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Ethnic associations and politics in contemporary Malawi

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ABSTRACT
Malawi has recently seen a rise in the number and prominence of formal ethnic associations. What is the nature of these organizations and what effect will they have on politics? To answer these questions, we conducted in-depth interviews with current and former leaders of the three main ethnic associations, Mulhako wa Alhomwe, Mzimba Heritage Association, and Chewa Heritage Foundation. The interviews and other documentary sources allow us to place these new organizations in historical context, describe their organizational structures, and examine their potential political influence. We depart from other studies in arguing that these ethnic associations are unlikely to pose a threat to state authority in the near term, and they have shown little or no sign of fomenting ethnic conflict. However, these ethnic associations have the potential to be used for political mobilization, especially when ethnic traditional authorities lack the capacity and autonomy to block the political manipulation of ethnic organizations.

Whereas some scholars have argued that ethnic political mobilization is a normatively desirable outcome, as it encourages the political inclusion and representation of minority groups, others view it as potentially dangerous for democracy, development, and peace.[1] However, we have a limited understanding of the forms and processes of ethnic mobilization beyond ethnic voting. Existing research has focused almost exclusively on this single form of ethnic political mobilization, mainly because it is observable at regular intervals and during times of peace.[2] We know much less about the causes and implications of other forms of ethnic political mobilization, such as cultural and social associations organized along ethnic lines, or how they relate to formal political behavior.

We set out to understand the nature and political implications of ethnic associations in Malawi, which has recently witnessed a surge in both the number and prominence of formal ethnic associations. The country has over sixteen ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Chewa, the Lomwe, the Yao, the Ngoni, and the Tumbuka.[3] Most ethnic groups are headed by state-recognized traditional authority structures, which operate as both a complement and an alternative to formal state institutions.[4] Most ethnic groups in Malawi are geographically concentrated, with their historical homelands nested within only one of the country's three administrative regions: northern, central, and southern.[5]

Politically, Malawi's trajectory has followed that of many other African states. Shortly after independence in 1964, Malawi became a de-facto one-party state under the leadership of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). [6] In 1993, the country transitioned to a multi-party democracy, but the party system has been fairly unstable since, with significant party switching and a steady proliferation of political parties.[7] Compared to many other African democracies, ethnicity is only moderately related to vote choice in Malawi, but regional voting patterns have dominated all but one of Malawi's five multi-party national elections.[8] More recently – and most apposite to the topic at hand – Malawian political leaders have increasingly affiliated themselves with burgeoning ethnic associations and made significant contributions to their operations.

In our study of the political implications of such ethnic associations, we focus our analysis on the three associations that are the most well-established: Mulhako wa Alhomwe (MwA), Mzimba Heritage Association (MZIHA), and Chewa Heritage Foundation (CHEFO). Based on in-depth interviews with current and former leaders of these three groups, we describe their historical antecedents, organizational structures, and the non-political roles they fulfill. Respondents were recruited through a snowball sampling strategy, and interviewed in person at a time and place of their choosing. Table A1 of the appendix lists characteristics of the respondents interviewed.

Based on these interviews, we theorize the ways in which such formal ethnic organizations might influence the political sphere. In particular, we discuss the possibility that these organizations could provide alternative sources of political authority and thus challenge the state, that they could foster ethnic antagonisms and intergroup conflict, and that they could provide the organizational basis for political mobilization. Our analysis of the interviews and other documents, including media statements and pronouncements in political gatherings, suggests that these associations are unlikely to pose significant threats to state authority in the near term, largely because they lack institutional. In addition, we find that, thus far, these three ethnic associations have facilitated interethnic cooperation and collaboration more than conflict, as these types of organizations typically support one another and constitute a segment of civil society. However, we discovered the potential for ethnic associations to be used as a means of political mobilization. This is especially true for the case of MwA, the only group that was founded by ruling party politicians, including the president of the country. The potential for MwA to be used for political mobilization is also driven by the fact that the ethnic group it claims to represent, the Lhomwe, does not have a strong and autonomous chieftaincy that can constrain political elites, while traditional authorities significantly constrain the political utility of both CHEFO and MZIHA.

The rise of ethnic associations in contemporary Malawi

The three associations covered in this study (MZIHA, CHEFO, and MwA) have their origins in the early 2000s. They are all registered with the government and have adopted formal constitutions. There are other ethnic associations in the country, beyond the scope of this paper, and these include Chiwanja cha Ayao, Tonga Heritage Association, and Ngonde Cultural Association.

MZIHA is the ethnic association of the M'mbelwa Ngoni of Northern Malawi, and, nominally, other ethnic communities within Mzimba District.[9] The M'mbelwa Ngoni

are the descendants of Zulu warriors who fled present day South Africa after the *mfecane* of the nineteenth century, invaded Malawi, and ruled over the local populations they encountered.[10] Due to intermarriage with local populations, the Ngoni language was replaced almost entirely by the language of those they conquered, chiTumbuka, but the Ngoni continued practicing their cultural customs, especially dances.[11] However, in response to the perceived weakening of cultural traditions especially among the youth, a group of Ngoni elite met in February 2000 to discuss the founding of a cultural association.[12] This initial group formalized and expanded the smaller scale Abengoni Revival Troup, which was established in 1996 to celebrate and preserve Ngoni dances.[13] The new group was officially registered with the government of Malawi on 11 December 2002.[14]

Despite the choice of a non-ethnic name, much of MZIHA's effort has focused on the preservation and celebration of M'mbelwa Ngoni cultural traditions, including dances, modes of dress, and proper marriage customs. MZIHA also holds Ngoni language classes at the Mzuzu Museum and organizes an annual Umthetho cultural festival at Mt. Hora, which features Ngoni dance troupes and centers on Paramount Chief M'mbelwa.[15] The Ngoni paramount chief, referred to as Inkosi Ya Makosi, is the patron of MZIHA, further aligning the nominally multiethnic association with the Ngoni ethnic group.

The Chewa of central region established CHEFO around the same time as MZIHA, with its first meetings occurring in 2005 and 2006, and its formal registration in 2009.[16] The desire to establish CHEFO emerged in response to the fact that the Chewa people of Malawi lacked a formal organization to receive a prominent Chewa chief visiting from Zambia.[17] It was Justin Malawezi, the former Vice President of Malawi (1994–2004), who spearheaded its establishment. Like MZIHA, the patron of CHEFO is the highest-ranking traditional authority of the Chewa, Kalonga Gawa Undi, who lives in neighboring Zambia. To preserve and celebrate the Chewa culture, CHEFO facilitates the movement of Malawian Chewas to the annual Kulamba ceremony in Zambia. They also aim to 'modernize' harmful cultural practices among the Chewa, including discouraging early marriage among girls.

