

# Malawi's Post-Independence Foreign Policy and its Influence on Development Options: A Historical Institutionalism Analysis

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**Abstract:** This paper analyses the causes, processes and systemic factors that have been central to Malawi's post-independence foreign policy and its implication on national development policy options. The paper argues that Malawi's post-independence foreign policy and development direction was mainly adopted in reaction to Kamuzu's failure to win the international support (at an OAU summit) for his quest to break Malawi's land locked status. From a historical institutionalist perspective, it can be argued that this rejection 'carved out' a future foreign policy direction that was deliberately meant to 'rebel' against OAU's prescriptions. Subsequent development policies were actually more of an aftermath of this 'curved out' foreign policy direction. In other words, foreign policy dictated the development policy options. The findings are drawn from available documentary sources (new and old) and review of existing literature. The paper is not bringing in new evidence but through a re-examination of the said existing evidence, in the context of historical institutionalism, the paper provokes and recasts a new and fascinating debate on Malawi's post-independence foreign policy architecture.

**Keywords:** Development policies, Foreign policy, Landlocked, Post-independence

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## 1. Introduction

Over thirty years ago, Laslett (1984:394) noted that Malawi's official policy documents start with the words "Malawi is a small, landlocked country". As discussed in Kayuni and Makwembere (2018:i), Laslett's observation of these two words "*small*" and "*landlocked*" have significantly defined Malawi's policy agenda. As Kayuni and Makwembere (2018:i) further highlight, "*small*" suggests the country's insignificance in world trade terms and is at the mercy of world prices" while the word '*landlocked*' "implies Malawi's vulnerability and cumulative loss of efficiency in the transport sector which have had profound impact on its economic and development policies". However, Kayuni and Makwembere (2018:iii) cautions that these two words do not necessarily mean that they explain everything about Malawi's policies. Building on this geographical viewpoint, this paper goes a step further and uses the historical institutionalism analysis to argue that Malawi's foreign policy as defined by its first president (which was a reaction to the geographical status of Malawi), significantly curved a developmental path that defined the country's future.

Since independence in 1964, the Malawi's domestic, and especially her foreign policies during the reign of its first President Hastings Kamuzu Banda (popularly known as Kamuzu), have always been

shrouded in controversy. Ayandele (1974:600) rightly argued that "The Malawi polity is certainly of academic interest to students of the African scene in many ways" and he further argued that the personality and behavior of Kamuzu has puzzled many scholars; specifically Kamuzu himself "is a fascinating subject" and "a puzzling bundle of contradictions". In other words, the way Kamuzu defined his domestic and foreign policies further brought a special flavor incomparable not only in southern African region but arguably the whole of the African region.

This paper contributes to the small but growing body of research output that applies historical institutionalism to the foreign policy analysis and debate. Leithner and Libby (2017:13) point out that there is a dearth of research within the discipline of foreign policy that utilize [historical institutionalism] concepts such as "path dependence," "critical junctures," or "increasing returns" but a critical analysis of the existing foreign policy literature clearly shows that history is regarded as a key explanatory aspect in the issues being discussed or analyzed.

Several studies have examined Malawi's foreign policy, especially during the Kamuzu regime. For instance, Pike (1968), Short (1974), McMaster (1974), Henderson (1977) and Patel and Hajat (2013) emphasized the role of the personality

of Kamuzu while Sagawa (2011) contextualized Malawi's foreign policy in the realist and dependency perspective. The focus of these studies was mainly foreign policy itself without linking it to development plans. Apart from this section, the paper has five sections presented as follows: (1) Historical institutionalism, foreign policy and development; (2) Malawi's post-independence foreign policy: Southern Africa's 'odd one out'; (3) Cases of path dependency in foreign policy: Application of Kamuzu's "Contact and Dialogue"; (4) Logic of increased returns: Consequences of Kamuzu's foreign policy on development policy option and finally; (5) Conclusion.

## 2. Historical Institutionalism, Foreign Policy and Development

### 2.1 Overview of Historical Institutionalism

Leithner and Libby (2017:1) argue that the roots of path dependence can be traced to several disciplines "from the physical sciences to economics". Peters *et al.* (2005:1276) state that "during the past several decades, historical institutionalism has emerged as a leading approach to institutional analysis, and, indeed, a prominent approach within political science more generally". For over 50 years, historical institutionalism has gained reputation as an established research approach in comparative politics and this has been done through emphasis on "the question of how political and social behavior is structured by institutions and public policies" (Capoccia, 2016:1095). Although it has been prominent in other sub-disciplines of political science, Fioretos (2011:367-368) argues that international relations (IR) "has devoted no sustained attention" to historical institutionalism and this negatively affects the growth and maturity of the discipline.

Historical institutionalism is "historical" because it is now generally recognized that some political decision and outcomes are a product of a social process that has unfolded over a certain period of time (Pierson, 1998:29). It is "institutional" because it emphasises on the current consequences of these processes which are entrenched in institutions. This entrenchment in institutions can be in different forms such as policies, norms or simply rules. In other words, historical institutionalism is as a way of capturing some of the longer-term social-political dynamics (Bulmer, 2009).

