvuku was that the interpreter translated either English or Chichewa or Chitumbuka into a popular Zimbabwean indigenous language spoken in that area, whether Chishona or IsiNdebele. For example, in Harare, the interpreter was speaking Chishona while in Bulawayo it was IsiNdebele. This follows the pattern of Zimbabwe language politics in which IsiNdebele is the language predominantly spoken in Bulawayo while Chishona is spoken in Harare. But the underlying fact is that most Malawian migrants and some of their children born in the diaspora were either bilingual or multilingual speakers, and that those who could not understand the language used by the preacher could benefit

¹¹¹⁷ Interviewed W. Gama and Vinje Mwafulirwa, Bulawayo on 18 October, 2015.

¹¹¹⁸ S. Gunde, “A Church Historical Enquiry regarding Growth of Membership in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian- Harare Synod,” 17.

through the interpreter. This largely happens because it appears that language maintenance and language shift are happening, while the latter seems to be a reality among younger generation who are shifting from their mother-tongues to socially and economically viable languages spoken in some parts of Zimbabwe. This could be the reason why the Harare Synod considered substituting Chichewa for Chishona and IsiNdebele, or including the indigenous languages alongside Chichewa as church official languages with the purpose of averting divisions over language use and suiting the local context.¹¹¹⁹ The reason behind it was that most members of the CCAP do speak either Chishona or IsiNdebele alongside one of Malawian languages, while the Zimbabwean born members of the CCAP rarely understand either Chichewa or Chitumbuka or Chitonga.¹¹²⁰

Another factor for prioritizing IsiNdebele and Chishona was that some indigenous Zimbabweans are members of the CCAP either through interethnic marriage or through choice to become members of the CCAP.¹¹²¹ Although the diasporic CCAP members were divided along Malawian ethnic lines, the church remains a multi-ethnic. It was the ecclesiastical exclusivity created by white missionaries through language manipulation, and later influenced by the post-colonial Malawian politicisation of ethnicity, that fostered the ecclesiastical divisions in Zimbabwe, along Malawian ethnic lines. Hence, it can be argued that the white missionaries set the blueprint that contributed to consolidation of ethnic identities among Malawian migrant Christians through language manipulation and ecclesiastical exclusivity. However, the effort made to recognise all languages is a welcome development. While the efforts of recognising multilingualism are crucial for missiological purposes, how is it relevant to a divided church, along the same lines? Is this not sending message to church leaders that the decision they took to divide the Church due to having different languages was ill-conceived? According to Pentecostal episode, the recognition of different languages is part of *missio Dei*. Why then was language used to divide it?

5.5 *The Beginnings of the CCAP in South Africa: Contesting Identities and Ambivalence*

¹¹¹⁹ Interview J.C. Juma at Mbare CCAP Manse in Harare on 17 October 2015.

¹¹²⁰ S. Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry regarding Growth of Membership in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian- Harare Synod," 112.

¹¹²¹ Telephone conversation with Vinje Mwafuilwa on 18 October 2015, and int. Juma at Mbare Manse on 17 October 2015.

The subsection explores how the CCAP started in South Africa and ascertains whether it relates to the ongoing border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods of the CCAP. It will also explore why there are different congregations in Johannesburg belonging to the three Malawian CCAP synods instead of all congregations being under the CCAP General Synod. It will question why the CCAP, whose tradition was to cooperate with the partner churches in South Africa such as the DRC and Uniting Presbyterian Church Southern Africa, decided to establish congregations in that country parallel to the sister churches in Johannesburg, South Africa.

5.5.1 The birth of the CCAP in South Africa: Malawian migrant Christians' initiative

The beginning of the CCAP in South Africa is not much different from that of Zimbabwe. The only difference is that the Johannesburg congregations, while paying allegiance to the three Malawian CCAP synods, were started by Malawian migrant Christians working in the city in the mid-1990s without the support of the white missionaries.

According to the testimonies the researcher collected from the CCAP members residing and working in the townships of Johannesburg, the beginnings of the CCAP can be traced from [machona \(A 313\)](#)¹¹²² who used to meet regularly as migrant Malawians in the township of Soweto, Johannesburg. This group was largely composed of Malawians who were Tonga by ethnicity in the early 1990s. The group was led by Simon Kajilere Banda, Nkhwazi and Mwale.¹¹²³ Unlike the other two leaders, Kajilere Banda was originally baptized in the Seventh Day Adventist Church and later became a member of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), before joining the CCAP. The group had 645 members at the time when the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia leadership visited it.¹¹²⁴

This grouping called itself the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in Southern Africa. It appears that the name was judiciously crafted although in a contradictory way. They used the word “southern” to incorporate all countries south of the equator, as a strategy of shunning away from the name CCAP that limits the church’s work to three African countries, namely Zambia, Zimbabwe and

¹¹²² The male labour migrants who rarely visit their home countries or decided to stay in hosting country without returning to their home countries.

¹¹²³ Interview Lucy Kaunda, one of the pioneer members of the CCAP Livingstonia Synod in Johannesburg at Berea prayerhouse, Johannesburg on 25/10/2015, and Charles Nyirenda, a grandchild of Simon K. Banda in Berea township of Johannesburg on 24/10/2015.

¹¹²⁴ Min. 1284/94 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia meeting held at Bandawe from 10 to 14 August, 1994. Synod Office, Mzuzu.

Malawi. But it was a contradiction in that the word “CCAP” was incorporated in the name of the church, because the word “central” still restricts it to the three aforementioned countries, and it is vague. However, the Synod of Livingstonia renamed it as the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in South Africa because South Africa was considered as a mission area.¹¹²⁵

In 1993, the Johannesburg group wrote the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia asking to recognise it as its congregation.¹¹²⁶ In 1994, the Synod Moderator Tembo and Mazunda, the Synod General Secretary, met the group in Johannesburg, but without informing the CCAP General Synod or the South African sister churches. During the 1994 Synod of Livingstonia biannual meeting, the Synod General Secretary reported on the Johannesburg CCAP group. In turn the Synod of Livingstonia made the following resolutions that:

- (i) Kajilele should undergo a six months course in Malawi and then be recognised as a minister in South Africa; and
- (ii) A Malawi minister be sent to South Africa on a temporary basis and that Synod Office should continue pursuing matters related to ministering to the people in South Africa.¹¹²⁷

While the Synod’s recognition of the group had its own implications with regard to church unity, that Kajilere Banda would become a recognised church minister after undergoing a six-month course is a questionable decision. This was a discrepancy that raised serious ecclesiological questions. Traditionally, a person like Kajilere Banda without a Presbyterian background cannot immediately be admitted to the membership of the Church.¹¹²⁸ He can only be admitted after being observed for a period of one year or more in order to acquaint him with the church teachings and then baptise him, because the CCAP does not recognise the ZCC and other independent churches. However, he never went through this ecclesiastical process. Further, conditions for admitting someone to the ministerial office are quite rigorous. It requires a person to undergo three years’ training and spend another year on probation before ordination, regardless of whether s/he has theological qualifications from institutions recognised by the CCAP. For example, all students trained at the African Bible College, a recognised college by the Malawi Government, are asked

¹¹²⁵ Interview with H.M. Nkhoma who served successively the Synod as a Deputy General Secretary for a period of twelve years and as a General Secretary for eight years to the time of his retirement (1980-2000) at his house in Mzuzu, on 25/12/2014.

¹¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹¹²⁷ Additional report of Min. 1284/94 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia meeting held at Bandawe from 10 to 14 August, 1994. Synod Office, Mzuzu Additional report of Min. 1284/94 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia meeting held at Bandawe from 10 to 14 August, 1994. Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹¹²⁸ J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi*, 229.

to undergo a two-year programme at the CCAP theological colleges. But Kajilere Banda never went to any theological college as required until his day of ordination. Banda's recognition to the office of church minister raised a serious ecclesiological question about the expedience and motives behind his acceptance and ordination. Therefore, as the discussion unfolds, it is necessary to examine the missiological motives of the Synod of Livingstonia in opening its branches in a space where it had its sister churches, in the light of the ecumenical implications.

In August 1995, the Synod of Livingstonia posted [\(A 314\)](#) Wyson M.K. Jele to Johannesburg, as the Synod missionary in South Africa, with the purpose of preparing Kajilere Banda for ordination. He was commissioned by the Synod moderator by reading Matthew 28:18-20.¹¹²⁹ He left Malawi in 1996.¹¹³⁰ However, in South Africa Jele did not only become a minister to the migrant Christians from the Synod of Livingstonia but to all migrant members of the five Synods of the CCAP until 1999. A group of Christians, originally from the Nkhoma Synod's sphere of influence, moved out of the Synod of Livingstonia Johannesburg congregation and established its own congregation, as CCAP Nkhoma Synod in Johannesburg. They cited language as the cause for their departure because the predominant languages during Sunday services were either Chitumbuka or Chitonga, although Chichewa was also used.¹¹³¹

In January 1999, the group, through its representatives Donald Phiri and Charles Fanikiso Suluma, wrote to the CCAP Nkhoma Synod General Secretary A.A. Sasu to recognise the Johannesburg Nkhoma Synod congregation. In March 1999, Sasu responded to the group that they had recognised it.¹¹³² What Nkhoma Synod did to accept this group raises a serious question. In 1969, R.J. Kampala, Rafayer Kampeza and Nelson, as representatives of a breakaway group called the Nyasaland Dutch Reformed Church (later was named Malawi Christian Reformed Church of South Africa), approached the Nkhoma Synod, it refused to accept the group. The Nkhoma Synod resolved, "Bungwe liuza mipingo kuchenjeza akristu onse opita ku South Africa kuti asalowe mu mupatuko umenewu, ndipo kuti mipingo isalandire makalata awo a mpingo ... Mlembi adziwitse Sinod Wamkulu ndi masinodi ena a m'CCAP" (my translation: The General Administration

¹¹²⁹ Min. 1461/95 of the GAC of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia held at Ekwendeni from 8 to 11 August 1995, Synod office in Mzuzu.

¹¹³⁰ Min. 1145/96 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia held at Ekwendeni from 1 to 4 October 1996, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹¹³¹ Interview Mabuza, a former member of the Nkhoma Synod, and the Synod of Livingstonia Johannesburg congregation. Now a founder of the Malawi United Church in South Africa, at Phomolong Secondary School in Johannesburg on 21/02/2016.

¹¹³² W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod," 197.

Committee should inform church members migrating to South Africa not to join this breakaway group, and congregations should not accept their disjunction certificates. The General Secretary should inform the General Synod and other CCAP synods do the same.)¹¹³³ Although members from the Nkhoma Synod seceded, those originally from the Blantyre Synod continued to be part of the Synod of Livingstonia Johannesburg congregation.

By the end of 1999, the Blantyre group that used to meet at Bwanaisi's house, as the Southern region burial society, began to discuss the possibility of having Blantyre Synod in Johannesburg.¹¹³⁴ The group agreed and wrote to the Blantyre Synod secretariat to recognise it as part of the Synod. The Blantyre Synod did not hesitate to recognise it in the same year¹¹³⁵ yet it was the same Synod refused to recognise the Harare Synod breakaway. During the 2000 CCAP General Assembly meeting, all three Malawian Synods reported that they had opened congregations in Johannesburg, paying allegiance to each synod. In order to bring strong unity among the Synods, it was recommended that the General Assembly should send "a commissioner and representative from the concerned synods to South Africa in order to inform the congregations" that they all belong to one Church.¹¹³⁶ Ideally, this was intended to bring all Johannesburg congregations under the CCAP General Assembly, rather than belonging to individual Malawian Synods.¹¹³⁷ The process was started but it had its own challenges.

The first challenge relates to the Nkhoma Synod. The Nkhoma Synod wrote the Dutch Reformed Church's Committee for Witness, asking it to take responsibility for overseeing its Johannesburg congregation. In May 2000, the Nkhoma Synod, through its General Secretary Sasu, wrote to the DRC Committee of Witness stating:

We write to inform your church that Malawian nationals working in South Africa have requested Nkhoma Synod to assist with the organisational training and planting of a Malawi languages church in South Africa. Nkhoma Synod has accepted to organise the initial stages of establishing the congregation. We, however, want to surrender the new church under the care of the Dutch Reformed Churches family

¹¹³³ Min. KS 1552 of the GAC of the Nkhoma Synod held at Nkhoma on 10/05/1969, SLA, Box 49.

¹¹³⁴ Interview Elifa Chimesha, J. Kazembe and Bhekisa Siula at Johannesburg Blantyre Synod congregation, Berea township in Johannesburg on 25/10/2015.

¹¹³⁵ Appendix 5 on report for Life and Work in the CCAP General Assembly minutes held at Blantyre from 1 to 5 November 2000, page 36, General Assembly office in Lilongwe.

¹¹³⁶ Appendix 5 on report for Life and Work in the CCAP General Assembly minutes held at Blantyre from 1 to 5 November 2000, page 39, General Assembly office, Lilongwe.

¹¹³⁷ This is clearly stated in the email of L. Kalua, Acting Secretary General of the CCAP General Assembly to Wilner S. Mpele, Secretary of the CCAP General Assembly congregation in South Africa, dated 1st August 2007, General Assembly Office in Lilongwe. The CCAP General Assembly in South Africa was established by CCAP members who were not interested in divisions, along the three synods with the support of the General Assembly secretariat. Daniel Tembo, from the CCAP Synod of Zambia, was sent as a missionary to South Africa. However, the Synod congregation has not continued for unknown reasons.

(sic) in South Africa. We ask in this regard that discussions must be arranged later this year or next [year] where an agreement can be reached for this purpose. Nkhoma Synod is open to any advice from the DRC towards a proper handover of the church to any of the DRC family.¹¹³⁸

Although the letter does not explicitly say that the Nkhoma Synod established a congregation in Johannesburg to serve the Chichewa-speaking Christians worshipping in a congregation that was started by the Synod of Livingstonia in Johannesburg, it was clear that the Johannesburg Nkhoma Synod congregation began as a result of language problems, as explained above. It was the same language issue that split the CCAP in Malawi and Zimbabwe, and to some extent caused schisms in Zambia. Interestingly, the Nkhoma Synod wrote a letter as if the Malawian Synods had not yet recognised the CCAP congregations in South Africa. In response, the DRC Committee of Witness, following its investigation, did not respond to the Nkhoma Synod, but rather to the CCAP General Synod. It wrote:

Our Committee for Witness has heard that three congregations respectively linked to three CCAP synods have been established during the past year or so in Johannesburg. We also understand that these congregations were more recently visited by officials of the CCAP General Synod. We are very sorry indeed that we did not know about this visit. We would have loved to receive you and to host you as our visiting partners. In terms of our partnership there has for a long time been an understanding and tradition to mutually minister to each other's members living in other country. For that reason, the DRC has, for instance, never established a separate congregation for its members living or working in Malawi. Having heard of the development in Johannesburg we would greatly appreciate information about the situation and if possible some clarification as to the consideration which led to a decision to follow this course.¹¹³⁹

Even if the letter from the DRC pointed out how the CCAP synods' decisions would impact on the unity of the Church with its partners in South Africa, the CCAP appears not to have been ready to retreat from South Africa and surrender the work to its sister churches. What was interesting is the responses each of the three Malawian synods gave to the Standing Committee of the CCAP General Assembly in 2005. The Synod of Livingstonia reported to the Standing Committee that "because the other two synods appear reluctant to go along with the unity in South Africa, they decided to post a church minister to Johannesburg to look after the Livingstonia Synod Christians". They said that "another minister [would] be sent to Johannesburg".¹¹⁴⁰ As noted above, the Synod of Livingstonia's response demonstrates how the politics of exclusivity, which

¹¹³⁸ A letter of A.A. Sasu to the DRC Commission of Witness dated 2nd May 2000 as quoted in W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, 197.

¹¹³⁹ C.M. Pauw, Secretary of the Commission for Witness to the Senior Clerk of the CCAP General Synod dated 11 November, 2002 as quoted in W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod," 197-8.

¹¹⁴⁰ Min. 52/2005 (a) of the CCAP General Assembly Standing Committee held in Lilongwe on 15th December 2005, General Assembly Office in Lilongwe.

the white missionaries had for the Christians coming from their area of influence but working in different countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, continued to influence church debates [\(A315\)](#). [Regardless that CCAP members got disjunction certificates from their home synods, each Synod still considered them as belonging to them although they are no longer residing \(A 316\) in their domains of influence \(A 316\)](#). These politics of exclusivity were vividly evident among the Malawian church leaders in the twenty-first century.

The Nkhoma Synod informed the Standing Committee “that it was sad that the initiative of unity did not start from Johannesburg. And this is why there are a lot of problems in the unity. It was therefore not right to force the unity on them”.¹¹⁴¹ While the Nkhoma Synod was right to say the process of bringing the Johannesburg congregations together should have started with the congregations themselves, why, then, did it write to the DRC? Why did Nkhoma Synod not ask its Johannesburg congregation to discuss the issue with the DRC Committee of Witness? In fact, the Nkhoma Synod leadership was involved in the establishment of its congregation in Johannesburg. Why should it distance itself from negotiations towards church unity in South Africa? Was it not the appropriate time and could it not have advanced its agenda of handing over the CCAP congregations to sister churches in South Africa? It appears that the Nkhoma Synod was at pains to continue with its agenda of serving the Chichewa-speaking Christians, and thereby violated the agreement it had with the DRC, on the one hand, and on the other hand, it considered how it could handover the congregation to the DRC in order to maintain its relationship. The problem that led to the failure of the CCAP Synods to put all CCAP congregations under one umbrella or surrender them to sister churches in South Africa was embedded in Malawian CCAP politics and ecclesiastical identities created through language manipulations by white missionaries.

Most importantly was the Blantyre Synod’s response. It told the Standing Committee that they “have asked the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) to provide accommodation for the Christians and to look after them. This was being formalised”.¹¹⁴² But this has not happened up to the time of writing this thesis. Prior to the establishment of the CCAP congregations, most CCAP migrant Christians used to worship in the UPCSA congregations, as most research participants interviewed in Johannesburg said. If the Blantyre Synod was aware of

¹¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁴² Min. 52/2005 (a) of the CCAP General Assembly Standing Committee held in Lilongwe on 15th December 2005, General Assembly Office in Lilongwe.

the migrant Presbyterian ecclesiastical affiliation in South Africa, why did it allow its members to plant a church in a space where it has sister churches? Further to this, the Blantyre Synod was the only synod that raised the sum of SAR 60,000.00 towards the purchase of the place from Bwainase where it built a church building. This amount of money was raised in Malawi and deposited into the South Africa bank account by the Synod secretariat.¹¹⁴³ In an interview with its members, they said that there was no attempt by Synod officials to ask them to go back to the UPCSA. Therefore, the coming of the three synods to South Africa was not primarily based on the *missio-Dei*, but continued politicking and other motives.

5.5.2 *Balkanising the church: CCAP missiological motives in South Africa*

While it is clear why and how the Synod of Livingstonia started congregations in South Africa, it is questionable as to why the two other Malawian Synods decided also to establish congregations in a country where its sister Synod had planted a congregation and most importantly where they have partner churches to which members have been worshipping for over a century – such as the Nkhoma Synod, which was founded by the DRCM of the NGK. Was the CCAP leadership aware of the ecumenical implications for not recognising the mutual understanding between them and their partners?

It is possible that the Nkhoma Synod recognised the Johannesburg congregation because of the border dispute between the Synod of Livingstonia and itself. It also appears that it did not understand the ecumenical implication of the decision of planting congregations in South Africa where it has its partners. But for the Blantyre Synod, it is questionable why it recognised the Johannesburg congregation. If it was a language problem, both Nkhoma and Blantyre use Chichewa. It would have made sense if both had formed one congregation. Some research participants indicated that besides the politics in the three CCAP synods in Malawi, finances played a big role in influencing the decisions of the Synods to recognise the three Johannesburg congregations.¹¹⁴⁴ Hence, politicisation of ethnicity and finances were the motivating factors that led to the establishment of the separate congregations, paying allegiance to the three Malawian

¹¹⁴³ Interview Elifa Chimesha, J. Kazembe and Bhekisa Siula at Johannesburg Blantyre Synod congregation, Berea township in Johannesburg on 25/10/2015.

¹¹⁴⁴ Most research participants who answered on finances as motivational factor for the synods asked not to write their names on condition of anonymity.

Synods. This defeats the whole purpose of doing mission in unity as espoused by Bosch. Bosch calls it an anomaly when we talk of “unity of churches” - it is only ideal if we talk about “unity of the church”.¹¹⁴⁵ Bosch’s statement strongly applies to the divisions the CCAP has been experiencing.

During the fieldwork in Johannesburg, the researcher found that some Malawian migrant Christians were not interested in differences that the Synods have. They worshipped with any CCAP congregation that was close to their residential place, regardless of its social and ecclesiastical origin in Malawi. For example, the three top leaders of the Johannesburg Blantyre Synod congregation were from the Northern Region and formerly members of the Synod of Livingstonia. It was also the same case with the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods’ congregations in Johannesburg. The question is, what is the source of the debates that are balkanising the CCAP in South Africa? The answer to the question lies in what the next chapters will explore.

5.6 *Summary of the Chapter*

The chapter has shown that the Malawian migrant Christians in the early days of diasporic ministry were not interested in ethnic and ecclesiastical differences. Rather they were interested in being identified with a single territorial or ecclesiastical identity, that is, Nyasas (Malawians) or CCAP members. However, the European ecclesiastical differences had profound effects on divisions that occurred among African Christians, along ethnic lines. The chapter has further observed that the causes of schisms in the Copperbelt CCAR in Zambia were ethnic cleavages, personalities, and differences in church disciplinary conduct. However, the Copperbelt ecclesiastical divisions did not link to the border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods.

The chapter also indicated that the Bulawayo schism originated from ethnic differences largely influenced by the manipulation of languages and mission identities by missionaries. It also noted that at the beginning the Bulawayo breakaway was not linked to the border dispute because it was regarded as a Harare Synod issue. However, the developments of politics in Malawi during and after the fall of Dr Banda contributed to ethnic and ecclesiastical debates, leading to ecclesiastical divisions, whereby the Harare Synod and Synod of Livingstonia came to have parallel congregations in the same space, and overlapping activities regardless of the fact that both synods

¹¹⁴⁵ D. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 464.

belong to one Church, the CCAP. It further noted that the border dispute debates have significantly aggravated the divisions of the Harare Synod, along ethnic lines. Hence, it argues that ethnicity among the migrant CCAP members was consciously crafted through language manipulation and the Banda's politics in Malawi.

The chapter also shows that the tendency for the CCAP Synods to recognise the breakaway groups from sister churches in the hosting countries of the Malawian migrant Christians not only impinged on the unity of the Christian church, but it also set a precedent for future breakaways. If the CCAP Synods' leadership stood by its first position of no-tolerance to breakaways, it would have deterred other members from breaking away. Instead, they would have had to find better ways of resolving ecclesiastical disputes.

Finally, the CCAP missiological motive in South Africa is not necessarily centred on the *missio-Dei*, but on ethnicity and finances. This missiological approach defeats the purpose of doing mission in unity, as suggested by David Bosch.

CHAPTER SIX

ETHNIC AND ECCLESIASTICAL DEBATES DURING DR BANDA ERA (1964-1994)

6.0 *Introduction*

This chapter explores how Dr Banda's socio-political policies contributed to the ongoing border dispute between the Synod of Livingstonia and the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) along ethnic lines. Banda became the Prime Minister of Nyasaland (Malawi) in 1963 and the State President of Malawi in 1966 and he championed the Chewa hegemony. In 1967, the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute resurfaced after it had been settled in 1958, as explained in Chapter Three.

The critical questions we must ask are: Why was the border dispute reasserted soon after independence? Why did it happen at the time when Banda was also employing the ethnic card as a strategy of divide-and-rule to consolidate his political power base? Was there any correlation between ecclesiastical debates over the border dispute along ethnic lines and Banda's politicisation of ethnicity? These questions could help in understanding why ethnicity has been a recurrent problem in the border dispute since 1967. It must be remembered that ethnicity rises as a reaction to historical forces, because individuals do not affirm or contest their ethnic identities without a clear cause or purpose. This is why this chapter explores how Banda's socio-political policies contributed to the border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods from 1964 to 1994.

This post-independence socio-political discourse needs to be read in the context of the transfer of the Kasungu Station to the DRCM. As explained in Chapter Four, Dr Banda's exclusionary policies were largely influenced by the transfer of the Kasungu Station, which in his view and that of his fellow Chewa people was intended to deprive them of the right to western formal education so that could not compete meaningfully in the job market. This is crucial to the understanding of why the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute resurfaced in 1967. In order to have a better perspective of this debate, this chapter begins re-examining the political history of Malawi from the ethno-political perspective, and link it to the border dispute.

In order to have a better understanding of the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute, the discussion will be divided into two sections, namely the Kasungu border dispute that started in 1956 and settled in 1958, and resurfaced in 1967. The second section focuses on the Nkhotakota border dispute, which was a post-independence discourse that started in 1967. In the Kasungu District, the Nkhoma Synod claimed that [the \(317\)](#) Milenje Stream was its northerly boundary, as opposed to the traditional boundaries (in figure 6.9) while the Synod of Livingstonia claimed that its southern boundary [\(A 318\)](#) was the Dwangwa River, which is at a distance of 40 kilometres to the south of the Milenje Stream. In Nkhotakota side, the Nkhoma Synod claimed that its northerly boundary with the Synod of Livingstonia was the Dwangwa River whereas the latter claimed that its southern boundary with the former was the Bua River, which is at a distance of 35 kilometres to the south of the Dwangwa River. The crux of the matter is why did the Nkhoma Synod make these claims after independence.

6.1 Ethnic Preference in the One-Party Era: A Contested Site for the Border Dispute

The press statements, which were issued by two [the \(A 319\)](#) Synods, link the border dispute to Dr Banda's politics of inclusion and exclusion. For instance, the Nkhoma Synod, in its press statement, stated,

We refer with great pain, to the reaction of the Synod of Livingstonia, on the presumed Nkhoma Synod's political affiliation to Dr H. Kamuzu Banda's regime, as contained in their report of the same meeting, stating, 'It's true, to some extent, that political influence plays some significant part in fuelling the dispute. We would love to see that emphasis is also placed on why certain people prefer one party to the other(s). This may include how certain groups of people have been victimized by parties which align themselves with Synods without having these Synods abandon the party's altogether'.¹¹⁴⁶

¹¹⁴⁶ The CCAP Nkhoma Synod Press Statement issued at its 23rd Biannual Assembly held at Namoni Katengeza Lay Training Centre from 22 to 27 October 2009, p 2.

The Nkhoma Synod distanced itself from Banda's regime.¹¹⁴⁷ However, the Synod of Livingstonia's allegation that Banda's politics fuelled the border dispute requires further investigation, to ascertain the extent to which Banda's politics could have contributed to the ongoing Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute.

Some scholars claim that there were no ethnic divisions during Banda's reign,¹¹⁴⁸ while other scholars contend that ethnic cleavages emerged during the one-party era, because Banda's policies favoured the Central Region Chewa at the expense of other Malawians through Chewa hegemony.¹¹⁴⁹ Interestingly, Malawi, unlike other British colonies such as Nigeria, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, where nationalist political parties were regionally and ethnically inclined,¹¹⁵⁰ had one dominant nationalist political party: the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), a successor of the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) that had overwhelming support across ethnic or regional boundaries.¹¹⁵¹ If this Malawi political party had membership across ethnic boundaries, why was Banda accused of politicising ethnicity?

6.1.1 *Problematizing ethnicity during Banda's authoritarian rule*

Although ethnicity did not start in post-independence Malawi, this subsection argues that Chewa ethnic consciousness [intensified \(A 320\)](#) with the coming of Dr Banda. Vail and White observed that, prior to Banda's arrival, there were no Chewa intellectuals who would act as cultural brokers for the 'progressive ethnic ideology', as was the case in northern Malawi.¹¹⁵² While Vail and White might be right, it would be important not to downplay aspirations of the leaders of the Chewa ethnic associations among Chewa migrant labourers, as discussed in Chapter Four. They had a desire to mobilise their fellow Chewa, but they lacked a strategy. It should be noted that they were the same individuals that networked with Dr Banda while in London, and also with Chief Mwase on how to deal with Chewa backwardness caused by the DRCM education system. This is the reason why it is important to read Malawi ethnic narratives conjunction with how Banda executed the politics of the we-and-they through the Chewa hegemony. Jonathan Joseph is right

¹¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 2.

¹¹⁴⁸ E.T. Mvula, "Language Policies in Africa," 46.

¹¹⁴⁹ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi," 179-180; R. Carver, *Where Silence Rules*, 55-59; K.R. Ross, *Here Comes Your King*, 156, 157.

¹¹⁵⁰ D. Welsh, "Ethnicity in sub-Saharan Africa," in *International Affairs*, 72:3. 1996, 484.

¹¹⁵¹ K. R. Ross, "Christian Faith and National Identity," 156; J. McCracken, "Democracy and Nationalism in Historical Perspective: The Case of Malawi," 238.

¹¹⁵² L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi," 174.

in saying that the hegemonic process cannot be “understood [as] the domination that one group exerts on the other, but we should consider how a group influences the economic, political and cultural conditions to maintain its position as a leading group.”¹¹⁵³ In this case, the hegemonic process can be defined on the basis of group relations between specific groups and their structures.¹¹⁵⁴ Hence, to have a better perspective on Banda’s politicised ethnicity, this section explores how Banda, as a representative of Chewa hegemony, related to people from the north and south in political, economic and social policies and everyday dealings.

The authoritarian leadership that Banda displayed after his arrival is considered to be one of the factors that led to the cabinet crisis. John G. Pike, Andrew Ross, Philip Short, T. David Williams and John L.C Lwanda, among other historians, have given a detailed account of how Dr Banda became a dictator.¹¹⁵⁵ However, this subsection will briefly document how Banda’s propensity for dictatorship contributed to the politicisation of ethnicity.

Dr Banda began to politicise ethnicity after he returned to Malawi in 1958, at the age of sixty-nine years,¹¹⁵⁶ to participate in the political struggle against the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. He came to lead the country to self-determination, after over 40 uninterrupted years living in the diaspora.¹¹⁵⁷ This implies that the political struggle against White supremacy was started by other Nyasas residing in Malawi. This political struggle was led by the nationalists who were former graduates of the two Scottish Presbyterian Missions of Blantyre and Livingstonia.¹¹⁵⁸ It was these mission graduates who formed a national political party that was named the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC).¹¹⁵⁹

The Federation of Nyasaland and Rhodesia was formed in 1953 by the white minorities living in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, primarily to serve their economic interests.¹¹⁶⁰ The Nyasas (Malawians) noticed developments leading to the Federation after what happened in 1944, when the white settlers formed a council to facilitate the amalgamation of the two Rhodesias and

¹¹⁵³ J. Joseph, “A Realist Theory of Hegemony,” in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 30: 2, 2000, 183.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 182.

¹¹⁵⁵ J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 135-172; A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 111-230; P. Short, *Banda*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, 130-320; D. Williams, *Malawi: The Politics of Despair*, London: Cornell University Press, 1978, 196-260; J.L. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*,

¹¹⁵⁶ P. Short, *Banda*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, 12 5; L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi,” 178; A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 48.

¹¹⁵⁷ J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 114, 115; L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi,” 178.

¹¹⁵⁸ CIIR, *Malawi: A Moment of Truth*, London: 1993, 9.

¹¹⁵⁹ D. Williams, *Malawi: The Politics of Despair*, London: Cornell University Press, 1978, 144.

¹¹⁶⁰ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 52.

Nyasaland.¹¹⁶¹ This happened at the same time as the NAC was formed, with Levi Mumba, a northerner, as its first President.¹¹⁶² According to Williams, James Frederick Sangala, the southerner, “was sympathetic to Levi Mumba’s effort to set up a national body”.¹¹⁶³ This was the reason why both Sangala and Mumba became instrumental in the formation of the NAC as a channel through which African grievances could be made known to the colonial government.¹¹⁶⁴ As noted above, the NAC was predominantly led by the graduates of the Scottish mission schools. Ross is right in saying, “It is important to note that Congress was an entirely northern-southern affair.”¹¹⁶⁵ This implies that not many Malawians from the Central Region joined the NAC.

Prior to his return, Dr Banda, a graduate of the Livingstonia Mission, heard about the political developments in Nyasaland, and joined the struggle, while practising medicine in Britain. He began to correspond with members of the NAC and supported them financially.¹¹⁶⁶ Following the death of Mumba in 1945, with the NAC facing political, organisational and financial crises, its leadership turned to Banda for advice.¹¹⁶⁷ From this time, Banda continued to support the NAC while in the diaspora. At a certain point, he withdrew from being an active member of the Congress because he was disappointed with the progress being made. He even suggested that nationalists should “give the federation a fair chance.”¹¹⁶⁸ According to Short, Banda “vowed not to return to Nyasaland while the [Federal Government] remained in force.”¹¹⁶⁹ In March 1957, he maintained his stance, even when T.D.T. Banda, the interim President of NAC, and Chipembere persuaded him to return to Malawi to lead the party, while he was practicing medicine in Ghana.¹¹⁷⁰

Between the period of the NAC crisis and when Banda gave up, it was the young leading nationalists and other educated elites who revived the party and pumped their energy into it,¹¹⁷¹ with limited support from senior members such as Sangala, Manoah Chirwa and T.D.T. Banda.¹¹⁷² These young leading nationalists were: Masuko Chipembere, Augustin Bwanusi, Dunduzu

¹¹⁶¹ Ibid, 49; D. Williams, *Malawi*, 125.

¹¹⁶² Ibid, 64; B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 225-226, 231; D. Williams, *Malawi*, 126.

¹¹⁶³ D. Williams, *Malawi*, 126.

¹¹⁶⁴ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 65; B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 232.

¹¹⁶⁵ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 65.

¹¹⁶⁶ D. Williams, *Malawi*, 127.

¹¹⁶⁷ B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 233; A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 65.

¹¹⁶⁸ D. Williams, *Malawi*, 165.

¹¹⁶⁹ P. Short, *Banda*, 75; J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 139.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 83; D. Williams, *Malawi*, 175.

¹¹⁷¹ Ibid, 80; J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 137.

¹¹⁷² A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 75, 77.

Chisiza, Yatuta Chisiza, Kanyama Chiume, Orton Chirwa, and Rose Chibambo. Among them, Orton Chirwa was the eldest, aged thirty-seven years, in 1956 when the rest of his group were in their twenties.¹¹⁷³ With the exception of Chipembere and John Msonthi, who were Anglican members, all young prominent nationalists were members of the CCAP or had a Presbyterian background, including Dr Banda himself.

Before Banda, the NAC was led by Manoah Chirwa, a Tonga by ethnicity. However, he had a propensity for wanting to be treated as a godfather, which young nationalists did not like. When he was asked to resign, it was Chipembere and Chiume who saved him, enabling him to retain his position.¹¹⁷⁴ But later on, as Short wrote, “As months went by, Chipembere and Chiume [also] became increasingly dissatisfied with the timidity of their older colleagues, and towards the end of 1956 they began to search for new methods of making the movement more effective.”¹¹⁷⁵ One option was to ask Manoah Chirwa to resign. However, they were faced with the question of succession in the event of Chirwa resigning or being removed from the position. Against this background, they thought of inviting Dr Banda to lead the struggle against the colonial regime.¹¹⁷⁶

When Banda arrived in 1958, he began to show dictatorial tendencies¹¹⁷⁷, particularly after what transpired between 1958 and 1964. Upon his arrival, Banda was made president of the NAC. In 1959, Banda and thousands of NAC members were arrested and detained, following the state of emergency declared by the colonial government. While in detention, Orton Chirwa and the ablest nationalists, mostly from the south and north, formed the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), with Orton Chirwa as its first President.¹¹⁷⁸ When Dr Banda was released from detention in 1960, Chirwa handed over the MCP presidency to Banda, who was made the life president of the party.¹¹⁷⁹

When he returned home, Banda identified himself as an elder of the Church of Scotland, which had persistently lobbied the British government to abolish the white minority rule in Malawi and supported the nationalists and the CCAP. Although Banda was not a legitimate member of the CCAP¹¹⁸⁰, he identified with it during his tenure of office as State President. This association

¹¹⁷³ Ibid, 206.

¹¹⁷⁴ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 92, 95-96.

¹¹⁷⁵ P. Short, *Banda*, 82.

¹¹⁷⁶ J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 139.

¹¹⁷⁷ J. McCracken, “Democracy and Nationalism in Historical Perspective: The Case of Malawi,” 242.

¹¹⁷⁸ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 196-97.

¹¹⁷⁹ P. Short, *Banda*, 149.

¹¹⁸⁰ Email interview with Dr Silas Ncozana on 13/04/2016.

played a role in Banda's political life. Besides his ecclesiastical association, his age contributed to making him a dictator.¹¹⁸¹ While his age played a part, the attitude the nationalists had about party leadership also played a big role in making Banda a dictator. Chipembere said that the reasoning was that a leader of the political struggle was to be "a kind of saviour, a prestigious father who would provide the dynamic leadership necessary for success."¹¹⁸² Lwanda says that "the younger Congress supporters of course considered that because, Banda was highly-educated, he would be equally reasonable and democratic, a first among equals."¹¹⁸³ The young nationalists miscalculated what type of a leader Banda was.

Based on what Chipembere says, the young nationalists began to accord Dr Banda messianic adulation that made him to think that he was indispensable.¹¹⁸⁴ Williams points out that Banda was intoxicated with adulation, leading him to underestimate the young nationalists.¹¹⁸⁵ Besides the adulation that the MCP supporters accorded to him, there were other factors which also contributed to make Banda a dictator, namely, a personal cult that was embodied in the big-man syndrome: political patronage; the political manipulation of traditional concepts, such as respect for the elders and age, the reintroduction and use suppressive legislation to silence political opponents, such as detention without trial, the supporting role that Sir Glyn Jones, the Governor, played by favouring Banda at the expense of the young nationalists, the use of the party paramilitary wing to silence and deal with dissenters, and other state machinery. They played a big role to consolidated Banda's power base.¹¹⁸⁶

Lwanda observes that Banda's sensitivity to leadership threats also played a part.¹¹⁸⁷ Dr Banda sensed that his authority was being threatened by the young nationalists. This led Banda to begin playing an ethnic card as a strategy for divide-and-rule.¹¹⁸⁸ Contributing to a new amendment of the Penal code in Parliament, Dr Banda argued, "But I want to make absolutely sure that, as much as it is within my power, no one can get away safe in this country, and if that is dictatorship, then I am a dictator. I don't mind it at all."¹¹⁸⁹ To accomplish this, he put in place draconian laws and

¹¹⁸¹ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 163-4.

¹¹⁸² H. M. Chipembere, as quoted in J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 139.

¹¹⁸³ J.L. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi: A Study in Promise, Power and Legacy*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2009, 113.

¹¹⁸⁴ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 208.

¹¹⁸⁵ D. Williams, *Malawi*, 178.

¹¹⁸⁶ J.L. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, 113-116; P. Short, *Banda*, 204.

¹¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 207.

¹¹⁸⁸ K.R. Ross, "Christian Faith and National Identity," 156.