MwA is an ethnic association for the Lhomwe people, who migrated to Malawi from Mozambique in several waves in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unlike the other two groups, upon arrival in Malawi, the Lhomwes did not evolve elaborate political structures. They were divided into sub-groups, identified by the different dialects of their language. Their diversity and late entry into the Protectorate also meant that the ethnic group did not have a paramount chief.[18] Because the Lhomwe settled under Mang'anja and Yao chiefs, and due to perceived discrimination from the state and other ethnic groups, the Lhomwe cultural practices declined precipitously.[19] MwA was born in 2008, although it had been in the works since 2005. Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika, the president of Malawi (2004–2012), and leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), formed the association, and served as its patron until his death in 2012.[20] Like MZIHA, MwA also initiated an annual cultural festival to showcase Lhomwe culture, held every October at its headquarters at Chonde, in Thyolo District.

The historical origins of ethnic associations in Malawi

Scholars have linked the rise of ethnic-based associations to the democratic dispensation (since 1993), viewing them as a by-product of the 1995 Republican Constitution. That

Constitution replaced the one framed in 1966 that had de-emphasized the formation of ethnic-based or civil society organizations at the pretext of promoting national unity.[21] From a somewhat different angle, Lisa Gilman traces the formation of the ethnic-based associations to the beginning of the present century, following the Malawi Government's 2003 ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.[22] Among other issues, the UNESCO Convention mandated signatories to ensure that they safeguarded and increased strategies for cultural preservation.

We argue that the origins of present-day ethnic associations in Malawian predate the transition to multiparty democracy. We trace them to the early twentieth century, when the country, then known as Nyasaland, was under British rule. During that time, several ethnic-based associations emerged in response to a series of political, economic, and social concerns that the native peoples of the protectorate faced. These colonial-era associations, known as 'Native Associations' were precursors to the contemporary associations relative to their geographical location, organizational structure, and their aims and objectives.[23] What we know as MZIHA, for instance, has its historical roots in the Mombera Native Association (MNA), established in 1920, with Reverend Hezekiah M. Tweya as its first president.[24] CHEFO's historical roots can be traced to the Central Province Native Association (CPNA), established in 1927, with George Simeon Mwase as one of the early organizers.[25] MwA has its historical antecedent in the Lhomwe Tribal Representative Association (LTRA), formed in 1943 under the leadership of Lewis Mataka Bandawe.[26] The LTRA aimed to uplift the values and behavior of the Lhomwe people, promote cooperation amongst the Lhomwes, and to bring the existence of the Lhomwe people in the country to the colonial government's attention, especially on welfare-associated matters.[27] The LTRA had branches in Chiradzulu, Thyolo, and Mulanje Districts, and one of its main achievements was to persuade the colonial government to remove the derogatory name 'Anguru' from the government's official list and correspondences, and instead to use the preferred name of 'Alhomwe', a feat achieved by November 1943.[28] Because the Lhomwes lacked chiefs that would have commanded unity among the them, the need to form a unified group through LTRA should not be surprising.

Once the colonial state legalized the formation of political parties in Nyasaland, the native associations disbanded in 1944 in support of the leading nationalist movement, the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC). The aim was to present a united front against British rule, and ensure that the colonial state provided the people with their basic welfare needs.[29] Nationalist politics, however, did not completely supplant ethnic identities in the country. From time to time, the nationalist leaders, both during the fight for independence and after, played the ethnic card where it suited them most.

While political pluralism in the 1990s explains the resurgence of these associations, democracy alone is an inadequate framework with which to analyze their nature. The differences that exist between the modern-day ethnic and the pioneer native associations, we argue, could be a product of Dr. Hastings Banda's (first president of independent Malawi) somewhat contradictory nation-building policy implemented between 1966 and 1993, which other scholars have examined in detail.[30] Suffice it to state that the nation-building policy of Dr. Banda's regime pitted the country's ethnic groups against each other.

For example, Bonaventure Mkandawire demonstrates how the choice of Chichewa as a national language left many of the Tumbuka speaking peoples in the north disgruntled.[31] That was mainly because the process was an imposed one accompanied by removal of all symbols of previous languages in schools and the media houses, further alienating other

ethnic groups.[32] Kaspin blames Dr. Banda for favoring the Chewa constituency in the center by moving the Capital from Zomba in the south to Lilongwe in the center, the location of Banda's regional base, and to where he also diverted national resources toward rural development projects.[33] Daniel Posner shows how Banda's regime targeted the people from the north in ways that undermined the nation-building policy. In 1988, the state transferred workers from the north to the National Examination Board in the south on allegations of favoring pupils from their districts. Similar concerns justified the 1989 policy of posting primary school teachers in the country to schools in their districts of origin. Again, because of lack of political will to develop the north, the region retained its colonial image of the 'dead north'.[34] Whether such criticisms are justified, Chirwa argues that the Chewa-ization of the nation helped to polarize it along ethnic and regional lines, a historical legacy that later characterized the country's democratic politics after the 1990s.[35]

The divisive nature of what should have been a unifying policy also had other ramifications. Kayira and Banda have earlier demonstrated how the Lhomwes welcomed the decision to form MwA because it presented them an opportunity to revive their traditions long subsumed under the umbrella of national unity.[36] MZIHA's multiethnic nature possibly shows the influence of Banda's onslaughts against the people from the 'north'. Homogenized in a single identity, MZIHA is in a dilemma to break loose from that history.

While Banda sought to promote the Chewa traditions, some Chewa practices did not escape his condemnation, chief among them being the Kulamba ceremony that CHEFO recently revived. Banda banned the celebrations, which brought together Chewas across Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique, arguing that it threatened national unity.[37] These concerns appear in his letter of 28 November 1967 to Kenneth Kaunda, the then-president of Zambia, who Banda accused of providing 'shelter' to some of Malawi's political dissidents in the aftermath of the 1964 'Cabinet Crisis', in which Banda and his cabinet differed on matters pertaining to domestic and foreign policies.[38] The Chewa of Malawi now happily patronize the Kulamba ceremony having moved on from the hindrances of the Banda regime.