Bulmer (2009:308-309) argues that two issues need to be emphasized concerning the historical institutionalism; *firstly* it focuses on analyzing "how institutional or policy choices create a path dependency in future development". These institutional and policy changes are often gradual (incremental) or sudden brief transformative changes also known as 'punctuated equilibrium'. *Secondly*, historical institutionalism can be regarded as taking a middle ground between those who take a rational and those who take culture-based justification of political action. In other words, institutions have an impact not only on the strategies that political actors take but even the goals that they pursue.

### 2.2 Concepts of Path Dependency and Critical Juncture: Their Relationship to Historical Institutionalism

The concepts 'path dependency' and 'critical juncture' often show up in the discussion of historical institutionalism. This observation is further reinforced by Leithner and Libby (2017:9) who point out that "path dependence in political science has been closely connected to the field of historical institutionalism". Path dependency describes the reasons for a certain predictable coherence or stability in decision making and policies while critical juncture on the other hand explains why some of the infrequent changes occur. Capoccia and Kelemen (2007:341) point out that the concept of critical junctures is one of the key elements in historical institutionalism. Probably the most concise and influential definition of path dependence comes from Sewell (1996:262-263) who says "that what has happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time." Mahoney (2000:508) went on to explain the path dependency that "involves both tracing a given outcome back to a particular set of historical events, and showing how these events are themselves contingent and cannot be explained on the basis of prior historical conditions".

Thus, according to Kay (2005:553) path dependency as a process, limits future policy choice options due to the influence of decision that were made earlier that have had an impact on current and future selections. Leithner and Libby (2017:5) also introduce the concept of "logic of increasing returns" which says that policy actors will continue to take the same direction that they initially took when they see benefits associated with such a direction

taken. Institutions develop during periods of path dependent stability but this is often interrupted by short periods of instability caused by critical junctures when dramatic changes take place and long lasting decisions are also made at this stage. In other words, Capoccia and Kelemen (2007:342, 354) summarize the link between path dependency and critical junctures as follows:

*"Junctures are 'critical' because they place institutional arrangements on paths or trajectories, which are then very difficult to alter. Path dependence is a crucial causal mechanism for historical institutionalists, and critical junctures constitute the starting points for many path dependent processes... Political science analyses of critical junctures (and synonyms) most often focus not on random small events but instead on decisions by influential actors – political leaders, policymakers, bureaucrats, judges – and examine how, during a phase of institutional fluidity, they steer outcomes toward a new equilibrium".*

In other words, critical juncture and path dependency brings together "key actors, events, decisions, and their interconnections" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007:352).

### 2.3 Historical Institutionalism and Foreign Policy

According to Pardesi (1976:17), foreign policy is defined as a "social process", a "system of human action", a "dynamic political process" an "ideology" and, above all, a system of action to preserve the global political and social status. This definition is more holistic because it captures the diverse core elements of foreign policy in practice and it is the definition which guides this paper. Most of the literature in foreign policy assumes that the actors are rational and not explicitly influenced by historical factors. This type of thinking is currently dominating the field of foreign policy hence makes a historical approach "perhaps more challenging to defend" (Leithner & Libby, 2017:11). However, historical institutionalism is key to the understanding of most foreign policy decisions; specifically, Bursens and Deforcheb (2010) point out that historical institutionalism "delivers explanatory insights into the evolution of regional foreign relations". This point is further explained by Mabee (2011:27) who states that historical institutionalism can help explain the "origins and durability" of some foreign policies

and also adds that probably the most important contribution of historical institutionalism to foreign policy is the analysis of the critical junctures concept because it clearly explains the forces behind the initial policy decisions and how subsequent positive feedback obstruct policy changes.

The work by Khong (1992) entitled *Analogies at War*, is probably the most influential in explaining the applicability of historical institutionalism in foreign policy. Borrowing from cognitive social psychology, he introduced the concept of "historical analogies" that affects policy choice options. Specifically, using an example of American decision-makers in 1965, he points out "how and why policymakers use[d] historical analogies in their foreign policy decision-making" Khong (1992:6). In relation to these analogies, he explains that:

*"...analogies 'help' define the nature of the problem or situation confronted by the policy maker by comparing the new situation to the previous situations with which the policymaker is more familiar. This comparison highlights the similarities between the two situations and downplays their differences... they persist in using their analogies even when defects have been pointed out to them" (Khong, 1992:20, 37)*

Since there is a lot of information that policy makers have to process, and in some cases the environment is generally complex, unfamiliar and unpredictable, historical analogies become handy. Thus once a policy maker has decided on a particular policy path, any contrary option is dismissed (Leithner & Libby, 2017:9).