¹¹⁸⁹ Malawi Hansards of 7th October 1965, Zomba Government Printer, p 185, SLA, Box 28

rules to suppress any critic whom he perceived as a stumbling block to his political career, particularly the nationalists who associated with the two Scottish-oriented Presbyteries.¹¹⁹⁰ For instance, in July 1962 Banda appointed a sub-committee, with Orton Chirwa as its chairperson, to work on [an \(A 321\)](#) MCP disciplinary code. Short says that although the sub-committee was to look at party management, the disciplinary rules were meant “to find ways of dealing with dissidents.” The critical rules written by MCP subcommittee were Rules 15 and 16. For example, Rule 15 stipulates, “The Life President, as the Supreme leader and Symbol of the Supremacy of the Party, must be respected, honoured and revered by every member of the Party, high or low, and Party members, high or low, are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner in his presence.”¹¹⁹¹ This rule demanded all members to show loyalty to him. As such, Banda began purposely demeaning his cabinet ministers in public meetings, and treating them as nonentities, which the young cabinet ministers did not like. It was this political development that led to the cabinet crisis.

6.1.2 *The cabinet crisis: the rise of Chewa ethnic consciousness*

This section explores how the cabinet crisis contributed to ethnic cleavages in Malawi during Dr Banda’s autocratic rule. However, it will not give a full account of the 1964 cabinet crisis, because other historians have already extensively documented that.¹¹⁹²

Dr Banda ambivalently used to say, “As far as I am concerned, there is no Yao in this country, no Lomwe, no Sena, Chewa, no Ngoni, no Nyakyusa, no Nkhonde, no Tonga: there are only ‘Malawians’. That is all”.¹¹⁹³ This was a double-standard rhetoric statement that Banda repeatedly made. However, he was promoting Chewa-ness in his everyday life.¹¹⁹⁴ That was why his campaign for the national unity contradicted his position on public policies and everyday life, and the way in which he defined the *ways of seeing* and the *structure of actions*. Most scholars have

¹¹⁹⁰ F.E. Kanyongolo, “The Limits of Liberal Democratic Constitutionalism in Malawi,” in *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*, edited by Kings M. Phiri and Kenneth R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998, 359-60.

¹¹⁹¹ MCP Code of Conduct as quoted in P. Short, *Banda*, 169.

¹¹⁹² J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 161-172; A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 111-230; P. Short, *Banda*, 130-320; D. Williams, *Malawi*, 196-260; J.L. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, 131-146.

¹¹⁹³ President Dr H.K. Banda’s speech in 1974 as quoted in Leroy Vail, 1981, 121; This speech was not different to what he said during the opening of the MCP Convention held at Mzuzu Teachers Training College on 30 September 1979, SLA, Box 64.

¹¹⁹⁴ W.C. Chirwa, “Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience,” 57.

observed that Banda abandoned his national agenda in favour of the central Chewa's plight.¹¹⁹⁵ [His agenda of excluding non-Chewa](#) was vividly evident in Malawian political episodes, [which](#) is called "cabinet crisis", that happened soon after Malawi attained independence from Britain ([A 322](#)).

To consolidate his power base, Banda continued with his politics of divide-and-rule, by frustrating his cabinet ministers and other sections of the Malawian population. Pike, commenting on post-independence events, says,

Within the cabinet, Dr Banda's chief lieutenants- Chipembere, Chiume, Chirwa and Yatuta Chisiza- had become increasingly dissatisfied with the role in which they found themselves; they resented being treated by Dr Banda as incapable of directing policy within their own ministries and carved for greater responsibility and power commensurate with their newly-achieved positions.¹¹⁹⁶

On 26th July 1964, during Banda's speech at a public meeting, it was evident to the young ministers that he was after them. He publically humiliated them and instigated the public to deal with anyone that he labelled as a traitor, possibly referring to cabinet ministers, with the exception of his home boys: John Z.U. Tembo and John Msonthi and Richard Chidzanja.¹¹⁹⁷

In August 1964, the cabinet ministers confronted Banda, and outlined some of their grievances. Among the list of grievances they presented to Dr Banda were the following: (a) The pace at which Africanisation in the civil service was moving was slow; (b) Banda did not give them greater personal freedom in the administration of policy in their respective ministries; (c) Banda should reconsider his foreign policy in regard to Malawi diplomatic relations with the Portuguese colonial government in Mozambique, and the South African apartheid government; and (d) His leniency towards the white minority government in Southern Rhodesia should be in line with the aspirations of the Pan-Africanists. They also urged him to recognise Communist China:¹¹⁹⁸ they accused Banda of running the government as a personal estate, and asked him to stop practising nepotism and favouritism in his appointments.¹¹⁹⁹ But Banda turned down their requests.¹²⁰⁰

In September 1964, Banda called an emergency session of Parliament, and he dismissed Chirwa, Bwanausi, Chiume and Rose Chibambo from the cabinet. In sympathy with fellow cabinet

¹¹⁹⁵ P. Short, *Banda*, 273; J.L.C. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, 187; B. Mkandawire, "Ethnicity, Language, and Cultural Violence," 33.

¹¹⁹⁶ P. Short, *Banda*, 163.

¹¹⁹⁷ A.R. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 219.

¹¹⁹⁸ J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 165; A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 211, 215; L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi," 179; R. Carver, *Where Silence Rules*, 12.

¹¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 167; P. Short, *Banda*, 208.

¹²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 165.

colleagues, Yatuta Chisiza and Willie Chokani also resigned. Later, when Chipembere returned home from Canada, he also resigned, in solidarity with his fellow ex-cabinet ministers, leaving Dr Banda and his home-boys John Z.U. Tembo and John Msonthi.¹²⁰¹ It was this resignation of the cabinet ministers that was described as a “cabinet crisis”.

It is this political development that led Kenneth Ross to lament that the national unity, which the nationalists had built during the struggle, had been “shattered by the cabinet crisis”.¹²⁰² While the cabinet crisis shattered the national unity, it should be said that it just affirmed the large scheme that Dr Banda had been harbouring, after his correspondences with Chewa leaders such as Chief Mwase, his uncle Hanock Musokera Phiri, Ernest C. Matako and Kamangeni, on how to deal with the backwardness of the Chewa people, after the Livingstonia Mission handed over the Kasungu Station to the DRCM. Dr Banda, in his letter to Matako of 8th October 1938, wrote,

I am not at all surprised that the Rev. Manda does nothing to assist the Chief, politically. He is in the Dutch Reformed Church, a church which is notorious for its aversion to political advancement among native people ... I lived in South Africa, the home of the Dutch, for years. I know the cardinal policy of the Dutch Reformed Church very well, so far as native advancement goes. It only believes in saving the souls of the natives and preparing the natives for the life to come.¹²⁰³

Having concerned with DRCM education after 14 years when Kasungu was transferred, he went on to say that:

I wrote Chief Mwase, as well as Rev. Phiri to pick out two most clever boys at Kasungu, to go to Khondowe [Livingstonia Mission headquarters] as my personal bursaries ... All I want is that they must be most clever boys at Kasungu. And I shall bear all their expenses at Khondowe, except clothing, which they must bring with them. If the experiment works, I shall increase the number to four. And I hope that others at Kasungu, who are economically able to do the same, will offer to help some other boys.¹²⁰⁴

However, it is known that boys from Kasungu went to Livingstonia to get the education that Dr Banda and his Chewa people desired, [because the selection was done within the sphere of influence of Livingstonia Mission \(A 323\)](#). This is why he turned against those who continued to benefit from the education offered by the Livingstonia Mission, as opposed to the DRCM. This explains why most victims of the cabinet crisis were predominantly from the Northern Region and, to some extent, from the Southern Region.¹²⁰⁵ Banda only dismissed “chiefs from both the Northern and Southern Regions ... but none from the Central Region” were affected. “Likewise a

¹²⁰¹ A.C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, 221; J.G. Pike, *Malawi*, 167; P. Short, *Banda*, 210.

¹²⁰² K.R. Ross, “Christian Faith and National Identity,” 156.

¹²⁰³ Letter of Dr H.K. Banda to Ernest C. Matako dated 08/10/138 attached in Sean Marrow and John McCracken, “Two Previously Unknown Letters from Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Written from Edinburgh, 1938, Archived at the University of Cape Town,” in *History in Africa*, Vol. 39, 2012, 352.

¹²⁰⁴ Letter of Dr H.K. Banda to Ernest C. Matako dated 08/10/138, p 353

¹²⁰⁵ K.R. Ross, “Christian Faith and National Identity,” 156; R. Carver, *Where Silence Rules*, 57.

majority of regional councils in both the Northern and Southern Regions were dissolved-but again, none from the Central Region.”¹²⁰⁶ Banda’s actions were not only political, but they were also ethnically motivated.

Kenneth Ross also observed, “With his own authority under threat, Banda had opted to play the tribal card and to attempt to maintain his highly authoritarian rule by means of a hegemony of his own Chewa-speaking people of the Central Region.” Banda politics were skewed to mobilise Chewa against non-Chewa, particularly the northerners and the Yao, whom he thought were associates of Chipembere. As part of his tactics of divide-and-rule, Dr Banda began mobilising other Malawian ethnic groups such as the Lomwe and the Mang’anja against the Yao and the Makololo. As a result, he lumped the Chipeta, Nyanja, Mang’anja, and Lomwe people together with his Chewa group, into a single ethnic group known as the Chewa¹²⁰⁷, although in colonial Malawi they had never identified themselves as Chewa.¹²⁰⁸ This was Banda’s *melting-pot* in which he wanted other Malawian ethnic groups to become Chewa culturally and linguistically.

During Banda’s reign, members of the Chewa hegemony appealed to ethnicity, not because they loved to be Chewa, but because the Chewa hegemony was functional. No wonder, in the post-one-party dispensation, the Mang’anja people disassociated themselves from the Chewa association, by forming their own cultural association called “Nkumano wa a Mang’anja” in 2012, with the purpose of promoting the Mang’anja culture and ethnic identity.¹²⁰⁹ The Lomwe that Dr Banda clustered together with his Chewa people, formed Mulhako wa Alomwe, arguing that Banda suppressed their cultural rights.¹²¹⁰ Dr Banda consciously crafted a new Chewa identity by incorporating members from other ethnic groups in the Southern Region for political mobilisation, to exclude the Yao.¹²¹¹ Then Leroy Vail is right to argue that ‘ethnicity is not a natural cultural residue, but a consciously crafted ideological creation.’¹²¹²

Banda discriminated the educated Yao people, not because they were of the same ethnicity like Chipembere, but because he held that they were his supporters. This could be the reason why some

¹²⁰⁶ R. Carver, *Where Silence Rules*, 57.

¹²⁰⁷ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi,” 180; B. Mkandawire, “Ethnicity, Language and Cultural Violence,” 32-33.

¹²⁰⁸ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 19.

¹²⁰⁹ The Nation Newspaper of 5 September 2014, in the article authored by Pledge Jali titled “Culture”

¹²¹⁰ G.W. Kayira and P.C. Banda, Materialism and Ethnicity: The Rise of Lomwe Ethnic Consciousness in Malawi 1890-2010,” in *The Society of Malawi Journal*, 66:2, 2013, 48, 49.

¹²¹¹ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi,” 180; W.C. Chirwa, “Democracy, Ethnicity, and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience,” 63.

¹²¹² L. Vail, “Introduction: Ethnicity in Southern African History,” 7.

scholars mistakenly identified Chipembere as a Yao.¹²¹³ Lwanda says that Chipembere was a Nyanja by ethnicity from the Mangochi District.¹²¹⁴ This propensity of associating an ethnic group with a region or district is problematic to understand ethnicity in Malawi. As argued in Chapter Three, most regions and districts, if not all, in Malawi are ethnically heterogeneous. In discussing Malawian (324) ethnicity, there is a need to distinguish between speaking one common language and being a member of an ethnic group. These two things are different. It is a fact that there have been language shifts in Malawi in which individuals or groups of people embraced other languages as their mother-tongues, but it should be noted that they have maintained their distinct ethnic identities and cultures that are different from the ethnic group that owns the language that they use (A 325). For example, during fieldwork, a Ngoni research participant from the Dowa District, where nearly everyone speaks Chichewa, did not accept to be classified or described as a Chewa, but as a Ngoni.¹²¹⁵

Chipembere, commenting on the aftermath of the cabinet crisis, pointed out,

Dr Banda had the considerable advantage of controlling the party organization (especially the Young Pioneers and League of Youth, who were used as storm troops during this period) ... He also had some important sources of support among the general populace. The Chewa, his own tribal group, were numerous and, for the most part, poorly educated. They were not in favour of rapid Africanisation, because that would have led to dominance of other tribal groups, especially Northerners, among whom the advantage of modern education had been more widespread: they feared that the Northerners might have proved far more difficult to displace than the Europeans, who accepted the temporary nature of their positions in the government.¹²¹⁶

According to Chipembere, Banda purposely slowed down the process of Africanisation for his Chewa people to fill the public service posts that were occupied by the Western expatriates. But most educated Africans participated in the political struggle leading to self-determination with the hope that (A 326) process of Africanisation would allow them to fully participate in socioeconomic development of their country.¹²¹⁷ Banda's position on Africanisation was supported by the purging of northerners and southerners in order to fill the vacant posts with his Chewa people, as the section will illustrate later.

When the political indicators showed that the independence was attainable, Dr Banda and his allies began to shift the pendulum, from addressing national issues, to focussing on the plight of

¹²¹³ K. R. Ross, *Here Comes Your King*, 165.

¹²¹⁴ J.L.C. *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, 132.

¹²¹⁵ Interview Moyo at Kasasanya TDC, a Ngoni from Dowa District in Central Malawi on 19/01/2015.

¹²¹⁶ D. Williams, *Malawi*, 226.

¹²¹⁷ L. Vail and L. White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi," 179; T.J. Thompson, "Presbyterian and Politics in Malawi: A Century of Interaction," 583.

the Chewa, which, to a large extent, was propelled by the DRCM educational policy.¹²¹⁸ Banda began to show resistance to the epicentre of their struggle, namely, Africanisation. It was the debate surrounding how to implement the content of Africanisation, which led to ethnic politics, as part of the divide-and-rule tactic. Surprisingly, it was Dr Banda, as quoted in *Malawi News* of 22 February 1963, who said,

They are saying that all the important jobs in the Party, in the Government and in all other walks of life in this country are held by people from the Northern Province. Not only that, they are also saying that most of the scholarships are awarded to the students from the Northern Province, [and that] most of the places in our Secondary Schools throughout the country are given to the children from the Northern Region.¹²¹⁹

Although McCracken states that Banda refuted this allegation, arguing that “it is [the] ability and suitability of the individual that always decides who is to hold which and what job,”¹²²⁰ what he did after independence contradicts what he said. He was just buying time on how he could begin to address the Chewa plight, because he had information that the Chewa were lagging behind, as a result of the education that the DRCM provided. Lwanda rightly says, “Shrewdly, Banda used the carrot method, stating that those who were good enough would be promoted.” However, this did not continue.¹²²¹ Access to business and top positions in the civil service during Dr Banda’s era “depended on compliance with [patrimonial] politics and on being part of the patronage network.”¹²²² This system favoured his fellow Chewa and a few Malawians from other ethnic groups in southern and northern Malawi, who were part of political patronage network.¹²²³

The exclusion of non-Chewa from public service became apparent in a speech made by Richard Chidzanja, a Chewa by ethnicity, during Parliamentary deliberations. He allegedly said that the younger ministers, prior to the cabinet crisis, used to attack the Chewa as “the *nyau*.”¹²²⁴ Though the word “*nyau*” refers to a Chewa secret society that did not allow the Chewa children to have access education,¹²²⁵ sometimes it is used pejoratively to mean those without formal education.¹²²⁶ Lwanda, commenting on Chidzanja’s remarks, says,

¹²¹⁸ W.C. Chirwa, “Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience,” 59.

¹²¹⁹ An extract from *Malawi News* as quoted in J. McCracken, “The Ambiguities of Nationalism: Flax Musopole and the Northern Factor in Malawi Politics,” 83.

¹²²⁰ J. McCracken, *History of Malawi*, 406.

¹²²¹ J.L.C. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, 177.

¹²²² *Ibid*, 196.

¹²²³ W.C. Chirwa, “Democracy, Ethnicity, and Regionalism,” 61.

¹²²⁴ J.L.C. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, 165.

¹²²⁵ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi,” 179.

¹²²⁶ *Ibid*, 182.

There was some truth in Chidzanja's allegations. As Minister of Education, Chiume [was] alleged to have sent more of his 'home mates' abroad. More of Chiume's people, it was alleged had been given scholarship during his 'Send the Students' fund, while [he was] Minister of Education in 1962. Similar allegations were also made about Chipembere, when he was Minister of Education.¹²²⁷

Although this allegation was often made, no one, including Dr Banda, could conclusively provide substantive evidence that Chiume favoured his home boys.¹²²⁸ In an interview with Prof. Mpalive-Hangson Msiska, he disputed this assertion. He said that Kanyama Chiumie never favoured students from the north. He pointed out that most students who benefited from the scholarships during Chiumie's time as a Minister of Education were not from the north, but from the central and southern regions. He gave the example of former President Bingu Mutharika, a Lomwe from the Southern Region, as one of the beneficiaries of the 1962 scholarships, which enabled him to study in India. Msiska argued further that it was Chiumie who turned mission schools into national secondary schools, to enable students from all districts across the country to go to any secondary school. He said that this why, during his days as a student, many learners from the South and the Centre found their way to mission secondary schools, like Livingstonia Secondary School in the North, as was also the case with northerners.¹²²⁹ Prior to that, it was not possible.¹²³⁰

Banda, as part of the Chewa hegemony's scheme, used the state and party machinery to carry out [systematic discrimination](#) of the non-Chewa ethnic groups in civil service from southern and northern Malawi.¹²³¹ Andrew Ross, a principal witness to the cabinet crisis, in a conversation with the researcher in Edinburgh, pointed out that Dr Banda purposely purged a good number of graduates of the two Scottish missions from civil service and put in his Chewa home boys.¹²³² Jack Mapanje, a Yao from the Southern Region, states, "Almost everyone knows that Banda's coven has been doing everything in their power to discredit southerners and northerners, demoting some or sacking others from jobs, retiring them early and excluding or eliminating them from Malawi society by detentions, exiles and deaths."¹²³³ [\(C 10\)](#).

¹²²⁷ Ibid, 165.

¹²²⁸ W.C. Chirwa, "Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience," 60.

¹²²⁹ Interview Prof. Mpalive-Hangson Msiska at Chancellor College, Malawi on 11/11/ 2015.

¹²³⁰ I.C. Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-war Education Policy Formulation and Application in Colonial Malawi*, 76.

¹²³¹ G.H. Kamwendo, "Ethnic Revival and Language Associations in the New Malawi," 144; J.L.C. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, 259.

¹²³² Mapala conversation with Dr Andrew C. Ross at St Colms in Edinburgh Scotland in February 2008.

¹²³³ J. Mapanje, *And Crocodiles Are Hungry at Night*, Oxfordshire: Ayebia Clarke Publishing Limited, 2011, 306-07.

As such, non-Chewa Malawians, particularly northerners, were no longer perceived as Malawians, but as the “other”, because Banda’s view and that of most Chewa, to use Leroy Vail’s and Landeg White’s expression, “equated Malawian-ness with Chewa-ness”.¹²³⁴ In Mamdani’s language, the Chewa were “citizens”, while the other ethnic groups were “subjects”.¹²³⁵ It was on this basis that the *ways of seeing* and the *structures of action* were defined, contested, navigated and negotiated in Malawian ethnicity during the one party era, as the case of the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute will illustrate later.

Banda’s attitude towards the “other” was imbedded in Chewa hegemony that characterized his government policies, which discriminated against certain sections of the Malawi population. Examples of this are: (a) the quota system for post-secondary education that was geared to exclude northerners from having access to university education; (b) the removal of northerners from the public service, and (c) the detention of university lecturers and administrators, of which 90% were northerners, between 1973 and 1975, and 10% from the Southern Region. In 1989, there was the collective transfer of teachers, originally from northern Malawi, to their home region. Lwanda calls the last event (A 327) the “ethnic cleansing of teachers”.¹²³⁶ Chirwa, commenting on the isolation, stereotyping, and scapegoat propensities in Dr Banda’s speech on 2nd February 1989, argues that “it was a way of creating a feeling of animosity and competition between ethnolinguistic groups from the Northern Region and those from the other two regions.”¹²³⁷ He further pointed out that Banda engaged this kind of politics as “a way of giving the ethno-linguistic groups from the Centre and South the perception that they were more Malawian than those from the North, that they were the in-groups, the putative ‘we’, distinct from the ‘they’ from out there.”¹²³⁸ This is why this study argues that Banda’s attitude towards the “other” was largely influenced by the withdrawal of the Livingstonia Mission from his home district Kasungu, which he interpreted as a denial of his people to learn English, a language associated with socioeconomic empowerment and social status in the society. This is one reason why the Central Chewa and other non-Chewa ethnic groups were divided, along ethnic lines. Banda consciously crafted this form of ethnicity to divide people who used to live side by side.

¹²³⁴ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi,” 182.

¹²³⁵ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subjects*,

¹²³⁶ W.C. Chirwa, “Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism,” 59-63; J.L.C. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, 259.

¹²³⁷ *Ibid*, 60.

¹²³⁸ *Ibid*, 60.

6.2 *The Chewa Hegemony and the Language Policy: A Divisive or Unifying Tool?*

Most Pan-Africanist (A 328) leaders, after obtaining independence from the colonial European powers, embarked on language policy formulation as part of the national integration project. The primary purpose was to deal with the perceived divisions along ethnic lines that characterised most African states, because they were multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual.¹²³⁹ Most Pan-Africanists, including Dr Banda, were guided by a popular theory on ethnicity at that time. It was held that ethnicity is a primordial phenomenon that is manifested in the survival of traditional values. It was argued that ethnicity and ethnic cleavages would disappear with modernisation.¹²⁴⁰ This view was embedded in the assumption that a person is a member of an ethnic group, not by choice, but by birth, and her/his ethnic identity is fixed. However, this explanation downplays the historical process that an individual undergoes, and how this process influences individuals in how and why they define themselves ethnically, as opposed to other members of different ethnic groups. In Chapter Three, it was pointed out that conquest, inter-ethnic marriages, integration and economic factors were critical in how individuals affirmed, constructed and negotiated their ethnic identities. It was concluded that Malawi ethnic identities are malleable constructs, because the origin, content, and form of ethnicity were a reflection of creative choices individuals and groups have, to define and redefine their social boundaries within time and space.¹²⁴¹

The language policy formulation was largely influenced by the emergence of post-colonial studies, especially ethnolinguistic studies, in which the use of imperialist language in public spaces was under scrutiny as another manifestation of imperialism.¹²⁴² At the same time, issues of national language and national integration were directly connected to the emergence of (A 329) one-party state system in post-independence Africa.¹²⁴³ This had a profound impact on how the ethnic groups, associated with those in power, began to define and contest ethnic identities of those who did not belong, and how those who did not belong, resisted the ethnic hegemony.

¹²³⁹ M. Kashoki, "Language Policy Formulation in Multilingual Southern Africa," 186.

¹²⁴⁰ L. Vail, "Introduction: Ethnicity in Southern African History," 1, 2.

¹²⁴¹ J. Negel, "Constructing Ethnicity and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," in *Social Problems*, 41:1, 1994, 152.

¹²⁴² Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of language in African Literature*, London: Heinemann, 1989, 11.

¹²⁴³ M. Kashoki, "Language Policy Formulation in Multilingual Southern Africa," 187.

Daryl McLean observes, “The factors underpinning the language planning are: assimilationism, pluralism, vernacularisation and internationalisation.”¹²⁴⁴ Internationalisation refers to the adoption of a non-indigenous language, with wider communication in a given society and beyond its borders (A 330). These factors played a role in how different governments came to adopt their own language policies. Some governments opted to adopt the colonial language and one or two indigenous languages, which were named as national language(s). In some cases, governments chose the colonial language as an official language for the sake of neutrality. For example, Zambia, after the attainment of independence, chose English as the official language. Other countries, guarded by the aspirations of African nationalism, opted to have a neutral language that was not a colonial language.¹²⁴⁵ For example, Tanzania chose the Swahili language, because it was not affiliated to any ethnic group and colonial powers. [Timpunza Mvula quotes Mazrui who argued that “the eventual acceptance of Kiswahili as Tanzania’s only national language in 1967 was due to the ethnic neutrality of Kiswahili, unlike \[sic\] Luganda, or Kikuyu and Luo in Kenya”, beside other reasons.](#)¹²⁴⁶ (A 331)

The problem with the adoption of national language policies was the aspect of assimilationism. Quoting Cobarrubis, McLean says assimilationism is “grounded in the belief that, in a given society, every person should be able to function effectively in the dominant language, regardless of individual language background.”¹²⁴⁷ This aspect had ethnic undertones that led some ethnic groups to resist and resent the language policy, particularly where governments opted to impose a language that was associated with the incumbent Head of State. It also led to ethnic polarisation and conflicts, in certain cases. Sudan is a good example. The genesis of ethnic conflicts was largely an outcome of the imposition of Arabic as the official language on non-Arabic ethnic groups.¹²⁴⁸ And the 1976 South African uprising in Soweto was instigated by the imposition of Afrikaans on black South Africans, by the apartheid National Party-led government.¹²⁴⁹ The imposition of a

¹²⁴⁴ D. McLean, “Guarding Against the Bourgeoisie Revolution: Some Aspects of Language Planning in the Context of National Democratic Struggle,” in *Language and Society in Africa: The Theory and Practice of Sociolinguistics* edited by Robert K. Herbert, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1992, 152.

¹²⁴⁵ M. Kashoki, “Language Policy Formulation in Multilingual Southern Africa,” 187.

¹²⁴⁶ [E.T. Mvula, “Language Policies in Africa: The Case for Chichewa in Malawi,” 42](#)

¹²⁴⁷ D. McLean “Guarding Against the Bourgeoisie Revolution: Some Aspects of Language Planning in the Context of National Democratic Struggle,” 153.

¹²⁴⁸ E.T. Mvula, “Language Policies in Africa,” 39.

¹²⁴⁹ N. Alexander, *Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa*, 23.

language, which had ethnic undertones, became a contested site for ethno-politics, ethnic cleavages and conflicts in Africa.

6.2.1 *Integration or politicking along ethnolinguistic lines?*

After returning from the December 1958 All-African People's Conference organised by Pan-Africanists under the chairmanship Kwame Nkrumah, according to Pike, Banda's "sole concern was now to bring the tribes together and he was rapidly achieving this."¹²⁵⁰ One area of achieving unity was to have a national language. Although Dr Banda valued the English language, he ambivalently pursued the language policy along ethnic lines, during his tenure of office as State President. The official languages of Malawi were English, Chinyanja and Chitumbuka, until September 1968. To use Mkandawire's word under the "guise" of nation-building in a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural Malawi¹²⁵¹, Dr Banda imposed his mother tongue as a national language alongside English, and banned Chitumbuka and other indigenous languages in public spaces.

Mvula claims that Chitumbuka was only a *lingua franca* for the Northern Province.¹²⁵² What Mvula did not mention is that Chitumbuka was a medium of instruction in schools for the area under the Synod of Livingstonia that stretches to the Dwangwa River in the Kasungu District¹²⁵³ until September 1968. Chinyanja, and not Chichewa, was a *lingua franca* for the area that stretches from Dwangwa River in the Central Province and the whole Southern Province. However, it was Banda who elevated Chichewa as part of his ideology. In 1965, addressing the Parliament, Banda said, "Can't say it myself, I am a Chewa, but a branch of the Chewa is called Achipeta, a branch of Chewa is called Anyanja, a branch of Chewa is called Amang'anja, but basically they are all Chewa."¹²⁵⁴ It was on this assumption that Banda consciously started to craft the Chewa ideology for political mobilisation, assuming all ethnic groups listed were Chewa.¹²⁵⁵

In 1968, the MCP annual convention, under the influence of Dr Banda, passed the following resolutions:

¹²⁵⁰ J.G. Pikes, *Malawi*, 145.

¹²⁵¹ B. Mkandawire, "Ethnicity, language and Cultural Violence," 31.

¹²⁵² E.T. Mvula, "Language Policies in Africa," 43.

¹²⁵³ The Kasungu area stretches to the Dwangwa River but the Nkhotakota area to the Bua River.

¹²⁵⁴ Malawi Hansard, 5 October 1965, Zomba: Government Printer, 161, SLA, Box 28.

¹²⁵⁵ T. Moyo, "Language Politics and National Identity in Malawi," in *South African Journal of African Languages*, 22: 4, 2002, 264, 265.

- a) that Malawi [should] adopt Chinyanja as a national language;
- b) that the name Chinyanja [should] henceforth be known as Chichewa;
- c) that Chichewa and English [should] be the official languages of the state of Malawi and that all other languages would continue to be used in everyday private life in their respective areas.¹²⁵⁶

As such, Chitumbuka was discontinued and proscribed in publication, printing and electronic media, as a medium of instruction and public life.¹²⁵⁷ Instead of Chinyanja, which many considered to be the best language to acquire the status of national language alongside English, on the instruction of Dr Banda, Chichewa was made the national and official language alongside English.¹²⁵⁸ Chichewa was imposed on other ethnic groups, assuming that “in multilingual nation, a common language strengthens and increases cultural and nationalistic identities.”¹²⁵⁹ Banda’s assumption was not different from that of Governor Thomas made in the 1920s, as discussed in Chapter Three.¹²⁶⁰ To accomplish his objective, Chichewa was also imposed in schools as a medium of instruction and a subject for examination throughout the country.¹²⁶¹ On the contrary, Kaspin says that Malawi “ethnic and linguistic diversity ran counter to the President’s claim of nation cohesion, and justified his decision to nationalise and bind them to the political elite.”¹²⁶²

Why did Banda opt for Chichewa, rather than Chinyanja? Mvula responds that it was the missionaries who erroneously gave the name Chinyanja. To justify this, Mvula states,

These Maravi people were called Anyanja or Amang’anja because they inhabited the area near the lake or the Shire River, commonly known as Nyanja. The people were named Anjanja in order to describe them as people of the lake. Hence, Chichewa, the term which should have been employed to designate the language of the Chewa people.¹²⁶³

On the contrary, missionaries never invented the word “Chinyanja”. It was a language of the Nyanja and Mang’anja. [They](#) still maintain their ethnic identities [as opposed to the Chewa people \(A 332\)](#). The problem with Mvula’s explanation is that, in precolonial and colonial Malawi, the

¹²⁵⁶ Malawi Congress Party Convention Resolutions 1965-1983, 6 as quoted in P.J Kishindo, Dr H. Kamuzu Banda’s Language Policy: A Study in Contradictions,” in *Ufahamu: Journal of African Studies*, 25:1; 1997, 87; see E.T. Mvula, “Language and Society in Africa,” 43.

¹²⁵⁷ P.J Kishindo, Dr H. Kamuzu Banda’s Language Policy: A Study in Contradictions,” in *Ufahamu, Journal of African Studies*, 25:1; 1997, 88.

¹²⁵⁸ P.J Kishindo, Dr H. Kamuzu Banda’s Language Policy: A Study in Contradictions,” 87.; K. M. Phiri, “Dr Banda’s Cultural Legacy and its Implication for a Democratic Malawi,” in *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*, edited by Kings M. Phiri and Kenneth R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998, 163

¹²⁵⁹ E.T. Mvula, “Language Policies in Africa,” 43.

¹²⁶⁰ L. Vail, “Ethnicity, language and National Unity,” 141.

¹²⁶¹ G.H. Kamwendo, “Ethnic Revival and Language Associations in the New Malawi,” 141.

¹²⁶² D. Kaspin, “Politics of Ethnicity in Malawi Democratic Transition,” 608-9.

¹²⁶³ E.T. Mvula, “Language Policies in Africa”, 45.

name Chewa was not identical to Maravi, as the latter sometimes was regarded a cluster name for the Maravi ethnic groups, Chewa being one of them.¹²⁶⁴ Equating Chewa to Maravi was Dr Banda's ideological construct for political mobilisation and to promote his ethnic group. Both colonial and postcolonial population censuses have never categorised the Chewa together with the Nyanja as one ethnic group.¹²⁶⁵ This explains why Chichewa was not widely approved across the country. Kishindo reports that the adoption of MCP resolutions:

sparked a wave of resentment, not only among those who feared that it would have the effect of suppressing the development of major indigenous languages, such as Chitumbuka in the North and Chi Yao in the South, but also among those who resented the replacement of Chinyanja by Chichewa.¹²⁶⁶

In addition, some non-Chewa ethnic groups found in the Central Region resented the imposition of Chichewa. Chirwa points out, "It is very likely that some, if not the majority, of the non-Chewa people in the [Central] did not, and still do not, want to be lumped together with the Chewa. They would rather have their own ethno-linguistic identities clearly spelt out and recognised."¹²⁶⁷ After the fall of Dr Banda, the Mang'anja and Lomwe people stopped identifying themselves as Chewa, because the Chewa hegemony was no longer functional. On this basis, this study argues that Chewa ethnicity, as propagated by Banda, was not necessarily based on primordial motives, but on instrumental and was consciously crafted.

In 1969, this is why the newly-appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Education, John W. Gwengwe, a Chewa by ethnicity, announced that pupils who failed their examinations in Chichewa would be required to retake their papers in all subjects.¹²⁶⁸ Vail says that the announcement brought fear among parents in the Southern and Northern regions, who saw the development as an attempt by Chewa hegemony to deprive their children of the right to education (A 333).¹²⁶⁹ These fears seem to have had a basis. Mvula, commenting on the three official language adopted in 1947, observes that the three languages "divided the already divergent ethnic groups into three linguistic and socio-cultural units". He says that:

the three languages further divided the already divergent ethnic groups into three linguistic and cultural units; English-speaking population, which was numerically small but economically and

¹²⁶⁴ J.M. Schoffeleers, "The Meaning and Use of the Name Malawi in Oral Traditions and Precolonial Document" in *The Early History of Malawi* edited by Bridglal Pachai, London: Longman, 1972, 95, 96.

¹²⁶⁵ K. R. Ross, "Christian Faith and National Identity," 157; Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories Part II*, 24.

¹²⁶⁶ P.J Kishindo, Dr H. Kamuzu Banda's Language Policy", 87.

¹²⁶⁷ W.C. Chirwa, "Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience," 63.

¹²⁶⁸ P. Short, *Banda*, 274.

¹²⁶⁹ L. Vail, "Ethnicity, Language and National Unity," 148.

politically powerful, the Chitumbuka in the northern province, and [the] Chinyanja in the central and southern provinces.”¹²⁷⁰

What was fascinating about Mvula was not how he categorised the groups, but the description he gave to one group as being “economically and politically powerful”. The question is, who were the people described in this category? Based on Dr Banda’s speech of 22 February 1963, as quoted above, it was alleged that “the politically and economically powerful” were the northerners, whose (A 335) Scottish mission education privileged them to occupy high positions in the society. This suggests that the proscription of Chitumbuka might have been politically motivated, rather than advancing linguistic functions. The purpose was to stifle the perceived progressive minorities, described as ‘economically and politically powerful’, to excel in life. However, this came as a surprise, because most nationalists and Malawians in their political struggle for self-determination, particularly the Nkhoma Synod Teachers’ Association (NSTA) chaired by John Z.U. Tembo, regarded western education offered through English as a medium of instruction, as opposed to Chichewa, as a gateway to the world of opportunities.¹²⁷¹ In fact, it was the liberal education offered through English that (A 335) made the NSTA and Nkhoma Synod members wanting to secede from the DRCM and join the Synod of Livingstonia in the 1960s.¹²⁷²

As noted above, Banda used school curricula to propagate the Chewa-ness. The school and the University curricula for history were designed to serve Chewa ethnic ideology. Kishindo notes,

This was the type of pre-colonial Malawian history taught in schools and university... Its objective was simply to portray the Chewa as the ‘real’ Malawians, the dominant group and the founders of the nation. This scheme, dubbed the ‘process of Chichewa-ization’, effectively erased out [the] histories of other ethno-linguistic groups.¹²⁷³

It was intended to impress on learners that other ethnic groups were foreigners, and the Chewa were the owners of the land. To some extent, it was to justify Banda’s exclusionary policies on non-Chewa ethnic groups in the public sector.

On the contrary, Mvula concluded that there had been no ethnic antagonism during Banda’s era, because of the Chichewa language policy.¹²⁷⁴ Mvula, perhaps including Dr Banda and the MCP cadres, assumed that the lack of public protest on the imposition of Chichewa meant every

¹²⁷⁰ E.T. Mvula, “Language Policies in Africa”, 43.

¹²⁷¹ R. Tangri, “From the Politics of Union to Mass Nationalism: The Nyasaland African Congress, 1944-59,” in *From Nyasaland to Malawi*, edited by Roderick J. Macdonald, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975, 255; C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 376, 378-379.

¹²⁷² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 390.

¹²⁷³ P.J Kishindo, “Dr H. Kamuzu Banda’s Language Policy”, 90.

¹²⁷⁴ E.T. Mvula, “Language Policies in Africa”, 46.

non-Chewa Malawians accepted it. In fact, as the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute will show, the non-Chewa Malawians did not give consent to the imposition of Chichewa, because they were forced to have it as a *lingua franca*.¹²⁷⁵ Dr Banda took the non-Chewa as if they were naïve to accept his language.

Gramsci rightly says that “man does not enter into relations with the natural world just by being himself part of the natural world, but actively, by means of work and technique. Further, these relations are not mechanical. They are active and conscious.”¹²⁷⁶ The resentment that some sections of the Malawian population displayed to the imposition of Chichewa was evident and they did not approve it. The problem was that Banda and his cadres thought that the non-Chewa were gullible, that would just rubberstamp what Banda said on the language policy, because his words were final for defining Malawi.¹²⁷⁷ What Banda forgot was that for any policy to have a universal acceptance, it needs to have the spontaneous consent of the led or ruled. President Nyerere of Tanzania, as quoted in Hameso, said that “unity should not be imposed and that genuine unity can only be [secured by] general consent of the people concerned.”¹²⁷⁸ Moyo noted that language cannot be a solution to perceived ethnic divisions, as envisaged by Banda and his cadres¹²⁷⁹, specifically when it is politicised to exclude the other ethnic groups. As Chapter Seven will illustrate, the Muluzi language policy was a protest [against \(A336\)](#) the 1968 language policy, because it did not have the consent of the ruled.

6.2.2 *The Interplay between Banda’s politics and the CCAP ethnic cleavages*

How did Banda’s language policy and politics relate to the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute? Kenneth R. Ross says, “The imposition of a national language could be presented as conducive to national unity but, in fact, it alienated the north and the country became ever more divided on regional lines.”¹²⁸⁰ It did not only alienate the north, but it also promoted ethnic polarisation in the CCAP. It is important to examine the extent to which Banda’s politics promoted ethnic cleavages in the Church.

¹²⁷⁵ P. Foster, “Law and Society under a Democratic Dictatorship Dr Banda and Malawi,” in *Journal of Asia and African Studies*, 36:3, 2001, 277.

¹²⁷⁶ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 352.

¹²⁷⁷ J.L.C. Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, 129.

¹²⁷⁸ S.Y. Hameso, *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Africa*, Commack, NY: Nova Science, 1997, 72

¹²⁷⁹ T. Moyo, *Language Politics and National Identity in Malawi*, 272

¹²⁸⁰ K.R. Ross, “Christian Faith and National Identity,” 157.