Organizational structures

Despite their minor differences, the three associations share a lot in common. Their organizational structures, the running of their day-to-day activities, the way they raise funds, and the nature of their relationships to other associations, all display a high degree of similarity. While the organizational structures of these associations are flexible, evolving to react to changes in the social and political reality of Malawi, they are also hierarchical. This means that the organizations comprise different offices arranged according to levels of seniority. Again, these associations are centralized, with several of their activities revolving around a handful of elite actors, in which ordinary members support the agenda set from above.

The associations have the office of the patron, which is more ceremonial than administrative. Right from the onset, MZIHA had the Paramount chief M'mbelwa IV as its patron, succeeded after his death in February 2013 by his son, M'mbelwa V. Like MZIHA, CHEFO's highest office is that of the patron, held by his royal highness Gawa Undi, the highest-ranking Chewa chief, stationed in Zambia. In its early years, MwA

had the then-president of the country, Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika (a Lhomwe) as its patron. Upon his death in April 2012, the office fell vacant, and was occupied again in December 2015 when the MwA leadership appointed Senior Chief Ngongoliwa to the post. The death of Mutharika created a crisis in the office of the MwA patron since his successor, Joyce Banda, came from the Yao ethnic group. Beyond this ethnic mismatch, Joyce Banda had fallen out with Mutharika before his death, and would not have been a suitable candidate for that position. In this sense, the choice of a traditional authority as the new patron became desirable. It alleviated the chances of future succession challenges in that office. Moreover, it brought MwA more in line with other ethnic associations in the country. There was, however, more to this change. Interviews with Mulhako leadership indicated how the move also responded to the many criticisms leveled against the group, one of which was the presence of a politician at the helm of the association making it more political than cultural. [39]

Besides the patron, all three associations have a Board of Trustees that oversees group activities. Members of the Boards of Trustees are the legal owners of the associations. While such Boards potentially raise questions of legitimacy, as they undermine ownership by the people, it is a requirement that before registration takes place at the Registrar General, such associations appoint a board. It is this office that gives legal legitimacy to the operations of the associations, making them operate as though they were fully-fledged formal organizations.

It is the executive committees that give routine leadership to the associations. Here too, the structure takes after that of other formal organizations. The constitutions for each of the three groups provide for the offices of chairpersons, general secretaries, treasurers, and their respective deputies. Unlike MwA and MZIHA, in which executive committee positions are elected, the patron appoints the chairperson in CHEFO.[40] In all three associations, the most active office is that of the Secretary-General, who is responsible for the running of the day-to-day operations of the associations.

Besides a patron, a board of trustees, and an executive committee, all three associations have several other departments that report to the Secretariat. They name these after their functions, and include departments of women and children, climate change, development, and education, to mention a few. Even though each of these associations has their headquarters in areas with the highest concentration of their ethnic groups, they also have branches across the country. For instance, other than the headquarters in Mzuzu, MZIHA has branches in Blantyre and Lilongwe, the two other major cities of the country. CHEFO operates branches – they refer to these as zones – in districts such as Nkhotakota and Kasungu with large Chewa populations. Mulhako has also established a presence in Lilongwe and other districts outside the south while maintaining several zones in the southern region of the country. This geographical span makes mobilization of members and resources for major functions an easier task.

Ironically, given the cultural agenda and focus of these organizations, traditional authorities have, by and large, been excluded from leadership roles in these associations, aside from the ceremonial role of patron. Instead, the elites outside the traditional realm, including academics, business tycoons, and retired politicians, occupy the most powerful positions in the executive committees. Currently, the executive chairpersons of all three associations are seasoned professors. Dr. George Kanyama Phiri, professor of Crop Sciences and Vice Chancellor of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural

Resources, is the current chair of CHEFO, a position previously held by Justin Malewezi, former Vice President of the country, and one of the founders of CHEFO. MZIHA is chaired by Dr. Boston Soko, professor of French; before he died in 2017, Robson Chirwa had served as its first chairperson. Chirwa had also served in several ministerial positions in Dr. Hastings Banda's government. The chairperson of MwA, Dr. James Seyani, Professor of Biology, took the helm after the August 2015 death of the previous chairperson, Mr. Bright Mangulama, who was a distinguished career civil servant, having previously served as Commissioner for the Civil Service and Public Reform Commission and Malawi's High Commissioner to Japan.

While the domination of the associations by non-traditional elites (mostly the urban and educated elite) may undermine the group's purported aim at cultural preservation and celebration among the masses, the connections of such elites to business tycoons and politicians are imperative for fundraising. All three ethnic associations rely mostly on fundraising dinners to finance their ceremonies, such as annual cultural gatherings and celebrations. For instance, on 7 August 2016, Mulhako collected MK6,500,000 (US $9,000) from two business gurus, Leston Mulli and Jean Mathanga, when the two won the bid to sit next to the president, the guest of honor. Those who sat near the vice president contributed MK2,000,000 or US$2,800.[41] In 2012, Chimala reported that the then Vice President, Khumbo Kachale, donated MK500,000 (US $1,250) to CHEFO during its fundraising dinner in Lilongwe.[42] Other 'well-wishers' who attended and contributed included the acting president of the Democratic Progressive Party (Prof. Peter Mutharika), the People's Party Secretary-General (Henry Chibwana), the Provincial Chairperson for the Central Region (Kizito Ngwembe), the second Vice President of the DPP (Jean Kalilani), and the former presidential spokesperson (Dr. Heatherwick Ntaba). During its July 2015 fundraising dinner in Lilongwe, MZIHA netted a combined donation of MK900,000 (US$1,700) from President Peter Mutharika and his cabinet ministers, Henry Mussa and Goodall Gondwe.[43]

Given their domination by political and business elites, it is tempting to suggest that these associations are more than cultural organizations. In important ways, they have helped to create a new arena of elite networking with a potential to enhance personal interests and ambitions. The fact that the high-profile dinners are out of reach for the ordinary that these organizations claim to serve attests to their elitism.