As comprehensively explained in subsequent sections, it may be deduced from this theoretical discussion that Malawi's independence in July 1964 as well as the OAU summit in Egypt in the same year, were critical junctures in Malawi's foreign policy landscape. Kamuzu had expected support for his long envisaged expansionist plan into Mozambique. When this vision was not supported, he chose a path of consistently disobeying the OAU and its resolutions. He chose a policy path that the OAU disapproved. In relation to development, the path dependency he had taken of supporting Portuguese East Africa, apartheid South Africa and Israel was logically producing increased returns. Each foreign policy situation that he subsequently faced was analyzed within the ambit of historical analogies – which

persistently perceived OAU and its membership as enemies of his vision for Malawi. The fall of communist and collapse of the economy in 1980s emerged as another critical juncture for the country which forced Kamuzu to re-evaluate his previous decisions and embraced the new policy of working with the formerly perceived enemies. Although Kamuzu is taking centre stage in Malawi's foreign policy the approach taken shows that Kamuzu himself was being drawn towards a particular path that had been predetermined- and this is the focus of the paper thus bringing together "key actors, events, decisions, and their interconnections" which is the hallmark of historical institutionalism.

## 2.4 Foreign Policy and Development

Spohr and da Silva (2017:157) argue that not much has been "written on how these countries' foreign policy can help their development goals, as most works...focus on the instruments that centre countries have created to help promote the periphery's development". Foreign policy doesn't operate in total isolation from domestic factors or dynamics. Foreign policies are meant to facilitate achievement of national interests (Sagawa 2011) and national interests emanate from the domestic environment. Although referring to the case of India, Shaw (2017) explains that foreign policy is influenced by many things inter alia geographical situation (such as location, size, topography, state boundaries and population) and political system and traditions.

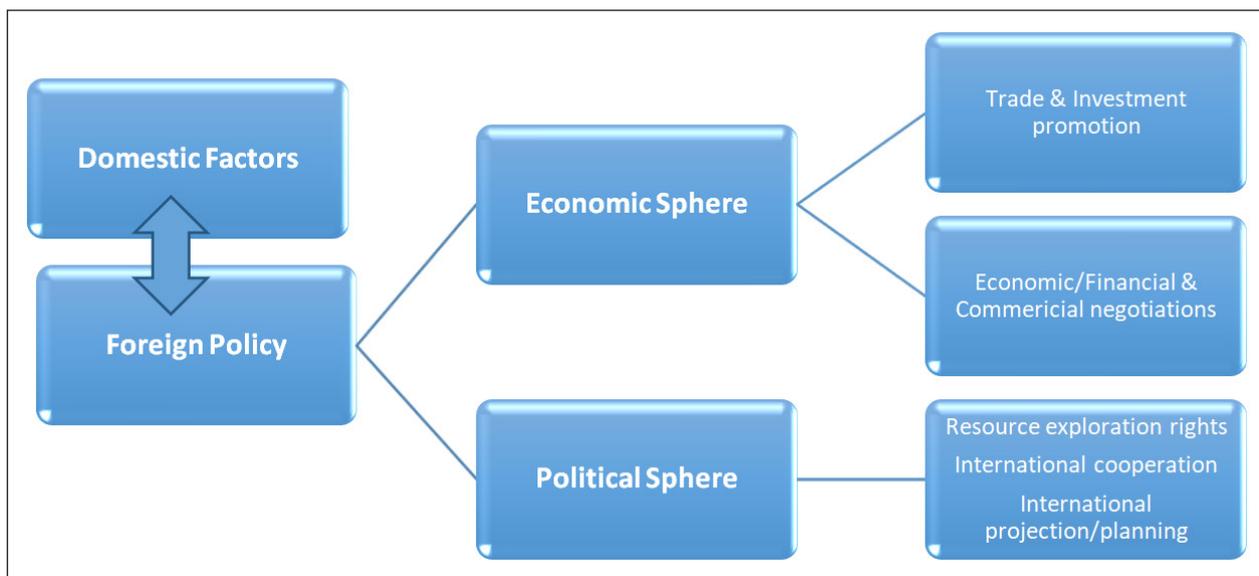
This paper's hypothesis that the critical issue of geographical position has had an impact on foreign policy direction which ultimately affected the development policy direction.

Borrowing from Spohr and da Silva (2017:158), this paper defines development "as the process of increasing utilisation of available resources in order to ensure a more favourable interaction in world markets and, so, generate better conditions for the people through better wages and reduced socio-economic inequality". Spohr and da Silva (2017) further point out that a country's foreign policy may promote development in two ways: The economic area or political area. Figure 1 below shows how the paper looks at the relationship between foreign policy and development.