To illustrate this, the study uses the case of the Blantyre Synod, and then link the debate to the border dispute. In November 1994, the CCAP Blantyre Synod women petitioned the Synod on issues perceived as infringing on women rights in the church.¹²⁸¹ In response, the Synod made a list of recommendations. Among these was the recommendation that: “Dr Isabel Phiri should be told not to interfere [in] the affairs of Blantyre Synod, and [that] if she [had] some knowledge, [she] should go and propagate that gospel in [the] Nkhoma Synod [from which she hailed].”¹²⁸² Yet Dr Phiri was a *bona fide* member of the CCAP Blantyre Synod because, according to the CCAP church polity, of which the researcher is a church minister, if a church member takes a disjunction certificate from his former congregation/synod to a new congregation/synod, she/he ceases to be a member of the former congregation/synod, and duly becomes a *bona fide* member of the new congregation/synod that she/he joins. Most importantly, Dr Phiri was baptised in the Blantyre Synod and remained a practising member, until the time when this verdict was pronounced on her.¹²⁸³ Ross, commenting on the verdict that the Blantyre Synod made on Dr Phiri, says, “Such a comment reveals how close to the surface [this] sense of alienation [lay between] people of different ethnic and regional origin.”¹²⁸⁴ The Blantyre Synod’s reaction exposed the attitude its members had towards the Nkhoma Synod, perhaps because of its association with Dr Banda. Schoffeleers, commenting on a meeting held between the Anglican Church and CCAP leaders on 27th March 1992 after the issuance of the RC pastoral letter, says,

Of the CCAP synods, only Blantyre and Livingstonia were present. [The] Nkhoma [Synod] preferred not to come, which was understandable, since Nkhoma, located in the Central Region, where the MCP had its strongest following, had more intimate links with the party than its sister synods.¹²⁸⁵

Schoffeleers’ view was shared by Brown whose views are sympathetic to the Nkhoma Synod in his doctoral thesis. Brown says, “The [Nkhoma] Synod and the [MCP-led] government created a symbiotic relationship”.¹²⁸⁶ It was this symbiotic relationship that made the Nkhoma Synod leaders formidable. In 1980, the assistant General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia, writing to the Bandawe Presbytery on the Nkhotakota border dispute with the Nkhoma Synod, said, “We

¹²⁸¹ I.A. Phiri, “Marching, Suspended and Stoned: Christian Women in Malawi 1995,” in *God, People and Power in Malawi*, edited by Kenneth R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996, 70-73.

¹²⁸² Ibid, 74.

¹²⁸³ K.R. Ross, “A Practical Theology of Power for the New Malawi,” in *God, People and Power in Malawi*, edited by Kenneth R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996, 239.

¹²⁸⁴ Ibid, 239.

¹²⁸⁵ M. Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice*, 183.

¹²⁸⁶ W.L. Brown, “The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod,” 223.

therefore request you to keep away as far as possible from this involvement, until otherwise advised. But it is significant to be sensitive to what they [the Nkhoma Synod] are doing.”¹²⁸⁷ Ross, commenting on the relationship between the Nkhoma Synod and the MCP, as opposed to other sister synods, said, “This action revealed that the churches had not been immune from the fragmentation of the Banda years.”¹²⁸⁸ This contradicts Mvula’s assumption that there were no ethnic polarisations during Dr Banda’s reign. The symbiotic relationship that the Nkhoma Synod had with Banda and the MCP could have contributed to the fragmentation of the CCAP along ethnic lines.

6.2.3 *Asymmetrical relations: The Church as a counter-hegemonic force*

As noted in Chapter Three, it appears that Banda and his allies forgot that the imposition of a dominant language on other ethnic groups could attract resistance. Arguing against the Anglo-conformity in which Anglo-Americans wanted to impose [\(A 337\)](#) their Britishness on others, Kallen contended that forcing people to abandon their ethnic identities, in favour [of \(A 338\)](#) integration, was undemocratic. He argued that the cultural and linguistic diversity was consistent [with \(A 339\)](#) democracy.¹²⁸⁹ This might explain why the non-Chewa ethnic groups resisted the Chewa hegemony, specifically in [the](#) language area [\(A 340\)](#).¹²⁹⁰

In an attempt to preserve its legacy and balance the playing field ethnolinguistically, the Synod of Livingstonia assumed the position of a counter-hegemonic force, following the ban of Chitumbuka in public spaces. Despite the ban, together with the Mzuzu Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, it continued publishing Chitumbuka religious texts, hymns, and Bibles, for liturgical purposes.¹²⁹¹ Publishing materials for public use, in a different indigenous language that was proscribed in 1968, was against the law. Lupenga Mphande says that “it was criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment, to possess, import, print, publish, distribute, display, exhibit or reproduce any publication, which the [Censorship] Board had declared undesirable” during Dr

¹²⁸⁷ D.K. Mphande, Assistant General Secretary of Synod of Livingstonia, to M.A.W.K. Chirwa dated 04/12/1980, SLA, Box 58.

¹²⁸⁸ K.R. Ross, “Christian Faith and National Identity,” 160.

¹²⁸⁹ H.M. Kallen, “Americanization” and the Cultural Prospect 1924, 216.

<http://cas.sss.uwo.ca/documents/Kallen.Americanization.pdf> accessed on 05/09/2014.

¹²⁹⁰ L. Vail, “Ethnicity, language and National Unity”, 142, 148

¹²⁹¹ G.H. Kamwendo, “Ethnic Revival and Language Associations in the New Malawi,” 141.

Banda's tenure of office.¹²⁹² However, the Synod used every opportunity to show that the language it developed was not only for private use, but it could also be used in public spaces. In 1975, Dr Banda was asked to read the Chitumbuka Bible during the Livingstonia centenary celebrations, and he read it. It was re-broadcast on Malawi Broadcasting Corporation radio.¹²⁹³ His favourite hymn, which Banda used to sing during public functions, was the Chitumbuka Hymn 136. Kishindo observed that, although Dr Banda "championed Chichewa himself, he never spoke the language in public, but he always used interpreters to communicate with the public."¹²⁹⁴ In a Chitumbuka-speaking area, Dr Banda communicated through a Chitumbuka interpreter. This countered the existing policy that Chitumbuka was to be used in private life.

Why did the Synod of Livingstonia defy the ban? Kamwendo responds,

The fact that the Livingstonia Synod defied the government's devaluation of Chitumbuka is understandable in an historical perspective. It was the Livingstonia Mission which initiated language development for Chitumbuka. Its pioneer missionaries gave the language its written form, and other developments followed in the areas of orthography, lexicography and the overall promotion of Chitumbuka as a lingua franca for its sphere of influence.¹²⁹⁵

This is one of the reasons why the Synod of Livingstonia, possibly including the Mzuzu Diocese, defied the proscription and assumed the position of a counter-hegemonic forces, to resist the imposition of Chichewa on ethnic groups, living within their spheres of influence. This might also explain why the two ecclesiastical bodies were prime suspects of Banda's regime, following the issuance of the RC pastoral letter in 1992. Banda and MCP functionaries singled out Monsignor John Roche, head of the Mzuzu Diocese, as the author of the famous 1992 Roman Catholic pastoral letter and alleged that other bishops just endorsed his ideas.¹²⁹⁶ In April 1992, the police arrested some ministers and elders of the Synod of Livingstonia. They were accused of preaching subversive sermons to the regime, in solidarity with the 1992 pastoral letter.¹²⁹⁷ Among the clergy arrested were Aaron Longwe, Winston M. Nyirenda, Alfred E.C. Mtonga, Alder Kayira, Jacob Kumwenda, Ted Mwambila, and Chande Mhone, in addition to a number of church elders, besides

¹²⁹² L. Mphande, "Dr Hastings Kamuzu and the Malawi Writers Group: The (un)Making of a Cultural Tradition," in *Research in African Literatures*, 27: 1, 1996, 83.

¹²⁹³ Prof. T. Jack Thompson, 04/04/2015), email message to the researcher. He was one of organising members of the 1975 Centenary. Dr Banda read Palm 103 in Chitumbuka. Thompson narrated that Dr Banda kept on pausing and giving a proper Chitumbuka translation of the text.

¹²⁹⁴ P. J. Kishindo, "Dr H. Kamuzu Banda's Language Policy," 101.

¹²⁹⁵ G.H. Kamwendo, "Ethnic Revival and Language Associations in the New Malawi," 142.

¹²⁹⁶ M. Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice*, 134, 139, 180; K.R. Ross, "Partnership in Mission and Postcolonial Politics: The Case of the Church of Scotland and the CCAP," in *Here Comes your King*, edited by Kenneth Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998, 113.

¹²⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 185-86; F.L. Moyo, "Church and Politics: The Case of Livingstonia Synod," 129.

other renowned political prisoners such as Chakufwa Chihana. [The Orton and Vera Chirwa, although they were arrested after the issuance of the Roman Catholic Pastoral Letter, were victims of Banda's regime, and that the mysterious death of Orton Chirwa appears to have connection to the political debate that resulted to the issuance of the Pastoral Letter \(A 341\).](#) No other Christian church had such an enormous number of its members arrested on account of showing solidarity with the Roman Catholic bishops.¹²⁹⁸

The reaction of the Synod of Livingstonia at the inception of multiparty politics was a manifestation of the experience of the members and people of its constituency and what they went through, during Banda's despotic rule. During fieldwork, most research participants of the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods pointed out that Banda's politics had made a significant contribution to the way the border dispute was negotiated.¹²⁹⁹ This explains why the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute was based on ethnolinguistic differences.

6.3 *Resurgence of the Border Dispute in North Kasungu: Politicising Ethnicities*

According to Mgawi, the border dispute started in 1967 when the Synod of Livingstonia said that the boundary between the Nkhoma Synod and itself should be the Dwangwa River. From the Nkhoma Synod's point of view, the northern boundary was the Milenje Stream (in figure 6.7).¹³⁰⁰ However, the report of the 2006 Commission of Inquiry states that the border dispute started when the Nkhoma Synod rejected the resolution made on 3rd November 1967. The report reads, "The Nkhoma Synod conference rejected [the Chamakala Agreement] on the grounds that if this area was to be a buffer zone, as required by the two committees, there is need that an equivalent area beyond Milenje should also be a buffer zone."¹³⁰¹ What the report stated was historically inaccurate, because the border dispute in north Kasungu predated the meeting held in 1967. The Kasungu border dispute was first discussed in 1956 and was settled in 1958, as explained in

¹²⁹⁸ Interview Saul Chitsulo, Blantyre Synod Deputy General Secretary during Malawi political transition, in Pietermaritzburg, on 18/04/2016.

¹²⁹⁹ Interviews with Kasasanya and Kafita congregations' focus groups; Interviewed H.M. Nkhoma on 03/01/2015 in Mzuzu; L.N. Nyondo, on 08/01/2015 in Mzuzu; Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu on 08/01/2015 in Mzuzu; Dr F.L. Chingota in Zomba on 29/01/2015; V.K. Banda, on 07/08/2015 through email, and Kaluluma E.M. Tembo on 30/01/2015 in Lilongwe.

¹³⁰⁰ Interview with K.J Mgawi, at Nkhoma Mission on 01/02/2015.

¹³⁰¹ CCAP, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry," 18.

Chapter Three. The agreed boundary was the Dwangwa River in the Kasungu area (in figure 6.9).¹³⁰² It only resurfaced in 1967.

¹³⁰² No Minute of the General Synod records the border dispute in north Kasungu between 1958 and 1964.

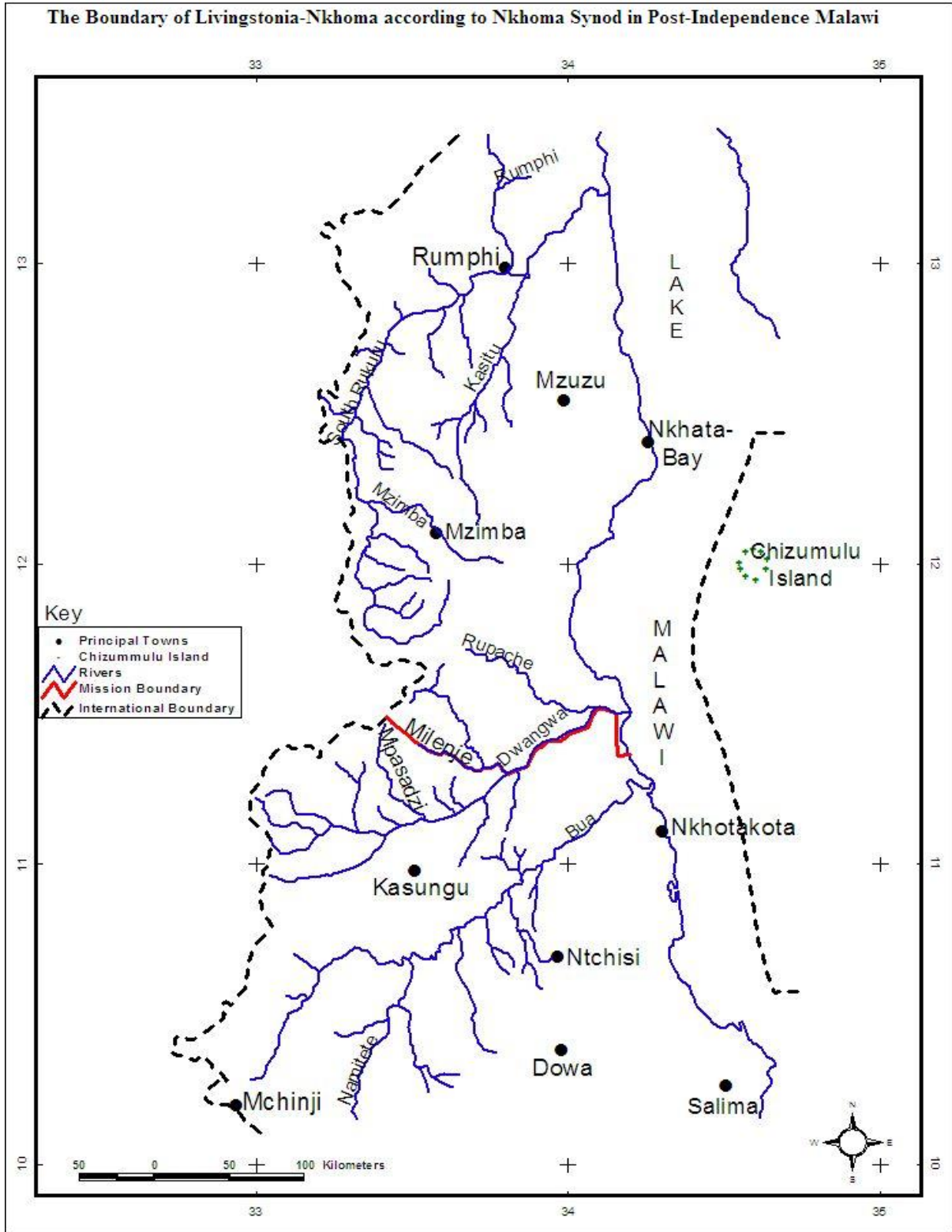


FIGURE 6.7. Map showing the Nkhoma Synod's version of the boundary between the Synod of Livingstonia and itself after the Chamakala Agreement in 1968 (The map drawn by the researcher)

6.3.1 *The Background to the 1967 Resurgence of the Border Dispute*

After the two Synods settled their border dispute in 1958, as stated above, it [\(A 342\)](#) resurfaced in 1967. The resurgence of the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute can only be understood if we are to read it from the perspective of the political environment during the one-party era. It should also be noted that the Nkhoma Synod had a boundary dispute with the Blantyre Synod during the one party-party era, when the Nkhoma Synod sent Rev. Matanda to minister across the border between Malawi and Mozambique in Milanje in 1984 where Blantyre had been working since 1900.¹³⁰³ Discussions ensued on the matter and ended amicably by withdrawing Matanda in 1985.¹³⁰⁴ The old boundary between the two Synods was maintained, as discussed in Chapter Three. However, the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute continued. It is interesting to note that it resumed exactly 16 months after the cabinet crisis. The question to ask is why it resumed at this time. Were these events concomitant or coincidental?

To respond to these questions, let us examine the content of the Chamakala Agreement of 1968, which is mostly cited in church and academic circles on the subject under discussion. One contested area, regarding this agreement, is the interpretation that each synod gives to its content. For example, the Nkhoma Synod claimed the Milenje Stream as its northerly boundary, on the basis of this agreement (in figure 6.7).¹³⁰⁵ Categorically, the Synod of Livingstonia insinuated that the border dispute started with the mass immigration of the Chewa people in search of land for tobacco farming and employment on tobacco farms in the 1960s¹³⁰⁶, yet the border dispute predated it. Interestingly, the Nkhoma Synod also argued that the border dispute started when the Tumbuka speakers immigrated to this area in search of farming land and began to plant prayer-houses in Nkhoma's territory.¹³⁰⁷ However, the version of the Nkhoma Synod contradicted the testimonies of most research participants and chiefs, testified [\(A 343\)](#), that most Chewa people with a Nkhoma Synod background, immigrated to this area between the 1970s and 1980s.¹³⁰⁸

¹³⁰³ Email interview with Dr Silas Ncozana on 17/04/2016.

¹³⁰⁴ Min. S 1691 of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod meeting held at Namoni Katengeza C.L.T.C. from 5 to 12 April 1983, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

¹³⁰⁵ CCAP, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry," 18.

¹³⁰⁶ CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, "A Press Statement on the Border Issue between the CCAP Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma," 5.

¹³⁰⁷ W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church During the First Years of Autonomy," 251.

¹³⁰⁸ Interview STA Mpomwa 24/01/2015 at Mphomwa, and STA Mnyanga on 23/01/2015 at Chatoloma.

While the economic aspect contributed to the border dispute, it was not the first and primary motive. As per the testimonies collected during fieldwork, the tobacco estates were not opened in the 1960s, but in the 1970s. For example, the Mpasadzi Tobacco Scheme was opened in 1975 and, the Chambwaza Tobacco Estate of Dr Banda in 1974.¹³⁰⁹ Therefore, there were other motives that led to the resurgence of the border dispute in 1968.

6.3.2 Politicking or territorial boundary? The Kasungu border dispute

Before investigating the reasons that led to the resurgence of the border dispute in 1968, there is a need to clarify certain terms used in church records. A survey conducted by the Synod of Livingstonia in 2005 indicated that the Nkhoma Synod planted 89 or 88 congregations/churches inside its territory between 1931 and 2005.¹³¹⁰ As argued in Chapter Three, the Nkhoma Presbytery (later Synod) had no congregation or prayerhouse north of the Dwangwa River before the late 1940s. The Synod of Livingstonia's survey is far from being accurate. The oldest congregations of the Nkhoma Synod that opened to the north of the Dwangwa River in the 1960s were Dwangwa, in the Silemba area, and Kakonje, in the chief Chulu area.¹³¹¹ For example, the Kakonje congregation, which was named Matenje II because another Nkhoma Synod congregation bearing same name as Matenje I was in Dowa district, started as a prayerhouse, or outpost, for the Chilanga congregation (formerly the Kasungu Station) in 1950, but it became a congregation in 1961.¹³¹² In 1982, the Chilanga Presbytery of the Nkhoma Synod had the following congregations: Chilanga, Thumba, Kasungu, Rusa, Mziza, Chamwabvi, Kakonje, Dwangwa and Chigodi.¹³¹³ Among the nine congregations, only the Dwangwa and Kakonje congregations were to the north of the Dwangwa River.¹³¹⁴ Hence, the majority of the claimed congregations or churches by the Synod

¹³⁰⁹ Interview Boston Soko, Coordinator of Mpasadzi Tobacco Scheme, and STA Mnyanja on 23/01/2015, Chatoloma; Interviewed Sigmund Chirambo, Programme Manager of Mpasadzi Tobacco Scheme (KASUF) between 1985 and 2004 on 08/01/2015 in Mzuzu.

¹³¹⁰ CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, "A Press Statement on the Border Issue between the CCAP Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma," 21-23; Min. 28/06 of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia meeting held at Bandawe from 22 to 27 September 2006, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹³¹¹ It should be noted that Traditional Authorities Simulemba and Chisemphera and STA Mnyanja were under Chief Kaluluma. Before the 1946 regional boundary, they were under Paramount chief M'mbelwa.

¹³¹² Session minute book of Kakonje congregation of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, consulted on 24/01/2015.

¹³¹³ SC 221 of the Synodical Committee of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod held from 19 to 21 October 1982, NGK Archives, St.

¹³¹⁴ According to General Synod minutes of 1977, the Nkhoma Synod had 78 congregations. See Life and Work Report of Nkhoma Synod: Appendix II of the CCAP General Synod minutes held at Chongoni from 16 to 17 August, 1977, p 13. Also see appendix 10 on the number of the congregation that Nkhoma Synod had in 1979.

of Livingstonia, in accordance with the CCAP polity, could be classified as prayer-houses, but not congregations or churches.

The most profound question regarding the resurgence of the border dispute in the Kasungu area is whether it was a territorial dispute or not. Brown, Zgambo, and Chatha Msangaambe, including the 2006 Commission of Inquiry's report, considered the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute as a territorial dispute.¹³¹⁵ While this could be the general assumption, a number of questions have been left unanswered. For example, if the Kasungu border dispute was settled in 1958, why did it reappear in 1967? Knowing that the border was the Dwangwa River, why did the Synod of Livingstonia accept the buffer zone as a solution to the border dispute? The answers to these questions go beyond the territorial dispute.

To have a better perspective, let us give a brief history of the Chamakala Agreement. In December 1967, the CCAP held its first meeting at Chamakala in the Sub-Traditional Authority Mnyanja area in the Kasungu District to discuss the border dispute in the north Kasungu area. The Nkhoma Synod argued that its northerly boundary was the Milenje Stream,¹³¹⁶ while the Synod of Livingstonia maintained that the boundary was the Dwangwa River. After discussion, the two Synods agreed that “meanwhile the two Synods shall work together in the area between the two disputed boundaries in a spirit of mutual respect, peace and goodwill.”¹³¹⁷ According to this minute, the decision reached was not final, but provisional, in anticipation of finding a lasting solution. On 11th July 1968, the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods had a second meeting over the border dispute, and reached a deal in what was to be called the Chamakala Agreement, named after the place where the meeting was held. The findings of meeting were confirmed by the CCAP General Synod Standing Committee meeting held in Lilongwe on 27th November 1968. The Chamakala Agreement states:

After a very long discussion, it was found that it was very difficult to agree on a common boundary because:

- 1) both Synods-Livingstonia and Nkhoma have already established many prayer-houses, and these are all mixed, each had more than twenty prayer-houses; and
- 2) there is no straight stream or river between the two rivers- Milenje and Dwangwa, which could be used as boundary;

¹³¹⁵ W.L. Brown, “The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church During the First Years of Autonomy,” 247, 249; H.F.C, Zgambo, “Conflict within the Church,” 38; C. Msangaambe, “Laity Empowerment with regard to the Missional Task of the CCAP in Malawi,” Th.D. diss., Stellenbosch University, 2011, 133; CCAP, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry”, 10

¹³¹⁶ Interview K.J. Mgawi at Nkhoma in Lilongwe on 22/12/2015.

¹³¹⁷ Minutes of the Chamakala boundary committee held at Chamakala CCAP congregation on 03/11/1967, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

Because of this, it was agreed that the following recommendations [should] be referred to the respective Synods:

- a) that the two Synods should stick to the decision agreed upon at the meeting held at Chamakala on the 2 December, 1967 and section (b) which reads as follows: 'Meanwhile the two Synods shall work together in the area between the two disputed boundaries in a spirit of mutual respect, peace and goodwill;
- b) the Nkhoma Synod should not cross the Milenje stream, and Livingstonia should not cross the Dwangwa River; they should all work in the area between the two rivers;
- c) no prayerhouse or outpost should be built or started near a place where there is already one working from either side;
- d) when a member of one Synod would like to transfer to another synod, there ought to be a mutual agreement between the ministers and disjunction certificates to be used, no minister shall receive members of either side without disjunction certificate;
- e) all church collection shall be used by a synod whose minister is in-charge of the particular prayerhouse or outpost; and
- f) in order to avoid clashes, it was recommended that all ministers sent to work at this area should always be instructed to work at this area with a spirit of good relationships."¹³¹⁸

According to this agreement, the contested issue was a new boundary between the two Synods north of the Dwangwa River. As a solution, a buffer zone was established in accordance with the resolution of 3rd November 1967 meeting, because each of the two Synods had a score of prayerhouses in the same space. Therefore, the Chamakala Agreement did not establish a new boundary besides the agreed boundary of 1958 in the Kasungu area, based on the 1923 meeting between the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM.

The insinuation that the border dispute started after the Nkhoma Synod had rejected the buffer zone, is historically incorrect. Why did the Nkhoma Synod, then, use the Kasungu buffer zone as a model for the Nkhotakota border dispute in the 1980s?¹³¹⁹ There is no evidence to support this insinuation besides what the report of the 2006 Commission of Inquiry says. As pointed out in Chapter Three, the Nkhoma Synod crossed the Dwangwa River, following the alteration of the regional boundary in 1946, based on the DRCM missiological understanding that the Centre was Chewa, and hence, should belong to the Nkhoma Synod. On the other hand, the Synod of Livingstonia was also not ready to change the Dwangwa River as a boundary in the Kasungu area. The Synod of Livingstonia accepted the buffer zone as a compromise.¹³²⁰ As such, the Milenje Stream was made the northerly boundary for the buffer zone, not between two Synods, to limit the Nkhoma Synod from expanding its activities northwards.

¹³¹⁸ Addendum 5 of the CCAP General Synod special meeting held at Lilongwe on 27 November 1968, General Synod office, Lilongwe.

¹³¹⁹ Simon A. Faiti-Phiri, Senior Clerk of the General Synod to the General Secretary of Nkhoma Synod of 21 February, 1980, General Synod Office, Lilongwe.

¹³²⁰ Conversation with A.D. Kayira in 2004 in Chitipa, a delegate to the 1956 General Synod meeting.

In August 1968, the Livingstonia General Secretary reported to his Synod that the border dispute had been resolved, as stated above.¹³²¹ After 1968, the Kasungu border dispute was not recorded in the Synod of Livingstonia's minutes until 1997.¹³²² This suggests that the Synod of Livingstonia respected the 1968 resolution of not crossing the Dwangwa River.

Why did the Synod of Livingstonia accept the buffer zone? It should be remembered that the Chamakala Agreement was made just 22 months after the cabinet crisis, in which the majority of casualties were not only from the Synod of Livingstonia's sphere of influence, but they were its members. It should be noted that the Nkhoma Synod crossed the Dwangwa River, arguing that it was following the Chichewa speakers who had problem with Chitumbuka. It was just three months after Chitumbuka was banned in public spaces and replaced with Chichewa by Banda's regime. It was this formidable political situation that made the Synod of Livingstonia accept the buffer zone. Kamwendo rightly pointed out that "linguistically and culturally, perhaps even politically, the elite with a Chewa identity came to dominate Malawi, as if other languages and ethnic identities did not exist."¹³²³

During the one-party era, the Synod of Livingstonia experienced ethnically-and politically-oriented violence linked to the Nkhoma Synod. For example, Stephen Kauta Msiska, a minister of the Synod of Livingstonia and the Principal of the CCAP Joint Theological College at Nkhoma, was dismissed on ethnic and political grounds after a Nkhoma Synod's ministerial student reported him to the MCP authorities in 1974. According to Dr Silas Nyirenda, it started when Msiska asked a Nkhoma Synod ministerial student whether it was appropriate to wear a political party badge with Dr Banda's picture, while preaching.¹³²⁴ When the case was brought before Dr Banda, he dismissed it without giving reasons.¹³²⁵ Willy Zeze says that the "Nkhoma [Synod] finally stated that it lost confidence in Rev. Msiska, the Principal and proposed the dismissal of Rev. Kauta Msiska. He was immediately dismissed,"¹³²⁶ and was sent to an early retirement. Further ethnically-oriented violence occurred as a result of the border dispute, but went unreported. In

¹³²¹ Min. 407 of the GAC meeting held at Livingstonia from 21 to 26 August 1968, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹³²² Min. 1508/97 of GAC meeting held at Ekwendeni from 4 to 8 August 1997, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹³²³ G.H. Kamwendo, "Ethnic Revival and Language Associations in the New Malawi," 141.

¹³²⁴ Interview Dr S.M. Nyirenda, a lecturer with Msiska at a Joint Theological College at Nkhoma Synod's headquarters on 18/11/2015.

¹³²⁵ Min. V of the Executive Committee of the Synod of Livingstonia held at Ekwendeni on 18/03/1974, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹³²⁶ W.S. Zeze, "Christianity: A State-sponsored Religion in Malawi?" 6
<http://www.iclrs.org/content/events/28/751.pdf> accessed 14/06/2016.

1988, Jonathan B. Mwale, a minister of the Synod of Livingstonia, was asked by the CCAP members, originally from the same Synod with him but working to the south of the Dwangwa River, to start a prayerhouse in that area. They built a grass-thatched prayerhouse without the knowledge of the Synod leadership. Within a few months, it was alleged that Nkhoma Synod members had set it on fire because it was a Tumbuka prayerhouse planted in the Chewa area.¹³²⁷

Why should Msiska's case be described as ethnically and politically motivated? Killion J. Mgawi, commenting on how some Nkhoma Synod ministers opted to be apolitical during the MCP era, says, "Abusa ena monga a Josaphet Mwale adakaniratu za ndale. Adakana ngakhale kugula Khadi (card) ya chipani kapena kulowa mchipani chili chonse ngakhale kugula baji ya Kamuzu" (My translation: Some Nkhoma Synod ministers, such as Josaphet Mwale, refused to buy a party membership card of the MCP, nor a badge of Kamuzu Banda, or to join any political party).¹³²⁸ Similarly, Pauw reported that some Nkhoma "ministers forbade Christians to wear a badge with Dr Banda's picture on it in the Church"¹³²⁹, but none was arrested or sent to early retirement. Refusing to buy a membership card, during the MCP era (between 1963 and 1993), was unthinkable and punishable. Klaus Fiedler has ably illustrated why the Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted in Malawi. He said that the Banda's regime persecuted them because they refused to buy MCP cards.¹³³⁰ The researcher argues that if Msiska was a member of the Nkhoma Synod and a Chewa, as Mwale and other ministers were, he would not have been treated that way. This political atmosphere was formidable to non-Chewa Malawians when the Chewa hegemony was functional.

As noted above, the Nkhoma Synod's objective was to have the whole Central Region as its sphere of influence, because it unilaterally assumed that the Central Region belonged to it. This notion was mentioned during the focus group and individual interviews.¹³³¹ It was captured in the report of the Commission of Inquiry.¹³³² In separate interviews with Nkhoma and Nyondo of the Synod of Livingstonia, [they \(A 344\)](#) also told the researcher that the Nkhoma Synod made the same claim during the border dispute negotiations. They further pointed out that this assertion was

¹³²⁷ Interview Edgar Kamanga at Mphomwa in Kasungu District on 24/01/2015.

¹³²⁸ K.J. Mgawi, *Mbiri ya CCAP Nkhoma Sinodi kuyamba mchaka cha 1962 mpaka 2012*, Nkhoma: Nkhoma Press, 2012, 19.

¹³²⁹ C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 372.

¹³³⁰ K. Fiedler, "Power at the Receiving End: The Jehovah's Witnesses' Experience in One Party Malawi," in *God, People and Power in Malawi*, edited by Kenneth R. Ross, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996, 153-168.

¹³³¹ Interview Kakonje congregation's focus group on 24/01/2015.

¹³³² CCAP General Synod, *Commission of Inquiry*, 83.

influenced by Dr Banda's politics.¹³³³ It was this view that contributed to the border dispute. This also explains why the Nkhoma Synod did not consider the planting of prayer-houses inside its sister Synod as "storming in someone's territory", as stated in Chapter One.

Surprisingly, the Roman Catholic Church (RC), which had the same population characteristics as the CCAP in the area under dispute, had never had such an experience. Attending a Sunday service at the Chulu outstation of St Peter Holy Family Parish, the researcher was told that the RC parish and its out-stations conduct worship services in Chitumbuka and English as the official languages for the Mzuzu Diocese, although Chichewa was also used in some cases.¹³³⁴ During interviews with RC members, they said that language had never been a problem in their church. Magadalana Nzima, a RC member at the Holy Family Parish-Bowe, said that if Catholic members crossed the Dwangwa River, they used Chichewa, since it is the indigenous official language for the Lilongwe diocese, but when they are in the Mzuzu Diocese, they use Chitumbuka.¹³³⁵ Both Mzuzu and Lilongwe dioceses, with the same demographic characteristics as those of the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods, had not experienced the same problems as the CCAP.¹³³⁶ The question is why the ethnolinguistic difference was a problem for the CCAP, and not for the Roman Catholic Church. It is for this reason that the study argues that the Livingstonia-Nkhoma Synods' border dispute was not a territorial dispute, but that it was political, along ethnic lines. It was embedded in the CCAP history, represented by the Chichewa and Chitumbuka languages, and shaped by their missions and political affiliation, as discussed above and in the previous chapters. Therefore, the study concludes that the proscription of Chitumbuka and the resurface of the Livingstonia-Nkhoma dispute were not accidental, but concomitant, because the latter was influenced by the political environment.

6.3.3 *Finances and ethnic identities in the border dispute*

As noted above, economic and financial issues seem to have played a role in the way the two Synods negotiated the border dispute, and as inferred in the Chamakala Agreement. One of the issues raised in the agreement was where the money collected would go. During fieldwork in the

¹³³³ Interview H.M. Nkhoma on 03/01/2015 in Mzuzu, and L.N. Nyondo at Synod Office in Mzuzu on 08/01/2015.

¹³³⁴ Interview E. Chirwa, a teacher at Sazu School in Kasungu district, in Lilongwe on 31/01/2015; Interviewed Matthew Mvula on 25/01/2015 at TA Chulu Trading Centre in Kasungu District.

¹³³⁵ Interview Magadalana Nzima at Bowe Trading Centre on 26/02/2015.

¹³³⁶ Interview Robert Gondwe, secretary to Mzuzu Diocese bishop, on 20/02/2015, Diocesan Offices, Mzuzu.

Kasungu area, both the focus group and individual semi-structured interviews indicated that finance was one of the motivating factors for the border dispute.¹³³⁷ Question Eight of the semi-structured interviews asked the research participants to explain how the border dispute started. Out of ten groups, eight alluded to finances. They pointed out that the two Synods were competing for church members in the same space. The other two groups mentioned the political predispositions of the two synods. While the second reason was true for both Synods during the multiparty dispensation, during the one-party era it was only applicable to the Nkhoma Synod, because of its affiliation to MCP. However, the competition for members between the two Synods would partly explain why ethnicity is a persistent problem in the border dispute. Olayiwo Abegunrin rightly says that “ethnicity arises when relations between ethnic groups are competitive, rather [than] cooperative.”¹³³⁸

On 25 July 1968, the Mvera Presbytery of Nkhoma Synod said, “Monga Presbiterio wa Mvera anatsimikiza kale, malire aku mpoto wa Nkhotakota ndiye mtsinje wa Dwangwa” (My translation: The Mvera Presbytery confirmed that the northern boundary of the Nkhotakota congregation was the Dwangwa River).¹³³⁹ According to the Marawi (Malawi) congregation’s baptismal role book, the Synod of Livingstonia had prayer-houses in the area between the Dwangwa and Bua Rivers. Members of these prayer-houses were baptized on 16th October 1926, and all minutes were recorded in Chitonga.¹³⁴⁰ If the Synod of Livingstonia had prayer-houses to the south of Dwangwa River as early as 1926, why did the Mvera Presbytery claim the Dwangwa River as its northerly boundary?

Interestingly, the Mvera Presbytery raised the boundary issue just a year after the Nkhoma Synod secretariat had asked the Synod of Livingstonia what the boundary between their Synods could be.¹³⁴¹ It was also two years after the Nkhoma Synod had planted a congregation at the Nkhotakota District headquarters, to evangelize the Muslims in the district. In 1969, it was reported that the Nkhotakota congregation had 176 members who were not able to support their parish minister.¹³⁴² The Nkhoma Synod was in financial difficulties, but it had an obligation to support

¹³³⁷ Interview Kasasanya focus groups 17/01/2015, and Kakonje focus groups on 24/01/2015.

¹³³⁸ O. Abegunrin, *Africa in Global Politics in the Twenty-first Century*, 84.

¹³³⁹ Min. MV. 97 of the Mvera Presbytery meeting held at Mvera on 25/07/1968, SLA.

¹³⁴⁰ Marawi Congregation Baptismal Role book and Minute book, SLA, Box 13.

¹³⁴¹ Min. 403 of the Synod of Livingstonia meeting held at Ekwendeni in August 1967, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹³⁴² Min. 1441 of the Nkhoma Synod GAC meeting of 13/12/1968 and Min. KS. 1584 of the GAC held at Nkhoma on 19/06/1969, SLA.

the Nkhotakota congregation. For instance, the Nkhoma Synod asked the sum of £ 15, 648 from the NGK, of which £ 3626 was for minister's salaries working in the Muslim area, £ 1440 for evangelisation in the same area, and £ 3500 for constructing a church building and minister's house at Nkhotakota. But, the NGK managed to remit the sum of £3, 614. The breakdown of £3, 614 was as follows: £ 1,166 was for women's ministry, £ 1,16 for the Blind school, £ 1,166 for hospital expenses, and £ 1,166 for ministers' salary arrears from 1964 to 1968.¹³⁴³ This financial situation continued to appear [in \(A 345\)](#) its minutes until the mid-1980s. Financial constraints could be one of reasons that led the Nkhoma Synod to expand into other synods' area, which was considered financially viable, and also, to recruit more members. The Synod of Livingstonia considered the planting of prayer-houses in its territory as the intention to grab its members.¹³⁴⁴

In 1979, when the CCAP General Synod asked the two Synods to begin negotiation on the Nkhotakota border dispute, the Nkhoma Synod sent the salaried evangelist to the Mpasadzi Tobacco Estate, where it had another prayerhouse. The statement that follows is fascinating. It reads, "Kumenenso kuli akristu athu ambiri," (My translation: There are many of our Christians). The phrase "our Christians", in this contexts, means the Chewa and Chichewa speakers who were originally from the Nkhoma Synod, but who are now working at the Mpasadzi Tobacco Estate. One is bound to ask whether the Nkhoma Synod went to the Mpasadzi Tobacco Estate to serve the Christians on basis of ethnic background, rather than ecclesiastical identity. The reason, why church leaders began to mobilise those who belonged to them along ethnic lines, was to plant prayer-houses or resist the planting of prayer-houses. The product of this process was the border dispute. So the contested issue was not territorial *per se*, but also financial.

During fieldwork in all sampled areas, the researcher observed that not all Chewa or Chichewa-speaking Christians joined the Nkhoma Synod in places that had prayer-houses adjacent to the Synod of Livingstonia's prayer-houses or congregations. Most Chewa or Chichewa-speaking Christians continued to be members of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia. When the Synod of Livingstonia crossed the Dwangwa River, some Chitumbuka-speaking Christians continued to be members of the Nkhoma Synod. For example, in 2015, the Kakonje congregation had 534 members, while its neighbouring congregation, Kasasanya of the Synod of Livingstonia, had 2500

¹³⁴³ Min. KS 1621 of the Nkhoma Synod GAC held at Nkhoma on 25 August 1969, SLA.

¹³⁴⁴ Minutes of Marawe Kirk Session held from 5th to 6 January 1983, SLA.

members.¹³⁴⁵ If ethnicity is considered as a primordial phenomenon in Malawi, how do we account for the Chewa Christians who have continued to be members of the Synod of Livingstonia in north Kasungu and Nkhotakota, where the Nkhoma Synod has prayer-houses and congregations. CCAP ordinary members appear to show more loyalty to Christianity compared to other institutions, including ethnicity. This was supported by both qualitative and quantitative data, as indicated in Figure 6.8.