Potential political implications of ethnic associations

Theoretical and empirical studies of ethnic associations in Africa have often treated them as a unique manifestation of the perennial problem of 'tribalism' on the continent.[44] Such approaches treat contemporary ethnic groups as primordial, with members who are compelled to identify tribally by the ineffable pull of ethnic belonging.[45] Others see the existence of ethnic associations, and especially their genesis in urban areas, as evidence of the constructed nature of ethnicity and ethnic belonging. Such approaches focus on the benefits that accrue to the elite actors who lead ethnic associations. For example, such associations may allow urban-based elite to maintain formal ties to a rural 'home' while networking with coethnic elites in the city. In addition, the associations are often used as a means for developing the rural homeland of a particular ethnic community, in response to both the economic and moral obligations of urban-based elites. The three

associations we analyze within Malawi are consistent with some tenets of both primoridialist and constructivist approaches. While certain groups, notably the educated elite and urban dwellers, helped to form these organizations, they principally did so by appealing to the supposedly preexisting traditions of the members of a particular ethnic group. Still, we recognize that, despite being constrained by mass understandings of ethnic and cultural differences, elite actors have significant latitude over which components of an ethnic group's culture and traditions will be emphasized. Thus, we follow Paul Brass in concluding that the study of ethnic associations, and ethnicity more broadly, is in large part the study of

> the process by which elites and counter-elites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group, to defend its interests, and to compete with other groups.[46]

How do such processes affect politics? Drawing on existing research, we theorize three potential ways in which ethnic associations in Africa could affect politics: as potential alternatives to the state, as civil society organizations that either ameliorate or inflame ethnic conflict, and as a means of electoral mobilization.

First, ethnic associations may pose an existential threat to the multi-ethnic, territorially-defined state in Africa for two reasons. The first is that the nature of ethnicity, as an identity that is built around purported primordial 'givens', mounts a more serious threat to a territorially-defined national identity than other forms of sub-national identification. Clifford Geertz argues that this is because ethnicities are perceived as 'possible self-standing, maximal social units' and are thus viable candidates for nationhood in way that class, party, occupation, and other social units are not.[47] This struggle between national and ethnic identities is expected to be especially strong when and where the state has low capacity and is, thus, deemed 'irrelevant' in citizens' daily lives.[48] The second and more prominent concern is that ethnic associations could challenge the relevance of the state by substituting for its services. A very common feature of ethnic and hometown associations across the continent is their focus on rural development and public goods provision.[49] Sam Hickey even goes so far as to call such organizations 'ethnic-development associations'.[50] While in some cases ethnic associations simply compete for resources within a state rather than challenging the state through calls for sovereignty or independence,[51] in many contexts there are tensions between associations and the state over the rights to provide services.[52] This could manifest in either state atrophy, because such associations and other non-state actors (e.g. NGOs) are 'skipping the state', or in active secessionist movements.

Second, ethnic associations could affect politics through their role in civil society, either as an avenue for increased engagement or by providing institutional capacity for conflict. Classic conceptions of civil society organizations (CSO) include trade unions, professional associations, religious organizations, special interest groups, and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs).[53] To the degree that ethnic associations involve themselves in non-state activities and operate in the space between the state and the family, however, they could also be understood as one type of CSO. Recognizing ethnic associations as CSOs is in line with Stephen Orvis's call to acknowledge the various ways in which CSOs manifest in Africa.[54] Orvis argues that many scholars have underestimated the size and influence of African CSOs mainly because they adopt a narrow vision of such

societies, often based on Western forms that exclude common forms of civil society organization in African contexts.[55] One example of this tendency is to consider organizations to be part of civil society only if they are fully democratic and representative. A more straightforward definition, which Orvis posits, is one that refers to civil society as 'a public sphere of formal or informal collective activity, autonomous from the state and family'. Such a definition allows for the inclusion of common forms of associations in Africa, including patronage networks, 'hometown' associations, self-help groups, some 'traditional' authorities, and, most relevant here, ethnic associations.[56] Such associations or societies do not necessarily need to be internally democratic to fall under the umbrella of CSOs. Instead, what is necessary is for the associations to provide an autonomous public sphere of collective activity whose very existence has the potential to limit the state's reach and create an avenue for civic participation.

Other scholars have alternatively posited that civil society organizations organized along ascriptive lines, such as ethnic or religious organizations, do not confer the same positive political effects. For example, Ashutosh Varshney argues that while non-ascriptive civil society organizations ameliorate the likelihood and severity of conflict, organizations defined along ethnic and religious lines may make such conflict, especially along ethnic lines, more likely.[57] In particular, according to Varshney, ethnically defined associations reify 'traditional' cleavages within society, and can provide the organizational apparatus required to mobilize violent group behavior. Pita Ogaba Agbese reaches a similar conclusion in his study of the Agila Development Association in Nigeria, noting the important role that it played in organizing armed conflict in Nigeria.[58]

Third, ethnic associations could be used as political tools for voter mobilization in at least three different ways. The first is that ethnic associations provide a formal means of defining and displaying cultural symbols. Such symbolism, once defined and imbued with meaning, can be employed by political elites in their efforts at connecting with members of the public. In other words, political actors can capitalize on the affective ties that have already been established by an ethnic association when making appeals to potential voters. The second is that such associations create institutions and processes – such as regular meeting times, physical spaces, and means of communication – that could be valuable for political elites to piggyback on rather than constructing such tools for themselves. Paul Brass suggests that 'when ethnic appeals are made, the pre-existing communal and educational institutions of the groups will, if made available for the purpose, provide an effective means of political mobilization'.[59] Martin Evans documents the grafting of party politics on top of the institutional structures of voluntary hometown and ethnic associations in one region of Cameroon.[60] The third way in which ethnic associations can aid in voter mobilization is by identifying and formalizing political intermediaries. Dominika Koter's research on electoral politics in Senegal points to the important role played by 'political intermediaries' who command moral authority on the ground and can therefore mobilize support on behalf of politicians, even non-coethnic politicians. The relevance of ethnic associations rests in their capacity to identify and promote such intermediaries, often the elite leaders of the groups, who have direct access to politicians as a result of their elite status. The result is a process of bargaining between leaders of ethnic associations and political actors, in which political actors provide monetary support for the group and its leaders in exchange for the electoral support of its membership.

Ethnic associations and politics in Malawi

This section draws on our empirical data, especially interviews with current and former leaders of three ethnic associations in Malawi, to assess the degree to which ethnic associations have political implications along the three dimensions discussed above.