## 3. Malawi's Post-Independence Foreign Policy: Southern Africa's 'Odd One Out'

Malawi's post-independence foreign policy cannot be divorced from the country's father and founder, Kamuzu. According to Hedges (1989:618) "any explanation of Malawian foreign policy has to begin with an historical analysis of the social basis of the movement which H.K. Banda came to lead, the Malawi Congress Party, and the process which led Malawi to independence". During the fight for independence, Kamuzu had a medical practice in the United Kingdom where he had settled for many years but had been in touch with the nationalist within the

Figure 1: Foreign Policy's Influence on Development



Source: With modification from Spohr and da Silva (2017:160)

country. Some of the fiery young nationalists such as Kanyama Chiume and Henry Chipembere felt that they needed a more mature leader in order to bring credibility to the independence movement. Consequently, they spearheaded the move to invite Kamuzu to Malawi to lead the struggle. Since he had been out of the country for many years, and as part of 'selling' Kamuzu to the public, the nationalists presented an image of Kamuzu as a great leader or 'messiah' who was going to deliver them from their British colonial masters. Among other things, this created an environment which later led to Kamuzu's dictatorial tendencies.

In a special presentation entitled "*What is communism?*", delivered a few months before independence, Kamuzu provided his views on whether Malawi should align itself with the West or East. Although in general he pointed out that Malawi should do neither, a critical reflection on the presentation itself clearly showed that he was in favour of the West and even went on to caution his prospective ministers to be careful and not be enticed by communist ideas from the Eastern countries such as Communist China. He said, "communism does not and cannot succeed, does not or cannot work" (Banda 1964:15). This issue of Communist China was later to emerge a few months after independence. Specifically, two months after independence, Kamuzu and his cabinet seriously disagreed on a number of domestic and foreign policy issues. In a special parliamentary session held from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> September 1964, what transpired was later to be dubbed "Cabinet Crisis" because it led to resignation and firing of almost the whole cabinet. Kayuni and Tambulasi (2010:411) aptly summarizes the key issues of disagreement as follows:

*"(1) the adoption of the Skinner report, which approved reduced remunerations of civil servants; (2) the delay in the Africanisation process; (3) the continuation of diplomatic links with the racist regimes of Portuguese Mozambique and apartheid South Africa; (4) the introduction of three pence (tickey) hospital charges and; (5) reluctance to accept aid from, and forge links with, Communist China".*

Although all the issues raised above were critical but issues relating to foreign policy were the most contentious. Some scholars have argued that the aftermath of this crisis saw Kamuzu internally consolidating his power thus gaining an almost free rein

on policy decisions for the country. Unlike Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique which did some experimentation (though at different levels) with African socialism, Kamuzu took a pro-west approach to an extent that Chipembere (1971:281) said that Kamuzu "takes a clearly pro-western line, sometimes he is more western than the west themselves". Kayuni (2011) called Kamuzu's developmental approach as "pragmatic unilateral capitalism" while Kydd (1984) and Laslett (1984:393) called it "African capitalism" and "command economy" respectively. It seems Kamuzu regarded Malawi as his own personal project and he was also willing to disagree with many stakeholders, whether local or international, who challenged him. Ayandele's (1974:599) observation appropriately summarizes this perspective:

*"First and foremost he is a statesman, intensely and passionately in love with Malawi which he regards as his personal estate. He believes that he and he alone knows the best for Malawi; that his domestic policies and his relations with the outside world are motivated primarily by this love for "Bandaland" (emphasis added).*

The subsequent sections are largely building on this observation especially in relation to Kamuzu's reaction to the OAU's policy foreign policy prescriptions which were not in tandem with his "personal estate".

### 3.1 Role of OAU in Africa's Foreign Relations Policy

Established in 1963, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which was headquartered in Ethiopia may be described as a key entity as far as setting the tone for African countries' foreign policies. Despite lacking "disciplinary or enforcement provisions", Akinyemi (1982:251) argues that the OAU was "the indispensable ingredient in the evolution of an African viewpoint". Specifically, among other things, Article II of the 1963 OAU mentioned that the role of OAU was to:

- To promote the unity and solidarity of the African states.
- To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa.
- To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and independence.

- To eradicate all forms of colonialism in Africa.
- To promote international cooperation, having due regard for the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Right (Akinyemi, 1982).

Points 1, 3 and 4 became very critical taking into consideration that several African countries were not yet independent when the organization was created. Consequently, African solidarity to "eradicate all forms of colonialism" was highly prioritized. The OAU exerted international political pressure to ensure that South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola were liberated. Malawi had from the onset developed foreign policies that were going to set it on a collision path with OAU. In other words, Malawi was later to defy the OAU (either directly or indirectly) in all the three said critical foreign policy areas.

The writings and speeches of Kamuzu before independence clearly demonstrated that he was a fiery and passionate Pan-Africanist. It should also be pointed out that before his return home to Malawi he had been interacting a great deal with some of the well-known Pan-Africans such as Kwame Nkrumah, Mzee Jomo Kenyata and Julius Nyerere. These were some of the key pillars in the OAU. Kamuzu regarded the fight for freedom in Malawi as part and parcel of the wider African liberation movement. His closest associates in Malawi such as Kanyama Chiume and Dunduzu Chisiza had spent considerable time in other African countries. In a memo that he wrote while in the United Kingdom and in reaction to some issues related to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Kamuzu wrote (quoted in Hedges, 1989:619) "No responsible African in Nyasaland ... would ever be content with his own political freedom while his brothers and sisters in Southern Rhodesia suffer ...." However, there seems to have been a sudden change in Kamuzu's attitude soon after independence in 1964. Kamuzu's character had earlier been praised in relation to "his resourcefulness, resilience, mental endowment and credit-worthiness...of no less importance were his exertions in the Pan-Africanist agitation in Britain" but, according to Ayandele, his decision to drop Pan-Africanism meant, "he suddenly ceased to be a political animal" (Ayandele, 1974:598). Consequently, the section below explains Kamuzu's pre and post-independence expansionist's policy that may have led to his collision course with the

OAU; hence adopting foreign policies that were at odd with the rest of the region.