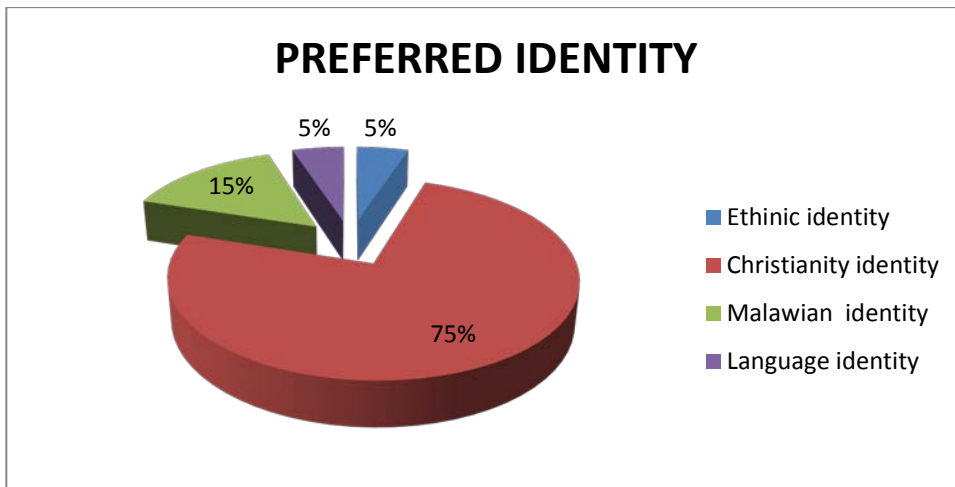


FIGURE 6.8. showing the most preferred identity to which ordinary CCAP members of the two Synods identify with in their everyday life, according to quantitative data collected through questionnaire

According to quantitative data as shown in the figure 6.8 above, 42 respondents in a total of 56 research subjects, representing 75 percent, preferred to be referred as Christians, while the other respondents preferred to be associated with other identities, as indicated in figure 6.8. Asked whether they are comfortable worshipping in a church where they do not use their mother tongue, 41 respondents of the total 56 subjects, representing 73.2 percent, answered that they were comfortable, but 15 respondents, representing 26.8 percent, replied that they were not comfortable. This explains why some Chewa and/or Chichewa-speaking Christians, in spite of the appeal made by the Nkhoma Synod leaders to join their Synod along ethnic lines, have continued to be members of the Synod of Livingstonia. Therefore, ethnicity, as contested in the border dispute, cannot be attributed to primordial motives. Rather, it was based on instrumentalist motives.

¹³⁴⁵ Both role books were checked by the researcher in presence of the parish ministers of Kakonje and Kasasanya congregations.

6.4 *The Nkhotakota Border Dispute as a Concomitant of the Political Discursive Field*

This section interrogates the behaviour and actions of the elites in the CCAP. It also explores whether the Nkhotakota border dispute was a breakaway or not.

6.4.1 *A breakaway or Nkhoma Synod's missiological strategy?*

Within the church and academic circles, it is held that the Nkhotakota border dispute between two Synods started in 1977, following the opening of the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation by the LONHRO in the Nkhotakota District.¹³⁴⁶ As such, historians consider the Nkhotakota border dispute as a breakaway, because members of the Malawi congregation with a Nkhoma Synod background seceded from it on ethnolinguistic grounds in 1979.¹³⁴⁷ This assumption is simplistic because it only focuses on the outcome, without considering the causes. The issue of the breakaway came after the border dispute. The Synod of Livingstonia claimed that the boundary was the Bua River,¹³⁴⁸ while the Nkhoma Synod said that it was Dwangwa River, after the transfer of the Kasungu Station.¹³⁴⁹ This sub-section begins by determining the boundary between two Synods in Nkhotakota. Then, it explores whether the Nkhotakota border dispute was a breakaway or territorial dispute.

To begin with, the 1924 boundary between the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM in the Kasungu area did not extend to Nkhotakota, as explained in Chapters Two and three, because the Livingstonia Mission did not share a boundary with the DRCM, but with the UMCA. So the Nkhotakota boundary was between the Livingstonia Mission and the UMCA. The Nkhoma Synod only extended to Nkhotakota in 1966. As indicated above, the Nkhoma Synod inquired from the Synod of Livingstonia about what the boundary between the two Synods in Nkhotakota could be. The Synod of Livingstonia answered that it was where [\(A 346\)](#) Malawe congregation ends, which was Bua River.¹³⁵⁰ As indicated in Chapter Two, Malawe congregation was an outstation of Bandawe before 1899 and was called Kanyenda. It was established as a congregation in 1915 by

¹³⁴⁶ W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod," 250; H.F.C. Zgambo, "Conflict within the Church," 39.

¹³⁴⁷ CCAP, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry," 8; H.F.C. Zgambo, "Conflict within the Church," 40.

¹³⁴⁸ M.A.K. Chirwa to the General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia dated 27/04/1982; Min. 21 of the Joint Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia Executive and Planning Committee held at Ekwendeni on 15/12/1977; SLA, Box 47; Minutes of Malawi Congregation held at Nkhunga on 21/07/1979, p 2, SLA, Box 13.

¹³⁴⁹ W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod," 251.

¹³⁵⁰ Minutes of the Malawi Kirk session held at Nkhunga on 21/07/1979, SLA, Box 13.

A.G. MacAlpine of the Livingstonia Mission.¹³⁵¹ The Malawe is a corrupt Tonga word for Malawi. Since the mid-1960s, it has been called (A 347) Malawi until the 1990s, when it was named (A 348) Nkhunga congregation.

Why did the Synod of Livingstonia consider the Bua River as the boundary between the Nkhoma Synod and itself? The Nkhoma Synod's argument that the boundary was the Dwangwa River, following the transfer of the Kasungu Station to the DRCM, could be a good starting point. If we are to follow the Nkhoma Synod's logic, then the boundary between the two missions was not the Dwangwa River, because the 1923 minutes did not mention it as a boundary. Rather, it mentioned the "tribal line". In accordance with the interpretation of "tribal line", as discussed in Chapter Three, the Nkhotakota boundary can only be established if we are to determine which chiefs shared the boundary in the 1920s. From the Bua River, going northwards, the chief was Kanyenda, a Tonga by ethnicity.¹³⁵² In the 1920s, Chief Kanyenda shared a boundary with Chief Musa, a successor of Jumbe. Musa himself was not a Chewa by ethnicity, but a Nyamwezi-Yao.¹³⁵³ However, most of his subjects were either Chipeta or Chewa, including his sub-chief Mphonde, the current traditional authority that shares a boundary with Chief Kanyenda. Based on the colonial anthropological understanding at that time, the "tribal line" was the Bua River, because it separated the Tonga and the Chewa.

¹³⁵¹ Livingstonia Mission Staff Records, Livingstonia papers, NLS.

¹³⁵² S.S. Murray, *A Handbook of Nyasaland*, 145; B. Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation*, 15.

¹³⁵³ *Ibid*, 145, 137.

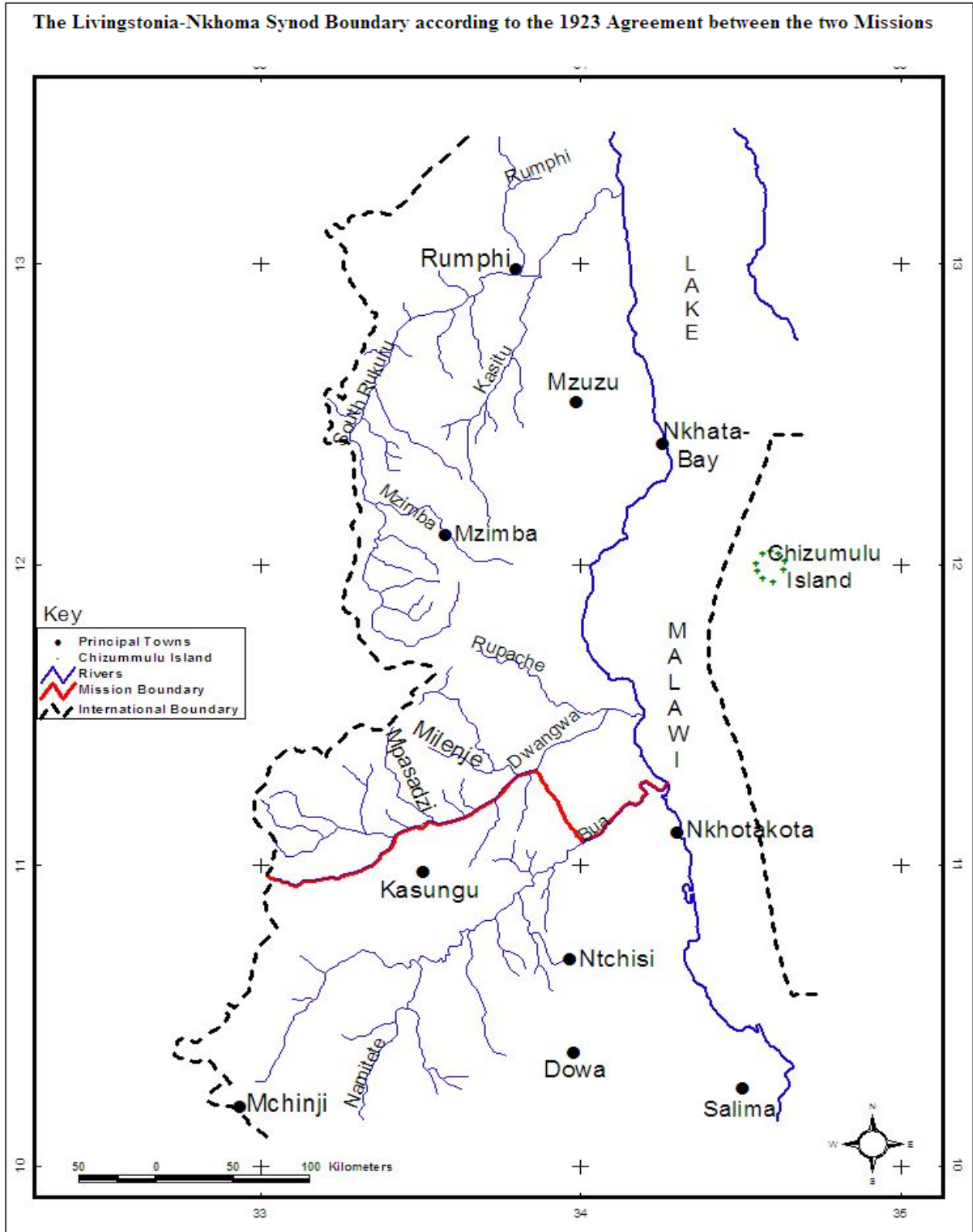


FIGURE 6.9. Map showing the traditional boundary between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods as agreed in 1923 by the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM, and as affirmed by the CCAP General Synod in 1958 (Map drawn by the researcher)

Secondly, let us explore whether the Nkhotakota border dispute was a territorial dispute or a breakaway. To have a better perspective, let us explore the sequence of events that happened before a few members of the Malawi congregation seceded from it and identified with the Nkhoma Synod.

In August 1967, the Nkhoma Synod secretariat asked the Synod of Livingstonia [where \(B 17\)](#) the boundary in Nkhotakota was. On July 1968, the Mvera Presbytery of the Nkhoma Synod categorically stated that the northern boundary of the Nkhotakota congregation was the Dwangwa River.¹³⁵⁴ On 4th October 1977, it was reported that the Nkhoma Synod officials would go to the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation to inspect the situation regarding the northern boundary of the Nkhotakota congregation.¹³⁵⁵ During the Synod of Livingstonia meeting held from 15th to 16th December 1977, H.A.C. Mhone, the parish minister of the Malawi congregation, reported that [\(A 349\)](#) Nkhoma Synod minister of the Nkhotakota congregation had crossed the Bua River to do pastoral work in his congregation.¹³⁵⁶ In 1978, Samson J. Mwale, who led the breakaway group of the Malawi congregation¹³⁵⁷, was employed at the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation, and became a member of the Malawi congregation.

On 16th April 1979, the Nkhoma Synod moderamen¹³⁵⁸ discussed the size of a church building to be built at the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation.¹³⁵⁹ On 13th June 1979, the Nkhoma Synod moderamen recruited a salaried session clerk to work with the Nkhoma Synod members at the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation. It was during this meeting that the moderamen thanked Human, the DRC Liaison Officer working with the Nkhoma Synod, for “his initiative in getting the work at the Dwangwa Sugar [Corporation] started”.¹³⁶⁰ On 27th June 1979, the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods’ leaders met at the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation to discuss [\(A 350\)](#) the Synods’ boundary.¹³⁶¹ On 18 July 1979, the two Synods met to discuss the Nkhotakota Border dispute, which was chaired by Y.C. Kaunda, Synod of Livingstonia moderator, and I.M. Kainja, the Nkhoma Synod General Secretary, who was appointed as the secretary of the committee. The meeting made the following resolutions that:

¹³⁵⁴ Min. MV. 97 of the Mvera Presbytery meeting held at Mvera on 25/07/1968, SLA.

¹³⁵⁵ Min. KS 7142 of the Moderamen held at Nkhoma on 04/10/1977, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

¹³⁵⁶ Min. 21 of a Joint meeting of Synod of Livingstonia Executive and Planning Committees held at Ekwendeni from 15-16/12/1977, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹³⁵⁷ J.S. Mwale told the researcher that he came to Dwangwa in 1978. He came from Lilongwe District.

¹³⁵⁸ Moderamen is a Latin word. It means management or leadership. The Nkhoma Synod uses it when referring to its Synod executive committee.

¹³⁵⁹ Min. KS 7562 of the Synodical Committee meeting held at Chongoni on 16/04/1979, NGK Archive, St.

¹³⁶⁰ Min. KS 7626 of the Nkhoma Synodical Committee held at Lilongwe congregation on 13/06/1979, SLA, Box 58.

¹³⁶¹ Min. 7653 of the Moderamen meeting of the 27/06/1979, NGK Archive, Box 94, St.

- a) it found that there was misunderstanding regarding Minute 19 of the General Synod minutes of 4th to 5th September 1968 on the question of the boundary;
- b) it agreed that the Synod of Nkhoma should reconsider the Northern boundary of Nkhotakota Congregation;
- c) it requested that the Nkhoma should meantime withhold their church plans in the lower Dwangwa area; and
- d) it requested that the Nkhoma Synod should report on this matter to Livingstonia Synod and General Synod before the meeting of the Standing Committee in November 1979.¹³⁶²

The misunderstanding was based on the assumption, which the Nkhoma Synod had about [the \(A 351\)](#) Chamakala Agreement, where it stated that the Synod of Livingstonia should not cross the Dwangwa River. To the Nkhoma Synod this meant that the Dwangwa River was made a boundary. As argued above, the Chamakala meeting did not establish the boundary between the two Synods, but a buffer zone. However, this seems to be the Nkhoma Synod's interpretation, because before [\(A 352\)](#) September 1968, the Mvera Presbytery had unilaterally declared the Dwangwa River as the boundary. At Chamakala, the Nkhoma Synod did not agree that the Dwangwa River was the boundary. This could be the reason why, at the 18 July 1979 meeting, the Nkhoma Synod resolved to have a new boundary for Nkhotakota, and decided not to post the salaried session clerk to the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation. Instead, he posted [\(A 353\)](#) to the Mpasadzi Tobacco Estate. It also suspended its activities at the Dwangwa Sugar Scheme, in compliance with the resolutions made.¹³⁶³

In July 1979, a few members of the Malawi congregation, led by Samson J. Mwale, agreed to secede from it.¹³⁶⁴ On 1st September 1979, the Malembo Presbytery of the Nkhoma Synod and elders of Nkhotakota congregation met the group, led by S.J. Mwale, to discuss the protest. The Nkhoma Synod moderamen then instructed its General Secretary to write to the Synod of Livingstonia "that it should not do anything to our church members at the Dwangwa area until the new boundary has been fixed".¹³⁶⁵ [Mentioning a "new boundary" \(A 354\)](#) implies that the Nkhoma Synod knew about the old boundary. Given this account, one wonders whether the Nkhotakota

¹³⁶² Minutes of the meeting held at Matiki between the Leaders of Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods on 18th July 1979, SLA, Box 58

¹³⁶³ Min. KS 7660 of the Nkhoma Synod held on 27/07/ 1979 at Lilongwe CCAP congregation, SLA, box 58

¹³⁶⁴ Interview with S.J. Mwale at Mowe-Dwangwa Sugar Corporation on 05/02/2015

¹³⁶⁵ Min. 7680 of the Moderamen meeting the Nkhoma Synod held on 03/09/1979, NGK Archives, Box 94, St.

border dispute could be described as a breakaway. From the ongoing narratives, it is evident that the breakaway could have been influenced by the 18 July resolution on the Nkhotakota border dispute, or by the Nkhoma Synod leaders themselves, after being dissatisfied with the resolution. It appears that the second view was at work.

In December 1979, the Nkhoma Synod gave its interpretation of the minutes of 8 July 1979. It said, “The Matiki meeting did not state where the boundary is, but only stated that there [was] a misunderstanding. Our Synod investigated the history of this misunderstanding, tracing it back to the agreement of 10th January 1958, which was accepted by the Livingstonia Synod.”¹³⁶⁶ It continued saying that:

We did, in fact, reconsider the boundary, and concluded that we [could] not change the historic boundary and that it should remain as it is. The Matiki meeting did not agree to change the boundary. It only said that [the] Nkhoma Synod should reconsider the boundary. We gave very careful consideration indeed to the boundary, thereby fulfilling the argument made at Matiki. We found that changing the border was not possible, and that it would not solve the problem of the presence of both Synods in the same area. We saw the only solution in the Synods reaching a similar agreement to that at Chamakala, viz. that we each continue to work side by side in the specified area between the lower Dwangwa and lower Bua.¹³⁶⁷

It further told the Synod of the Livingstonia that it had instructed the Nkhotakota congregation to continue planting a prayerhouse at the Dwangwa Sugar Scheme, as planned. The same instruction was repeated by the Nkhoma Synod in 1981.¹³⁶⁸ On 25 December 1979, the Synod of Livingstonia responded, “We regret to note that the whole conclusion of the Matiki meeting is now and again being ignored by Nkhoma Synod...For all these, the Synod of Livingstonia, which met at Ekwendeni on 12th December 1979, decided that the General Synod is to be informed that [the] two Synods fail to agree to anything.”¹³⁶⁹ What is interesting is that the Nkhoma Synod was silent on what boundary was agreed on 10 January 1958; rather, it proposed to have a buffer zone. If the Synod of Livingstonia had crossed the historic boundary, why did the Nkhoma Synod easily give up in contest for the Dwangwa River as the boundary, instead of opting for the buffer zone? Hence, what happened at the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation in 1979 cannot be described as a breakaway *per se*. It was the Nkhoma Synod schema or missiological approach to claim the Central Region. It is possible that the members of the Malawi congregation were largely influenced by the Nkhoma

¹³⁶⁶ I.M. Kainja, to the Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary dated 11 December 1979, General Synod Office, Lilongwe

¹³⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁶⁸ I.M. Kainja to the Senior and Junior Clerk of the General Synod dated 30/04/1981, General Synod Office.

¹³⁶⁹ W.P. Chibambo to Nkhoma Synod General Secretary dated 25/12/1979, SLA, Box 58

Synods leadership, to establish their own prayerhouse for social, economic and political gains, in which both the leaders and members of a breakaway had vested interests. [\(A 355\)](#)

After sensing the political implications associated with the border debate, the Synod of Livingstonia opted not to respond to letters written by the Nkhoma Synod. Through its General Secretary H. A. Kamnkhwani, a successor of Kainja, the Nkhoma Synod wrote, “It was therefore evident that ‘silence means consent’. Hence, the people of Katopeka have been given a site for building a prayerhouse, we have already bought bricks and a contractor is to be employed to do the work.”¹³⁷⁰ It is evident that the Nkhoma Synod unilaterally declared the Dwangwa area a buffer zone. In 1980, the General Synod just endorsed the Nkhoma Synod’s position of having a buffer zone.¹³⁷¹ It resolved that there should be proper consultation between the two Synods, or its presbyteries and congregations, before a prayerhouse was constructed. There was a shift from being a border dispute, to contesting for a place where the two Synods could build prayer-houses.

In the same year, the Nkhoma Synod constructed at a prayerhouse called Majiga, which became a contested site for decades. The new debate for the place is what is recorded as the Dwangwa question or issue in the minutes of the CCAP. The shift of the debate shows that the border dispute was not territorial. Therefore, the Nkhotakota border dispute was not a breakaway or a territorial dispute, but rather it was a consciously crafted discourse for economic and political reasons. Then it is argued that the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute will remain politically significant for group mobilisation, along ethnic lines.

6.4.2 Problematizing the Dwangwa Question as CCAP divisive discourse

The question we must ask is why the border dispute abruptly change from territorial border dispute to contesting for a site where to build a prayerhouse. This subsection examines what led to this shift and its implication on the unity of the CCAP.

After the Synod of Livingstonia gave a historical background of the disputed place¹³⁷², the General Synod resolved that the place where the Nkhoma Synod built the Majiga (Katopeka) prayerhouse belonged to Malawi congregation of the Synod of Livingstonia. The Nkhoma Synod was not ready to comply with the General Synod resolution.¹³⁷³ In February 1983, the Project

¹³⁷⁰ H.A. Kamnkhwani, to Senior Clerk of the General Synod, dated 21/08/1981, General Synod Office.

¹³⁷¹ Simon A. Faiti-Phiri to the General Secretary Nkhoma Synod of 21/12/1980, General Synod Office.

¹³⁷² Bandawe Presbytery clerk to Livingstonia General Secretary dated 27/05/1979, SLA, Box 47.

¹³⁷³ D.K. Kalua, parish minister Malawi congregation to W.P. Chibambo dated 03/07/1981, SLA, Box 58

Manager for the Small Holder Sugar Authority wrote to the moderator of the General Synod that he was “in no way to be involved in any disagreement that there may be within CCAP, regarding limits or areas of different Synods.” He further pointed out that “each [Synod] appears to interpret the minutes of the General Synod of CCAP differently.”¹³⁷⁴ In response, the Nkhoma Synod pointed out that the General Synod gave permission to the Nkhoma Synod to build a prayerhouse at another given place. Then he went on to say “that means the two prayer-houses will operate in the same area, that of [the] Malawe congregation and of [the] Nkhotakota Congregation, respectively.”¹³⁷⁵ While this position was not disputed by the Synod of Livingstonia, it did not agree with the construction of a prayerhouse at Katopeka by the Nkhoma Synod. As such, the Synod of Livingstonia considered the building of a prayerhouse at Katopeka/Mowe, as a violation of the General Synod’s ruling.¹³⁷⁶ In 1987, the Nkhoma Synod General Secretary wrote,

While we affirm that we had not given the mandate to the Nkhotakota congregation to build a prayerhouse at the place [Mowe] where it stands at present, which is in contradiction with what was agreed upon by [the] General Synod in 1983. We are dismayed at a prayerhouse, which has been built at Nkhunga at Nsenjere near our primary school, and this also was not built respecting the resolution of the General Synod. As such, both cases cancel each other, as neither had consulted the neighbouring Kirk session before building their prayer-houses.¹³⁷⁷

Inconsistences on the side of the Nkhoma Synod suggest that the main players were Synod officials, who were using the parishioners as a pretext to advance their goals. When the General Synod asked the Nkhoma Synod leaders to reconsider the handover, they told the Standing Committee that they would respond to questions raised, after discussing with their Synod. Interestingly, the Nkhoma Synod General Secretary wrote to the Synod of Livingstonia that:

The Moderamen wish to draw your attention [to fact] that: (1) the work on the church building must continue and be completed unhindered. (2) They have taken note of your recommendation to surrender the prayerhouse to ‘General Synod’, but have declined to issue a final decision on the matter until General Synod and Nkhoma Synod give a declaration on the matter.¹³⁷⁸

It remains an enigma why the Nkhoma Synod wanted the General Synod to be party to its decision on the handover of the Katopeka (now Majiga) prayerhouse to the Synod of Livingstonia. Based on the 1956 politics that championed by the DRCM missionaries, as discussed in Chapter

¹³⁷⁴ Project Manager of Small Holder Sugar Authority to the J.G. Maseko 28/02/1983, General Synod.

¹³⁷⁵ H.A. Kamnkhwani, to the Project Manager of D.S.C Small Holder Sugar Authority, dated 15 February 1983, General Synod Office.

¹³⁷⁶ W.P. Chibambo, Livingstonia General Secretary to the Nkhoma Synod General Secretary dated 15/07/1981, General Synod Office; H.A.C. Mhone to W.P. Chibambo dated 10/09/1986, SLA, Box 47.

¹³⁷⁷ H.A. Kamnkhwani to the General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia dated 05/03/1987, General Synod Office.

¹³⁷⁸ C.I. Chimkoka, Nkhoma Synod General Secretary to the Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary dated 25/11/1987, General Synod Office.

Four, the final decision was left in the hands of an individual Synod. And the Nkhoma Synod leadership was capitalising on these politics, as the next chapter will show. This explains why the ethnicity is a persistent problem in the border dispute. It affirms the explanation that espouses that ethnicity and ethnic conflicts are the outcome of the manipulation of ethnic identities by the cultural brokers, to promote their personal interests, and that of the group which they represent for political, socio-economic and religious arenas,¹³⁷⁹ although the explanation assumes that those mobilised are gullible. This could be explained by a few members who accepted to side with the Nkhoma Synod leadership. Those [who \(A 356\)](#) accepted, according to qualitative data, had their own interests of joining the leaders. Some of these members were suspended because of immorality by the Malawi Session. Then they were joined by their sympathisers. Secondly, the Majjiga congregation, as opposed to Matiki, remains a congregation of few members at the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation. The majority of Central Region CCAP members continues to congregate at the Matiki congregation of the Synod of Livingstonia.

What is fascinating about the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute was the resolution that the Nkhoma Synod made in 1987. It resolved, “Synod accepts the minute of the boundary committee (2.329) page 78 paragraph 6 and 7. The Synod re-affirms that the boundary between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods is the Dwangwa River, from its source to where it flows into the lake. Therefore, Synod says that the words in paragraph 7 (b) and (c) convey the understanding of [the] Nkhoma Synod about this matter.”¹³⁸⁰ While the Nkhoma Synod recognised that the Dwangwa River was the boundary between the Synod of Livingstonia and itself in Kasungu District as agreed in 1923 and affirmed in 1958, it unilaterally extended the boundary to Nkhotakota District (in figure 6. 10). Why did the Nkhoma Synod accept the Dwangwa River as the boundary in 1987? Why did the Nkhoma Synod fail to accept it in 1968? There are two explanations. The first is that it was difficult to hand over the Majjiga prayerhouse, because its members would interpret it as a betrayal. The second is that it would defeat its goal of claiming the Central Region. Based on these two reasons, the leadership did not want to comply with the General Synod resolution of handing over the prayerhouse.

¹³⁷⁹ B. Osei-Hwedie, “The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia,” 230

¹³⁸⁰ Min. S. 2232 (1) of the special Nkhoma Synod meeting held at Lilongwe on 25 June 1987, NGK Archives, Box 94, St.; letter of I.M. Kainja, CCAP Nkhoma Synod General Secretary to Faiti-Phiri dated 31st October, 1979, General Synod Office.

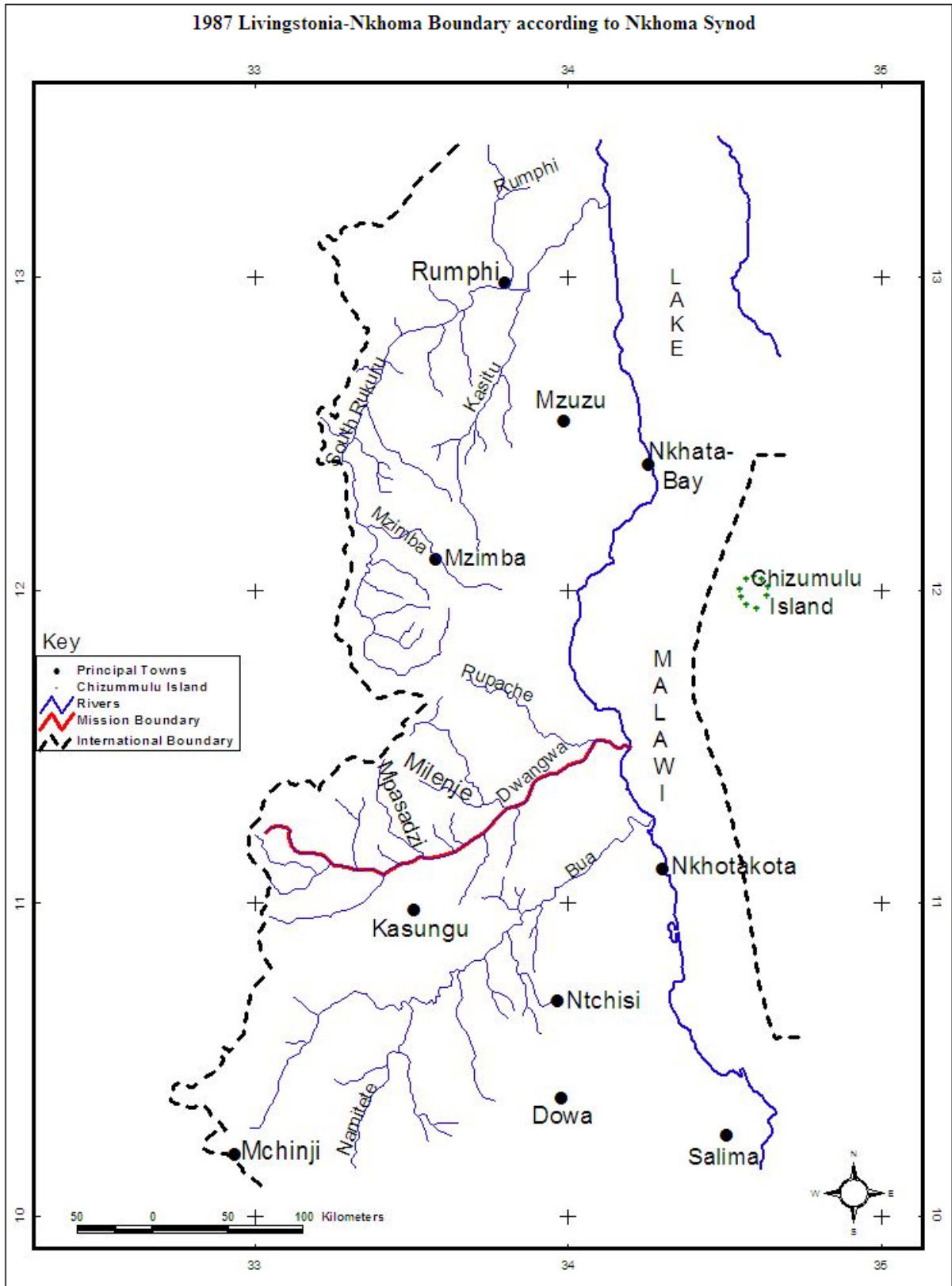


FIGURE 6.10. Map showing the other version of the Nkhoma Synod about the boundary between the Synod of Livingstonia and itself, as per its decision of 1987 (Map drawn by the researcher)

In August 1987, the Nkhoma Synod did not attend the General Synod meeting held at Ekwendeni.¹³⁸¹ Asking why the Nkhoma Synod did not attend the meeting, the incumbent moderator of the CCAP General Synod, at that time, responded,

That was when the Dwangwa issue was going to be discussed. To avoid the consequence, the Nkhoma [Synod] gave the pretext that some of its officials were attending a funeral. That was a surprise to the commissioners from Blantyre and Livingstonia for a whole Synod to stay away [from] an important meeting, such as [the] General Assembly.¹³⁸²

The action of the Nkhoma Synod shows that the Nkhotakota border dispute was not a breakaway issue, because its leadership did not distance itself from the Dwangwa breakaway, as was the case with the Bulawayo and South African breakaways, as discussed in Chapter Five. All decisions regarding the border dispute were made by the moderamen. During the fieldwork, both church leaders and CCAP ordinary members put the blame on the church hierarchy, which chapter continues to explore.¹³⁸³ Kawale admitted that “most decisions we made as church leaders, seemed not to have reflected reality at the grassroots level”.¹³⁸⁴ The ultimate objective of the Nkhoma Synod leadership was to claim the Central Region as its sphere of influence, because it was their missiological approach, coupled with economic and political reasons. To achieve this, it employed ethnicity, because politically it was well-positioned, as a result of its close association with the Banda regime.

6.4.3 1990 Livingstonia’s no-border resolution during one-party politics

At its 1990 biannual meeting, the Synod of Livingstonia passed a resolution that it would no longer respect the boundary between the Nkhoma Synod and itself. The General Synod was informed of the Synod of Livingstonia’s decision of no boundary between Nkhoma and Livingstonia. As a response to it, the General Synod resolved that the Nkhoma Synod “should consider handing over the church building at a controversial place to [the] Livingstonia Synod.”¹³⁸⁵ In 1992, the Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary reported that:

¹³⁸¹ Min. 10 of the CCAP General Synod meeting held Ekwendeni from 5th to 10th August 1987, General Synod Office.

¹³⁸² Email interview with Dr Silas Ncozana on 06/04/2016.

¹³⁸³ Interview Kasasanya, Majiga, Matiki and Kafita focus groups; Interviewed H.M. Nkhoma on 25/12/2014 in Mzuzu; L.N. Nyondo on 08/01/2015 in Mzuzu; Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu on 08/01/2015; Dr F.L. Chingota in Zomba on 29/01/2015; K.J. Mgawi at Nkhoma on 01/02/2015; V.K. Banda on 07/08/2015 through email.

¹³⁸⁴ Interview Dr W.R. Kawale, Nkhoma General Secretary (2002-2008) on 02/11/2014.

¹³⁸⁵ Min. 42/90 of General Synod meeting held at Blantyre from 26th August to 3rd September 1990, General Synod Office.

[The] Nkhoma Synod was requested to consider the request, but no positive word was received. It was, however, reported by the General Synod Moderator that the controversial area was made No man's land. Synod resolved to stand by the 1990 decision that there [should] be no boundary between two Synods.¹³⁸⁶

Interestingly, the Synod of Livingstonia did not implement its resolution. The question is, why did the Synod fail to implement the no border during the one-party era. In an interview with Matiya Nkhoma, the Deputy Secretary at that time, he answered that it was difficult to implement the no border resolution during the time of Dr Banda, because of the political atmosphere. This was the reason why it was only feasible after the inception multipartyism.¹³⁸⁷ The next chapter will look at how the border dispute was negotiated after the fall of Dr Banda.

6.5 Summary of the Chapter

The study has indicated that the ethnic cleavages that exist between the Chewa and non-Chewa in northern Malawi were the product of Dr Banda's autocratic rule. Banda discriminated against the northerners on the assumption that they dominated the work place because of the Scottish education that they had benefitted.

It has shown that the salience of ethnic polarisation and cleavages between the Central Region Chewa and non-Chewa in the other two regions in post-independence Malawi was not based on primordial motives, but was consciously crafted by Dr Banda to promote Chewa ethnic ideology, underpinning factors that were economic and political, based on the past group experience caused by the DRCM education system. It was alleged that the transfer of Kasungu Station coupled with the quality of education offered by the DRCM disadvantaged its graduates to compete meaningfully in the job market, with their counterparts, who benefitted from the Scottish mission schools.

The chapter has also indicated that the proscription of Chitumbuka and other indigenous languages by Banda's regime in favour of Chichewa had a profound effect on the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute. It influenced the Chewa to linguistically dominate the non-Chewa. It was this process that sparked resistance and [contributed to](#) the border dispute ([A 357](#)).

In addition, the Synod of Livingstonia accepted the buffer zones both in Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts because the political environment was formidable. It has also shown that the Milenje Stream was a northerly boundary of the buffer zone in Kasungu, and not between the two

¹³⁸⁶ Minutes of the Synod of Livingstonia held at Livingstonia from 18 to 23 August 1992, Synod Office, Mzuzu

¹³⁸⁷ Interview H.M. Nkhoma on 25/12/2014 in Mzuzu.

Synods, and that the boundary was Dwangwa River in Kasungu. It has stated that the Bua River was the boundary between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods in Nkhotakota.

It has also indicated that the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute was not territorial, but rather, a consciously created phenomenon for economic and political reasons. The Nkhoma Synod leaders employed ethnicity as a resource to mobilise those who followed the Chewa hegemony in the ethnolinguistic area. In turn, the Synod of Livingstonia acted as the counter-hegemonic force to promote and protected the language legacy that it received from its founding missionaries.

The dominant factors in the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute include: the Nkhoma Synod missional approach to evangelise the Central Region which it assumed as Chewa, politics of exclusion and finances. In all these factors, ethnicity was employed as a resource to dominate or resist dominance. This is why [this \(B 18\)](#) chapter argues that ethnicity is a recurrent problem because the Synod leaders use it as a resource to mobilise those who belong against those who do not belong. This study argues that the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute will remain politically significant as a site for group mobilisation along ethnic lines as long as the elite and bourgeoisie continue to prey on people's perception towards socioeconomic and political issues.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DEBATES ABOUT ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND ECCLESIASTICAL DIVISIONS IN THE (B 19) SECOND DEMOCRATIC MALAWI (1994-2016)

7.0 *Introduction*

This chapter continues to explore how Dr Banda's socio-political legacy contributed to, and shaped, the ongoing border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods in the post-one-party era Malawi. The chapter investigates the following questions: How did Banda's socio-political legacy contribute to in-group mobilisation against the others? What happened to the Chewa hegemony after the fall of Dr Banda? How did the political landscape influence the border debate along ethnic lines? If religious and ethnic identities overlap, what happens? The chapter begins by exploring how Banda's socio-political legacy continued to contribute to the ongoing border dispute between the two Synods, along ethnic lines, in the second democratic Malawi, from 1994 to date. It will then examine what happens when religious and ethnic identities overlap from the perspective of mission in unity. It will also examine the impact of the no-border resolution which both Synods adopted after the border dispute had reached a stalemate on the unity of the Christian church. Though this resolution, the two Synods stopped respecting their traditional boundary in the 2000s.

7.1 *Without Banda: A Moment for Redefining Ethnic Identities*

The previous chapter examined how Dr Banda conceptualised the ideology of Chewa ethnic consciousness to promote the Chewa interests in cultural, political, economic and social arenas, and, at the same time, discriminated against the non-Chewa ethnic groups. Vail, in his paper that was authored 13 years before the fall of Dr Banda in 1994, predicted that "when the charismatic Banda disappears from the scene, it is likely that ethnic tensions will come to the surface, breaking the long silence prevailing in Malawi over the past decades and a half."¹³⁸⁸ His prediction was echoed at the dawn of multiparty politics by some Malawians, who believed that Banda's politics had left a divisive legacy.

¹³⁸⁸ L. Vail, "Ethnicity, Language and National Unity," 149.