Alternatives to the state

The three Malawian ethnic associations differ in their historic relationship to the state. MwA grew from the initiatives of politicians while in government. Established by a sitting president, many saw it as synonymous with the DPP government. For example, one respondent said 'Muhalko wa Alhomwe is political. It started at a time when the founder was the president of the country. The association was part of government'.[61] Clearly, Bingu wa Mutharika and those around him had intentions to use MwA as an avenue of both cultural unity and political mobilization. As Ngwira illustrates, it has over time facilitated the distribution of public goods among its members.[62]

In contrast, CHEFO has always been more autonomous, but has had a collaborative relationship with the state. One official said 'CHEFO works "hand in hand" with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, while another noted the close working relationship with the Ministry of Civic Education, Culture, and Community Development'.[63] But respondents also noted how in the past, the state viewed Chewa cultural events as potentially threatening. One respondent told us that due to the fear of organized opposition, the colonial state stopped the Kulamba cultural celebrations in Zambia in 1934.

> They said no! if these people are united they will overthrow us. If you allow the Chewas from Malawi [Nyasaland], Zambia [Northern Rhodesia] and Mozambique [Portuguese East Africa] to unite and they speak one language, they will overthrow us. So they stopped us.[64]

The same respondent noted that despite being a Chewa himself, the first president feared the Chewa cultural festival could pose a threat to his regime.[65]

Compared to the other two groups, MZIHA has the most antagonistic relationship to the state. This antagonism originates in colonial-era agreements that granted relative autonomy to the M'mbelwa, a historical development that did not escape the memory of our respondents. For example, one MZIHA leader told us,

> this man [Inkosi ya Makosi] was not brought under the control of the colonial government but remained a king over his people to date. He is a partner, in fact, under those [colonial] concessions, he was supposed to be working as a partner.[66]

Another noted that 'this country became the British Protectorate in 1891. But that did not include Mzimba. Yes! It was a Ngoni land. The British used to send ambassadors to the Ngoni land'.[67]

Because of that colonial era arrangement, MZIHA officials suggested that the state should respect such autonomy and that photos of the Inkosi Ya Makosi should hang alongside those of the president in government offices.[68] One respondent told us 'We are a kingdom, and we still feel we are a kingdom. We want government to recognize us. A kingdom with M'mbelwa as King'.[69] In response to the Lands Bill, a recent initiative to bring communal land under greater government control, the Secretary-General of MZIHA stated that

land in Mzimba belongs to M'mbelwa our king, not the government. These issues were already resolved in 1904. We will not accept any attempts to steal our land. We were partners with the Nyasaland government. That position has never changed. Land belongs to M'Mbelwa and his people.[70]

Another expressed a similar sentiment: 'Mzimba is under Mbelwa and land is under Mbelwa. They can do their things there, but here land is under the Inkosi Ya Makosi'.[71]

Positions such as these have led to some fears that MZIHA, and its constituent Mbelwa Administrative Council, might secede from the state. For example, there was a concern by the lawyer that drafted the MZIHA constitution that the government was not going to approve it because it looked too much of a state constitution.[72] And when the organization first announced its plans to hold a cultural celebration in 2007, some within the government felt that this was the first step towards the secession of Mzimba.[73]

However, to be a true alternative to the state, these ethnic associations need to engage in actual development and governance and a lot more than that. While leaders from all three organizations claimed to be engaged in development, this appears to be more rhetoric than reality. A Mulhako leader told us that they had several development projects planned whose implementation was awaiting funding.[74] And yet, the only 'development' projects that Mulhako leaders could name included encouraging girls to go to school and helping to connect tea estate workers who fall ill with their family at home.[75] Similarly, the only development project that MZIHA officials referenced was a cattle-rearing program which is still in the works.[76] All the association leaders emphasized that they support improved education for their constituencies, but there were no clear programs. Instead, these aims were expressed by leaders in their speeches or through the chosen themes for annual cultural festivals. Their lack of engagement in concrete development, despite registering interest in that area, thus makes contemporary ethnic associations in Malawi differ from the better-studied hometown associations elsewhere on the continent. While the associations in Malawi have elaborate plans suggesting that they could be an alternative to the state, primarily as a provider of public goods, their operations to date do not bear this out. Thus, at present, they offer little threat as viable alternatives to the state.

Civil society organizations or precursors to ethnic conflict?

The three ethnic associations under consideration have several features that qualify them as civil society organizations. For example, they have formal constitutions, which define their structural organizations and missions, and the Malawian state officially recognizes them. They also aim at promoting the socio-economic welfare of their respective peoples. The leadership of MZIHA, for instance, stated that the association seeks to promote culture, unity, and development amongst the peoples who trace their origins to Mzimba District.[77] The CHEFO leadership conveyed similar sentiments, noting that their association seeks to promote unity amongst the Chewa peoples, Chewa cultural traditions, and the socio-economic development of the Chewa peoples.[78] Finally, MwA leadership argued that theirs is an association that focuses on the goals of unifying the various Lhomwe speaking peoples; encouraging formal education amongst the Lhomwe peoples, who historically had low education attainment as laborers in the tea and coffee estates of the Shire Highlands; and assisting each other in times of need.[79]

The Malawian ethnic associations of interest here fit the criteria for ascriptive membership. They are brought together or bound by common aspects such as language, kinship, culture, or allegiance to traditional leadership. It is these highlighted cultural and historical characteristics, some of which do not constitute the 'modern society' connotation and definition of a CSO, which set them apart from 'traditional' CSOs. However, our interviews suggest that ethnic associations in Malawi are primarily sites for interethnic cooperation and mutual support, rather than competition and conflict.

For example, the current chairperson of CHEFO acknowledged the cordial relations existing between their organization and the other ethnic associations. He referenced the routine invitations CHEFO leadership receives to attend the annual ceremonies of MZIHA and MwA. CHEFO leadership also invites leaders of the two associations to its cultural festivals, notably the Kulamba ceremony at Mkayika in Zambia. Interviews with MwA leadership highlighted similar relations amongst the three associations. They all agreed that they have a positive working relationship with the other associations, pointing to the related goals and objectives they seek to achieve. Moreover, all of them operate under the same UNESCO charter, the aim of which is to promote the preservation of cultural heritage.[80] This characterization of inter-association cooperation and collaboration is consistent with the view that ethnic associations, as a particular form of civil society organization, may promote rather than inhibit positive inter-ethnic relations.