### **3.2 Critical Juncture in the Foreign Policy Direction: OAU and Kamuzu's Expansionists Ambition**

Various sources have argued that Kamuzu and his Malawi Congress Party had demonstrated expansionist's tendencies way before independence. Apart from some Zambian territories, Kamuzu was mainly interested in making sure that Malawi has a port in the Eastern Coast which means getting some Mozambican territory. According to Hedges (1989:620) who has examined several firsthand accounts which are available in Portuguese, he argues that "there is clear evidence showing that, at least from 1961, the Malawi Congress Party aimed to expand its power in Mozambican territory". Coelho (in Hedges, 1989:621) says that during Malawi's fight for independence, the Malawi Congress Party had actually established some of its branches in Malawi-Mozambique's neighbouring territories and they had been instructed to talk about integration with Malawi. Specifically, he says that "propagandists of the Malawi Congress Party in Moatize [Mozambican territory] ... instead of arguing for the independence of Mozambique, advocated instead the integration of the whole region into Malawi". Malawi's first Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kanyama Chiume also pointed out in his memoirs that Kamuzu once said, "I want to leave a worthwhile heritage when I am dead. I must at least grab the northern part of Mozambique, we cannot do without Beira" (Chiume, 1975:167). During the armed struggle for independence in Mozambique, Kamuzu never provided any support for freedom fighters because it is alleged that "the Portuguese settlers convinced Banda that they would give him the northern portion of Mozambique in return for not allowing freedom fighters to pass through Malawi and for the recognition of Mozambique Independence" (Chiume, 1975:207).

Before delivering his maiden speech (discussed below) at the 1964 OAU conference in Cairo, Kamuzu's long time quest to expand Malawi's territory was rejected by the OAU. As Munene (2015:125) points out, during the 1964 OAU sitting, Nyerere proposed that colonial boundaries should remain and not be contested by new African states. Nyerere's proposal was widely discussed and officially adopted by the OAU. This proposal was presented as follows:

"1. Solemnly reaffirms the strict respect of all Member States of the Organization for the principles laid down...Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state..; 2. Solemnly declare that all Member States pledge themselves to respect the frontiers existing on their achievement of national independence" (Mayall, 1973:620-21).

If the OAU had agreed otherwise, Kamuzu had hoped that he would take this opportunity to ask for more territory to the East using the argument that the ancient Maravi Kingdom, which was headquartered in present Malawi, extended as far as Beira in Mozambique (Chime, 1975; Hedges, 1989). However the newly adopted OAU position meant that Kamuzu's aspiration was now rejected. Munene (2015:125) says that Nyerere had deliberately introduced the proposal in the OAU summit because among other things, Kamuzu had approached him (Nyerere) and suggested that they should share the northern part of Mozambique so that Malawi may have an opening to the East Coast. Nyerere was very uncomfortable with this suggestion hence he wanted it settled once and for all through the OAU assembly.

This arguably became Kamuzu's turning point in foreign policy, and later to define his direction. His maiden speech at the OAU conference in Cairo in July 1964 was a clear manifestation of his new foreign policy direction that was actually a reaction to the resolution adopted by the OAU. Using an economic argument, Kamuzu completely rejected the OAU's resolution to cut off economic and diplomatic relations with Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique), Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and apartheid South Africa. Among other things, his argument was that:

*"In my own state of Malawi, for example, the colonial geography makes it impossible for me to cut off all relations...because colonial history and colonial geography have denied it a part of its own... I do not want to be a hypocrite, I do not want anyone to accuse me of hypocrisy after I leave this room, because it is impossible for me to accept any such resolutions" (GoM, 1964).*

In tandem with OAU's charter, several other resolutions had later been adopted which Kamuzu systematically ignored as further discussed below. Kamuzu now coined the "Contact and dialogue"

philosophy or concept in order to challenge his critics. The development of this philosophy can be deduced that he needed a political explanation to the problem rather than an economic one and in theoretical terms it became his path dependency identity. Zambia and some other countries were also land locked but they embraced the OAU's resolution - there was a need for another reason to explain the decision. His image however was tarnished and the OAU and its policies were now an anathema to Kamuzu and this set Malawi as an "odd one out" in Africa. Ayandele (1974:598) pointed out that "at the African audience Hastings Kamuzu Banda is more of a liability than an asset" and continues to say that one of Kamuzu's problems has been "darting his vile tongue at the rest of African leaders for believing that the Organisation of African Unity is worth more than a wishful thinking".