Among these Malawians was the Member of Parliament for the Rumph North constituency, Orison Ian Boma Mkandawire. In his maiden speech, Mkandawire lamented, “The division ... has generated a lot of ill-feelings between tribes and regions ... It has generated suspicion. Any leader governing a fragmented people is like sitting on the time bomb.”¹³⁸⁹ His observation was driven by the group experience that some ethnic groups had during the despotic rule of Dr Banda and the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). Referring to the Banda era, he pointed out, “There was in place a systematic policy to estrange ethnic groups in the country ... political heavy weights of the ruling party at that time were employing their relatives and friends in the economic sector of the country ... a policy calculated to marginalise people of the Northern Region.”¹³⁹⁰ The dawning of multipartyism was perceived as a period of emancipation for the marginalised groups. It was this group experience and perception that might have played a significant role in the group mobilisation against each other. To what extent did the government and the Christian churches, particularly the CCAP, respond to Banda’s policy of exclusion in the multiparty dispensation, and how did it influence their *ways of seeing* and their *structures of action*?

7.1.1 Language policy in plural Malawi: Reclaiming the lost glory and ethnicities

As observed in the previous chapter, the Chewa hegemony accomplished its objectives through language manipulation, as a result of which Chichewa enjoyed the monopoly. What was the public perception towards Chichewa as a national language at the inception of the plural politics?

In June 1993, Malawi held a referendum on whether the country should adopt multiparty politics or remain a one-party system. The voting outcome showed that 64.69 percent were in favour of multiparty politics.¹³⁹¹ This opened the door for opposition groups to publicly debate on issues of national interest, including the language policy in public spaces.

Against the *status quo*, in which the languages of media were English and Chichewa, the opposition newspapers, the *UDF News*, *The New Voice* and *Mulendo* (a newspaper published by the Synod of Livingstonia), began publishing in other vernacular languages such as Chitumbuka, Chisena, Chilomwe, and Chiyao. Pascal J. Kishindo observes that “this initiative was obviously and deliberately against the official Malawi government policy, which proscribed the publication

¹³⁸⁹ O.I.B. Mkandawire, *My Parliamentary Sojourn May 1994-2004*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2010, 5.

¹³⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 6.

¹³⁹¹ T. Lodge & D. Kadima eds., *Compendium of Elections in EISA Southern Africa*, Johannesburg, 2002, <https://www.eisa.org.za/wep/mal1993referendum.htm> accessed on 08/05/2016.

of such languages in the media.”¹³⁹² It intended to challenge the Chewa hegemony, and to send the message that Chichewa would no longer enjoy the same monopoly as before. It was during the same period that people debated whether Chichewa, as a national language, would be relevant in a plural Malawi. One argument against Chichewa was that it was associated with the authoritarian rule, and was a symbol of the suppression for other ethnic groups. Kishindo mentions part of this debate in his article.¹³⁹³

When Bakili Muluzi and the United Democratic Front (UDF) were voted into power in May 1994, President Muluzi, a Yao by ethnicity, responded to Banda’s language policy by ending the monopoly of Chichewa on the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) radio. On 25 June 1994, Muluzi directed the MBC management to reintroduce Chitumbuka on the MBC radio, after being proscribed in public spaces for 26 years.¹³⁹⁴ As noted in Chapter Six, Chitumbuka was not proscribed for its linguistic function, but on political grounds. Although Muluzi promoted Chitumbuka for political expediency¹³⁹⁵, the Chitumbuka-speaking population considered it to be a welcome development. The reintroduction of Chitumbuka enabled other indigenous languages such as Chiyao, Chilomwe, Chisena, Kyangonde and Chitonga, to be introduced on the MBC radio in November 1996. While the introduction of these Malawian languages on MBC radio was not based on linguistic concern, the move was in tandem with the values of a multilingual, multicultural and multi-ethnic society.

As noted in the previous chapter, Dr Banda propagated his Chewa ideology through school curricula. To counter the Chewa hegemonic influence, the Muluzi regime carried out some reforms in the school curricula, so that it would reflect the needs and aspirations of a plural society. The Ministry of Education issued a circular that Grades One to Four learners should be taught in their mother-tongues. This contradicted Banda’s language policy, in which Chichewa was imposed on every pupil whose mother-tongue was not Chichewa.¹³⁹⁶ The primary objective of the new language policy was to promote the language rights for all ethnic groups in the country.¹³⁹⁷ In July 1995, the Chichewa Board, which Banda established in the 1970s to advance the Chewa ideology, was dissolved and replaced with the Centre for Local Malawi languages, to reflect the multilingual

¹³⁹² P. J. Kishindo, “Politics of Language in Contemporary Malawi,” 261, 268.

¹³⁹³ *Ibid*, 262-3.

¹³⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 264.

¹³⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 265.

¹³⁹⁶ L. Vail and L. White, “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi,” 269.

¹³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 252.

society.¹³⁹⁸ However, some critics of the new language policy argued that it would promote ethnic divisions.¹³⁹⁹ What these critics overlooked was the fact that the country was already divided by Banda's politics of exclusion, in which the Chewa were perceived as citizens, while other ethnic groups were subjects without a culture.¹⁴⁰⁰ Kishindo described the 1968 Banda language policy as the "brutalisation and humiliation of the languages" of ethnic groups whose mother-tongues were not Chichewa.¹⁴⁰¹ Unlike the one-party era that divided the country along ethnic lines by promoting Chichewa, the multiparty dispensation exposed how the cultural diversity could be celebrated.

Gramsci, commenting on organic relations, points out that "it may happen that whoever has exercised hegemony during the war ends up losing it, as a result of the enfeeblement suffered in the course of the struggle, and is forced to see a 'subordinate', who has been more skilful or 'luckier' become hegemonic."¹⁴⁰² The adoption of the multilingual policy might also have influenced people's perception towards Chichewa, and it may have been a response to the cultural injustices that the one-party regime had inflicted on the other ethnic groups. The 1998 Population and Housing Census indicated that only 5.4 percent of the households in the Northern Region spoke Chichewa. This means that 94.6 percent did not use Chichewa on daily basis. In the Karonga District, 41.6 percent of the households used Chitumbuka in everyday life, which was followed by Kyangonde, with 36.5 percent of its population speaking it. Only two percent of households spoke Chichewa. In the Chitipa District, only 0.9 percent of households spoke Chichewa.¹⁴⁰³ Similarly, in the Southern Region, some districts rarely spoke Chichewa. For example, the Mangochi District had 69.6 percent of households who mostly spoke Chiyao, while 15.8 percent spoke Chichewa. In the Nsanje District, most households used Chisena, representing 75.4 percent, as opposed to 11.4 percent of the households who used Chichewa.¹⁴⁰⁴ Yet, this census was conducted 30 years after Dr Banda had imposed Chichewa on non-Chewa ethnic groups. The retention of their ethnic languages was due to the resistance to the Chewa *melting-pot*.

¹³⁹⁸ P.J. Kishindo, "Dr H. Kamuzu Banda's Language Policy: A Study of Contradictions," 97.

¹³⁹⁹ Ibid, 267, 270-271.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, 183.

¹⁴⁰¹ P.J. Kishindo, "The Impact of a National language on Minority Languages: The Case of Malawi," in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 12:2, 1994, 141.

¹⁴⁰² A. Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 534.

¹⁴⁰³ National Statistical Office, *1998 Population and Housing Census*, Zomba, 1998, 34.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 38.

On the other hand, the imposition of Chichewa also had a profound impact on the language shift among other Malawian ethnic groups such as the Lomwe.¹⁴⁰⁵ According to the 2008 Population and Housing Census, 296,065 people living in the Southern Region were described as the Chewa; 1,875, 992 as the Lomwe, and 1,439, 932 as the Yao.¹⁴⁰⁶ Yet, according to the 1998 Census, 41.3 percent of households spoke Chichewa, 10.1 percent spoke Chiyao and 4.9 percent spoke Chilomwe.¹⁴⁰⁷ In his research, Alfred J.I. Matiki argued that “the Lomwe needed Chichewa to survive socially and economically.”¹⁴⁰⁸ While Matiki’s observation might be true, none should underestimate the influence of the imposition of Chichewa on school curricula and public life. It had a great influence on how some ethnic groups lost their languages. Kayambazinthu noted that both stigmatisation and schooling contributed to the Lomwe losing their language.¹⁴⁰⁹

Cultural hegemonies use schooling as a form of socialisation, to impose the values of a dominant group of any society on the marginalised people. The Chewa hegemony, to a larger extent, used schools to promote Chichewa and the Chewa culture, as noted in Chapter Six. During the one-party era, the medium of instruction (from Grade One to Four) in primary school was Chichewa. The qualitative data of a recent study by Gift Wasambo Kayira and Paul C. Banda, in which the role played by the Lomwe elite in Lomwe ethnic consciousness was observed, indicated that the mass reception to the Lomwe cultural revival was not an outcome of the material and political motives, but rather, it was a response to cultural suppression that they suffered during the authoritarian rule of Dr Banda.¹⁴¹⁰

According to the oral testimonies collected for this study, most research subjects indicated that their preference of Chichewa for inter-ethnic communication was largely influenced by the fact that it was a national language.¹⁴¹¹ This implies that their choice to speak Chichewa was not

¹⁴⁰⁵ A.J.I. Matiki, Language Shift and Maintenance: Social Determinants of Linguistic Change among the Lomwe people,” in *Journal of Humanities*, 10/11, 1996-7, 20.

¹⁴⁰⁶ NSO, Copy of Population Characteristics of the 2008 *Population and Housing Census*, retrieved on 22/01/2015, <http://www.nsomalawi.mw/2008-population-and-housing-census/107-2008-population-and-housing-census-results.html>.

¹⁴⁰⁷ NSO, *1998 Population and Housing Census*, 38.

¹⁴⁰⁸ A.J.I. Matiki, Language Shift and Maintenance,” 15.

¹⁴⁰⁹ E. Kayambazinthu, “The Role of Minority Languages in National Development in Malawi,” 152.

¹⁴¹⁰ G.W. Kayira and P.C. Banda, “Materialism and Ethnicity: The Rise of Lomwe Ethnic Consciousness in Malawi,” 49.

¹⁴¹¹ Interview Melinefa Saka, on 05/02/2015 in Nkhotakota; P.G. Mwangomba on 05/02/2015; Brave Kulemeka on 23/01/2015 in Kasungu; MacDonald Madikula on 06/02/2015 in Nkhotakota; Jessie Kayila on 31/12/2015 in Lilongwe; Hasting Banda on 05/02/2015 in Nkhotakota; Edah Phiri on 05/02/2015 in Nkhotakota and Kakonje Focus groups on 23/01/2015.

influenced by primordial motives, but by the making of Chichewa as a national language. However, this is not to say that some Chewa people did not learn other indigenous languages. Interviewees in the Nkhotakota and Kasungu districts of the two Synods categorically stated that they were bilingual or spoke more than two languages. It was interesting to note that the leaders of the group that broke away from the Malawi congregation were bilingual. They told the researcher that they spoke and understood Chitonga and Chichewa.¹⁴¹² Osei-Hwedie observes that “ethnicity becomes politically significant when common culture, as in language, is cultivated to foster a common political stance among a group.”¹⁴¹³ Chichewa was politically imposed on other ethnic groups to dominate them. This could have prompted other ethnic groups to resist the domination, resulting in in-group mobilisation against the dominant group. Then the problem was the politicisation of a language. What is interesting was that the Matiki congregation of the Synod of Livingstonia conducted its worship services in Chichewa and English as displayed on figure 7. 11, and not in Chitonga, the mostly spoken language in the area. Similarly, the Majiga congregation of the Nkhoma Synod, which is at a distance of less than a kilometre from the Matiki congregation, also conducted its worship of service in Chichewa.

¹⁴¹² Interviewed Samson J. Mwale, Josaya Kalolo, Zeblon Zefania Banda at Dwangwa on 06/02/2015.

¹⁴¹³ B. Osei-Hwedie, “The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia,” 229.



FIGURE 7.11. A picture showing the bill-board of the Matiki Congregation indicating the languages in which the Sunday service is conducted. Matiki was an outstation of Malawi congregation in the 1920s, and became a congregation in 1982 (The picture was taken by the researcher during fieldwork at Dwangwa Sugar Corporation in Nkhotakota on 6th February 2015)

7.1.2 Politics, church and ethnicity

Although Dr Banda and his supporters said that multiparty would divide the country along ethnic lines¹⁴¹⁴, ethnic [discriminations and resentments](#) were [perpetuated](#) by Dr Banda himself. [He purposely excuted policies intended to discriminate non-Chewa Malawians, particularly those from northern Malawi \(B 20\)](#). Ross observes, “Banda’s regime was sowing the seeds of its own destruction by its cultural and political marginalization of wide sections of the people of Malawi.”¹⁴¹⁵ Banda’s politics divided the country into three categories, not following the regional

¹⁴¹⁴ R.M. Chirambo, “The Sinking cenotaph: Jack Mapanje’s and Steve Chimombo’s contention of monumentalised nationalist public memories of Malawi’s President Banda,” in *Social Dynamics*, 36: 3, 2010, 553. J.Z.U. Tembo is quoted that multipartism would tribalism in the Daily Times of 6th April 1993 in the article titled, “People in the Centre urged to continue supporting the Ngwazi (Title for Dr Banda), Malawi National Library, Mzuzu.

¹⁴¹⁵ K.R. Ross, “A Practical Theology of Power for the New Malawi,” 235-6.

boundary, as is often indicated in the existing literature, but rather it followed the traditional boundaries of the three CCAP Synods, as explained in Chapter Six.

As noted in the previous chapters, some scholars consider regionalism as politically significant when it comes to group mobilisation. This interpretation was influenced by the outcome of the 1994 general elections.¹⁴¹⁶ The interpretation was based on the assumption that the three main political parties won most Parliamentary seats in each region. The Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) won all seats in the Northern Region, the MCP won substantial parliamentary seats in the Central Region, and the UDF in the South Region. Deborah Kaspin notes, “Regionalism was at least as salient as ethnicity in creating voting blocks, and given [the] population numbers, ultimately more important in determining the outcome of the election.”¹⁴¹⁷ The existing literature maintains this view.¹⁴¹⁸ To such end, the three regions, namely, the Northern, Central and Southern regions, were labelled as Tumbuka, Chewa and Yao,¹⁴¹⁹ in that order, although Kaspin has questioned this assertion as an overstatement.¹⁴²⁰ This interpretation does not take into consideration the fact that people in the Northern Region, did not vote for Chihana and AFORD, not because he was Tumbuka by ethnicity, but because of the group experience that they had during despotic one-party rule. If they voted for Chihana and his party, AFORD, because of ethnic and/or regional affiliations, how do we account for the voting pattern in later general elections? While Chihana was still the leader of AFORD, the party lost most its parliamentary seats in the region. In 1994, AFORD had 33 parliamentary seats, but in 2004 it won only six parliamentary seats and UDF was becoming weak in the Southern Region.¹⁴²¹

In 1994, the three main political parties won parliamentary seats across the regional borders. For example, AFORD won 33 seats in the Northern Region and three seats in the Kasungu and Nkhosakota districts. Commenting on the 1994 electoral results, Chirwa noted, “The three constituencies [that] AFORD gained in the Central Region all bordered the Northern Region and are inhabited by ethnic groups predominantly found in the North.”¹⁴²² It should also be added that

¹⁴¹⁶ E. Kalipeni, “Regional Polarisation in Voting Pattern: Malawi’s 1994 Elections,” in *African Journal of Political Science*, 2: 1, 1997; 165; B. Osei-Hwedie, “The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia,” 231.

¹⁴¹⁷ D. Kaspin, “The Poitics of Ethnicity in Malawi’s Democratic Transition,” 602.

¹⁴¹⁸ A. Thorold, Regionalism, “Tribalism and Multiparty Democracy: The Case of Malawi,” 138, 139.

¹⁴¹⁹ K.R. Ross, “A Practical Theology of Power for the New Malawi,” 237.

¹⁴²⁰ D. Kaspin, “The Poitics of Ethnicity in Malawi’s Democratic Transition,” 602.

¹⁴²¹ B. Dulani, “The Elections under Scrutiny: Process – Results – Lessons,” *The Power of the Vote*, edited by Martin Ott, Bodo Immink, Bhatupe Mhango and Christian Peters-Berries, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2004, 24

¹⁴²² W.C. Chirwa, “Democracy, Ethnicity, and Regionalism,” 65.

the 36 AFORD parliamentary seats won were in the sphere of influence of the Synod of Livingstonia. Out of the 56 seats that the MCP won, 51 seats were in the Central Region and five seats in the Southern Region, the home district of Dr Banda's running mate and MCP Vice President, Gwanda Chakuamba. Out of 85 seats, the UDF won 73 seats in the South Region and twelve in the Central Region, particularly in areas predominantly inhabited by the Yao and the Muslims. Chirwa concluded that "there was no party that could claim to be national in character, and therefore none of them could claim legitimacy in the regions where they lost."¹⁴²³ It can be argued that the voting pattern was influenced by combined factors, rather than emphasising regionalism.

The assumption that regionalism is politically significant for group mobilisation is problematic in the later general elections of 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. In 1999, the only northern presidential candidate was Kamlepo Kalua. In the Northern Region, he got 5,673 votes against Chakuamba, a southerner and a Sena by ethnicity, who had 573, 688 votes.¹⁴²⁴ What was significant in the 1999 general election was not the regionalism, but the religious and ethnic affiliations. This was supported by the violence that occurred after the announcement of the electoral results, in which Muluzi emerged the winner. People and property were attacked because of their association with a religious and/or ethnic group. Muslim mosques were burnt in the North and the Centre, and on the other hand, the Christian church buildings were attacked in Muslim populated areas in the South Region. In the Northern Region, UDF members, regardless of whether they were Yao and Muslims or not, were labelled as Yao and Muslims, because Muluzi was a Yao and a Muslim. Electorates wanted to get rid of a Muslim President, because there were fears that he might islamise the country.

Although during the 1999 general elections Chakuamba was perceived a symbol of Christianity, the electorate voted for him in the Central Region because he was the President of the MCP: the party that was associated with Dr Banda for a period of thirty years. In this region, Chakuamba obtained 61.14 percent of the votes, compared to Muluzi, who had 34.56 percent.¹⁴²⁵ This explains why Chakuamba, as the president of the Mgwirizano Coalition, got seven percent of the total votes cast in the Central Region in the 2004 general elections, while John Tembo, as MCP

¹⁴²³ W.C. Chirwa, "Democracy, Ethnicity, and Regionalism," 66.

¹⁴²⁴ M. Ott, K.M. Phiri and N. Patel, eds. *Malawi's Second Democratic Elections*, 212.

¹⁴²⁵ M. Ott. et. al., *Malawi's Second Democratic Elections*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2000, 212.

presidential candidate, had 64 percent.¹⁴²⁶ The voting for Chakuamba and Tembo in the two elections was not based on the suitability of the candidate or on regionalism, but on their identification with a political party that was led by Dr Banda. This partly explains why Tembo, as a torchbearer for MCP, got 43.7 percent against Bingu Mutharika, a southerner and a Lomwe by ethnicity, who had 52.8 percent in the 2009 general elections.¹⁴²⁷ If regionalism was politically significant, Mutharika would have not claimed victory for all three regions. Mutharika's victory was attributed to his sound economic policies that ended the hunger crisis that affected the country during Muluzi's era.¹⁴²⁸ Therefore, people voted for Mutharika because of their group experience, which supersedes other factors.

In 2014, the electoral outcome indicated that it did not follow regional pattern. While the MCP Presidential Candidate Lazarus Chakwera, a Chewa by ethnicity, took the lead in the Central Region, he did not fare well in [some \(A 358\)](#) districts of the same region. For example, in the Ntcheu District, he got 2.1 percent of all the votes, while Peter Mutharika, a southerner and a Lomwe, had 69.2 percent. Mutharika got more votes in this district because it was the home district for his running mate Salous Chilima. Similarly, Mutharika [\(A 359\)](#) failed to claim victory for the whole Southern Region. He overwhelmingly won in the Lomwe belt, but he did not do well in [some](#) districts of the region [\(A 358\)](#). For instance, in [\(A 360\)](#) Mangochi District, Mutharika won 18.13 percent, Chakwera 2.28 percent, Joyce H. Banda, herself a Yao by ethnicity and a Christian, got 14.02 percent, and Atupele Muluzi, a Yao by ethnicity and a Muslim, got 62.61 percent. In the Machinga District, the home district of Atupele, Mutharika got 19.06 percent, Joyce H. Banda 25.74 percent and Atupele Muluzi 51.37 percent.¹⁴²⁹ In both districts, Muluzi took the lead because of his religious and ethnic affiliation. According to the 1998 Population and Housing Census, Mangochi District had 70.3 percent of the district population categorised as Muslims, compared to 28.7 percent of those described as Christians, and in Machinga District, 62.7 percent were Muslims, while 34.7 percent were classified as Christians.¹⁴³⁰ It can be concluded that Muluzi was preferred to other southern presidential candidates, because of his religious and ethnic affiliations.

¹⁴²⁶ M. Ott, et. al., *The Power of the Vote*, Zomba: Kachere, 2004, 309.

¹⁴²⁷ M. Ott and Fedelis Edge Kanyongole eds. *Democracy in Progress*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2009, 415.

¹⁴²⁸ C.W. Mapala, "The Church and Poverty Alleviation: The Study of the Synod of Livingstonia of the Church of Central Presbyterian (1992-2007)," MTh diss., University of Edinburgh, 2008, 38.

¹⁴²⁹ Malawi Electoral Commission, 2014 Parliamentary and Presidential Results. Retrieved on 08/03/2016 from http://www.mec.org.mw/Elections/all_results.html.

¹⁴³⁰ NSO, *Analytical report of the 1998 Population and Housing Census*, 40.

It should be noted that district-ism also plays a significant role in influencing in-group mobilisation. Chilima and Muluzi had more votes than other presidential candidates, because they came from a specific district, besides other factors. The aspect of district-ism and the popularity of a candidate affiliated to a sponsoring party is often neglected, if not ignored, in most studies as motivating factors. They are essential tools for in-group mobilisation, and add value to the final votes for any presidential candidate. When interpreting how people are politically mobilised in Malawi, the emphasis should not be put on regionalism. There are combined factors, but the group experience supersedes all other factors. Kaspin observes, “Unfortunately, regionalism tends to be conflated with ethnicity and to disappear as a category, when the analysis of Malawi’s political landscape requires that we address it directly as an alternative locus of identity.”¹⁴³¹ This suggests that regionalism is not politically significant for group mobilisation, compared to other motivating factors. This is why this study, like other studies, considers regionalism as an ideological construct for political mobilisation.¹⁴³²

Another factor to consider for in-group mobilisation is the role of the elite, bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. Church leaders are among the elite or bourgeoisie, depending on the role they play in the group mobilisation. They have the tendency to mobilise the in-group against the out-group. For example, CCAP Synods, particularly church hierarchy, have the propensity to align themselves with a particular political party leader, either for economic gain and/or ethnicity. Politicians use church leaders for mobilising those who belong to them, to vote for a candidate of their choice. For example, in the 2009 electoral campaign period, the Synod of Livingstonia leadership asked their followers to vote for John Z.U. Tembo, when MCP formed an alliance with UDF against Bingu Mutharika of the DPP.¹⁴³³ However, the electorates from the Synod’s area of influence voted against the wish of their church leaders. They voted for Mutharika, who won 94.8 percent in the Northern Region against J.Z.U. Tembo, who had three percent.¹⁴³⁴ This shows that the elite and bourgeoisie tend to view the ordinary people as gullible. Ordinary people do not participate in any event passively, but they do so when they have an interest.

¹⁴³¹ D. Kaspin, “The Politics of Ethnicity in Malawi’s Democratic Transition,” 602

¹⁴³² Ibid, 618

¹⁴³³ Interview of presbytery clerks and moderators of the Synod, who attended the meeting where Synod officials were lobbying them to mobilise electorates to vote against Mutharika. I also interviewed members of St Andrews CCAP congregation in Mzuzu on why they reacted negatively when Synod officials introduced Hon. Tembo as a rightful candidate during their visit with former President Muluzi in 2009. Names are withheld on condition of anonymity.

¹⁴³⁴ M. Ott and Fedelis Edge Kanyongole eds. *Democracy in Progress*, 415.

Ross might be right in saying, “It is regrettable to observe, however, that CCAP leaders have become adept at talking about the need for greater unity as a substitute for doing anything about it! By settling for a federalism, which is based on inter-regional suspicion, the CCAP actively contributes to the division of the country.”¹⁴³⁵ As argued in the previous chapter and will be shown in next section, the problem in the CCAP Livingstonia and Nkhoma border dispute was not the ordinary members, but the church leaders.

7.2 *The Border Dispute in the Multiparty Era: Understanding Symmetrical Relations*

This section explores the debate on the border dispute after the fall of Dr Banda. The Christian churches, particularly the Synod of Livingstonia, the Blantyre Synod, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church, with the support of civil society and international organisation, played a big role in the fall of Dr Banda and the MCP. On the other hand, the Nkhoma Synod opted to go to bed with the MCP. The question we must ask is what divided the CCAP and how does this help to explain the politics behind the border dispute. The section will pay special attention to the role of church leaders.

7.2.1 *The Role of General Synod as mediator and its ambivalences*

The section examines the role of the General Synod in the border dispute. How does it represent the politics of elitism? What role did it play in the handover of the Majiga prayerhouse at the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation? How did it contribute to the no-border resolution?

At the dawn of multiparty politics, the Majiga prayerhouse was not officially handed to the Synod of Livingstonia. In 1995, the Standing Committee agreed on the date when the Majiga prayerhouse should be handed over to the Synod of Livingstonia, and 10 September 1995 was set as the date for the handover. On 17th August 1995, the CCAP General Synod Senior Clerk, J.J. Mpatso wrote to the General Secretaries of the Synods:

I am pleased to remind you that at the Standing Committee meeting held at Msamba Catholic Centre on 15th and 16th August 1995, members graciously reaffirmed their commitment to implement the historic decision of the General Synod on 12th November 1994, to hand over the mission work at Dwangwa to Livingstonia Synod.¹⁴³⁶

¹⁴³⁵ K.R. Ross, “A Practical Theology of Power for the New Malawi,” 238.

¹⁴³⁶ J.J. Mpatso to CCAP General Secretaries dated 17/08/1995, General Synod Office, Lilongwe.

Although the dates were scheduled for the handover, it did not happen because members of the Majiga blocked the handover. On 1st November 1995, Mphatso wrote to the Nkhoma Synod General Secretary:

I am writing to remind you that we are still waiting anxiously to hearing from Nkhoma Synod about your official stand on the Dwangwa Dispute. As you might very well remember the long awaited for handing over ceremony did not take place on 10th September 1995, for reasons best known to your colleagues and Children¹⁴³⁷.

Mphatso reminded the Nkhoma Synod on the resolution of the General Synod sub-committee. He wrote,

However, the General Synod sub-committee on the above issues was informed at the last minute that:

- a) The church elders and members at Dwangwa decided not to allow the handover ceremony to take place;
- b) The church elders and members at Dwangwa decided not to attend the ceremony let alone the Sunday worship; and
- c) The church elders and members at Dwangwa were said to have no dealings with General Synod members and that [the] General Synod was to be informed through [the] Nkhoma Synod about the official position of that prayerhouse.¹⁴³⁸

He further pointed out, “Making matters more complicated, the prayerhouse was closed to public worship. This was witnessed by the General Synod sub-committee members, who failed to have access into the prayerhouse to worship on 10th September 1995.”¹⁴³⁹ Point (c) of the Minutes of the sub-committee was also raised in the letter written by the Nkhoma Synod, as discussed in Chapter Six, that the Synod of Livingstonia should have nothing to do with the members of the Majiga prayerhouse, unless the Nkhoma Synod and the General Synod told them to do so.¹⁴⁴⁰ Interestingly, the Majiga members told the General Synod that the ultimate decision lay with the Nkhoma Synod. It appears that the politics that the Nkhoma Synod adopted in 1956 was at work, which left the General Synod with minimal powers over its Synods. What is intriguing is that the DRCM missionaries engaged these politics to protect their apartheid policies, as explained in Chapter Four. The question is why the Malawian church leaders, whose predecessors were against the divisive politics, continued engaging them to divide the Church.

On 1st February 1996, in his circular letter to ministers and heads of departments of the Synod of Livingstonia, the General Secretary wrote,

The Dwangwa dispute remains unresolved despite the fact that we reached very close to the solution. I have recently written to the Senior Clerk of the General Synod that Livingstonia Synod will

¹⁴³⁷ J.J. Mphatso to the Nkhoma Synod secretariat dated 1st November 1995, General Synod Office, Lilongwe.

¹⁴³⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴⁰ See Min. KS 7680 of the Nkhoma Synod meeting held at Nkhoma Station on 03/09/1979, SLA, Box 56.

not take an active role in the programmes of the General Synod until a fresh mandate is given by the Synod again in August this year. I believe that our unity is superficial. I reminded the General Synod Secretariat that the Synod still holds to the resolution reached at Mzimba in 1990 that there should be no boundary between Nkhoma and Livingstonia. I am waiting for reaction from the Senior Clerk.”¹⁴⁴¹

What is fascinating in this circular is the General Secretary’s proposal that the Synod of Livingstonia should stop being an active member of the General Synod. Whether he reached this decision by himself or with a few church officers, it reflects the politics of the elite on how they influence some decisions to mobilise the in-group against the perceived out-groups.

On 16th February 1996, the Nkhoma Synod responded to Mphatso’s letter, stating, “[The] Nkhoma Synod is aware about the longing and need to settle the dispute once and for all. However, considering the historic nature of the case, one may be of [the] opinion [that we should] not rush things as the emotions [appeared to suggest].”¹⁴⁴² It is interesting to note that the Nkhoma Synod lowered the tone in their letters, compared to those authored during the one-party era. Why did it change its tone? Was it influenced by the political atmosphere of the day? Was it part of its politics? To better understand this, let us explore whether it was ready to hand over the Majiga prayerhouse. This will also help us to understand whether the action taken by the members of the Magija had the support the Synod officials or not.

The Nkhoma Synod General Secretary also informed Mphatso that his Synod would meet in April to discuss the handover of the Majiga prayerhouse.¹⁴⁴³ In July 1996, Mphatso asked the Nkhoma Synod about its position over the Dwangwa (Majiga) handover. This letter was a follow-up to what Nkhoma Synod delegates promised at the Standing Committee of 22 July 1996 that the Minutes of their Synod would be forwarded to the General Synod office on the resolution reached on the Majiga handover.¹⁴⁴⁴ In August 1996, Mphatso and the Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary reported on the progress of the Dwangwa handover to the Synod of Livingstonia biannual meeting held at Ekwendeni. After discussion, the Synod resolved that “in the event that Nkhoma Synod [did] not hand over the Majiga church at Dwangwa, the Synod of Livingstonia decided the following:

1. the Synod reasserted the 1990 Mzimba decision that there [should] be no boundary between [the] Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods; and

¹⁴⁴¹ O.P. Mazunda’s circular to Synod of Livingstonia heads of departments and ministers, 01/02/1996, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹⁴⁴² A.A. Sasu to J.J. Mphatso dated 16 February 1996, General Synod office, Lilongwe.

¹⁴⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴⁴ J.J. Mphatso to A.A. Sasu dated 23 July 1996. General Synod office, Lilongwe.

2. that the Livingstonia Synod shall pull out of¹⁴⁴⁵ the General Synod.”¹⁴⁴⁶

It is evident now that the Synod of Livingstonia endorsed the proposal that the General Secretary made in his circular. It withdrew from being an active member of the General Synod, until the Majiga prayerhouse was handed over.

On 22nd October 1996, the Nkhoma Synod, through its Clerk, responded,

Following our meeting on 20th October 1996 outside Majiga prayerhouse, we are pleased to confirm in writing the decision and ruling of the Standing Committee of the General Synod which met in Lilongwe on 27th September 1996 that:

- a) From 20th October 1996 Majiga prayerhouse is no longer under the spiritual care of [the] Nkhoma Synod. It will now be the responsibility of [the] Livingstonia Synod; and
- b) Nkhotakota CCAP minister will no longer be coming to Majiga prayerhouse. [The] Nkhoma Synod has handed over the prayerhouse and Christians of Majiga prayerhouse to [the] Livingstonia Synod as instructed by the General Synod.¹⁴⁴⁷

The crux of matter, though difficult to grasp, is why the Nkhoma Synod accepted the handover at this time. Was it that the Synod had realised that it was on the wrong side of history? Or was it influenced by the political landscape? Interestingly, this letter was not addressed to the Synod of Livingstonia secretariat and the General Synod, or copied to them, as the Church procedure requires, but to the Bandawe Presbytery. A similar letter was written to the General Manager of the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation, informing him about the handover.¹⁴⁴⁸ Although the Nkhoma Synod’s General Secretary wrote a separate letter to the Synod of Livingstonia on his Synod’s decision on the Majiga handover, the question stands why they failed to follow the procedure. Mazunda’s response to the Nkhoma Synod suggests that the handover was not properly handled. Mazunda wrote,

The Synod of Livingstonia believes the Dwangwa issue is a delicate one, and needs to be approached from a professional angle. It is not true to simply force the people to take what Rev. Kachaje announced. Accepting this is accepting a temporal solution tantamount to a big problem erupting in the future. The solution is not helping us now and posterity will not forgive us for such neglect to detail.¹⁴⁴⁹

According to oral testimonies, the Nkhoma Synod did not consult its members at Dwangwa over the Synod’s decision to hand over the prayerhouse, but rather, it imposed the decision on them. Members read about the handover in *Kuunika*, a Nkhoma Synod periodical.¹⁴⁵⁰ Why had the

¹⁴⁴⁵ The Synod of Livingstonia decided to pull out as an act of protest or boycott, because of the non-compliance of the Nkhoma Synod to hand over the Majiga prayerhouse as per the General Synod’s resolution.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Min. 1142 of the Synod of Livingstonia meeting held at Ekwendeni from 1-4/10/1996, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹⁴⁴⁷ G.A. Kachaje, Nkhoma Synod Senior Clerk to Moderator of Matiki congregation of the Synod of Livingstonia of 22 October 1996, General Synod office, Lilongwe.

¹⁴⁴⁸ G.A. Kachaje to the General Manager, Dwangwa Sugar Corporation of 22/10/1996.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Mazunda to A.A. Sasu dated 26/11/1996 General Synod office, Lilongwe.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Interview M. Madikula at Dwangwa in the Nkhotakota District on 06/02/2015.

Nkhoma leadership failed to consult their members? Did this not suggest politics of elitism, in which the blame is shifted onto the ordinary people?

Mazunda proposed that the two Synods should meet and map out the way forward. However, the Nkhoma Synod officials did not turn up. Instead, they asked the Mvera Presbytery to discipline the elders and forced them to accept the handover.¹⁴⁵¹ In July 1997, Mazunda asked the Nkhoma Synod leadership whether they could have a joint meeting about the handover. In the same letter, he also informed the Nkhoma Synod that “there [was] still another development in the upland where [the] Nkhoma Synod [was] establishing more churches. Small churches at Molozi, Bwaila, Munthawira, and Chanjovu [had] been established which [were] supervised by Rev. Jekapu Phiri of [the] Nkhoma Synod.”¹⁴⁵² Other prayer-houses were also planted at Chikuka in the Mzimba District, where ethnic-oriented violence occurred.¹⁴⁵³ Church buildings were demolished and torched by members of the two Synods.

This new development complicated the whole process of settling the border dispute after the handover of the Majiga prayerhouse. In October 1997, the General Synod asked the Synod of Livingstonia to consider resuming its active membership of the General Synod, and urged the Nkhoma Synod to speed up the handover of the Majiga prayerhouse.¹⁴⁵⁴ However, the new development was not discussed.

During the 2000 General Synod meeting, the Synod of Livingstonia returned to its active membership of the General Synod, on the understanding that the border dispute would be settled.¹⁴⁵⁵ As a complement to the solution, the 2000 General Synod meeting received a report on the draft Constitution, as proposed in 1987. The primary purpose of reviewing the 1956 Constitution was to empower the General Synod, so that it could settle the border dispute. In 2002, a new Constitution was enacted by the General Synod to replace the 1956 Constitution, as amended in 1958. All Synods ratified it, as the ultimate source of authority to govern the Church.¹⁴⁵⁶ Contrary to the powers that the General Synod had, according to paragraph 30 (1) of the 1956 Constitution, in which powers were given to individual Synods, the 2002 CCAP Constitution gave

¹⁴⁵¹ Sasu to Mazunda dated 13/05/1997. General Synod office, Lilongwe.

¹⁴⁵² Mazunda to the General Synod clerk J.J. Mphatso dated 18/07/1997, General Synod office, Lilongwe.

¹⁴⁵³ Min. 61/01 of the Mpasadzi Presbytery held at Jenda on 11th July 2000, Mpasadzi Presbytery Office, Nkhamenya in Kasungu District.

¹⁴⁵⁴ J.J. Mphatso to General Secretary of Livingstonia Synod dated 10/10/1997, General Synod office, Lilongwe

¹⁴⁵⁵ Minutes of the General Synod held at Blantyre from 1 to 5 November, 2000, 43.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Telephone interview with Dr F.L. Chingota, who was General Synod moderator, 10/03/2016.

powers and authority to the General Assembly. Paragraph 8.1 of the 2002 Constitution stipulates, “The General Assembly is the Supreme Court of the Church. Its decisions are final and binding and are not subject to review by any other Court or body. The General Synod has jurisdiction over all Synods.” However, the critical question as to the effectiveness of the 2002 Constitution lies in the continuity between the old and new constitutions in the perspective of the historical background, on the one hand, and behind the political will of the church leaders, on the other hand.

With regard to the continuity of the two constitutions, it is not clear whether the General Synod noticed the discrepancy that existed between them regarding the historic content of ongoing border dispute. The 1956 Constitution, as amended in 1958, paragraph 28 (a) states, “There shall be Synods of the Church whose areas of jurisdiction shall in the first instance be the areas under the Presbyteries of the Church at the date of adoption of this Constitution.” The researcher’s understanding of this clause is that it meant that all Synods had to respect the boundaries as they existed in 1956. Interestingly, paragraph 6.5 of the 2002 Constitution also stipulates, “There shall be Synods of the Church responsible to the General Assembly whose areas of jurisdiction shall be the areas under [the] Synods of the Church as at the date of the adoption of this constitution and as resolved by the General Assembly or standing committee.” The two paragraphs seem not to give the same interpretation. The intriguing part is that they give different dates on which the boundaries are to be recognised. The 2002 Constitution completely ignores the historical background and the context in which it was written, which was to settle the border dispute. If the interpretation is based on the new Constitution, it is likely to neglect the historic content of the border dispute, and to focus on addressing the current situation, which could be problematic.

In July 2003, the Synod of Livingstonia complained to the General Synod that the Nkhoma Synod continued planting prayer-houses inside its territory.¹⁴⁵⁷ A series of meetings were held to resolve the dispute, but nothing came out of that. The Majiga handover was left unresolved. The Nkhoma Synod continued planting prayer-houses inside of the Synod of Livingstonia, based on the same ethnic missiological approach.¹⁴⁵⁸ The Nkhoma Synod had maintained its stand. Speaking to the newly established Nkhoma Synod congregation in the City of Mzuzu on 8th November 2015, in which the researcher was in attendance, the Synod Director of Mission Debwe

¹⁴⁵⁷ H.M. Nkhoma, Synod of Livingstonia General Secretary to the General Assembly of the CCAP dated 15/07/2003, General Assembly office, Lilongwe.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Email of M.M. Banda and M.E.C. Munthali to the General Synod Moderator of 29 April, 2005 General Synod Office, Lilongwe.

said that they opened a congregation in Mzuzu to serve the Chewa, because Chitumbuka is a difficult language to speak and understand. Yet, in the pews there were Chewa Christians who fluently speak Chitumbuka. This indicates that the Nkhoma Synod had no intention to hand over Majiga, and all that they said was part of their politics.