While relations appear amicable overall, one respondent from MwA questioned whether the country would sustain these cordial relations among the country's ethnic associations, at least in the long-term. He argued that a growing sense of separation along ethnic lines had developed over the years manifesting itself through political leaders' selective provision of development projects and related services.[81] While we do not foresee an immediate threat to the relative peace and co-existence that Malawians have experienced since independence, such sentiments should be a cause for concern.

In sum, associations in Malawi clearly have ascriptive membership rules. This criterion, however, does not at the moment engender more conflict between groups. The status quo appears to be mutual support and collaboration between different associations, who see their aims as tied up with those of other, similar organizations.

Tools of electoral mobilization

On the whole, our respondents denied that their ethnic associations were engaged in voter mobilization or party politics. For example, a MZIHA official told us that 'we don't influence political issues, no! Even when it comes to general elections, the people of Mzimba vote for anybody. We have nothing to do with politics'.[82] It was also common for respondents to note the political plurality of their members as evidence against their political utility. For example, one CHEFO leader stated:

> We have members of the United Democratic Front (dominant in the South). I can give an example of Right Honorable Atupele Muluzi as a member of CHEFO. We have Honourable Jean Kalilani who is a member of the DPP and minister, both of them are cabinet ministers. She is also very prominent and active contributor towards CHEFO with regard to funding. We have Honorable Uladi Mussa who is the Acting President of People's Party. But also a very prominent Chewa and supporter of CHEFO. So I can go on and on. We have Reverend Chakwera, the Right Honourable; he is the president of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP)

and also very devoted Chewa and contributor. So, CHEFO is broad. We do not embrace a political party.[83]

Another MZIHA leader noted that 'some people belong to UDF, others to Alliance for Democracy (AFORD), and so on'.[84] Such political plurality was harder for MwA leadership to claim. While one respondent emphasized that MwA was open to members of all political stripes, he admitted that 'they stay away anyway, perhaps because they wrongly believe there is a connection between the association and DPP'.[85]

Some respondents attributed misperception of political meddling to ethnic voting that was independent of the associations themselves. Historically, the region has been a very strong correlate of vote choice in Malawi, and region also corresponds to ethnic differences. One CHEFO respondent explained this well: 'there is that misunderstanding because the CHEFO members are the Chewas and the majority of the Chewas are in MCP. Because of this, people usually conclude that these are one and the same, but that's not true'.[86]

But most accusations of political meddling focused on the relative power between political actors and traditional authorities. While elite actors are central to the three ethnic associations, the active leadership of elected government officials in MwA–and the potential for ethnic favoritism it allows–was noted by many respondents. One MZIHA leader emphasized that the founder and first leader of MwA was President Mutharika, and many of his ministers were on the board of trustees.[87] A CHEFO leader said, 'MwA is not separate from the party so that's the problem. You go to MwA and people have put on DPP uniforms'.[88] MwA officials recognized the potential problem with having the president serve as the association's patron:

> It was not proper to have the president as a patron, but maybe situation forced us to bring him in because I think being a president, and the president who championed it, he was a uniting figure. So, I think it was imperative to make him patron at that time. But the aim of establishing it was not political.[89]

Another MwA respondent stated that 'because it was Bingu who formed it and also that we the Lhomwes were the ones in power, the group was like a political one'.[90]

While many politically influential people also make up the leadership of CHEFO and MZIHA, their greater political plurality makes it harder for others to a accuse them of party politics. We do not, however, rule out the fact that the intermediary roles the leadership of these associations play could work in support of certain politicians. Even with that, the political potential of ethnic associations in Malawi may also be constrained by the chieftaincy of their respective ethnic communities.

The three ethnic associations differ in the relative strengths of their respective chieftaincies. Unlike MwA, both CHEFO and MZIHA associate strong chieftainships with the capacity to contain the political excesses in the organizations. CHEFO has as its patron Kalonga Gawa Undi, the highest-ranking king or chief, who is based in Zambia; but there is also a very powerful and long-serving Paramount Chief Lundu in Malawi, who serves as the chairperson of the chief's steering committee within CHEFO.[91] Again, the dominant cultural event among the Chewas, the Kulamba ceremony held every year in Zambia, predates CHEFO's establishment. Even before its establishment, traditional leaders already commanded influence among the Chewa which CHEFO leaders acknowledge. One respondent stated:

> We have an elaborate structure for our chieftainship and an elaborate organizational structure for CHEFO. But there is a huge difference here. According to constitution, CHEFO, is below the chiefs, no matter what. So, we have no control over the chiefs. It is our job to perform the tasks of the chiefs.[92]

Thus, the chieftaincy is well-institutionalized and has clear authority in the realm of cultural preservation. It is better placed to constraint MCP or any other political party seeking to use CHEFO for political ends.

The Ngoni chieftaincy is also well-institutionalized and predates the establishment of MZIHA. The highest-ranking chief is Inkosi Ya Makosi. In 2015, MZIHA formally integrated the traditional authorities into the association's organizational structure through the re-establishment of the M'mbelwa Administrative Council.[93] MZIHA officials claimed that the Inkosi is quite powerful, saying that they seek his approval for major decisions, including MZIHA's founding.[94] Another leader noted that 'the owner is Inkosi ya Makosi and his chiefs. We as MZIHA are in advisory capacity to our chiefs'.[95]

In stark contrast, the Lhomwe chieftaincy has only recently been created. Before Bingu wa Mutharika's presidency, there were no Lhomwe senior chiefs. Mutharika appointed the first Paramount Chief of the Lhomwe in 2008, the then Chief Mkumba from Phalombe, even though Mkumba was not himself a Lhomwe.[96] Mutharika also promoted a group village headman, Ngongoliwa (now deceased), to the rank of Traditional Authority. After the death of Mkumba, the DPP-led Government promoted Ngongoliwa to a Paramount Chief for the Lhomwes, rising to the post of a patron for the MwA. The organization has tried to bring the chiefs into a more central role, rendering the association more cultural than perceived. One respondent told us, 'cultural issues are supposed to be in the custody of chiefs because chiefs are the custodians of culture. So, that's why we moved towards that direction. Our chiefs have to be recognized'.[97]