#### **4. Cases of Path Dependency in Foreign Policy: Application of Kamuzu's "Contact and Dialogue"**

This section will discuss selected foreign policy areas in which Kamuzu defied the OAU and ultimately defined his country's foreign policy direction which was to remain like that for many years until his ousting in 1993.

##### **4.1 The Case of Relations with Apartheid South Africa**

Malawi's relationship with apartheid South Africa is probably one of the most prominent cases that raised not only regional but international attention. It is also mainly Kamuzu's relation with South Africa that he initially coined the concept of "Contact and Dialogue". It is worthy therefore examining it in detail. Many years after Kamuzu's maiden speech at the OAU, Ivory Coast (in 1971), introduced a motion in the OAU sitting of heads of state and government in which she wanted the organization to open dialogue with apartheid South Africa. After a heated debate, "the OAU voted overwhelmingly (23 to 6, with 4 abstentions) in favor of a resolution prohibiting the organization itself *and its member-states* from engaging in dialogue with South Africa" (Akinyemi, 1982, emphasis added). Malawi and other two countries openly disobeyed this OAU resolution. On 16<sup>th</sup> August 1971, Kamuzu travelled to South Africa for an official state visit, becoming the first and only African leader to visit apartheid South Africa, and was greeted with a 21-gun salute.

His view was that it's important to sit together with white South Africans and discuss the problem of apartheid. He at one time informed a senior expatriate in Malawi that, "Some Afrikaners have never spent more than 20 minutes in the company of an African. They have lived in Africa for 300 years and they are unlikely to change now unless they can be shown [through contact and dialogue] that they can get on with African people" (Walker, 1997).

South Africa as a country had some special attachments to Kamuzu. When Kamuzu was a young man, he trekked to South Africa (Johannesburg) where he did evening studies while working in the mines. Thus he spent most of his formative years in Johannesburg before leaving for the USA and later Britain where he did his medical studies and eventually settled in Scotland. This act by Kamuzu of going to South African mines is a trend that had been there since the establishment of the Malawi colony in 1891 and had steadily been growing over the years. Being land locked and with no viable minerals, Malawi's reliance on this labour arrangement was highly valued. For instance at the time of independence in 1964, there were 35,658 Malawian mine workers and this figure rose to 119,141 by 1973 (Chirwa, 1996:627). The South African government supported the idea of employing foreign workers because it gained some diplomatic leverage and the mine owners themselves liked Malawian workers due to "their skills, work discipline and lack of militancy" (Chirwa, 1998:53). Actually, for several years, remittances to Malawian workers in South Africa accounted for the second largest source of income for the country.

His South African foreign policy was construed as "contact and dialogue". Defending his philosophy by saying:

*"I do what I think is right, in the interests of my people, no matter what anyone thinks, feels, or wants to do. Let others talk and argue about dialogue either in Addis Ababa (headquarters of OAU)... or anywhere else. Let them argue, debate this issue, philosophize about it. I will practise, act, behave, live 'Contact and Dialogue' and take the consequences" (Chimphamba, 2003, in Chiponda, 2007:99).*

#### 4.2 The Case of Relations with Israel

When African states were gaining their independence in 1960s, the state of Israel saw that as an

opportunity to extend its influence in the region (Levey, 2001, 2008). Specifically, Israel wanted to be seen as 'a light unto the nations' and provided expertise in agriculture, medicine and administration; Israel also wanted to come out of the isolation that most developed countries had placed on it (Rodman 2013:584). With the influence of Arab nations within the OAU, such as Egypt, the organization slowly started adopting resolutions that were against Israel. Probably 1967 would be regarded as the starting point of souring of relations between Israel and most African countries. During the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Sinai Peninsula that belongs to Egypt was occupied by Israel. The OAU condemned Israel and had passed several anti-Israel resolutions in subsequent years.

Contrary from the general perception held in the OAU, Kamuzu had a state visit to Israel in 1968 with culmination of an address to the Israel parliament (Knesset) on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1968. Kamuzu therefore became the only African president (apart from Sadat) to have done this. Excerpts from his speech point out some key issues:

*"...That was why, when you were in a grip last June [1967 Arab-Israeli War], I felt bound to express my opinions as I saw the situation, come what might... no matter who disagrees or agrees with me. When I go back home, now, whether at meetings of O.A.U (Organisation for African Unity) in Addis Ababa or at the meetings... I think the stand I took last year [of supporting Israel] was the right one..." (Banda, 1964)*

Here we see that Kamuzu has clearly taken a stand that was not in favour of the majority, especially the OAU, and he seemed unfazed. Analyzing his foreign policy statements from 1964 OAU summit onwards, there is a clear common thread which somehow demonstrates that Kamuzu had already decided right away from the beginning that he would take his own path as far as international relations is concerned. His speech in Israel is simply a continuation of what had already been established. Thus what had also dominated his foreign policy choice options over the years was his reluctance to change what has initially been decided. In other words, he is using the same historical analogy as a reference point in his decisions. For instance, in the same speech, he says:

*"We must study the question, find out facts, and see who is in the right and who is in the wrong.*

*After we have convinced ourselves as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong, we can take a stand, and once we take a stand, we must not be swayed by fear, whether it be the fear of becoming unpopular, or the fear of not towing the popular line" (Banda, 1964).*

After the Yom Kippur War of 1973, on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1973 the OAU assembly of heads of state and government adopted a hard-hitting resolution which among other things stated that "...Israel ...constitutes a threat to the security of the continent [Africa]" and after this resolution almost all African countries severed diplomatic links with Israel, except for Malawi and two other sub-Saharan countries (the other two were Lesotho and Swaziland) (Levey, 2008:212).

## **5. Logic of Increased Returns: Consequences of Kamuzu's Foreign Policy on Development Policy Option**

At the time of independence, Kamuzu had a vision of accomplishing four key developmental projects which he said was a "dream" he received while in prison during the State of Emergency in 1959. These developmental projects were:

- Construction of a lake shore road from southern tip of Lake Malawi up to the Northern end;
- Construction of the railway link from Malawi to Nacala Port in Mozambique;
- Shifting the capital from Zomba to Lilongwe; and
- Building a national university campus in Zomba (Kayuni, 2011).

Of these four, the relocation of the capital to Lilongwe was highly prioritized. This was against the stiff opposition of Britain (main donor for Malawi at that time) and other experts. Britain recommended that the capital be relocated to Blantyre, which was relatively well developed in terms of infrastructure. Due to the cold war effects, Kamuzu still enjoyed some financial support (for other projects) from the West - despite their disapproval of some of his policies as well as his poor human rights record. In pursuance of Kamuzu's "dream", the *Capital City Development Corporation Act of 1968* was enacted on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1968. The Act saw the establishment of Capital City Development Corporation whose main purpose was specified in Part IV(1) of the Act and it

read "to administer and supervise the orderly construction, development and maintenance of the Capital City" at Lilongwe. As already mentioned, Britain and other western donors refused to fund this project and Kamuzu turned to apartheid South Africa. In 1968 Malawi managed to secure a loan from South Africa not only for the construction of the new capital but also the construction of a rail link to Nacala in Mozambique. Kamuzu later referred to South Africa as "in every sense of the word, a true friend in need, who is a friend indeed" (GoM, 1968: 463, in Kayuni, 2011). In this case, "between 1969 and 1971, South Africa came to supply about 20% of direct aid to Malawi. On the other hand, the number of Malawian miners in South African mines increased from less than 50,000 in 1966 to more than 100,000 in 1971" (Hedges, 1989:628). In other words, South Africa helped Kamuzu address his two major prioritized "dreams" that traditional donors were not willing to fund.

As will be discussed below, agriculture was also another critical area that Kamuzu was keen to see success. Although Israel had provided assistance in several areas, the most visible was in the agriculture sector. While thanking the Israel government for its support to the country, Kamuzu said "As I am speaking, we have...your agricultural experts... in particular, instructors for our [Malawi] Young Pioneers. Because our country is agricultural, we want to emphasize the development of agriculture" (Banda, 1968). The Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) was later to become a quasi-military arm of the Malawi Congress Party which was effectively used in suppressing Kamuzu's opponents in Malawi. Apart from the political utility of MYP to Dr Banda as documented by several authors (Hedges, 1989, Phiri, 2000; Chirambo, 2004), the organization also emphasized agricultural production with establishment of agricultural settlements. In other words, MYP training camp graduates were sent to specific areas (often underdeveloped) where they established agricultural settlement schemes (after being given some initial basic support with assistance from the Israel and Taiwanese governments). The idea was to mimic the "Kibbutz" agricultural communal system of Israel. For instance, an Israel agricultural expert who was closely working with MYP mentions that between 1964 and 1976, MYP had established 1,437 new agricultural settlement schemes (Meliczeck, 1977). Specifically, by 1977 it is said that these MYP settlements achieved the following:

"(a) they managed to reclaim large tracts of under-utilised fertile land; (b) the schemes boosted Malawi's agricultural production; (c) with the introduction of cash crops in the schemes, the settlers – who were once landless and unemployed rural people – had their household income improved; (d) the programme relied on low cost mechanisms in order to establishing a settler unit, hence benefited numerous household with minimal costs to the government" (Meliczeck, 1977:10).