In 2005, the Livingstonia's Executive Committee resolved to endorse the 1990 Synod resolution of no-border between the two Synods. In an unusual way, the Synod of Livingstonia wrote a letter that was countersigned by the Synod moderator and the Acting General Secretary, informing the General (Synod) Assembly that it would no longer recognise the boundary between the Nkhoma Synod and itself.¹⁴⁵⁹ According to the Synod of Livingstonia, procedurally all Synod correspondence is signed by the General Secretary alone, or his deputy, in his absence. It is only the Synod minutes and press statements that are countersigned by the Synod moderator and General Secretary. The way the letter to the General Synod was countersigned demonstrates that the politics of elitism was at work. The letter reads, "the decision was reached during the Synod Executive meeting" and not by the Synod, which is the sole policy-making body. This might be the reason why some of its church ministers and elders protested against the decision. Among the protesters was a former Synod moderator. Asked why he protested, he responded that the Synod's decision was based on retribution, which contradicted the Christian church's message. Revenge is God's prerogative. He also said that it was unconstitutional, because the CCAP (both the 1956 and 2002 Constitutions) spell out clearly that Synods shall have boundaries, and that the move was a threat to nation-building.¹⁴⁶⁰

Another intriguing part of the email authored by the Synod of Livingstonia was ethnic and political undertones. Part of the email reads, "We do appreciate the reasoning behind [the] Nkhoma Synod's move to build churches in our territory, alluding to the fact that they are following their Chichewa-speaking communities. We feel it is only fair for us to do likewise to the non-Chewa speakers."¹⁴⁶¹ This was in self-contradiction to its legacy, which was to recognise cultural diversity. This statement is evident that its decision was discriminatory. Why did it exclude the Chewa Christians who have been its members for over a century? Defending why it protested against the inclusion of Chichewa in the Republic Constitution, the Synod argued that it "has [the]

¹⁴⁵⁹ Email of M.M. Banda and M.E.C. Munthali to the General Synod Moderator of 29 April, 2005.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Henry K. Mvula email message to the researcher on 14 April 2016

¹⁴⁶¹ Email of M.M. Banda and M.E.C. Munthali to the General Synod Moderator of 29 April, 2005.

right to advocate for [the] protection, preservation and promotion of other languages than Chichewa. After all, through political manipulation, Chichewa has enjoyed a monopoly in Malawi.”¹⁴⁶² According to oral history interviews, the decision of no-borders has changed the church from being a multi-ethnic to ethno-churches. The Nkhoma Synod was referred to as a Chewa church, and the Synod of Livingstonia as the church for the Tumbuka in urban centres.¹⁴⁶³ Instead of celebrating unity in diversity, the CCAP leaders were deliberately promoting ethnic polarisation among people who used to worship and live together.

In tandem with its new policy of co-existence, the Synod of Livingstonia planted its first congregation at the Kasungu District headquarters on 18th December 2005. On 2nd April 2006, it established a congregation at the Nkhotakota District headquarters, followed by another in Lilongwe City on 17th September 2006. What is fascinating is that the Synod of Livingstonia’s action attracted the attention of the General Synod and the public.¹⁴⁶⁴ The question could be, why? The answer is simple; it was because the Nkhoma Synod had overreacted. It was this situation that prompted the General Synod to form a Commission of Inquiry to find a lasting solution. It only came in as a fire-fighting mechanism. The situation was aggravated by the media, where the leaders of the two Synods accused each other of being tribalistic, but the media was also used by the church leaders as a tool for in-group mobilisation against the perceived out-group.

One challenge that the Commission of Inquiry faced was that it was not impartial in its dealings.¹⁴⁶⁵ This might have been influenced by the lack of historical facts on the border dispute, as indicated in its report.¹⁴⁶⁶ It appears to have invented its own wheel, which made it difficult for the parties involved to accept its findings. For example, the proposed new boundary, as indicated figure 7.12, was arbitrary, largely influenced by a one-sided story. The new boundary, as in figure 7.12, was not based on historical facts and analysis, but on unverified oral testimonies that the commissioners heard from the Nkhoma Synod. This would justify the discrepancies between the two constitutions, as discussed above. The problem with the report was that it intended to deal with the border dispute in the present situation, without basing it on historical facts. This might be

¹⁴⁶² Synod of Livingstonia, “Press Statement on the Border Issue”, 18

¹⁴⁶³ Interview Kafita focus groups on 22/02/2015 and Matiki focus groups on 05/02/2015; E. Kamanga and J. Mkandawire in Kasungu on 18/01/2015.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Min. 10/05 of the Synod of Livingstonia, GAC meeting held at Ekwendeni, 16-22 August 2005, Synod Office.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Interview Dr W.R. Kawale on 20/11/2014 and H.M. Nkhoma on 25/12/2014.

¹⁴⁶⁶ CCAP, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry”, 6, 33.

the reason why the Synod of Livingstonia rejected it and questioned the motives of the individuals involved in the process of resolving the border dispute.¹⁴⁶⁷

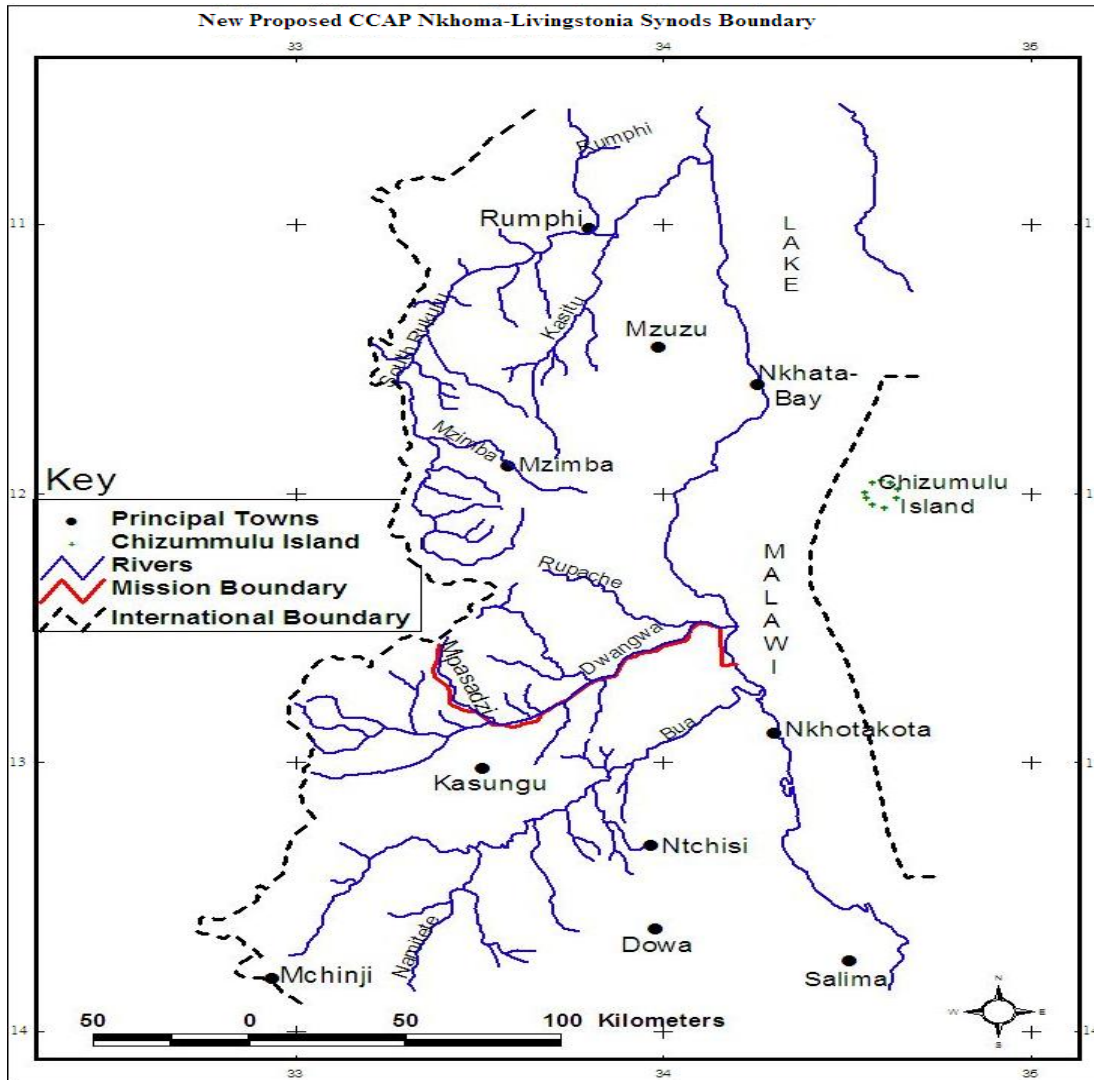


FIGURE 7.12. The new proposed CCAP Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods’ boundary by the General Assembly as suggested by the COI. (Source: adopted in the MOU on the border dispute, General Assembly office, Lilongwe)

This shows that church leaders had not critically and analytically looked at the question of the border dispute from its historical perspective and understood why the borders were created. For example, the no-border decision was not appropriate, because it did not solve the problem, but rather, it complicated matters. Church leaders failed to understand that boundaries were created to avert the overlapping of activities and to avoid competition between the same-minded churches.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Synod of Livingstonia, “Press Statement on the Border Issue”, 20.

Synods' boundaries were specifically for the administrative purpose. The removal of the borders was to promote competition between the two Synods, according to their perceived differences, in this case, along ethnic lines. While competition among Christian churches can be described as healthy, as far as it aims at salvation¹⁴⁶⁸, competing along ethnic lines could be dangerous and divisive.¹⁴⁶⁹ The decision of planting prayer-houses or congregations in a sister Synod was a breach of the General Synod Constitution. Paragraph 8.2 of the 2002 CCAP Constitution states,

Mission work shall mean the work in fulfilment of the objectives in 8.1 above and those under this Constitution in a locality outside the jurisdiction borders of the Church. The borders of the Church are the borders of the five Synods, not including current missions at the adoption of this Constitution.

The missiological option made by both Synods raises a serious question as to whether it is in tandem with the *missio Dei*. David Bosch, commenting on unity in mission, states that “all the unions of churches that have been taking place since the 1920s, and all the national ‘councils of churches’ that have been formed during the past half century or so, only make sense if they serve the *missio Dei*.”¹⁴⁷⁰ According to evidence unearthed in this study, it is doubtful whether the missiological motives of both the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods were centred on the *missio Dei*. Secondly, the no-border resolution did not divide churches, but a church because Synods were not *de facto* and *de jure* churches.

This could be reason why the CCAP leadership is struggling with the issue of whether there should be boundaries or not. The General Synod committee, which was tasked to review the Constitution in the light of the no-border resolution, recently recommended that “respect for another’s territory integrity and sovereignty” was ideal.¹⁴⁷¹ How was this to be implemented? If the decision was to withdraw, this is what the General Synod had failed to do for over sixty years, and it could complicate the situation further, according to oral testimonies.¹⁴⁷² If they opted for co-existence without borders, the question of whether there should be CCAP as one church, or CCAPs, as fragmented churches under one name, needed to be dealt with.

¹⁴⁶⁸ K. Fiedler, “Even in Church the Exercise of Power is Accountable to God,” 223-4.

¹⁴⁶⁹ O. Abegunrin, *Africa in Global Politics in the Twenty-first Century*, 85.

¹⁴⁷⁰ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 464.

¹⁴⁷¹ Minutes of the 1st to 4th January 2016, the Constitutional Review Committee of the General Synod, held at Chilema Ecumenical Training Church Centre, p 8.

¹⁴⁷² Both focus groups and individual interviews indicated that withdrew would prompt breakaways. Also see appendix E.

7.2.2 *Constitutionalism or Ethnicity: A challenge for the border dispute*

Another area that requires consideration is whether the 1956 Constitution contributed to the border dispute.¹⁴⁷³ While this study accepts that it could have contributed, it argues that the border dispute is beyond constitutionalism.

As observed above, the 2002 Constitution, like its predecessor, also had discrepancies, which were consciously or unconsciously included in it. Despite this, the Constitution was still considered as a solution to the border dispute.¹⁴⁷⁴ Like his predecessors, the General Synod moderator between 2000 and 2006, Dr Felix Chingota, was of the view that the border dispute could be resolved with the Constitution, as assured by his legal advisors.¹⁴⁷⁵ In 1987, the General Synod proposed reviewing the Constitution, in order to give itself more power over its Synods. The purpose was to strengthen the unity of the Church.¹⁴⁷⁶ The first draft of the Constitution was presented to the General Synod meeting in 2000, when Chingota was elected.¹⁴⁷⁷ The critical issue was to settle the border dispute, because it was held that some Synods were deliberately neglecting the General Synod's decisions.¹⁴⁷⁸

During the 2000 General Synod meeting, it was also observed that:

Synods agreed that the different Synods were hiding behind their own missionary historical background. Ethnic fragmentation and geo-political linings were also noted to frustrate any efforts towards closer co-operation. It was again highlighted that General Synod was functioning as an advisory body with no position to address any matters affecting the church. As such the CCAP cannot speak with one voice. The General Synod representatives also agreed that the individual Synods were strongly associated with the previous government. With the ethnic and geo-political [undertones], there was still danger of the Synod repeating the same mistake, hence jeopardizing the prophetic voice that was needed from the church especially on issues of human rights and preferential option of the poor. Monetary (A 363) favours in some cases lead to the culture of silence on justice, peace and reconciliation.¹⁴⁷⁹

Although the General Synod observed a number issues that were jeopardising the unity of the Church, it considered the 1956 Constitution as a problem, particularly paragraph 30 (1) of the 1956 CCAP Constitution, as amended in 1958, which states that the “decision of the General Synod

¹⁴⁷³ W.S.D Zeze, “Christ, the Head of the Church?” Authority, Leadership and Organisational Structure within the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian”, Th.D. diss., Stellenbosch University, 2012, 209, 210; V. Chilenje, “The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Zambia”, 23.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Minutes of the 1st to 4th January 2016, the Constitutional Review Committee of the General Synod, held at Chilema Ecumenical Training Church Centre, p 8.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Interview Dr F.L. Chingota at Zomba Theological College, 29/01/2015.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Min. 30 of the General Synod meeting held at Ekwendeni, 5-10 August 1987, General Synod, Lilongwe.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Min. 1.12.2000 of the General Synod held at Blantyre, 1-5 November 2000, Synod Office, Mzuzu.

¹⁴⁷⁸ W.S.D Zeze, “Christ, the Head of the Church?”, 210

¹⁴⁷⁹ Min. CCAP General Synod, 1st - 5th November 2000, 46, 47.

shall become Acts governing the Church only after they have been agreed to by all Synods”.¹⁴⁸⁰ When discussing the border dispute, most people mistook this paragraph for the Barrier Act.¹⁴⁸¹ The two clauses are completely different. In Chapter Four, it was pointed out that Paragraph 30 replaced the Barrier Act in 1956, which, in the view of the DRCM missionaries, was a stumbling block to their objective on the question of integration between the mission and the church, as stated in Article 15 of the draft constitution. They were of the view that Article 15 was contradicting apartheid policies.¹⁴⁸² Since the Barrier Act was removed in the Constitution, it had never been incorporated again. In 1977, the CCAP General Synod proposed to incorporate it in the Constitution after it had been reworded.¹⁴⁸³ In 1987, the General Synod “resolved that the Barrier Act should be included in the proposed amendments to the Constitution and that Christian lawyers should be invited to work with the Committee charged with the task of amending the Constitution.”¹⁴⁸⁴ When the 2002 Constitution was adopted, it was not incorporated.

Zeze, commenting on the CCAP Constitution, described the General Assembly as a weak governing body, and as a “toothless bulldog”, because it lacked the binding character. He also suggested that the root of disunity in the CCAP was the lack of confessional-minded unity among its Synods.¹⁴⁸⁵ While it could be true that the General Assembly lacked a binding character, it should be noted that problem goes beyond that, as an institution, because of the politics executed by the leaders of the individual synods. The same reasoning was used when some alleged that the General Synod played an advisory role. In 1987, it rejected this allegation.¹⁴⁸⁶ Why were the Malawian leaders of the Nkhoma Synod failing to detach themselves from the DRCM politics in the interest of the unity of the Church?

During fieldwork, some Nkhoma Synod ministers pointed out that the removal of Paragraph 30 (1) in the 2002 Constitution was an infringement on the individual Synods’ freedom.¹⁴⁸⁷ Mgawi clarified that if some ministers were not telling the truth about why the Nkhoma Synod was not comfortable with the removal of Paragraph 30 (1), the truth of matter was that the removal of

¹⁴⁸⁰ Min. CCAP General Synod, 1st - 5th November 2000, 12, 40-41.

¹⁴⁸¹ CCAP, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry”, 22.

¹⁴⁸² C.M. Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 355, 356, 360.

¹⁴⁸³ Min.21 of the CCAP General Synod meeting held at Chongoni from 16 to 17 August 1977, SLA, Box 49.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Min. 20 of the CCAP General Synod held at Blantyre Synod Offices, 5-10 August 1987, General Synod Office, Lilongwe.

¹⁴⁸⁵ W.S.D Zeze, “Christ, the Head of the Church?”, 210.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Min. 30 (g) of the General Synod meeting held at Ekwendeni, 5-10 August 1987, General Synod office.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Interviewed Abusa Kamanje and Abusa Musandichule (not real names), in Kasungu District on 27/01/2015.

Paragraph 30 (1), in the Nkhoma Synod's view, disempowered individual Synods, because, under the current Constitution, no synod could unilaterally disagree with the decision made by the General Assembly.¹⁴⁸⁸ This indicates that the Nkhoma Synod leaders capitalised on the politics that were executed in the 1950s. This comes as a surprise, because their Malawian precursors were not part of decision, as explained in Chapter Four. Hence, the problem is not about the General Synod or the Constitution *per se*, but leaders within the structures of the CCAP. In this sense, a constitution cannot be a solution. If the Constitution was the solution, why had the CCAP failed to solve the border dispute between the time when the new Constitution was adopted and the time when the Synod of Livingstonia started to plant congregations inside the Nkhoma Synod?

The oral testimonies collected during the fieldwork indicated that Synod leaders hid behind the constitution. The problem was the lack of the political will among church leaders to resolve conflicts. One research subject said that the General Synod hierarchy could not resolve the border dispute because of its ethnic and ecclesiastical composition, which is, as then, composed of leaders who were nepotistic and tribalistic. He said that leaders show more loyalty to their respective Synods than to the General Synod and to Christianity.¹⁴⁸⁹ Abale-Phiri also noted that the problem that the CCAP is grappling with is the politicisation of ethnicities by the Church leaders for political and economic reasons.¹⁴⁹⁰ Hence, the border dispute is beyond constitutionalism.

7.3 *Ethnicity and Identity Preference in the Border Dispute*

The question of whether there should be one CCAP or many CCAPs remains a critical one to deal with, and is crucial to the understanding of the border dispute in its current status. However, this section will not fully respond to it, but will engage the question, What happens when religious and ethnic identities overlap? To have a better understanding, the section examines the attitudes and perceptions of Malawians towards identity. It intends to ascertain to which institutions do church members show loyalty, when ethnic and religious identities overlap. The results displayed in this section are that of quantitative and qualitative data collected in Malawi and analysed with SPSS and NVivo 10 (see appendixes F and G).

¹⁴⁸⁸ Interview K.J. Mgawi, at Nkhoma Mission, 01/02/2015.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Interview with Jabulani Gama (not real name) at Kasasanya Primary School in STA Mphomwa on 19/01/2015.

¹⁴⁹⁰ See also H.M. Abale-Phiri, "Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis", 145.

7.3.1 *Identity preferences from the researched perspective and the role of the elite*

In the previous section, it was noted that church leaders showed more loyalty to their Synods than to Christianity. Kenneth R. Ross also observed,

The churches, through PAC, had earlier provided a rallying point for a united national movement. However, the churches themselves were seriously compromised by regionalism. This was most apparent in the Presbyterian Church where the Nkhoma Synod of the Central Region took a line which suggested that its political loyalty came before its ecclesiastical unity with the other Synods.¹⁴⁹¹

He further said, “the Nkhoma Synod acted in solidarity with the MCP government. The other churches felt betrayed that Nkhoma appeared to be lining up against them in the struggle for justice and the truth in Malawi.”¹⁴⁹² The Nkhoma Synod opted to go bed with Dr Banda and the MCP on the basis of ethnicity.¹⁴⁹³ To what extent, do ordinary church members show loyalty to politics and other institutions?

To respond to this question, the study used quantitative data obtained through a questionnaire, and qualitative data obtained through focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews, on CCAP members’ attitudes and perceptions towards identities in Malawi in the light of the border dispute. The purpose was to identify how salient ethnic and religious identities are compared with other identities, in order to establish where people show loyalty, when mobilising their in-group against the perceived out-group in the ecclesiastical circles. Using the same quantitative data, Chapter Six indicated that CCAP members showed more loyalty to Christianity than ethnicity.

Another question was whether members of a particular ethnic group were comfortable to work with members of a different ethnic group. 53 of the 56 respondents answered that they were comfortable, but 3 respondent refused, as indicated in figure 7.13.

¹⁴⁹¹ K.R. Ross, “A Practical Theology of Power for the New Malawi” 236.

¹⁴⁹² Ibid, 237.

¹⁴⁹³ D.N. Posner, “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi,” 539.

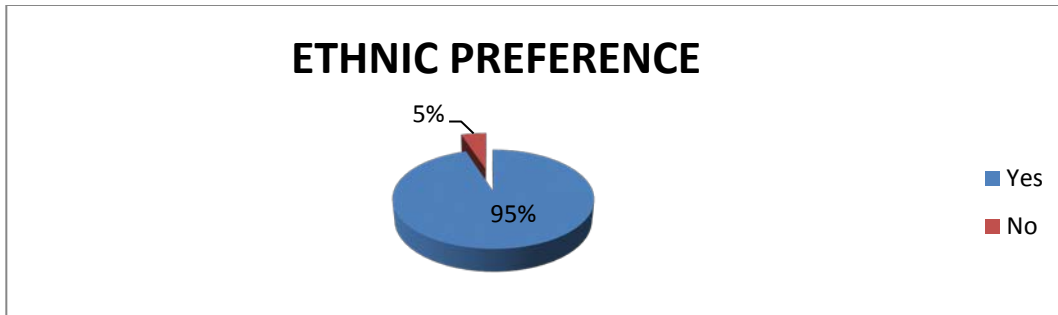


FIGURE 7.13. A chart showing ethnic preference at places of work by percentage

The respondents were also asked whether they were comfortable with worshipping in a church that used their mother tongue. 48 respondents out of 56 answered yes because they did not see any problem to worship their own language, while eight responded no to the question, as displayed in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 indicating language preference in worship services by church members

PREFERENCE	FREQUENCES	PERCENT
Yes	48	85.7%
No	08	14.3%
Total	56	100

Asked whether people from other ethnic groups felt comfortable worshipping in their own language, 35 of the total 56 respondents, representing 62.5 percent, agreed that they were comfortable, but 21 respondents, representing 37.5 percent, said that they were not comfortable. They were also asked whether people from other ethnic group felt comfortable working with them. 50 respondents of the total 56, representing 89.3 percent, responded that they were comfortable, while six respondents, representing 10.7 percent, replied that they were not comfortable working with people from other ethnic groups. They were also asked whether people from other Christian churches felt comfortable working with them. Out of 56 respondents, 50, representing 89.3 percent, did not see any problem working with a person from a different church or denomination. Six respondents, representing 10.7 percent, answered that they were not comfortable. The findings suggest that working and worshipping with a person of a different ethnic and/or ecclesiastical background did not pose a challenge to most respondents, but language use, to some extent, appeared to be a problem. This might explain why the border dispute was debated along ethnolinguistic lines. However, the number of those who preferred their own language was

relatively small, as opposed to those who did not see a problem with language use. As observed in Chapter Six, it is this small group that the elite use to accomplish their goals. Osei-Hwedie might be right in saying that “the elite prey on group perceptions or they create group perceptions, leading to conflict between groups.”¹⁴⁹⁴ It is likely that the Synod leaders exploited the group perceptions on language, and employed ethnicity as a resource to dominate other ethnic groups or resist the influence of other ethnic group(s) over them.

Another question asked, was about trust. Respondents were asked whether they generally trusted people from the same ethnic group as theirs, more than people from other ethnic groups. Out of 56 respondents, 29, representing 51.8 percent, agreed that they trusted them, while 27 respondents, representing 48.2, replied that they did not trust them. They were also asked whether they generally trusted people from the same church as them, more than people from other churches. Out of 56 respondents, 30, representing 53.6 percent, responded that they trusted them, but 26 respondents, representing 46.4 percent, answered that they did not trust a person from another church. The levels of trust that members of an ethnic group or a church had towards their fellow members were not statistically different from those whom they did not trust. This shows that mistrust is a problem.

What could be the root of mistrust? Kaspin says that “it may be fair to say that the North is an ethnicity, in so far as, it is politically cohesive and mobilised. However, ethnicity, in this case, is based not on a common culture or language, but on a common experience of the marginalisation that became acute during the 30 years of Banda’s rule.”¹⁴⁹⁵ Oral histories told by the subjects of this study¹⁴⁹⁶ supported Kaspin’s claim and a hypothesis that states “social divisions are products of political divisions. Over time, political mobilisation and counter-mobilisation might breed distrust and animosity that carries over from [the] political to the social realm.”¹⁴⁹⁷ The mistrust between members of the two Synods also were alluded to the border dispute and Dr Banda’s politics of exclusion¹⁴⁹⁸, as discussed in Chapter Six.

¹⁴⁹⁴ B. Osei-Hwedie, “The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia,” 231

¹⁴⁹⁵ D. Kaspin, “The Politics of Ethnicity in Malawi’s Democratic Transition,” 616

¹⁴⁹⁶ Interview Kafita focus groups on 22/02/2015, Kasasanya focus groups on 17/01/2015; H.M. Chivunga on 06/01/2015 and H.Z. Jere on 06/01/2015 in Kasungu District.

¹⁴⁹⁷ D.N. Posner, “The Political Saliency of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi,” 540.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Interview Kasasanya focus groups on 17/01/2015; H.M. Chivunga on 06/01/2015 and H.Z. Jere on 06/01/2015 in Kasungu District; Saul Chitsulo on 18/04/2016 in Pietermaritzburg; L.N. Nyondo and Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu on 08/01/2015 in Mzuzu

According to oral testimonies collected during fieldwork, in-group mobilisation was instigated by church leaders.¹⁴⁹⁹ Osei-Hwedie says that “the mistrust among ethnic groups is exploited by the elite, to mobilise support from tribesmen.”¹⁵⁰⁰ It appears that the elite exploited the mistrust started by Banda’s politics of ethnicity. According to semi-structured interviews and ethnographic studies, it appears that not everyone yields to in-group mobilisation. Despite the appeals that the Synod leaders made, some Chewa Christians have continued to be members of the Synod of Livingstonia. Similarly, members of ethnic groups from the Synod of Livingstonia’s sphere of influence have maintained their membership with the Nkhoma Synod in the urban centres such as in Lilongwe City.

Why do some members of the Synods fail to yield to the appeals of their leaders? Gramsci’s analogy of the popular reception of the Renaissance and the Reformation in Europe could give a better understanding why ordinary members do not succumb to group mobilisation instigated by the elite. Gramsci says, “The Lutheran Reformation and Calvinism created a vast national popular movement through which their influence spread ... The Italian reformers were infertile of any major historical success.”¹⁵⁰¹ Unlike the Reformation, the Renaissance was regarded as the movement of the privileged group. Hence, it did not attract the attention of the people. This suggests that the ordinary people can only succumb to in-group mobilisation if they have a cause. This means that the manipulation of popular perception by the elite is only effective if there are combined factors that also affect the people at grassroots level.

One area where social boundaries are maintained and assimilation occurs, is in the arena of intermarriages.¹⁵⁰² Respondents were asked whether they were comfortable getting married to someone from a different ethnic background. Out of 56 respondents, 40, representing 71.4 percent, answered that they were free to get married to any person of their choice, regardless of his/her ethnic background, but 16 respondents, representing 28.6 percent, said that they preferred to get married to a person of their ethnic group. They were also asked whether they could object to a marriage, where one of their family members intended marrying someone of a different ethnic background from their own ethnic group. 21 respondents of the total 56, representing 37.5 percent,

¹⁴⁹⁹ Interview Kafita focus groups on 22/02/2015; Philis Chakanika on 06/02/2015 in Nkhotakota; Lyson Moyo on 24/01/2015 in Kasungu; Nolias Thundu and P.G. Mwagombo on 05/02/2015 in Nkhotakota.

¹⁵⁰⁰ B. Osei-Hwedie, “The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia,” 231.

¹⁵⁰¹ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 731.

¹⁵⁰² D. L. Whiteman, “The Role of Ethnicity and Culture in Shaping Western Mission Agency Identity,” in *Missiology: An International Review*, XXXIV: 1, 2006, 62.

responded that they would object, while 35 respondents, representing 62.5 percent, answered that they would not object. Responses from individual interviews and focus groups skewed towards intermarriage. For example, nine focus groups of the total ten interviewed agreed that individuals are free to marry across ethnic lines, and 95 percent of individuals interviewed had the same view. Darrell L. Whiteman says that “marriage across ethnic boundaries may promote assimilation.”¹⁵⁰³ As observed in Chapter Three, interethnic marriages contributed to making social boundaries fluid in Malawi. This is why this study considers ethnic identities as malleable constructs, because individuals can choose an ethnic identity to identify with either through marriage or other means.

Respondents were asked whether they were comfortable working with someone belonging to a political party different from their own party. Out of 56 respondents, 51, representing 91.1 percent, answered that they were comfortable working with any person, regardless of political affiliation, while five, representing 8.9 percent, indicated that they were not comfortable. This trend was also indicated in the oral testimonies collected from focus groups and individual interviews. This shows that political affiliation has little impact on how individuals define themselves ethnically. In a nutshell, people’s loyalty is determined by combined factors, and is somehow complex. Individuals show loyalty to ethnicity or political party as far as they are politically motivated and mobilised. If religious and ethnic identities overlap, most ordinary Malawians show loyalty to Christianity as a common bond.

Research participants were asked to explain how the border dispute started. According to the oral testimonies, the border dispute was considered as a creation of the Synod leaders. It was said that the leaders created the border dispute, because of intolerance, selfishness and a lack of mutual understanding. It was said that leaders knew how the border dispute started, and had been participating in the discussions, without the knowledge of the ordinary members at grassroots level, who, in most cases, trusted their leaders. It also said that church ministers were the first to cross the border, and began to mobilise members along ethnic lines to plant prayer-houses, and these ministers did not act without the knowledge of Synod hierarchy. It was pointed out that the church leaders missed the opportunity to solve the border dispute in its early stages.

Oral interviews also ruled out that the border dispute cannot be resolved in its current status. Most subjects indicated that the no-border solution is the best, because it gives liberty to ordinary members to choose where to be members. However, some subjects were of the view that the border

¹⁵⁰³ D. L. Whiteman, “The Role of Ethnicity and Culture in Shaping Western Mission Agency Identity,” 63.

dispute could be resolved if the leaders of the two Synods would agree and inform members accordingly. In their view, the no-border resolution was confusing members of the same church and dividing them along ethnic lines, yet in their everyday dealings they live and do things together. They asked why the two congregations were in the same place if the CCAP was one church in the same place. They also asked, if they were one church, why they failed to worship together? Some research participants suggested that the two Synods should have different names such as the “Reformed Church” to avoid confusing members, because it is not possible to have two congregations in the same place that pay allegiance to different Synods of the same Church.¹⁵⁰⁴ If the Synods followed this suggestion, then the two Synods should cease to be the CCAP, they would have different names and become *de facto* and *de jure* churches. If they maintain the *status quo*, the question that has been asked needs to be answered.

7.3.2 CCAP or CCAPs: Understanding unity in mission

The question asked above is crucial in defining unity in mission for the CCAP. Do we have one CCAP or many CCAPs? Is it necessary to keep one name when the Synods that belonged to one church are fragmented along ethnic lines? This section investigates the question raised by research subjects as to whether there should be one CCAP, or many CCAPs or whether the Synods should be declared as *de facto* and *de jure* churches, to allow Synods operate without territorial borders.

The same question was also asked during the 2011 Nkhoma Synod biannual meeting. Minute S. 4354 reads, “Sinodi ya Nkhoma kutuluka musinodi wamkulu: Sinodi akuti Sinodi wa Nkhoma asatuluke mu Sinodi wamkulu ndipo dzina lisinthidwe popeza padzafunika zinthu zambiri zisinthidwe kuti izi zitheke. (My translation: The Nkhoma Synod to secede from the [CCAP] General Assembly: The Synod said that the Nkhoma Synod could not secede from the General Assembly, and that the name should not be changed, because there are several issues to address before that happens.)¹⁵⁰⁵ If it were not for the legal implications involved in secession, the Nkhoma Synod would have become an autonomous church with a different name. This could have ended the border dispute. The critical question is how to maintain the name CCAP when the Church is

¹⁵⁰⁴ Interview Hardwick Phiri at Mphomwa in Kasungu, 25/01/2015.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Minutes of the Nkhoma Synod meeting held at Namoni Katengeza Church Lay Training Centre, 20-26/10/2011, Synod Office, Nkhoma in Lilongwe.

fragmented along ethnic lines. Is it not ambivalent? Does it not defeat the Church's mission to the fragmented world? Blantyre

The difficult question that the CCAP leaders are grappling with is how to maintain the unity of the Church as CCAP, in the presence of fragmentation caused by the politics of exclusion and inclusion. One question to ask is whether church leaders understand the importance of unity in mission or mission in unity. Among the issues often mentioned as hindrance to total unity in the CCAP was that of the ordination of women. Most historians report that the Nkhoma Synod does not allow the ordination of women ministers and church elders while its sister Synods, that is, Blantyre, Livingstonia, and Zambia do allow.¹⁵⁰⁶ However, such issues are very peripheral. Bosch observes that mission in unity:

does not presume uniformity. The aim is not a levelling out of differences, a shallow reductionism, a kind of ecumenical broth. Our differences are genuine and have to be treated as such. Whenever the church takes seriously its mission in respect to the various human communities which stand in conflict with one another- whether these conflicts are doctrinal, social, or cultural in nature, or due to different life situations and experiences- there is an inner tension which cannot be disregarded. Rather, this tension calls us to repentance. Mission in unity and unity in mission are impossible without a self-critical, particularly where Christians meet with others... who, by human standards, should be their enemies. But this is what the church is for- 'to take up the deepest conflicts of the world into itself and to confront both sides there with the forgiving, transforming power which breaks and remakes them into a new community.'¹⁵⁰⁷

In the light of this, it can be argued that the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma's action, of dividing the Church along ethnic lines is a contraction of the *missio Dei* and a betrayal of the CCAP legacy, which has been cultivated in history as one church, a custodian of national unity, and a midwife of national politics.¹⁵⁰⁸ Failure to celebrate diversity in unity is not only a threat to nation-building, but also a challenge to the role of the Christian church in a fragmented world.

Bosch, discussing unity in mission within the South African context during the apartheid era, points out, "Ecumenism is only possible where people accept each other, despite differences. Our goal is not a fellowship exempt from conflict, but one which is characterised by unity in reconciled diversity."¹⁵⁰⁹ Drawing from Bosch's observation, it can be argued that the language used in worship services was not an adequate reason to divide the Christian church in Malawi. According to the Babel saga and the Pentecost episode, ethnolinguistic diversity is God's design and should

¹⁵⁰⁶ W.L. Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod," 248

¹⁵⁰⁷ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 464-5

¹⁵⁰⁸ C.W. Mapala, "A Critical reflection and Malawian Perspective on the Commemoration of the Edinburgh 1910 International Missionary Conference," 74

¹⁵⁰⁹ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 465

be celebrated by believers. Most importantly, all CCAP Synods are ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous. In all fairness, ethnicity, as a phenomenon, is not a problem for the Church and the nation. The problem is the politicisation of ethnicity, in which it is employed as a resource for domination and/or resistance for political and economic reasons by elite and petty bourgeoisie.

Against the proliferation of new churches, Bosch warns, “This Protestant virus may no longer be tolerated as though it is the most natural thing in the world for a group of people to start their own church, which mirrors their foibles, fears, and suspicions, nurtures their prejudices, and makes them feel comfortable and relaxed.”¹⁵¹⁰ The border dispute, as discussed in Chapter Five, had not only brought disunity among Malawians in the Church and the country, but it has also divided Malawians [\(A 364\)](#) nationals living in the diaspora along ethnic lines. Based on the Apostle Paul’s understanding of the Church, Bosch notes that the Christian church should not be built on social distinctions, such as those, between the [Tumbuka and the Chewa], poor or rich, slave or free, because all are one in Jesus, the progenitor of the Christian faith. Christians ought “to learn [how] to deal with difficulties arising out of their diverse social, cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds.”¹⁵¹¹ The church leaders need to do more and make informed decisions, based on their rationale, rather than on their emotions. The question of church unity seems to be appropriated by the egoistic propensities of the leaders for political and economic gain. The question is, Should there be a CCAP or many CCAPs? Bosch ends with a warning. He says, “We have to confess that the loss of ecclesial unity is not just a vexation, but a sin. Unity is not an option.” An attempt to divide the Christian church along ethnic lines, does not only tarnish the image of the church, but it is also defeats its core purpose to the world as an agent of Jesus, as a Risen Lord, a Redeemer, and a Reconciler of the fragmented world.

7.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter shows that ethnicity was employed as a resource for domination and resistance by church leaders. Ethnicity, as presented in this chapter, is a dynamic phenomenon, a constantly evolving property of individuals and group identities, and a malleable construct.

The chapter has shown that the introduction of indigenous languages on MBC radio and in school curricula was a response to the proscription of other indigenous languages in 1968 and to

¹⁵¹⁰ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 466.

¹⁵¹¹ *Ibid*, 466.

the cultural suppression that most ethnic groups suffered under the despotic rule of Dr Banda. It further observed that the introduction of indigenous languages in the media, and as the medium of instruction in Grades One to Four, went in tandem with the needs and aspirations of a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural society, like Malawi, where people needed to celebrate the diversity of cultures that is symbolised in the multiplicity of languages.

The chapter indicated that the preference of Chichewa by most subjects was not based on primordial motives, but on political motives, after Chichewa was made a national language. The findings are that a few individuals prefer to use their mother tongues or ethnic languages, as opposed to the common language used in the area in which they live. It was observed that this should not be interpreted as divisive, but as a manifestation of unity in diversity. Language preference can only be divisive if it is politicised. The chapter also observed that church leaders exploited the people's perception on language, and used it as a political tool for in-group mobilisation against the perceived out-groups, which resulted in border disputes and fostered divisions in the church. In this context, ethnicity is a representation of domination and resistance.

The chapter argued that, unlike the one-party era that divided the country along ethnic lines, by promoting a culture and a language of one ethnic group at the expense of other ethnic groups, the multiparty dispensation displayed how the diversity of cultures and beliefs can be celebrated together. It also observed that the retention of ethnic languages is a clear testimony that cultural diversity is part of human history and God's design.