But Lhomwe chiefs are unlikely to constrain political elites within Mulhako, given that they owe their positions to those same politicians (they arose politically). One respondent admitted that Paramount Chief Mkhumba 'rose because of our political manipulations … the business of making him the Paramount Chief of the Lhomwes was indeed political'.[98] The political nature of Mkhumba's rise was not anomalous: the same respondent noted that 'there was a shortage of Lhomwe chiefs, in fact, the Lhomwe chiefs [we see today] have gotten those positions mainly because of the manipulations of people like myself and Bingu'.[99] MwA leaders now argue that chiefs have taken over Mulhako, a claim leaders from other organizations dispute.[100]

This section suggests that there is greater potential for Mulhako wa Alhomwe to be used politically than the other two associations. Two factors drive this. First, the political elites within MwA are from a single party (DPP); second, the Lhomwe chieftaincy was only recently created by the very political actors who are at the helm of MwA. In contrast, both CHEFO and MZIHA display high political plurality in their leadership and stronger and more autonomous chieftaincies. As a result, it will be much harder for individuals to use those organizations for political ends.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the rise of ethnic-based associations in Malawi since the last decade of the twentieth century. It has focused on three such associations: Mulhako wa

Alhomwe, Mzimba Heritage Association, and the Chewa Heritage Foundation. These associations are dominant in the country's southern, northern, and central regions. Based on in-depth interviews with both past and current leaders of these associations, we have advanced three arguments. First, these three associations lack a robust program for development and governance, and thus do not pose viable threats to state authority. Second, we should consider these associations as formal civil society organizations, even though some of their activities are of a non-formal character. As civil society organizations, the associations foster inter-ethnic cooperation and do not seem poised to promote ethnic-based violence. Third, there are divergences in how the three associations relate to electoral politics. While MZIHA and CHEFO appear mostly apolitical, at least for the time being, MwA has had more political influence, especially in its early years of existence when its first patron and founder was a sitting state president. In part, we have attributed these differences to the nature of their chieftaincies which are an outcome of unique historical trajectories. In contrast to MwA, whose chieftaincy is of a more recent creation, both MZIHA and CHEFO interface with long-standing chieftaincies that predate contemporary electoral politics.

These findings make an important contribution to the study of ethnic associations in Africa. They do so by providing an in-depth look at the origins and organizational structure of ethnic associations in Malawi, a case which had not yet received sufficient attention in the study of cultural and hometown associations. In elucidating the Malawian case, however, we also advance a more general understanding of how such associations may be utilized for political ends. As a result, our research also advances the study of non-electoral forms of ethnic political engagement, focusing attention on the potential political implications of associations that are designed to celebrate and preserve the culture of distinct ethnic communities. This is important because we may see that such associations become stronger and more relevant in response to increased democratization and decentralization, as has been documented with respect to chiefs and other traditional authority structures.[101]

This research also raises a number of questions and suggests avenues for future research. First, this article relies on elite interviews to uncover the political implications of ethnic associations, but our evidence does not allow us to explicate the precise mechanisms through which political parties and politicians leverage ethnic associations for political ends. Possibilities include both the gathering and the dissemination of information, the distribution of material resources, and the bolstering of a political actors' claims to cultural authenticity and legitimacy, among others. Relatedly, what do ethnic associations gain, materially or socially, in exchange for their support for particular political actors? Second, we attribute differences in the relative politicization of different ethnic associations in Malawi to disparities in the strength and autonomy of their related chieftaincies. Does such a pattern help account for variation in the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic associations across time and in other contexts? Future research should address these questions and others related to the intersection of ethnicized forms of social organization and formal political competition.

Notes

1. Attafuah, "Ethnic Diversity"; Miquel, "The Control of Politicians"; Ajulu, "Politicised Ethnicity". Attafuah's is a representative of works that depict ethnic diversity in positive terms. The other two present an opposite view.

2. See Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics;* Kaspin, "The politics of Ethnicity"; and Ferree, "The Micro-foundations of Ethnic Voting".

3. Government of Malawi, *Malawi Population and Housing Census Main Report*, 20.

4. Eggen, "Chiefs and Everyday Governance."

5. Robinson, "Ethnic Diversity, Segregation."

6. McCracken, "Democracy and Nationalism," 387; Muluzi et al., *Democracy with a Price,* 38–51; 68–78.

7. Patel and Wahman, "Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Elections;" Rakner, Svåsand, and Khembo, "Fission and Fusions"; Svåsand, "Regulation of Political Parties"; and Young, "An Initial Look."

8. Dulani and Dionne, "Presidential, Parliamentary, and Local"; Ferree and Horowitz, "Ties that Bind?"; Kaspin, "The Politics of Ethnicity."

9. Phiri, *From Nguni to Ngoni*; Lisa. "The Politics of Cultural Promotion".

10. Phiri, *From Nguni to Ngoni*.

11. Ibid.

12. Interview with MZIHA4, 16 July 2016. The creation of an ethnic association for the Ngoni was spearheaded by Aupson Thole and Boston Soko in consultation with Tito Banda and D.D. Phiri. The individuals attending the first organizing meeting for MZIHA, held 18 February 1998, included Robson Chirwa, Aupson Thole, Victoria Mazunda, and around 20 important people within Mzimba. The first executive committee included Robson Chirwa (Chairperson), Victoria Mazunda (Vice Chairperson), Aupson Thole (General Secretary), Badokota Jere (Vice General Secretary), Chris Mzumala (Treasurer), and E. Munthali (Vice Treasurer).

13. Interview with MZIHA4, 16 July 2016.

14. Lisa, "The Politics of Cultural Promotion".

15. Ibid.

16. Interview with CHEFO2, 18 July 2016.

17. Ibid.

18. See Boeder, *Silent Majority*.

19. See Ibid.; Kayira and Banda, "Materialism and Ethnicity".

20. Interview with MWA2, 18 July 2016. In addition to the president, the main actors also included Ken Lipenga, then Minister of Information, and businessmen Mike Chilewe, Leston Mulli, and Joseph Mwanamvekha.

21. Zeze, "Democratic Constitution and Ethnic Organizations".

22. Gilman, "Demonic or Cultural Treasure?"

23. Among the early issues the Native Associations raised were local development, the use of forced labor, racial discrimination, and education equality.

24. Phiri, *History of Malawi,* 45–6.

25. McCracken, *A history of Malawi,* 235–6.

26. Pachai, *Memoires of a Malawian*.

27. Kayira and Banda, "Materialism and Ethnicity," 45.

28. McCracken, *A History of Malawi*, 233–4. The term 'Anguru' represented the inferiority complex of the Lhomwe peoples, as among other things, it undermined them for failing to speak the traditional local languages of Nyasaland. It also confirmed their 'foreigner' identity, as the Lhomwes were considered 'late-comers' to Malawi. The word Anguru is a local term that derived from a hill in Mozambique from which some of them migrated to Malawi.

29. McCracken, *A History of Malawi,* 313–8.

30. Mkandawire, "Ethnicity, Language, and Cultural Violence"; See also Phiri, "Dr. Banda's Cultural Legacy," 158–64.

31. Mkandawire, "Ethnicity, Language, and Cultural Violence".

32. Ibid., 3.

33. See Kaspin, "The Politics of Ethnicity". Kaspin argues that among the four major rural development projects the state implemented in the 1960s and 1970s, it was the Lilongwe Land Development program at the center that had the highest level of funding.

34. Posner, "Malawi's New Dawn".
35. Chirwa, "Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism," 63.
36. Kayira and Banda, "Materialism and Ethnicity".
37. Interview with CHEFO1, 17 July 2016.
38. Letter of Banda to Kaunda, 28 November 1967, Dr. H. K. Banda Archive, Indiana University Library.
39. Interview with CHEFO1, 17 July 2016.
40. Ibid.
41. Muheya. "Mulli Pumps K3mil as Mutharika denies nepotism through Muhalko wa Alhomwe."
42. Chimala, "VP donates K0.5mil to Chewa Heritage for Kulamba Ceremony."
43. Chunga, "Minister salutes Cultural Organizations." *The Nation Online*.
44. See, for example, Agbese, "Ethnic Conflicts and Hometown Associations"; Barkan, McNulty, Ayeni, "'Hometown' Voluntary Associations"; Woods, "Elites, Ethnicity, and 'Home Town' Associations"; and Page, "Slow Going".
45. Ake, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa,* 93–4. Ake presents a good review of the primordialist and constructivist debate.
46. Brass, "Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation," 40.
47. Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution," 108–13.
48. Ihonvbere, "The 'Irrelevant' State," 42–60.
49. See Evans, "Primary Patriotism, Shifting Identity"; Hickey, "Toward a Progressive Politics"; Kerlin, "New Agents of Socio-economic Development"; and Nkwi, "Rethinking the Role". These works present a good discussion of the role of ethnic associations in promoting economic development.
50. Hickey, "Toward a Progressive Politics".
51. Woods, "Elites, Ethnicity, and 'Home Town' Associations".
52. Page, "Slow Going".
53. Makumbe, "Is there a Civil Society in Africa?" 305.
54. Orvis. "Civil Society in Africa". See also Kasfir, "Civil Society, the state".
55. Kasfir, "Civil Society, the State".
56. Ibid.
57. Varsheny, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society".
58. Agbese, "Ethnic Conflicts and Hometown Associations".
59. Brass, "Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation," 40.
60. Evans, "Primary Patriotism, Shifting Identity".
61. Interview with MZIHA4, 16 July 2016.
62. Robert Ngwira, "Proof that president Mutharika is surrounded by people from one region." *Malawi Voice*, 31 May 2017.
63. Interviews with CHEFO1, 18 July 2016 and CHEF2, 18 July 2016.
64. Interview with CHEFO2, 18 July 2016.
65. Ibid.
66. Interview with MZIHA1, 14 July 2016.
67. Interview with MZIHA2, 16 June 2016.
68. Interview with MZIHA1, 14 July 2016.
69. Interview with MZIHA4, 16 July 2016.
70. Ibid.
71. Interview with MZIHA1, 14 July 2016.
72. Interview with MZIHA4, 16 July 2016.
73. Ibid.
74. Interview with MWA4, 15 August 2016.
75. Interviews with MWA1, 18 July 2016 and MWA4, 15 August 2016.
76. Interview with MZIHA4, 16 July 2016.
77. Ibid.
78. Interview with CHEFO1, 17 July 2016.

79. Interview with MWA1, 18 July 2016.
80. Interview with MWA1, 18 July 2016. We heard similar sentiments from our interview with MWA4 on 15 August 2016.
81. Interview with WMA3, 6 July 2016.
82. Interview with MZIHA3, 15 July 2016.
83. Interview with CHEFO1, 17 July 2016.
84. Interview with MZIHA2, 16 June 2016.
85. Interview with MWA4, 15 August 2016.
86. Interview with CHEFO1, 17 July 2016.
87. Interview with MZIHA4, 16 July 2016.
88. Interview with CHEFO2, 18 July 2016.
89. Interview with MWA1, 18 July 2016.
90. Interview with MWA3, 6 July 2016.
91. Interview with CHEFO1, 17 July 2016.
92. Ibid.
93. Interview with MZIHA1, 14 July 2016.
94. Interview with MZIHA4, 16 July 2016.
95. Interview with MZIHA3, 15 July 2016.
96. Interviews with MWA1, 18 July 2016; MWA2, 29 October 2016; and MWA4, 15 August 2016.
97. Interview with MWA1, 18 July 2016.
98. Interview with MWA2, 29 October 2016.
99. Ibid.
100. Interview with MZIHA4, 15 and 16 July 2016.
101. Chiweza, "The Ambivalent Role of Chiefs"; Englebert, "Patterns and Theories of Traditional Resurgence;" Logan, "The Roots of Resilience"; and Muriaas, "Local Perspectives."

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Disclosure statement

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Appendix

Table A1. Interview respondents, their organization, their role, and the date of interview.

Respondent ID	Organization	Role	Date of Interview
MZIHA1	Mzimba Heritage Association	Mbelwa Administrative Council Member	7/14/2016
MZIHA2	Mzimba Heritage Association	Member and one of the founders	6/16/2016
MWA1	Mulhako wa Alhomwe	Regional Secretary General	7/18/2016
CHEFO1	Chewa Heritage Foundation	Chairperson	7/17/2016
MWA2	Mulhako wa Alhomwe	One of the founders	10/29/2016
MWA3	Mulhako wa Alhomwe	Member	7/6/2016
CHEFO2	Chewa Heritage Foundation	Secretary General	7/18/2016
MZIHA3	Mzimba Heritage Association	Former Chairperson	7/15/2016
MWA4	Mulhako wa Alhomwe	Member of the secretariat	8/15/2016
MZIHA4	Mzimba Heritage Association	Secretary General	7/16/2016