Apart from these projects dictated by Kamuzu, there were other development plans that were mainly featured in official documents. Taking into consideration that over 80% (and was over 90% in 1964) of the Malawian population lives in the rural areas, Fair (in Chinsinga & Kayuni, 2008) aptly points out that "for Malawi rural and national development are virtually synonymous". However, the actual official plans that were developed during the Kamuzu era never fully reached out to these rural masses. Specifically, Kishindo (1997:18) points out that "the country has never really had a social development policy. What the country has had is economic development policy. Social sector expenditure had to be justified in economic terms". Several development plans were introduced during the Kamuzu regime such as: *Development Plan of 1965-69*, *Statement of Development Policies 1971-80 (DEVPOL I)*, *Statement of Development Policies 1987-96 (DEVPOL II)*. The Development Plan of 1965-69 was the first plan to be developed after independence and it highlighted four major areas:

- The expansion of agricultural production;
- The provision of greatly improved internal communication;
- Great expansion of facilities for secondary and post-secondary education; and
- Stimulation of the private sector of the economy (GoM, 1964:5).

*Statement of Development Policies 1971-80 (DEVPOL I)* was more comprehensive and continued to emphasize the issue of agricultural productivity with focus on smallholder sector. This was further emphasized in DEVPOL II of 1987-1996 (Actually DEVPOL II was a continuation of DEVPOL I). Although government indicated more support to smallholder farmers, the reality is that emphasis was on commercial farmers who owned huge tobacco estates. Kamuzu's own

company, Press Holdings as well as other key politicians and top civil servants significantly benefited from soft loans and other special privileges conferred on the sector (Mhone, 1987). Consequently commitment to the policies mentioned was problematic. Taking into consideration that Kamuzu never seriously experimented with social development policy, he isolated the country from its immediate neighbors who were trying as much as possible to reach out to the masses, there was now a serious disjuncture between state development policy and the masses. Agricultural policies that could have reached out to the people were highly skewed towards the elites at the expense of the rural farmers.

Political things were changing in the immediate social political environment that was diminishing the "increased returns". Zimbabwe and Mozambique had attained their independence but Malawi was allegedly being used by South Africa to support the RENAMO rebels in Mozambique. Among other things, the instability in the region affected Malawi in the long run. By 1980, Malawi started experienced an economic crisis which seriously contributed to her decision to re-think the foreign policy and development path that had been taken in the past. For instance, the MWK13 million budget deficit of 1981 was over 10% of GDP and it was also the largest deficit ever recorded; Malawi never recovered from this experience throughout the remainder of Kamuzu's reign (Harrigan, 2001; Kayuni, 2016). Some of the reasons for the economic problems faced were due to:

- Fall in the terms of trade.
- Oil price shock with cost of petroleum accounting for 10% of the value of all imports.
- Increase in transportation costs due to civil war in Mozambique.
- Increasing interest burden from the foreign debt accumulated since the mid-1970s.
- Drought in 1980/81 which led to a drop in agricultural production.
- Refugees from Mozambique placed additional demands on a distressed government budget.
- Parastatals initially considered as the growth pole became a drag on the economy as their financial position dwindled.

- Poor performance of the smallholder agricultural sub sector due to pricing structure (Harrigan, 2001; Chinsinga, 2013; Kayuni, 2016).

The cold war was also waning hence the west and other international financial bodies started putting more pressure on Kamuzu to reform his policies. In relation to foreign policy, one notable transformation was Kamuzu's move to start opening up in the region. For instance, just before independence, Malawi through Kamuzu, was invited and expressed interest to join the proposed east African political and economic entity. However, soon after independence in 1964, Kamuzu withdrew from this proposed organization "which marked a further step in the alignment of Malawi with the racist regimes of southern Africa" (Hedges, 1989:625). Later, a flexible coalition of southern African states called Front Line States (FLS) was formed with the intention of enhancing political and economic collaboration in order to end white dominated rule in the region. In 1975, FLS was formally recognized as a sub-committee of OAU. Its members were Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe joined after independence in 1980). Although the OAU categorized Malawi as a frontline state, it never joined the group later. Interestingly, when the FLS later formed Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in April 1980, Malawi joined and became a member. This was a clear sign that Malawi's foreign policy was now changing for the better due to its failure to deal with domestic economic problems that previous policy approaches had failed to address.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper has drawn from a historical institutionalism perspective in order to analyse Malawi's foreign policy during the Kamuzu era. The paper has argued that Malawi's independence, in July 1964, as well as the OAU July summit in Egypt of the same year provided a framework for what may be identified as critical junctures in Malawi's foreign policy landscape. During this OAU summit, Kamuzu had expected to have his long quest for an opening to the sea through Mozambique to be positively addressed. When his "dream" received no support, he chose a path of rebelling against most of the key OAU resolutions. In the process, he chose a policy path consistently was at logger heads with prevailing foreign policies of the region. In other words, the path that he had taken is the one which became crucial to explain foreign policy

directions of the country and not Kamuzu himself. In relation to development, the path dependency he had taken of supporting Portuguese East Africa, apartheid South Africa and Israel was logically producing increased returns. The fall of communist and collapse of the economy in 1980s emerged as another critical juncture for the country which forced Kamuzu to re-evaluate his previous decisions and embraced the new policy of working with the formerly perceived enemies. Thus using the historical institutionalism lens, the paper has managed to bring together "key actors, events, decisions, and their interconnections" (which is the hallmark of historical institutionalism) in Malawi's foreign policy terrain during the Kamuzu regime.

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