The chapter observed that the border dispute went beyond constitutionalism, because it is embedded in the politics of the two Synods and the CCAP as a whole. It showed that the border dispute was a creation of the elite and petty bourgeoisie, who mobilised those who belong against the perceived out-groups. It was also observed that church leaders show more loyalty to their Synods than to Christianity and ecclesiastical unity. In addition, it illustrated that if religious and ethnic identities overlap, ordinary church members, unlike their leaders, show loyalty to Christianity as their common bond. Finally, it posed questions as to whether there is one CCAP or many CCAPs, and whether missiological approaches opted for by the two Synods are in tandem with the *missio Dei*.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 Introduction

This chapter recapitulates some of the issues debated in this study and raises questions on how ethnicity interfaces with Christianity in the border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the CCAP. It draws general conclusions on the basis of the findings of this thesis, and makes recommendations for future research. According to this study, multiple factors contributed to ethnic cleavages between the Chewa, of central Malawi, and ethnic groups under the influence of the Synod of Livingstonia, as well as to the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute. These factors include: the effects of the Second Anglo-Boer War, language manipulation by the missionaries and the Malawian church leaders, the DRCM missiological option, the history of the CCAP, Dr Banda's politics of inclusion and exclusion, finances, patrimonial politics and the politics of patronage, and the role of the church leaders in the in-group mobilisation and counter-mobilisation against each other along ethnic lines.

Contrary to primordialist assumptions, this study argues that ethnic identities are not fixed, but are rather fluid and malleable constructs that are consciously crafted for specific purposes. In Malawi, individuals were, and are, free to choose their ethnic identities either by integration, acculturation or intermarriage, or for economic and/or political reasons. According to this thesis, ethnicity, in the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute, implies domination and resistance, where those on the side of the hegemony use it as a resource to secure consent, and those on the periphery employ it as a tool to resist domination, by retaining their cultural elements, such as language.

8.1 Summary of the Findings

The thrust of this study is to show how politics of inclusion and exclusion have been negotiated, contested and defined within the history of the CCAP, and Malawi as a nation, and how they impact on the relationship between the two ethnic constituencies of the two CCAP Synods. The study asked why the CCAP border dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods remains an unresolved issue, and why ethnicity has been considered as a recurrent problem in this border

dispute since 1967. It also asked what happens when religious and ethnic identities overlap. In response to these questions, the study re-examined how ethnic groups related to each in precolonial and colonial Malawi, and how the four first Protestant missions related to each other and respected each other's sphere of influence. It also examined how the relationship of the three Presbyterian missions contributed to the visibility of ethnic identities among the evangelised, with regard to the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute. It also examined how the question surrounding the uncertainty of the CCAP union contributed to the ongoing border dispute along ethnic lines. It investigated whether the boundary between the two Synods was ethno-linguistically established after the transfer of the Kasungu Station to the DRCM. It went on to examine how Dr Banda's politics of inclusion and exclusion contributed to the current border dispute between the two Synods, and how his legacy continued to shape the ethnic debates among the CCAP locally-based and diaspora Malawians in Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The study has demonstrated that the first four Protestant missions respected one another's sphere of influence in the early years of their existence. However, the later spheres of influence, created through comity agreements, were no longer respected, especially between the Presbyterian missions and the UMCA. The Presbyterians continued to respect their borders until 1956, when the border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods began. Despite this development, the urban Presbyterian congregations were multi-ethnic churches. They only became ethno-churches [\(A 361\)](#) after the implementation of the no-border decision in 2005.

It was observed that, prior to the determination of the border between Loudon and Kasungu stations after the transfer of the latter, there were no clear-cut social boundaries among the ethnic groups in the Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts. People were not known under their ethnic identity but by their political identity, as people of Mwase or M'mbelwa. It was the criterion used, as well as the ascription imposed by missionaries through language manipulations, which created the impression that the area occupied by the DRCM was Chewa, while that of the Livingstonia Presbytery was Tumbuka-Ngoni. However, the two imagined ethnic constituencies were, and still are, ethnically heterogeneous. It was assumed that the DRCM area was Chewa, and that the Livingstonia Mission was Tumbuka-Ngoni, and this shaped the DRCM missiological understanding. On the basis of this missiological approach, the Nkhoma Synod claimed the Central Region as its domain of influence without considering the history of the Church. This is why this study argues that the Chewa-Tumbuka ethnic dichotomy was consciously crafted by missionaries

and is, therefore, their divisive legacy. The crafted ethnic constituencies are “imagined communities”, because both these constituencies are ethnically heterogeneous. However, these ethnic constituencies have provided a platform for political mobilisation and counter-mobilisation by the elite, as they prey on the ordinary people’s perceptions of ethnolinguistic, political, educational and socio-economic differences.

It was also shown that the relationship between the white missionaries and the colonial authorities promoted forms of exclusion and inclusion among themselves. This was largely due to the effects of the Second Anglo-Boer War. This situation, to some extent, divided the Christian missionaries into two groups who had previously worked together in harmony. One group identified itself as English, while the other group identified itself as Dutch. This Anglo-Boer ethno-national cleavage planted the seed of division between the evangelised of the DRCM and Livingstonia Mission, and shaped their *ways of seeing* and their *structures of action*. The Afrikaner missionaries were considered to be counter-hegemonic forces, opposing the English hegemony. This divisive legacy also contributed to the ethnic cleavages that emerged between the CCAP Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma, because of the suspicion and mistrust that the evangelised inherited from the white missionaries.

This divisive legacy was inherited by indigenous people who used to live side by side. According to this study, ethnic groups in precolonial and colonial Malawi had no distinct boundaries because of intermarriage, the integration of ethnic groups, conquests and economic reasons. As noted above, people were not known under their distinct ethnic identities but by their political identities. Malawian societies were ethnically fluid and integrated. Their ethnic identities were malleable constructs.

The study further indicated that no colonial policy significantly contributed to the ethnic cleavages between the Chewa and non-Chewa Malawians. It was the 1919 – 1947 language policy which promoted ethnic consciousness along ethnolinguistic lines. Therefore, the ethnic polarization between the Chewa and non-Chewa ethnic groups was not a product of colonial policies such as the indirect rule and/or of primordial motives, but of other socio-political factors such as Banda’s politics of exclusion.

It was noted that the idea of establishing the CCAP as an indigenous church was a Scottish initiative. The goal was to form a united indigenous church that was based on the [Three Selves](#)

Theory – self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.¹⁵¹² However, the Three Selves Theory was deviated through the white missionaries’ paternalistic tendencies in which English and Afrikaner ethnic cleavage became a prominent factor in shaping the nature of the Church (C 8). Although founding missionaries such as Scott, Fraser and Laws, did not bring European historical confessional divisions into the Church, denominational differences continued to shape the *ways of seeing* and the *structures of action* in the CCAP on the basis of European-based confessional divisions. As observed in the discussion, the DRCM reinforced the Presbyterian identity to exclude the other churches from joining the CCAP, not primarily because of theological differences but because of socio-political differences between the Afrikaners and the English. It was the ethno-national differences that determined the politics of inclusion and exclusion among the English and Afrikaner missionaries in Malawi. These, in turn, dominated the politics of the CCAP from its inception – all ultimately resulting from the second Anglo-Boer War.

This is why this study argues that the original idea of establishing a united indigenous Christian church was appropriated by the missionaries who intended to establish, or retain, their hegemony. Instead of establishing an indigenous church, they mobilised their members to exclude the other Christian churches because of socio-political differences. This was compounded by the 1956 decision, which reduced the powers of the General Assembly over its synods. In the interest of defending the apartheid policies, the NGK and DRCM missionaries contributed to the reduction of the General Synod’s power, thus creating a breeding ground for ecclesiastical divisions, whereby CCAP Synods were turned into regional ethnic blocks and *de facto* churches under the identity of the mission that evangelised a specific area. The Scottish-Dutch dichotomy balkanised the CCAP, if not the whole country, along ethnic lines.

This was in sharp contradiction with the 1924 decision that gave the Synod (later the General Synod) the ultimate authority in all matters concerning the governance of the CCAP. The purpose was to make it act as a unifying force, not only for the Church but also for the whole nation. For this reason, the study argues that the CCAP problem is structural. Instead of considering the CCAP as the Church, each of the three Synods regards itself as a *de facto* church yet it is not a *de jure* church. The Church is the CCAP, and Synods are part of it, because it was the only Church that was registered by the Government of Nyasaland in 1960.

¹⁵¹² C.W. Mapala, “A Critical reflection and Malawian Perspective on the Commemoration of the Edinburgh 1910 International Missionary Conference,” 74

According to this study, the boundary between the Synod of Livingstonia and the Nkhoma Synod, after the transfer of the Kasungu Station, was the Dwangwa River in the Kasungu District and the Bua River in the Nkhotakota District. After 1895, the Synod of Livingstonia shared the boundary with the UMCA in the Nkhotakota District until 1966, when the Nkhoma Synod started working among Muslims. At the same time, this ecclesiastical border was not identical to the 1921, 1935, or 1946 provincial boundaries, as is often assumed in political, academia and church fora. Against this background, this study also argues that ethnicity, religion and regionalism are not coterminous in Malawi. This assertion was an ideological construct of the media, academia, political and ecclesiastical circles. Malawian regions are ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous.

It was found that the leaders of the two Synods knew very well what the boundaries of their Synods were after the transfer of the Kasungu Station, as stated above. However, the Nkhoma Synod leadership purposely disregarded the traditional boundaries, and unilaterally created theirs, because of their missiological option to evangelise the Chewa after the alteration of the regional boundaries in 1946.

This study also observed that one of the contributing factors to the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute and to ethnic cleavages was the way the history of the CCAP had been told. The study pointed out that, if history is poorly told, it can mislead and promote ethnic divisions among people who used to live side by side. An example of this is the propensity for the writers of the CCAP history to state that missionaries had agreed that the Livingstonia Synod should be in the Northern Region, the Nkhoma Synod in the Central Region and the Blantyre Synod in the Southern Region. Yet there was no such agreement and Malawi did not have the same geopolitical boundaries as today. This is the reason why this study contends that such a history is an ideological construct and is divisive. This might be the reason why the telling of the history of the transfer of the Kasungu Station has played a role in provoking the border dispute between the two Synods along ethnic lines.

It has been observed that the Protestant missionaries, more especially apartheid-minded Afrikaner missionaries, exported their home socio-political differences to the mission field although the indigenous Christians wanted a church that was free from denominational and ethnic differences. It has also been shown that the DRCM educational policy, which was shaped by the after-effects of the Anglo-Boer War, Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid policies, contributed

to ethnic cleavages. The DRCM educational system did not allow the evangelised to acquire formal education by means of the English language as a medium of instruction and as a full subject in the curriculum, as was the case with the Scottish-oriented education system.

This was aggravated by the transfer of the Kasungu Station to the DRCM by the Livingstonia Mission, which the Chewa, including Dr Banda, interpreted as a ploy to deprive them of the right to formal education because its education system was not liberal enough to allow its graduates to compete meaningfully with their counterparts in the labour markets, those who had been educated in Scottish-oriented mission schools. As a response to the Chewa's plight, Dr Banda resorted to discriminating against the non-Chewa, on the assumption that they had dominated the workplace because they had benefitted from the Scottish education. It was this backdrop which contributed to the ethnic cleavages and polarisation between the Chewa and non-Chewa, specifically those from the Synod of Livingstonia's domain of influence. This is why this study argues that the salience of ethnic polarisation and cleavages between the Central Region Chewa and the non-Chewa in the post-independence Malawi was not based on primordial motives, but rather it was consciously crafted by Dr Banda and the Chewa elite, to respond to the Chewa plight, based on perceived educational imbalances.

On this basis, Dr Banda politically proscribed Chitumbuka and other indigenous languages in public spaces to deprive other ethnic groups the right to culture and socioeconomic development. However, this study observed that President Muluzi introduced indigenous languages on the MBC radio and in school curricula as a response to the proscription of other indigenous languages in 1968, and to the cultural suppression that most ethnic groups suffered under the despotic rule of Dr Banda. It further observed that the introduction of indigenous languages in the media and as the medium of instruction in Grades One to Four was in tandem with the needs and aspirations of a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural society, like Malawi, where people needed to celebrate the diversity of cultures that is symbolised in the multiplicity of languages.

The study also asked whether the CCAP diaspora debates along ethnic lines correlated to the ongoing border dispute among Malawian migrant labourers working and residing in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The study has shown that the Malawian migrant Christians in the early days of diasporic ministry were not interested in ethnic and ecclesiastical differences. Rather, they were interested in being identified by their single territorial or ecclesiastical identity, that is, as Nyasas (Malawians) and/or CCAP members. However, the European ecclesiastical leaders divided

African Christians who used to worship together along ecclesiastical and ethnic lines. The study observed that the causes of the schisms in the Copperbelt CCAR in Zambia were the ethnic cleavages, personalities, and differences in church disciplinary conduct. However, the Copperbelt ecclesiastical divisions were not linked to the border dispute between the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods because the division was between the CCAP and the CCAR.

In addition, the study has indicated that the Bulawayo schism originated in ethnic differences that were largely influenced by the manipulation of languages and mission identities by missionaries. It was also noted that the Bulawayo breakaway was not linked to the border dispute in the beginning because it was regarded as a Harare Synod issue. However, the developments of politics in Malawi during and after the fall of Dr Banda contributed to ethnic debates leading to ecclesiastical divisions, whereby the CCAP Harare Synod and CCAP Synod of Livingstonia came to have parallel congregations in the same space, with overlapping activities regardless of the fact that both Synods belong to the same Church. This development was largely influenced by the border dispute in Malawi. Hence, this study argues that ethnicity among the migrant CCAP members in Zimbabwe was consciously crafted through language manipulation and Banda's politics.

This study also observed that the tendency for the CCAP Synods to recognise breakaway groups from sister churches in the hosting countries of the Malawian migrant Christians not only impinged on the unity of the Christian church, but it also set a precedent for future breakaways. If the CCAP synods' leadership had stood by its first position of no-tolerance to breakaways, it would have deterred other members from breaking away. Instead, they had to find a better way of resolving ecclesiastical disputes. It was evident that the missiological motives of the CCAP in South Africa was not necessarily centred on the *missio Dei*, but on ethnicity and finances. This missiological approach defeats the purpose of doing mission work in unity, as suggested by David Bosch.¹⁵¹³

The study has shown that another contributing factor to the CCAP divisions, which included the border dispute, was the politics of inclusion and exclusion, which was executed by post-missionary church leaders, as they mobilised those who belong against those who do not belong. Through this process of politicking, the church leaders divided the Church along ethnic lines and mission identities to satisfy their own interests, which have little, or nothing, to do with the *missio*

¹⁵¹³ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 464-5.

Dei. These ecclesiastical divisions were aggravated by a lack of consultation, particularly on the part the church leaders with the congregants in the concerned congregations, as demonstrated in the case of the transfer of the Kasungu Station and the CCAP border disputes in Malawi. There was a propensity among church leaders to act *for*, rather than *with*. This top-bottom approach is problematic and divisive. It is based on politics of elitism and shaped by the “we-and-they” dichotomy.

The study wondered why both the Mzuzu and Lilongwe dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church, with the same demographic characteristics as those of the CCAP Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods, did not experience the same problems as the CCAP. The question is why the ethnolinguistic difference is a problem for the CCAP, and not for the Roman Catholic Church. It is for this reason that the study argues that the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute was, and is, not a territorial dispute but that it has been political and along ethnic lines. It is embedded in the CCAP history, represented by the Chichewa and Chitumbuka languages, and shaped by their missions and political affiliation. It was an outcome of the politics of exclusion and inclusion. It was consciously created for economic and political reasons, where ethnicity was employed as a resource by the Nkhoma Synod leadership to mobilise those who belonged to them along ethnolinguistic lines. In turn, the Synod of Livingstonia resisted Chewa domination by acting as the counter-hegemonic force and by using ethnicity to promote and protect its language legacy, albeit in a contradictory way.

It was found that the preference of Chichewa by most subjects was not based on primordial motives but on instrumental motives after Chichewa was made a national language. This study has shown that a few individuals prefer to use their mother tongues or ethnic languages as opposed to the common language used in the area in which they live. It is this group that the elite and bourgeoisie used to accomplish their objectives and interests. However, this study has pointed out that this should not be interpreted as divisive but as a manifestation of unity in diversity. According to this study, language preference can only be divisive if it is politicised because most people are free and keen to speak and understand the language spoken by their neighbours.

This study has argued that, unlike the one-party era that divided the country along ethnic lines by promoting a culture and a language of one ethnic group at the expense of other ethnic groups, the multiparty dispensation displayed how the diversity of cultures and beliefs can be celebrated

together. It also observed that the retention of ethnic languages is a clear testimony that cultural diversity is part of human history and God's design. Hence, it is supposed to be celebrated by all.

As noted in the discussion, the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute was beyond constitutionalism because it is embedded in the politics of the two Synods and the CCAP as a whole. It was a creation of the elite, bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, who mobilised those who belonged to them against the perceived out-groups along ethnic lines. This was largely influenced by church leaders who showed more loyalty to their Synods than to Christianity and ecclesiastical unity. In addition, it illustrated that if religious and ethnic identities overlap, ordinary church members, unlike their leaders, show loyalty to Christianity as their common bond. In the light of the no-border resolution, the study asks whether there is one CCAP or many CCAPs, and whether the missiological approaches opted for by the two Synods are in tandem with the *missio Dei*.

This study observed that Dr Banda's failure to seek the people's spontaneous consent on language, was one of the contributing factors that influenced the ruled to resent or resist the 1968 language policy. Then it can be argued that the imposition of the cultural pattern of the dominant on the people on the periphery could be a source of conflict.

It has also shown that group mobilisation and counter-mobilisation were perpetuated by the elite, bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie after they preyed on ordinary people's perceptions towards specific socio-political and economic phenomena. However, it further observed that the appeals made by the elite, the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie are only effective if they combined factors which also affect the people at the grassroots level. This study noted that the most significant factor for group mobilisation was the group experience which a particular section of the population had to undergo. Ethnic mobilisation within a society which is socially affected by integration, intermarriage and acculturation cannot just occur without being politically motivated, or mobilised, by combined factors. Ordinary people do not just join the in-group mobilisation passively, but actively. This was why some CCAP members did not adhere to their Synod leaders' appeal to join the newly-opened prayer-houses or congregations beyond the traditional boundaries of their Synods that had been divided along ethnic lines.

Contrary to the previous studies which indicated that religion and ethnicity are used as resources for political mobilisation by politicians, this study argues that religion employed politics and ethnicity as resources for group mobilisation, to advance its missional agenda. For example, the CCAP divisions in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa do not primarily intend to carry out

the *missio Dei* but it propagates Malawian ethnicity through its ecclesiastical structures. The overlapping of the Livingstonia and Nkhoma, as demonstrated in Chapter Six and Seven, had very little to do with the *missio Dei*. Rather, it propagated and promoted polarisation and hatred along ethnic lines, which contradicts the original intended purpose of forming the CCAP as a church in 1924. Therefore, the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute remains divisive for the Church and nation as far as it is politicised by the elite, the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie who preyed on the perceptions of the people regarding ethnolinguistic, socioeconomic and educational imbalances, and which became a site for the politics of inclusion and exclusion.

In a nutshell, the study has observed that the reason why ethnicity is a recurrent problem in the CCAP border dispute is that the Synod leaders use it as a resource to mobilise those who belong, against those who do not belong. It has been employed as a resource for domination and for resistance. In fact, as this study also shows that ethnicity, as discussed in this thesis, is a dynamic phenomenon, a constantly evolving property of individuals and group identities, and ethnic identities are malleable constructs.

This research argues that, while the Christian church's role in the society is functional, particularly in the area of church-state relations, it is also dysfunctional. It is dysfunctional because its activities are partisan due to patrimonial politics and the politics of patronage along ethnic lines. Instead of fostering unity in diversity as God's design, the Christian church promotes ethnic divisions that are counterproductive to nation-building and ecumenism. This is a self-contradiction to her call as an agent of the *missio Dei* to the fragmented world, and to its legacy as the custodian of national unity.

The Christian church ought not to be perceived as a catalyst of inter-ethnic conflicts but as a peace-maker, the custodian of nation-building and a midwife in the fragmented world, where it is called to witness of Jesus Christ, the Reconciler of the fragmented world. The general perception of the public towards the Christian church is that it is a peace-builder and catalyst for peace. Waruta, commenting on tribalism in Africa, noted that "the Church has a better chance of promoting a multi-ethnic community of faith, where there is "no Jew or Gentile", but one family of God's children, brought together by a common faith, love and hope, as manifested in the Gospel of Christ."¹⁵¹⁴ Similarly, Tengtenga, commenting on the Christian churches in Malawi, noted that

¹⁵¹⁴ D.W. Waruta, "Tribalism as a Moral Problem in Contemporary Africa," in *Moral and Ethical Issues in Africa Christianity* edited by J.N.K. Mugambi & A. Nasimiyu-Wasike, Nairobi: Action Publishers, 1999, 134.

the “unity of the Church would have been a tool they used to stress their commitment to national unity.”¹⁵¹⁵ The establishment of the World Council Churches (WCC) in 1948 happened soon after the Second World War, and was described as a desired direction for the Christian Church. The WCC was a product of churches that came from countries that were at war against each other.¹⁵¹⁶ This testifies to the fact that the Christian church ought to be the hope and peace-builder for the fragmented world. As already noted in Chapter Seven, unity for the Christian church is non-negotiable because it is embedded in the very nature of the Triune God. The Christian church should not pretend as if differences are not real or part of the world systems. Its underlying responsibility is to confront the perceived differences and to celebrate unity in diversity. Therefore, its focus should not be on the perceived differences, as an excuse to legitimise fragmentation, but on how it can deal with those that are often peripheral to its noble calling in the world.

8.2 *Recommendations for Future Research*

The study has shown how Christianity was introduced in Malawi, and how the four Protestant missions respected each other’s territorial boundaries. It also observed that, when the UMCA stopped respecting the comity agreement, the three Presbyterian missions continued to adhere to the comity agreement until the beginning of the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border dispute in 1956 in the Kasungu District. It has pointed out that the genesis of the border dispute was rooted in the missiological understanding of the DRCM missionaries that the Central Region was Chewa. Hence, this region was regarded as its domain of influence, although an agreement was researched with the Livingstonia Mission at the 1923 meeting that agreed that the boundary was the Dwangwa River in the Kasungu District. This study has also noted that, by means of language manipulation, missionaries created two ethnic constituencies, which they labelled as Chewa and Tumbuka. Although these constituencies were “imagined communities”, the elite had used them as sites for politics to mobilise those who belong against the perceived out-groups.

It has further shown how different ethnic groups related to each other in precolonial, colonial and post-colonial Malawi, and how their ethnic identities were malleable constructs. It also observed that the ethnic cleavages were an outcome of the educational discrepancies between the Livingstonia Mission and the DRCM. Based on this reasoning, Dr Banda excluded the non-Chewa

¹⁵¹⁵ J. Tengananga, *Church, State and Society in Malawi: The Anglican Case*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2006, 186.

¹⁵¹⁶ L. Pirouet, *Christianity Worldwide, Church History 4: AD 1800 onwards*, London: SPCK, 1989, 18.

from the civil service and public spaces because it was assumed that the non-Chewa dominated the civil service as a result of the education that they benefited from the Scottish mission schools, as opposed to the Chewa from the DRCM area of influence. It was this politics of inclusion and exclusion that enhanced ethnic polarisation in Malawi. In addition, it has shown that the writing of the history of the CCAP has significantly contributed to the border dispute and ethnic cleavages. It has also refuted some assumptions that dominate the writing of this history, as ideological constructs. Therefore, this study makes the following recommendations:

Since the telling of the history of the CCAP is considered as the root cause of the ethnic cleavages, this study proposes to reread and rewrite it in order to put the records straight. It argues that those tasked to write the history of the Christian church should endeavour to tell the truth about the Christian church, on the basis of historical facts. The study also recommends that those tasked to solve conflicts or disputes such as the border dispute should not deliberately ignore historical facts by inventing their own world of history, as if the church has no history.

As observed in this study, the CCAP's problem is structural. Therefore, it is recommended that the question of the church structure should be re-examined. One of the options would be to consider the question of whether the CCAP should be one Church, or many churches under one name, based on the federal principle. If the purpose is to make the church an ecumenical body on this principle, then the question of deconstructing the church structure, which was built on the comity agreement, should be reconsidered, which was already started by the no-border resolution. This would allow each synod to register as a *de facto* and *de jure* church and to stop adhering to comity agreement principles. However, this will reduce its relevance when it comes to speaking as one body on issues of national interest. It can also foster the propensity of synods to align with particular political blocs that is counterproductive to nation-building.

Another option is to maintain the traditional boundaries and one church. If this approach is opted for, the question of whether synods should be abolished should be considered because it was them that fostered divisions along ethnic lines and according to the identities of the founding missions. The abolition of synods would centralise CCAP operations, put an end to them being seen as regional *de facto* churches, and it would also foster the unity of the church. Synods would cease to be regional blocks of ethnicity. In addition, it will enable CCAP congregations in affected areas to merge without any problem.

While Presbyterian political thought allows its members to engage into public politics, this study recommends that the question of partisan politics, with regard to the role and place of the clergy in public politics, should be explored and clearly defined in the interests of the church's prophetic ministry to society. As observed in the study, patrimonial politics and the politics of patronage play a big role in influencing church leaders to take sides with certain political parties, which results in the division of the Christian church along ethnic or politic lines. The Christian church is an all-embracing home for people with competing ideologies and interests.

Since ethnolinguistic differences played a significant role in defining the missiological approach of the church, this study postulates that the church should explore ways and means of how this trend could be dealt with, by using the babel saga and the Pentecostal episode. Diversity in unity is the very nature of the Triune God. Hence, it should be the basis on which the Christian church defines how it shall engage in the *missio Dei*.

As noted in the discussion, the educational imbalances that are alleged to have started as a result of mission education are still being politicised and are dividing the country along ethnic lines. Therefore, the study proposes that an investigation be taken on how stereotypes and prejudices associated with this debate on educational discrepancies have an impact on nation-building, particularly the ongoing debate about the quota system of selecting students to public secondary schools and institutions of higher education. The quota system debate is crucial to how Malawians have come to define their *ways of seeing* and the *structures of action* with regard to their fellow countrymen. If it is left unattended, it will continue to be divisive and a threat to the nation-building and the unity of the Church.

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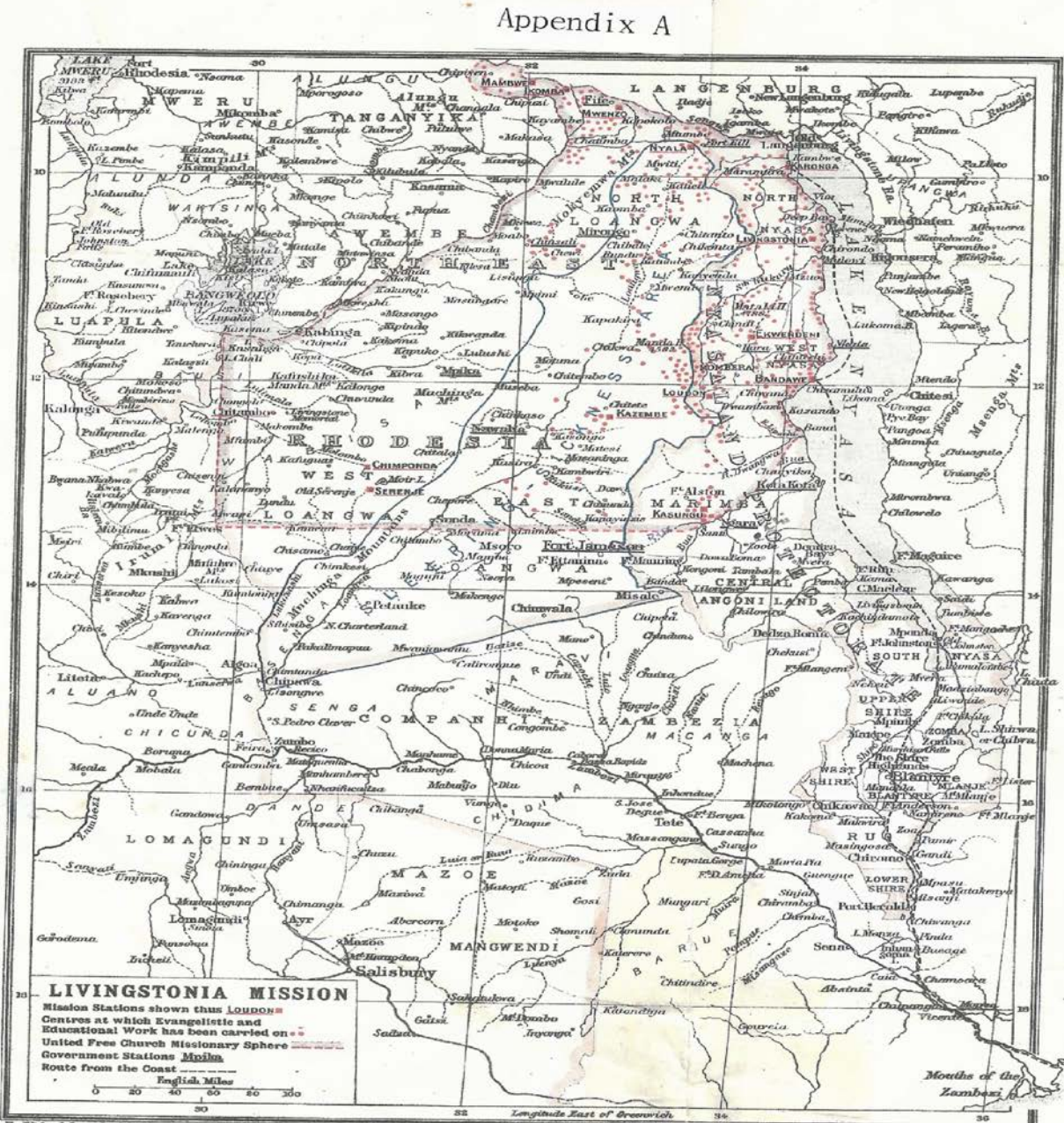
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. The Origin map showing the extent of the Livingstonia Mission after the NGK missionaries formed their own mission and had their sphere of influence. It shows the boundary between two missions in 1904



New stations : Chitambo Station is at Chimponda : Lubwa is near Chinsali : Tamanda near Kapayiozis

APPENDEX B

Letter to participants for questionnaire and semi-structured interviews

TO: The Research Participants,

From: Cogitator Wilton Mapala (Reg.214560286),
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
College of Humanities,
Pietermaritzburg Campus
School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics,
P/Bag X01, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg 3209, South Africa

Through: The Head of the School,
School of Religion, Philosophy.

Dear Research Participants,

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH

To begin with, I want to express my sincere thanks for accepting to participate in this study. I am a PhD student at the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I wish to conduct a research on the topic mentioned in the questionnaire attached to this letter. As part of the objectives of the study, I want to get your views on the ongoing topic of the “Border Dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods.” The information provided will be treated with confidentiality. Your personal data will not be mentioned unless the permission is sought and granted in writing. The information will only be used for the sake of follow-ups in case of clarification. Thereafter, it will be destroyed. Hence, I am requesting you to freely express yourself during this exercise.

All the answers you will provide are correct. Hence, do not fear to say what you want to say. It is your time to add value to the ongoing border discourse.

The question paper sent to you has two sections A and B in English, *Chichewa*, *Chitumbuka* and *Chitonga*. Please feel free to use the language of your choice in which you can freely express yourself.

Once more, I appreciate for your contribution towards this study.

Cogitator W. Mapala (Student no. 214560286)

Declaration of Permission and Acceptance to participate in the Research

I _____ (full name of representative or research participant) hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and nature of research project, and I consent to the research project.

I understand that we are at liberty to participate or withdraw from the project at any time, should we consider so.

Signature of the Officer/representative/ research participant_____

Chichewa-English Version

PhD Thesis Topic: Ethnicity and Christianity: A Historical Perspective of the Border Dispute between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (1900-2013)

By Cogitator Wilton Mapala, PhD Candidate, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Main Research Question: *Why is ethnicity a recurrent problem in the border dispute between the Livingstonia Synod and the Nkhoma Synod of the C.C.A.P?*

Instructions (**Malangizo**):

- This questionnaire has two sections A and B. (**Mndandanda wa mafunsowu uli ndi magawo awiri: Gawo A ndi Gawo B**)
- You can answer all questions if you feel to do so. **Mukhoza kuyankha mafunso onse ngati kukomerani**
- In both sections circle the appropriate answer that appeals more to you or write it in any language of your choice in the space provided. **M'magawo onse awiri zungulizani yankho lomwe mukugwirizana nalo; komanso mukhoza kuyankha m'chilankhulo cha kukonda kwanu m'mipata yomwe yaikidwa kuti mulembemo.**

SECTION A (GAWO A)

1. Name (**Dzina**) (optional)_____
2. Age range (**Muli ndi zaka zingati?**)
 - a) 16 to 20 years (**Pakati pa 16 ndi 20**)
 - b) 20 to 30 years (**Pakati pa 20 ndi 30**)
 - c) 30 to 50 years (**Pakati pa 30 ndi 50**)
 - d) 50 years and above (**50 kupita mtsogolo**)
3. Sex (a) Male (b) Female (**Kodi ndinu (a) Amuna kapena (b) Akazi**)
4. What is your region of origin and mention the district? (**Kodi mumachokera chigawo chiti cha Malawi? Nanga Boma liti?**)
 - a) Southern Region (**Chigawo Chakummwela**)_____ District (**Boma**)
 - b) Central Region (**Chigawo Chapakati**)_____ District (**Boma**)
 - c) Northern Region (**Chigawo Chakumpoto**) _____ District (**Boma**)
5. Social status (**Kodi muli ndi udindo wanji m'mudzi mwanu?**)
 - a) Chief (**Mfumu Yayikulu**)

- b) Village head man/woman (**Anyakwawa**)
 - c) Village (**Mzika ya M'mudzi**)
 - d) If none of the above specify (**Tchulani udindo wanu ngati siumodzi mwa maudindo ali mmwambawa**) _____
6. What is your highest qualification? (**Kodi maphunziro anu analekera pati?**)
- a) Primary School leaving Certificate (**Kalasi 8**)
 - b) Junior Certificate of Education (**Folomu 2**)
 - c) Malawi School Certificate of Education or its equivalent (**Folomu 4 kapena ena ofanana nawo**)
 - d) College education specify (**Maphunziro aukachenjede [chulani mwachidunji]**) _____
7. What is your favourite political party? (**Kodi ndinu a chipani chiti?**)
- a) Malawi Congress Party (MCP)
 - b) People's Party (PP)
 - c) United Democratic Front (UDF)
 - d) Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)
 - e) If none of the above, specify (**Tchulani chipani chanu ngati sichimodzi mwa zili mmwambazi**) _____
8. What is your occupation? (**Kodi mumagwira ntchito yanji?**)
- a) Farmer (**Mlimi**)
 - b) White collar specify (**Ntchito ya mu ofesi, longosolani**) _____
 - c) Businessperson (**Mumachita bizinezi**)
 - d) If none of the above, specify (**Tchulani ntchito yanu ngati siimodzi mwa zilimmwambazi**) _____
9. What is your ethnic group (**Kodi mumachokera m'gulu liti la mtundu wa anthu?**)
- a) Tumbuka
 - b) Tonga
 - c) Yao
 - d) Chewa
 - e) If none of the above, specify (**Tchulani gulu la mtundu wa anthu ngati siumodzi wa mitundu ili mmwambayi**) _____
10. Which denomination/religion do you belong to? (**Kodi ndinu a mpingo uti kapena chipembedzo chiti?**)
- a) Roman Catholic: specify diocese. (**Katolika: Tchulani dayosesi yanu**) _____
 - b) CCAP: Specify the Synod (**CCAP: Tchulani sinodi yanu**) _____
 - c) Anglican: Specify the diocese (**Anglican: Tchulani dayosesi yanu**) _____
 - d) If none of the above specify (**Tchulani mpingo/chipembedzo ngati siumodzi mwa mipingo ili mmwambayi**) _____

SECTION B (GAWO B)

11. Which of the following comes first in your life: **(Nchiyani mwa zinthu izi chomwe chimakhala choyambirira m'moyo wanu:)**
- Political identity **(Kudziwika chifukwa cha ndale)**
 - Ethnic identity **(Kudziwika chifukwa cha mtundu)**
 - Christian identity **(Kudziwika chifukwa ndinu Mkhristu)**
 - Malawian identity **(Kudziwika chifukwa ndinu MMalawi)**
 - Language identity **(Kudziwika chifukwa cha Chilankhulo)**
12. Before you joined your present denomination/church, which Church did you go to? **(Kodi musanalowe mpingo muli lerowu, munkapita mpingo uti?)**
- CCA P Livingstonia Synod
 - CCAP Nkhoma Synod
 - CCAP Blantyre Synod
 - If other, specify: **(Longosolani ngati siumodzi mwa mipingo ilia pa)**
-
13. Are you comfortable working with people from any church/denomination? **(Kodi mumakhala womasuka kugwira ntchito ndi anthu ochokera m'mipingo ina?)**
 [YES] or [NO] **([INDE] kapena [AI])**
14. Give reason for your answer. **(Perekani chifukwa poyankha motere.)**
- Because preaching is done in the language I understand. **(Chifukwa amalalikira m'chilankhulo chomwe ndimamva bwino.)**
 - Because the tradition serves my interest. **(Chifukwa ndimagwirizana ndi zikhulupiriro za mpingowo).**
 - Because it is where I was baptized **(Chifukwa ndinabatizidwa mu mpingo umenewu).**
 - Because my parents, husband or wife told me to be in this church. **(Chifukwa makolo anga/amuna anga/mkazi wanga anandiuza kuti ndilowe mpingo umenewu).**
15. Are you more comfortable working with people from any other ethnic group than yours? **(Kodi mumakhala womasuka kugwira ntchito ndi anthu ochokera m'magulu a mitundu ina ya anthu osiyana ndi mtundu wanu?)**
 [YES] or [NO] **([INDE] kapena [AI])**
16. Give reason for your answer **(Perekani chifukwa poyankha motere)**
- Because we have common things together. **(Chifukwa timafanana m'zambiri)**
 - Because we are all Christians. **(Chifukwa tonse ndife Akhristu)**
 - Because I am married to the same ethnic person. **(Chifukwa ndinakwatira/wa mkazi/mwamuna wa gulu la anthu a mtundu wanga)**
 - Because I do not bother as to which ethnic group one comes from. **(Chifukwa sinsamala mtundu wa anthu umene munthu amachokera).**
 - Because I do not want to mix with other ethnic groups. **(Chifukwa sinfuna kukhala pamodzi ndi anthu a mitundu ina.)**

17. Are you comfortable worshipping in a church where they do not use your language? (**Kodi mumakhala womasuka kupembedza Mulungu mu mpingo womwe umagwiritsa ntchito chilankhulo chomwe chisali chanu?**)
 [YES] or [NO] (**[INDE] kapena [AI]**)
18. Give reason(s) for your answer: (**Perekani chifukwa poyankha motere**)
- Because we have common things together. (**Chifukwa timafanana m'zambiri**)
 - Because we are all Christians. (**Chifukwa tonse ndife Akhristu**)
 - Because I am married to the same ethnic person. (**Chifukwa ndinakwatira/wa mkazi/mwamuna wa gulu la anthu a mtundu wanga**)
 - Because I do not bother as to which ethnic group one comes from. (**Chifukwa sinsamala mtundu wa anthu umene munthu amachokera**).
 - Because I do not want to mix with other ethnic groups. (**Chifukwa sinfunakukhala pamodzi ndi anthu a mitundu ina.**)
19. Are you comfortable worshipping in a church where they use your language? (**Kodi mumakhala womasuka kupembedza Mulungu mu mpingo womwe umagwiritsa ntchito chilankhulo chanu?**)
 [YES] or [NO] (**[INDE] kapena [AI]**)
20. Do people from other ethnic groups feel comfortable worshipping in your language? (**Kodi anthu a mitundu ina amakhala omasuka kupembedza m'chilankhulo chanu?**)
 [YES] or [NO] (**[INDE] kapena [AI]**)
21. Do people from other ethnic groups feel comfortable working with you? (**Kodi anthu a mitundu ina amakhala omasuka kugwira ntchito ndi inu?**)
 [YES] or [NO] (**[INDE] kapena [AI]**)
22. Do people from other churches feel comfortable working with you? (**Kodi anthu a mipingo ina amakhala omasuka kugwira ntchito ndi inu?**)
 [YES] or [NO] (**[INDE] kapena [AI]**)
23. Do you generally trust people from the same ethnic group with you more than people from other ethnic groups? (**Kodi mumakhulupirira anthu a mtundu wanu koposa anthu a mitundu ina?**)
 [YES] or [NO] (**[INDE] kapena [AI]**)
24. Do you generally trust people who have the same church with you more than people from other churches? (**Kodi mumakhulupirira anthu a mpingo wanu koposa anthu a mipingo ina?**)
 [YES] or [NO] (**[INDE] kapena [AI]**)
25. Are you comfortable getting married to someone of different ethnic background from yours? (**Kodi ndinu omasuka kukwatira/wa munthu wochokera ku mtundu wa anthu wosiyana ndi wanu?**)
 [YES] or [NO] (**[INDE] kapena [AI]**)

26. Would your family object if you are intended to get married to someone of different ethnic background from yours? (**Kodi banja lanu likhoza kukuletsani kuti musakwatirane ndi munthu wochokera mtundu wina?**)

[YES] or [NO]([INDE] kapena [AI])

27. Are you comfortable working with someone belonging to different political party from where you belong? (**Kodi mumakhala womasuka kugwira ntchito ndi anthu amene ndi chipani cha ndale cholekani ndi chanu?**)

[YES] or [NO] ([INDE] kapena [AI])

Chitumbuka-English Version

Instructions (Nchenjezgo):

- This questionnaire has two sections A and B. (**Mafumbo agha yali navigawo viwiri A na B**)
- You can answer all questions if you feel to do so. (**Mulibanangwa kuzgora mafumbo yose usange ndimo mwakhumbira kweni mungachichizikanga pakuzgola**)
- In both sections, circle the appropriate answer that appeals more to you or write it in any language of your choice in the space provided. (**Muvigawo viwiri muzingilitse zgolo ilo mwaona kuti ndaunenesko kwa imwe**).

SECTION A (Chigawo cha kwamba)

- 1) Name (optional) (**Zina linu- mungalemba panji yayi**)_____
- 2) Age range (**Vilimika vinu**)
 - e) 16 to 20 years (**Vilimika 16 mpaka 20**)
 - f) 20 to 30 years (**Vilimika 20 mpaka 30**)
 - g) 30 to 50 years (**Vilimika 30 mpaka 50**)
 - h) 50 years and above (**Vilimika 50 na kuyamuthazi**)
- 3) Sex (**Kawiro**) (a) Male (**Mwanalume**) (b) Female (**mwanakazi**)
- 4) What is your region of origin and mention the district? (**Kasi mukufuma chigawo nchini ndipo boma uli?**)
 - d) Southern Region (**Chigawo chakumwera**)_District (**Boma**)
 - e) Central Region (**Chigawo chapakati** _____ District (**Boma**)
 - f) Northern Region (**Chigawo champoto** _____ District (**Boma**)
- 5) Social status (**Udindo winu**)
 - e) Chief (**Fumu**)
 - f) Village head man/woman (**fumu ya muzi**)
 - g) Villager (**yumoza bamuzi uno**)
 - h) If none of the above, specify (**Usange muli yomoza waba, longosolani** _____)
- 6) What is your highest qualification? (**Kasi masambiro yinu yapachanya nivichi?**)
 - e) Primary School leaving Certificate (**standidi 8**)

- f) Junior Certificate of Education (**Nili wa fomu 2**)
 - g) Malawi School Certificate of Education or its equivalent (**M.S.C.E panji yakuyanayo**)
 - h) College education (specify) (**Yaukachechede; longosolani**) _____
- 7) What is your favorite political party (**Kasi chipani chinu ninchini?**)
- f) Malawi Congress Party (MCP)
 - g) People's Party (PP)
 - h) United Democratic Front (UDF)
 - i) Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)
 - j) If none of the above, specify (**Usange nchimoza cha ivi yayi, zunulani**) _____
- 8) What is your occupation? (**Mugwira nchito uli?**)
- e) Farmer (**Ulimi**)
 - f) White collar, specify (**Yatikiti, zunulani nchito yinu**) _____
 - g) Businessperson (**Bizinesi**)
 - h) If none of the above, specify (**Usange njimoza yayizi yayi zunulani**) _____
- 9) What is your ethnic group? (**Ndimwe bamtundu uli?**)
- f) Tumbuka
 - g) Tonga
 - h) Yao
 - i) Chewa
 - j) If it is none of the above, specify (**Usange ndiwe bamoza mitundu iyi, zunulani mtundu winu**)
- 10) Which denomination/religion do you belong to? (**Kasi ndimwe ba mpingo uli?**)
- e) Roman Catholic: specify diocese (**Mkatolika, diyosizi yinu**) _____
 - f) CCAP: Specify the Synod (**Zunulani Sinodi yinu**) _____
 - g) Anglican: Specify the diocese (**zunulani diyosizi yinu**) _____
 - h) If none of the above specify (**Usange palije pamipingo iyi, zunulani mpingo winu**) _____

SECTION B (CHIGABA CHACHIBILI)

- 11) Which of the following comes first in your life? (**Pavinthu vili musi, nchinthu chakwamba mu umoyo winu?**)
- f) Political identity (**Kuti ndimwe ba ndyali**)
 - g) Ethnic identity (**Kuti ndimwe ba mtundu wakuti**)
 - h) Christian identity (**Kuti ndiwme Mkhirisitu**)
 - i) Malawian identity (**Kuti ndimwe mwina Malawi**)
 - j) Ethnolinguistic identity (**Kuti ndimwe ba chiyowoyero chakuti**)
- 12) Before you joined your present denomination/church, which Church did you go to? (**Pamberi mundanjire mpingo mulimo, kasi mukaba mpingo uli pa kudankha?**)
- v) CCA P Livingstonia Synod
 - vi) CCAP Nkhoma Synod

vii) CCAP Blantyre Synod

viii) If other, specify: **(longosolani usage ngumoza iyi yayi)**_____

13) Are you comfortable working with people from any church/denomination? **(Ndimwe bakunozgeka kutebetata na bamipingo yinyake)**

[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}

14) Give reason(s) for your answer **(Perekani chifukwa chazgolo linu)**

e) Because preaching is done in the language I understand **(Chifukwa bakuphalazgo muchiyowoyero icho nkhopulika)**

f) Because the tradition serves my interest **(Chifukwa ndondomeko yawo yikuyana na mtima wane)**

g) Because it is where I was baptized **(Chifukwa nkhabatizika mpingo weneuwu)**

h) Because my parents, husband or wife told me to be in this church. **(Chifukwa bapapi, bafumu wane panje awoli wane ndimo wati tisopenge)**

15) Are you comfortable working with people from any ethnic group than yours? **(Ndimwe bakunozgeka kuteweta na banthu ba mitundu yinyake kupambana na winu?)**

[YES] {ENYA} or/ **panji** [NO] {YAYI}

16) Give reason(s) for your answer **(Perekani chifukwa chazgolo linu)**

f) Because we have common things together. **(Chifukwa ndise bakuyana vyakuchitika)**

g) Because we are all Christians. **(Chifukwa tose ndise bakhirisitu)**

h) Because I am married to the same ethnic person. **(Chifukwa nilikutola panji kutengwa kumtundu wawo)**

i) Because I do not bother as to which ethnic group one comes from. **(Chifukwa nkhopwererako mtundu wa munthu yayi)**

j) Because I do not want to mix with other ethnic groups. **(Chifukwa nkhumba chala kukhala na banthu ba mitundu yinyake).**

17) Are you comfortable worshipping in a church where they do not use your language? **(Ndimwe bakunozgeka kusopa mipingo umo bakugwiriska chiyowoyero chinu yayi?)**

[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}

18) Give reason(s) for your answer: **(Perekani chifukwa cha zgolo linu)**

a) Because we have common things together. **(Chifukwa ndise bakuyana vyakuchitika)**

b) Because we are all Christians. **(Chifukwa tose ndi bakhirisitu)**

c) Because I am married to the same ethnic person. **(Chifukwa nilikutola panji kutengwa kumtundu wawo)**

k) Because I do not bother to which ethnic group one comes from. **(Chifukwa nkhopwererako mtundu wa munthu yayi)**

l) Because I do not want to mix with other ethnic groups. **(Chifukwa nkhumba chala kukhala na banthu ba mitundu yinyake).**

19) Are you comfortable worshipping in a church where they use your language? **(Ndimwe bakunozgeka kusopa m'mpingo umo bakugwiriska chiyowoyero chinu)**

[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}

- 20) Do people from other ethnic groups feel comfortable worshipping in your language? (**Kasi banthu bamitundu yinyake mbakumasuka kusopa muchiyowoyero chinu?**)
[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}
- 21) Do people from other ethnic groups feel comfortable working with you? (**Kasi banthu bamitundu yinyake makumasuka kuteweta namwe?**)
[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}
- 22) Do people from other churches feel comfortable working with you? (**Kasi banyinu bamipingo yinyake mbakumasuka kuteweta namwe?**)
[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}
- 23) Do you generally trust people from the same ethnic group with you more than people from other ethnic groups? (**Kasi mwasanisani mukubagomezga banthu bamitundu winu kwakuluska mitundu yinyake?**)
[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}
- 24) Do you generally trust people who have the same church with you more than people from other churches? (**Kasi mwasanisani mukubagomezga banthu bampingo winu kwa kuluska bamipingo yinyake?**)
[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}
- 25) Are you comfortable getting married to someone of different ethnic background from you? (**Ndimwe bakumasuka kutora panji kutengwa ku munthu wantundu kupambana na winu?**)
[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}
- 26) Would your family object if you are intended to get married to someone of different ethnic background from yours? (**Kasi bapapi winu bangakukanizgani kutengwa panji kutola munthu uyo kuti ngwamtundu umoza naimwe yayi?**)
[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}
- 27) Are you comfortable working with someone belonging to different political party than where you belong? (**Kasi ndimwe bakumasuka kuteweta na munthu wa chipani chinyake kupambana na icho muliko?**)
[YES] {ENYA} or **panji** [NO] {YAYI}

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS RESEACH (**TAWONGA
PAKUTOLAPO LWANDI PAKAFUKUFUKU UYU**)

Chitonga Version

PhD Thesis Topic: Ethnicity and Christianity: A Historical Perspective of the Border Dispute between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (1900-2013)

By Cogitator Wilton Mapala PhD Candidate University of KwaZulu-Natal

Instructions:

- This questionnaire has two sections A and B. (**Mafumbo agha yali navigawo viwiri A na B**)
- You can answer all questions if you feel to do so. (**Mulibanangwa kuzgora mafumbo yose usange ndimo mwakhumbira kweni mungachichizikanga pakuzgola**)
- In both sections circle the appropriate answer that appeals more to you or write it in any language of choice in the space provided. (**Muvigawo viwiri muzingilitse zgolo ilo mwaona kuti ndaunenesko kwa imwe**).

SECTION A (Chigawo cha kwamba)

1. Name (optional) (**Zina**) _____
2. Age range (**Vyaka vinu**)
 - a) 16 to 20 years (**Vyaka 16 mpaka 20**)
 - b) 20 to 30 years (**Vyaka 20 mpaka 30**)
 - c) 30 to 50 years (**Vyaka 30 mpaka 50**)
 - d) 50 years and above (**Vyaka 50 kuya munthazi**)
3. Sex (**Chibilu**) (a) Male (**Mnthulume**) (b) Female (**Mnthukazi**)
 4. What is your regional of origin and mention the district? (**Mutuliya Chigawa ndipu muboma uli?**)
 - a) Southern Region (**kumwera**)_ District (**Boma**)
 - b) Central Region (**Pakate** _____ District (**Boma**)
 - c) Northern Region (**Kumpoto** _____ District (**Boma**)
4. Social status (**Maudindo mchikaya**)
 - a) Chief (**Ada bwana bala**)
 - b) Village head man/woman (**Ada bwana a muzi**)
 - c) Villager (**munthu a Muzi**)
 - d) If none of the above specify (**Asani palive kambani**) _____
5. What is your highest qualification? (**Mukufika nampha pamasambilo?**)
 - a) Primary School leaving Certificate (**Mwekupulayimale**)
 - b) Junior Certificate of Education (**Mwendi JC**)
 - c) Malawi School Certificate of Education or its equivalent (**Mwendi MSCE**)
 - d) College education (specify) (**Kambani asani wangufikaku ku koleji**) _____
6. What is your favorite political party (**Kumbi chipanicho mutanja ndi nichi?**)
 - a) Malawi Congress Party (MCP)
 - b) People's Party (PP)
 - c) United Democratic Front (UDF)
 - d) Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)
 - e) If none of the above, specify (**usani palivyeye pavyose ivi, kambani**) _____
7. What is your occupation? (**Kumbi useweza vithu uli?**)

- a) Farmer (**Zaulimi**)
 - b) White collar specify (**Yatikiti, zunulani nchito yinu**) _____
 - c) Businessperson (**Bizinesi**)
 - d) If none of the above, specify (**Asani palivye pavyonse ivi, kambani**) _____
8. What is your ethnic group? (**Kumbi imwi mutulya ku mtundu uli?**)
- a) Tumbuka
 - b) Tonga
 - c) Yao
 - d) Chewa
 - e) If none of the above, specify (**Asani palivye ivi, kambani**)
9. Which denomination/religion do you belong to? (**Mwebamupingu uli?**)
- a) Roman Catholic: specify diocese (**Mwe ba RC, kambani dayosisi yaki?**)
 - b) CCAP: Specify the Synod (**Mwe ba CCAP: kambani sinodi yaki?**)
 - c) Anglican: Specify the diocese (**Mwe ba Anglican: kambani dayosisi yaki?**)
 - d) If it is none of the above specify (**Asani palive pavyonse ivi, kambani**)

SECTION B

10. Which of the following comes first in your life (**Kumbi pavinthu ivi, chozilya paumoyo winu chinthu uli**):
- a) Political identity (**vyandyale**)
 - b) Ethnic identity (**mtundu winu**)
 - c) Christian identity (**zakupempera**)
 - d) Malawian identity (**Nga m'Malawi**)
 - e) Language (**chiwewetero**)
11. Before you joined your present denomination/church, which Church did you go to? (**Mwechendasere mupingo uwomuli, mwenga mpingu uli**)
- a) CCA P Livingstonia Synod
 - b) CCAP Nkhoma Synod
 - c) CCAP Blantyre Synod
 - d) If other specify (**Asani peinyaki mipingu kambani**)
12. a) Are you comfortable working with people from any church/denomination? (**Kumbi mwewakumasuka kuseweza pamodza ndi wanthu wamipingu inyaki**)
 [YES] {**hinya**} or **pamwenga** [NO] {**awa**}
- b) Give reason (s) for your answer (**Chifukwa uli?**)
- i) Because preaching is done in the language I understand (**kuphalazya kuphalazyika muchikambidwi chidu**)
 - ii) Because the tradition serves my interest (**apanga vyoine nditanja**)
 - iii) Because it is where I was baptized (**ndikweniko ndikubatisiya**)

- iv) Because my parents, husband or wife told me to be in this church. (**bapapi, balumiwangu pamwenga waboliwangu wangudikambiya kuti ndije mumupingu wenuwo**)
13. a) Are you comfortable working with people from any ethnic group than yours? (**Mwebakumasuka kuseweza ndi banthu bamutundu unyaki kupatuwa winu**)
[YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}
- b) Give reason(s) for your answer (**Chifukwa uli**)
- i) Because we have common things together. (**tendi vinthu vakuyanana**)
- ii) Because we are all Christians. (**tose te bakhirisitu**)
- iii) Because I am married to the same ethnic person. (**ndikubilwa kumutundu umodza**)
- iv) Because I do not bother as to which ethnic group one comes from. (**vitindkhuzacha niko munthu watuliya**)
- v) Because I do not want to mix with other ethnic groups. (**ndikhumba cha kujapamodza ndimitundu inyaki**)
14. a) Are you comfortable worshipping in a church where they do not use your language? (**Kumbi mwebakumasuka kusopa mutchalitchi mowaleka kuwereweta chikambitu**)
[YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}
- b) Give reason for your answer: (**Chifukwa uli**)
- i) Because we have common things together. (**tendi vinthu vakuyanana**)
- ii) Because we are all Christians. (**tonse tebakhirisitu**)
- iii) Because I am married to the same ethnic person. (**ndikuwilwa kumutundu umodza**)
- iv) Because I do not bother to which ethnic group one comes from. (**vitindikhuzacha ndiko munthu watuliya**)
- v) Because I do not want to mix with other ethnic groups. (**ndikhumba cha kujapamodza ndi mitundi inyaki**)
15. Are you comfortable worshipping in a church where they use your language? (**Kumbi mwewakumasuka kusopa mutchalitchi lowawereweta chikambidwi chinu**)
[YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}
16. Do people from other ethnic groups feel comfortable worshipping in your language? (**Kumbi wanthu mutudu unyaki wakondwsyeka kusopa mu Chitonga**)
[YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}
17. Do people from other ethnic groups feel comfortable working with you? (**Kumbi wanthu amutundu unyaki watuwa wakumasuka kuseweza namwi pamodza**)
[YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}
18. Do people from other churches feel comfortable working with you? (**Kumbi wanthu wakuwa mumupingu unyaki watuwa wakumasuka kuseweza limodza**)
[YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}

19. Do you generally trust people from the same ethnic group with you more than people from other ethnic groups? (**Kumbi mugomezya ukongwa wanthu wamutunduwinu kulusya wanthu wamutundu unyaki?**)
 [YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}
20. Do you generally trust people who have the same church as you more than people from other churches? (**Kumbi mugomezya ukongwa wanthu wamumupinguwinu kulusya wanthu wamumupingo inyaki?**)
 [YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}
21. Are you comfortable getting married to someone of different ethnic background than you? (**Mwewakumasuka kuwilwa pamwenga kuto munthu wamutundu unyaki ngepo muchitiya imwi mwaweni?**)
 [YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}
22. Would your family object if you intended to get married to someone of different ethnic background from yours? (**Kumbi ali waku wangakukaniza asani ungakhumba kuwilwa ku munthu wamutundu unyaki kulekana ndi winu?**)
 [YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}
23. Are you comfortable working with someone belonging to different political party than where you belong? (**Kumbi mwewakumasuka kuseweza limodzi ndi munthu wakutuluya ku chipani cho mwe mutichiyanja cha?**)
 [YES] {HINYA} or **pamwenga** [NO] {AWA}

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS RESEACH (**TAWONGA UKONGWA PAKULIYAPO LWANDI PA KAFUKUFUKU UYU**)

APPENDIX C

Showing the letter and semi-structed interviews to Church officers

TO: The General Secretary,
 The General Assembly,
 Church of Central Africa Presbyterian,
 P.O. Box 23252,
 Lilongwe 3
 Malawi.

From: Cogitator Wilton Mapala (Reg.214560286),
 University of KwaZulu-Natal,
 College of Humanities,
 Pietermaritzburg Campus
 School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics,
 P/Bag X01, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg 3209, South Africa.

Through: The Head of the School,
School of Religion, Philosophy.

Dear Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH

I am a lecturer in the Faculty of Education of the University of Livingstonia, Laws Campus, currently pursuing PhD studies in History of Christianity at the aforementioned University. My area of specialization and research is History of Christianity in Post-modern Era, with emphasis on politics, religion and ethnicity. My current research is on the “Ethnicity and Christianity: A Historical Study of the border dispute between the Livingstonia and the Nkhoma Synods of the CCAP”.

I am seeking your permission to participate in this research. You may recall that one observation made by the 2006 Commission of Inquiry on the Border Dispute was that it failed to make sound conclusions because there was insufficient information. This research does not fill the gap of the Commission but it intends to investigate deeper questions and contribute to the better understanding of the border discourse and make a follow-up on certain grey areas for future actions. Hence, your participation and contribution to the study will help the church, the nation and global partners to have a wider understanding of what happened and what is happening.

As ethical requirement, the information will be treated with high confidentiality and some data will be used as advised by your office.

I am looking forward to hear more from you.

Yours sincerely,

Cogitator Wilton Mapala (214560286)

Declaration of Permission and Acceptance to participate in the Research

I _____ (full name of representative or research participant) hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and nature of research project, and I consent to the research project.

I understand that we are at liberty to participate or withdraw from the project at any time, should we consider so.

Signature of the Officer/representative/ research participant _____

Semi-structured Interviews to Church officers (clergy)

SECTION A: Personal Data

1. Name of the faith Institution:
2. Name of the respondent:
3. Designation of the respondent:
4. Date of interview:
5. Sex of Respondent:

SECTION B: Question

6. I understand the question of border dispute has been discussed for a long time, why do you think it has taken such a long time?
7. Briefly explain how the border dispute started?
8. Explain the reason(s) that led to the border dispute?
9. If we read Synods' minutes, it is said that the problem making the border dispute to remain unresolved was because the 1956 CCAP constitution did not empower the General Assembly to make binding resolutions. Since the 2002 CCAP constitution empowers the General Synod, why do you think the problem is still unresolved?
10. I am also told that the General Assembly's meeting at Blantyre Mission in 2006 failed to elect the Moderator as stipulated in your constitution. Would you explain why you failed to comply with the constitutional requirement?
11. In the CCAP tradition, is the constitution an important document? Would you explain for your answer?
12. Since 2006 we have seen the Livingstonia and Nkhoma building congregations inside each other's territories, is the CCAP still considered an organic church? Explain.
13. In your view, was the decision to build congregations in each Synod's territory a corporate decision of [your/the] synod? Explain.
14. Does this decision serve the good purpose of ordinary members in your congregations/synod?
15. What do you think could be the better way of handling this situation in its current position?
16. Give the merits and demerits of the option suggested.
17. Do you have any further comment(s) from the topic?

Thank you very much for participating in this research

APPENDIX D

Showing Semi-structured Interviews for Individuals and Focus Groups

Instructions: Answer the questions that appeal to you and in the language of your choice (**Zgolani fumbo ilo mukulimanya**)

SECTION A: Personal Data

1. Name of respondent (optional): (**Zina linu**)
2. Name of the Synod s/he belong to: (**Sinodi yinu**)
3. Ethnic group of the respondent: (**Mtundu winu**)
4. Date of interview: (**Dazi lakufumbira**)
5. Sex of Respondent: (**Kawiro kinu**)
6. Region of origin and district: (**Chigawo and boma linu**)

SECTION B: Question

7. I understand the question of border dispute stands unresolved, why do you think it has taken such a long time? (**Makani ya mpaka pakati pa maSinodi ya Livingstonia and Nkhoma yatola nyengo yitali kuti yamale, mukughanaghana ku chifukwa nchichi?**)
8. How did the border dispute start? (**Kasi makani agha yakamba pauli?**)
9. Explain the reason(s) led to the border dispute? (**Longosolani vifukwa ivyo vikambiska makani agha?**)
10. Since 2006 we have seen Livingstonia and Nkhoma building congregations inside each other's territories, is the CCAP still an organic church? Explain. (**Kwamba m'2006 tikawona ma sinodi yawiri agha yakamba kuzenga mipingo m'malo ya Sinodi yinyake, kasi tingati CCAP ndimpingo umoza nthena?**)
11. If we read Synods' minutes, it is said that the problem making the border dispute to remain unresolved was because the 1956 CCAP constitution did not empower the General Assembly. Since the 2002 CCAP empowers the General Synod, why do you think the problem is still unresolved? (**Usange tikuwerenga ma mineti ya ma sinodi yakuti makani agha yatola nyengo yitali chifukwa malongo ya Sinodi yikulu yakaperekanga mazaza ku Sinodi iyi kupanga maudumuliro pa masinodi yake. Malongo yapya ya m'chaka cha 2002 yakupa mazaza sinodi iyi, mukughanaghana nchifukwa uli makani ya mpaka yachali kulutilira?**)
12. Was the decision to build congregations in each Synod's territory a corporate decision of your synod? Explain. (**Kasi udumuliro wa kuzenga mipingo m'malo yasinodi yinyake, mbudumuliro wa bakhirisitu wose wa sinodi yinu?**)
13. Does the decision of having congregations inside another Synod's territory serve the good purpose of the ordinary members in your congregations? (**Kasi udumuliro wakuzenga mipingo m'malo ya sinodi yinyake yakuvwiri bakhirisitu winu?**)

14. What do you think could be the better of way of handling this situation in its current status? **(Mukughanaghana kuti makani agha yangamala uli?)**
15. How do you relate to other members of other CCAP Synods when you meet? **(Kasi ubale winu na basinodi yanyake uli uli usange mwasangana?)**
16. What comes first to you between Christianity and your ethnicity? **(Kasi chakwamba nchivich mumoyo winu pakati pa Chikhirisitu panji mutundu winu?)**
17. Do you prefer your family member to marry someone from a different ethnic group than yours? **(Kasi mungazomerezga kuti mubale winu watengwe or kutolera munthu wamtundu uyake kupambana na winu?)**
18. When discussing with someone who does not speak your mother's tongue, which language would you prefer to use and why? **(Usange mukuyowoya na munthu uyo kuti ngwachiyowoyero chinu yayi, kasi nchiyewoyero nchi icho mutemwa kuti muyowoye nayo?)**

Additional Question for the Diaspora C.C.A.P. congregations

19. I have been told that you have different congregations in this town belonging to different C.C.A.P. Synods in Malawi. Would you briefly explain why do have these different congregations?
20. Do members from other sister Synods come to worship with you? Give reasons for your answer.
21. What type of language do you use in your liturgy during Sunday services?

Thank you very much for participating in this research. **(Tawonga pakutolapo lwandi)**

APPENDIX E. A summary of the results for the qualitative data collected in Malawi through semi-structured interviews and analysed with NVivo by the researcher (This is Table A and Table B is below).

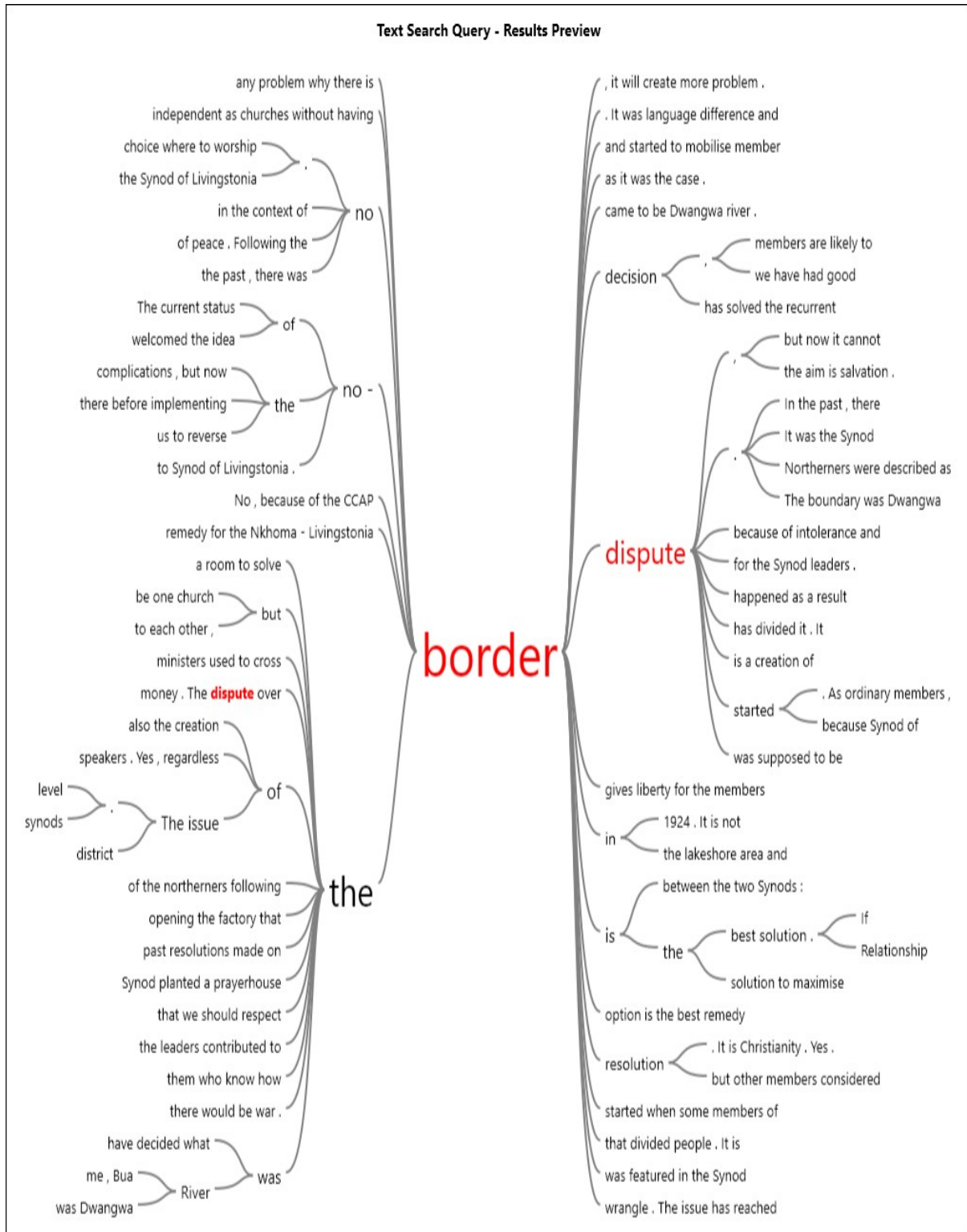
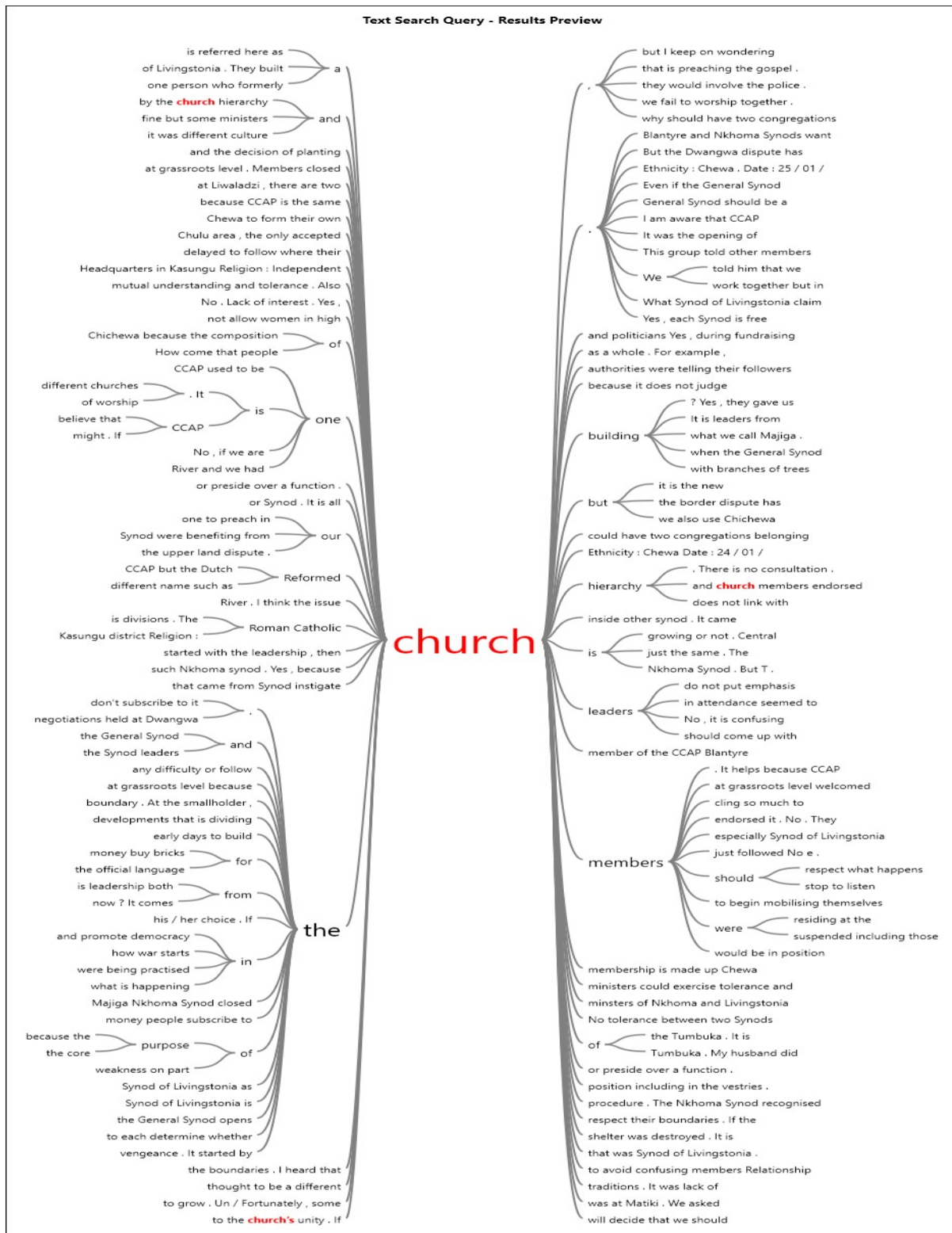


Table B of the summary of the results of qualitative data analysed by NVivo 10



APPENDIX F. Results of the quantitative data collected in Malawi through questionnaire and analysed with SPSS 6 by the researcher.

Question no.	Description	No. of Respondents out of the total 56	% of participation
1	Name (optional)		
2	Age range: a) 16 to 20 years b) 20 to 30 years c) 30 to 50 years d) 50 years and above	02 22 23 09	03.6 percent 39.3 percent 41.1 percent 16.1 percent
3	Sex: a) Male b) Female	29 27	51.8 percent 48.2 percent
4	Region of Origin: a) Southern Region b) Central Region c) Northern Region	03 26 27	05.4 percent 46.4 percent 48.2 percent
5	Social status: a) Chief b) Village head man c) Villager	00 02 54	00.0 percent 03.6 percent 96.4 percent
6	Highest acad. Qualification a) PSLC b) JCE c) MSCE or its equivalent d) Tertiary	08 07 20 21	14.3 percent 12.5 percent 35.7 percent 37.5 percent
7	Your favourite political party a) MCP b) People's Party (PP) c) UDF d) DPP e) No political party	25 08 01 05 17	44.6 percent 14.3 percent 01.8 percent 08.9 percent 30.4 percent
8	What is your occupation? a) Farmer b) White collar job c) Businessperson d) Blue collar job	12 13 16 15	21.4 percent 23.2 percent 28.6 percent 26.8 percent
9	What is your ethnic group? a) Tumbuka b) Tonga c) Yao d) Chewa e) Other ethnic groups	27 03 01 18 07	48.2 percent 05.4 percent 01.8 percent 32.1 percent 12.5 percent

10	What is your denomination? a) Roman Catholic Church b) Synod of Livingstonia c) Nkhoma Synod	02 36 18	03.6 percent 64.3 percent 32.1 percent
11	Which of the following comes first in your life? a) Political identity b) Ethnic identity c) Christian identity d) Malawian identity e) Language identity	00 03 42 08 03	00.0 percent 05.4 percent 75.0 percent 14.3 percent 05.4 percent
12	Before you joined your present denomination, which Church did you go to? a) Synod of Livingstonia b) Nkhoma Synod c) Blantyre Synod d) Other churches	23 24 04 05	41.1 percent 42.9 percent 07.1 percent 08.9 percent
13	Are you comfortable working with people from any church/denomination? a) Yes b) No	53 03	94.6 percent 05.4 percent
14	Give reason for your answer in 13. a) Because preaching is done in the language I understand b) Because the tradition serves my interest. c) Because it is where I was baptized. d) Because my parents, husband or wife told me to join. e) Provided they are my fellow Christians.	20 15 05 05 11	35.7 percent 26.8 percent 08.9 percent 08.9 percent 19.6 percent
15	Are you more comfortable working with people from any other ethnic group than yours? a) Yes b) No	53 03	94.6 percent 05.4 percent
16	Give reason for your answer in 15. a) Because we have common things together	10	17.9 percent

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Because we are all Christians. c) Because I am married to the same ethnic person. d) Because I don't bother to which ethnic group one comes. e) Because I do not want to mix with other ethnic groups. f) None of the answer give my perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 01 15 01 01 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50.0 percent 01.8 percent 26.8 percent 01.8 percent 01.8 percent
17	<p>Are you comfortable worshipping in a church where they do not use your language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Yes b) No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 41 15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 73.2 percent 26.8 percent
18	<p>Give reason for your answer in 17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Because we have common things together. b) Because we are all Christians. c) Because I am married to the same ethnic person. d) Because I don't bother as which ethnic group one comes. e) Because I do not want to mix with other ethnic groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 07 34 01 04 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12.5 percent 60.7 percent 01.8 percent 07.1 percent 17.9 percent
19	<p>Are you comfortable worshipping in a church where they use your language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Yes b) No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 48 08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85.7 percent 14.3 percent
20	<p>Do people from other ethnic groups feel comfortable worshipping in your language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Yes b) No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62.5 percent 37.5 percent
21	<p>Do people from other ethnic groups feel comfortable working with you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89.3 percent

	b) No	06	10.7 percent
22	Do people from other churches feel comfortable working with you? a) Yes b) No	50 06	89.3 percent 10.7 percent
23	Do you generally trust people from the same ethnic group with you more than people from other ethnic groups? a) Yes b) No	29 27	51.8 percent 48.2 percent
24	Do you generally trust people who have the same church with you more than people from other churches? a) Yes b) No	30 26	53.6 percent 46.4 percent
25	Are you comfortable getting married to someone of different ethnic background from yours? a) Yes b) No	40 16	71.4 percent 28.6 percent
26	Would your family object if you are intended to get married to someone of different ethnic background from yours? a) Yes b) No	21 35	37.5 percent 62.5 percent
27	Are you comfortable working with someone belonging to different political party from where you belong? a) Yes b) No	51 05	91.1 percent 08.9 percent

APPENDIX G. Ethical Clearance Approval Letter



22 October 2014

Rev Cogitator Wilton Mapala (214560286)
School of Religion, Philosophy & Classics
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/1202/014D

Project title: Ethnicity and Christianity: A historical perspective on the Border Dispute between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (1890-2013)

Dear Rev Mapala,

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 15 September 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor P Denis
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Denis
Cc School Administrator: Ns Catherine Murugan

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville