

**TANGAZA COLLEGE**  
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**MASS MEDIA COVERAGE OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS AND ITS  
INFLUENCE ON THE VOTER**  
**STUDY OF THE 2004 MALAWI GENERAL ELECTIONS**

Moderator  
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A long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Communication

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## DEDICATION

To the memory of George S. Chiwanda, I was very blessed and fortunate to have you as my father. You were the perfect gentleman and I loved and admired you.

Ruth, my beloved sister, you were a fearless young woman, you brought joy into my life, rest in peace until we meet again, thanks for the support and deep affection you showed me.

# DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Communication. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed:.....

Name of Student:.....

Date:.....

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college Supervisor.

Signed:.....

Name of Supervisor:.....

Date:.....

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

This work investigates mass media coverage of election campaigns and the influence it has on the voter. The research was carried out in Chikwawa district, located in the southern region of Malawi. It focused on the country's 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections.

Malawi, formerly known as 'Nyasaland' in the colonial era, is a small landlocked country located in South Eastern Africa. It has a surface area of about one hundred and eighteen thousand square kilometers and a population of about ten million people.<sup>1</sup>

Malawi achieved independence from the British colonial rule on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1964. The Nyasaland African Congress, a nationalist movement that was led by Orton Chirwa and other young politicians, championed the fight for freedom.

In 1953 Britain federated Nyasaland with Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe). The federation was vigorously opposed and, in 1958, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda returned to Nyasaland from Ghana, at the invitation of the Nyasaland African Congress, to lead the fight against it.

The Nyasaland African Congress invited Banda because the movement discerned the need to have an elderly and more experienced nationalist to lead it in the fight for freedom. The key leaders of the movement (Henry Masauko Chipembere and Orton Chirwa) were in their twenties, and inexperienced.

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<sup>1</sup> Malawi's population and housing census of 1996, 12.

Banda, in his late sixties had much experience in nationalist politics through his encounters with other African freedom fighters such as, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya during his stay in the United Kingdom.

From independence in 1964 to 1992, Malawi remained a one-party state under the rule of the Malawi Congress Party government led by Banda. During this period there was no serious challenge from within Malawi to Banda's rule. He had total control of the country. Freedom of the press was heavily curtailed. 'Kamuzu knows best!' used to be the slogan. The following were some of the institutions that served to enforce the suppression of freedom of expression: networks of state informers planted everywhere throughout the country, the censorship board, concentration camps, and detention without trial laws. There was only one state controlled radio station, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, and two national newspapers, the 'Daily Times' and 'Malawi News'. These newspapers only gave news from the angle of the Malawi Congress Party as the ruling party. This was the case with many newly independent African countries. People suffered under cruel dictatorships of their own African leaders.

However, things changed dramatically in the 1990s when Africa in general experienced in some parts more than others, the wind of change whose eye was in Eastern Europe and which affected the world, perestroika.

#### a) The Role of the Church

The Catholic Church Bishops speaking on behalf of the voiceless issued a Lenten Pastoral letter titled '*Living our Faith*', on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1992. The letter was critical to the Malawi Congress Party government's bad governance and suppression of human rights.

“The letter called for dialogue on the issues of equality in wages and opportunity; participation in development, health care and education”.<sup>2</sup> The letter ushered in the new democratic dispensation. Repressive laws were repealed and new political parties were formed in order to participate in the democratization process.

#### b) The Dawn of an Era

This was the beginning of a new era in the political history of Malawi. The democratization process was climaxed by the multi-party general elections on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1994. About ten political parties contested for seats in the national assembly, the major ones being the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), the United Democratic Front (UDF), and the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD). The United Democratic Front won the general elections. The Presidential candidate for the Party, Mr. Bakili Muluzi, became the first Head of State and government in the new democratic dispensation.

#### c) Expansion of Various Freedoms

The freedom of press, freedom of expression and association, and the observance of the rule of law characterized the new political dispensation. These things were heavily curtailed by the one-party system of government. With free press, there was a boom in privately owned newspapers, magazines, and radio stations.

Since the general elections of 1994, Malawi has been on the path of consolidating democratic institutions, for instance the Anti-corruption Bureau, the Human Rights Commission and many other institutions, which promote the rule of law. Currently, there are about thirty registered political parties. The new political system has created more democratic space for the citizens to take charge of their own destiny through active participation in political life and development.

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<sup>2</sup> S.M. NZUNDA, - K.R. ROSS (Eds) *Church, Law and Political Transition in Malawi 1992-94*, 71

So far the country has gone to the polls in general elections in the new political dispensation three times, in 1994, 1999, and 2004. The 2004 election campaigns were different from the previous two general elections because in 2004 Malawi had the highest number of private radio stations and newspapers, which covered the election campaigns.

During the 1994 elections there were only the state controlled radio station and newspapers, which did not give fair coverage for the opposition parties. In 1999, apart from the state controlled media houses, there were only two privately owned radio stations that covered the election campaigns. In 2004, there were about six private radio stations, two dailies and three weeklies that covered the election campaigns. The bigger number of private radio stations gave wider space for debate and diverse opinions from different players could be heard. This study assumes that the scenario-helped people make informed choices. This is the reason why this study has focused on the 2004 general elections.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The central contention of this paper is that in election campaigns, effective communication is achieved through oral speech. The language used in election campaigns aims at persuading, and wooing people to vote for particular candidates over others. The politician's use of language is meant to achieve the desired goal and that is to be voted into office, as Member of Parliament (MP) or as President. The problem the essay seeks to pay attention to is the coverage of election campaigns and its influence on the voter. The essay will do this by looking at the 2004 presidential and parliamentary election campaigns in Malawi. Particular attention will be paid to the way they were covered by the media and the influence the coverage had on the voter.

This investigation assumes that what is reported and how it is reported has effects on the people. The coverage of political rallies by the media is subject to influence by the media house policy, the owner, and the media practitioners.

Some assumed effects of the election campaigns coverage that will be investigated are: perceptions on political leaders and how choices are made for a particular candidate. Knowledge gained of contesting candidates through the media and choices made in the elections.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This essay investigates the impact of media coverage of election campaigns with the aim of pointing out its influence on the voter. Ideologies that are passed on to people in form of speech from politicians are assumed to have an impact on the way people vote and relate socially, and politically. The following are the general objectives of the investigation:

- a) To understand the role of the media during the 2004 election campaigns in Malawi.
- b) To investigate the extent to which the media was used to shape opinions, perceptions, and attitudes in the voter during the 2004 elections in Malawi.
- c) To study the extent of influence of media coverage on the voter's choice in the 2004 general elections.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In this study, the use of the media during the election campaign in Malawi's third multiparty general elections is investigated and discussed. These elections were conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

The election campaigns for 2004 were the most controversial in terms of media coverage in the history of multiparty general elections in Malawi. There were several turns and twists made by politicians and their faithful supporters. However, there will also be occasional reference to the two previous general elections, in 1994 and 1999. This will help us understand better the context of study. The study concludes by presenting and analyzing the findings of the research and links them with media theories in order to gain some lessons from the electoral experiences.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

“In a democracy media independence and professionalism are very important. The media play a complementary role in civic and political education and critical information delivery. Through the media the public is able to have a public sphere...”<sup>3</sup> What goes into the media helps shape perception, and value systems help shape an individual’s perception.

Human beings are complex and relate in a very dynamic way. How these relationships are created and consolidated is worth investigating. Values and belief systems are carried from generation to generation through communication.

It is important to understand how the modern means of communication help shape perceptions and in which way. The media organizations are linked to political activities through coverage. It is also of great value to understand how media organizations cover political debates.

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<sup>3</sup> C. BERRIE-PETERS, B. MHANGO, B. IMMINK, - M. OTT, (Eds) *The Power of the Vote: Malawi's 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential elections*, 164

Language use is an intriguing reality. “Words and phrases convey many meanings besides their dictionary meanings because they evoke associations that may have no relevance to dictionary meanings”.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is important to go beneath the words we see and hear in order to understand political debate for the purpose of shaping helpful perceptions and beliefs. For instance, aspiring Politicians go on the political platform and promise change for the better. But what do they mean? The word ‘change’ is ambiguous. It can mean anything. The politicians who win elections in Malawi go ahead to alter some policies and carryout some superficial alterations to institutions and make people believe that there has been ‘change’, when in fact what has happened is the maintenance of the ‘status quo’. It is therefore worth the trouble to investigate media use and its effects on society.

## HYPOTHESES

The research aims to verify the following hypotheses:

- d) Voters use the media to help them choose candidates in elections.
- e) The media help to give information to people on issues, contesting candidates and political parties during election campaigns.
- f) The selectivity in media coverage influences the outcome of an election.
- g) Winning an election race is partly a consequence of using most powerful media to entice voters.

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<sup>4</sup>E. MURRAY, *Politics of Misinformation*, 79-81.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The first chapter of the essay discusses in detail the political situation in Malawi, as regards the Political Parties and the involvement of the civil society in the electoral processes with specific focus on the 2004 elections. This chapter also presents the definitions of the major terms used in the essay and literature review.

The second chapter presents the location where the study was carried out, the research design, methodology, sampling criteria, and a detailed data analysis of the research findings.

The third chapter presents the interpretations of the findings, linked to relevant communication theories that help explain specific trends discovered in the research. It also includes a summary of the findings.

The general conclusion summarizes the findings of the research and makes recommendations for further study and research.

## Chapter I

### Politics in Malawi

#### 1.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the social and political situation during Malawi's third multiparty general elections in May 2004 is discussed. This will include definitions of key terms used in the essay and review of selected literature that will further deepen the understanding of the social and political situation in Malawi during the 2004 elections and beyond.

#### *1.1 Electoral Politics in Malawi*

To understand the current electoral political situation in Malawi, we need to look at a brief overview of the political history and elections in Malawi. Malawi had national elections for the first time on 15 August 1961. Before this time the colonial legislative elections were on a small scale and based on race and class of people.<sup>5</sup> However, the elections of 1961 were about change. The citizens had to decide on whether they wanted to continue with colonial rule or start self-rule. There were at that time four political parties to choose from: Malawi Congress Party (MCP), which was the biggest, Christian Democratic Party (CDP), which was viewed by the leaders of Malawi Congress Party as a stooge party for the Colonialists, the United Federal Party (UFP), whose followers were to be found among the colonialists, and the Congress Liberation Party (CLP) of T.D.T Banda (no relation to Kamuzu Banda).

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<sup>5</sup> J. LWANDA, *Changes in Malawi's Political landscape between 1999 and 2004: Nkhope ya Agalatia*, In C. BERRIE-PETERS, B. MHANGO, B. IMMINK, - M. OTT, (Eds) *The Power of the Vote: Malawi's 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential elections*, 50

The Malawi Congress Party had overwhelming support and, given its political strength, it was possible for it to intimidate the smaller parties, which eventually melted into political oblivion. It had completely dominated the political scene as early as 1961. This marked the beginning of the one-party era led by Kamuzu Banda, which lasted for about three decades. During this period, “a number of elections were held. The 1971 and 1979 ‘elections’ saw all Banda appointed candidates returned unopposed”.<sup>6</sup> Other elections were held in 1978, 1987 and 1992. These elections simply served the purpose of legitimizing the authority of Banda’s government. So at that particular time there was no campaigning for election.

In 1993 Dr. Banda was forced by domestic and foreign factors into calling for a referendum in which Malawians were asked to decide on whether to continue with one-party system of government or adopt a multi-party political dispensation. The 1993 referendum campaigns and the 1994 multi-party general elections were for the first time freely conducted, giving people choices since independence. This marked the beginning of a new era.

For the first time, different political parties were free to campaign for seats in the national assembly. The media started to play a significant role in the electoral processes. It helped people to know the different parties and candidates contesting in the elections better.

The 2004 general elections went down in history as the most fiercely contested elections. For the first time there were many independent candidates contesting for seats in the National Assembly. The mass media were crucial in the whole process.

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<sup>6</sup> See *Ibid.*, 50.

Private radio stations and newspapers had come on the scene. The coverage of the election campaigns became more creative and exciting due to the different scenarios painted by the media. With this came some complexity.

The number of electoral constituencies had been rising since 1964. At the time of independence, there were only 53 constituencies. But by 1998 there were 193 constituencies.<sup>7</sup> This number of constituencies was contested for at the 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections.

### ***1.2 Malawi's 2004 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections***

On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004 Malawians went to the polls to elect their President and their Members of Parliament. These were the third general elections after the end of the Banda era in May 1994. The political environment had somewhat improved since the 1994 elections. Evidence for this includes: the increased number of political parties that took part in the elections, for the first time there were three hundred and seventy-two candidates countrywide who contested as independents and thirty-nine made it to parliament.

The 2004 general election was different for many reasons. A total of nine political parties and five presidential candidates contested in the parliamentary and presidential elections. The following were the parties: Alliance For Democracy (AFORD), Congress for National Unity (CONU), Malawi Congress Party (MCP), MGOODE, National Democratic Alliance (NDA), PETRA, People's Progressive Movement (PPM), Republican Party (RP), and United Democratic Front (UDF), the ruling party.

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<sup>7</sup> Reports of the Malawi Electoral Commission, 1972, 1987, 1994, 1998.

Along side these parties were also independent candidates. Another interesting development was the formation of the Mgwirizano coalition by seven political parties to form a credible alternative to the ruling party UDF.

The 2004 general elections saw a record number of 1267 candidates contesting for parliamentary seats. There was also an increase in the number of women who vied for elections and were elected to parliament. Another important development was the increased involvement of civil society groups in civic education and election observation.<sup>8</sup>

The 2004 elections were also characterized by numerous administrative challenges arising out of insufficient planning and organization by the various stakeholders. There was lack of co-ordination among the civil society groups and the electoral commission on voter education. Due to these problems the elections were characterized by considerable voter apathy. The Voter turnout dropped from 4.6 million in 1999 to about 3.3 million in 2004.<sup>9</sup> The reasons for this low turnout are not very clear up to this day. Some have suggested inadequate civic education and others have suggested that this was a ‘silent protest’ on the part of the people.

### 1.2.1 *Election Campaigns and the Mass Media*

“The official campaign period according to the electoral law in Malawi is two months prior to the holding of general elections”.<sup>10</sup> For 2004 this was the period between mid March and April 2004.

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<sup>8</sup> Final report of the ‘European Union Election Observation Mission for 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections’, 25

<sup>9</sup> C. BERRIE-PETERS, B. MHANGO, B. IMMINK, - M. OTT, (Eds) Foreword, *The Power of the Vote: Malawi’s 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential elections*, v

<sup>10</sup> See *Ibid.*, v

The campaigns ended 48 hours before the polling day. However, unofficially the campaign for 2004 elections commenced long before the official campaign period.

### *1.2.2 The Electronic Media*

In 1994 there was only one radio station, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation with only one channel. Following political changes of 1994, a communication law was passed in 1998 and this led to the establishment of Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA). This body was mandated to manage and regulate the frequency spectrum, giving license to broadcasters and Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Today MBC has two channels (radios 1 and 2), there is one national television station (TVM), and one satellite relay-Television operated by Multi-Choice, a South African company.

During the 2004 elections there were three private commercial radios, Capital Radio, Power 101 and Joy Radio. And there were about seven 'community' radios: 'MJ FM (Malawi Institute of Journalism) meant to give Journalism students broadcasting experience, Radio Maria operated by the Catholic church, Radio Alinafe, a diocesan radio for the Diocese of Lilongwe in central Malawi, Radio Islam, operated by Muslims, Nkhota-Kota Community Radio, Dzimwe Radio, and African Bible College Radio'.<sup>11</sup>

The public broadcaster, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation's two radio channels (radios 1 and 2) have a nationwide outreach.

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<sup>11</sup> L.Z. MANDA, *Covering the Elections: The Role of the Media*, In C. BERRIE-PETERS, B. MHANGO, B. IMMINK, - M. OTT, (Eds) *The Power of the Vote: Malawi's 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections*, 165

Both the ruling party and the opposition were supposed to have balanced coverage by the public media according to campaign regulations. In reality, however, this was not the case. There was bias towards the ruling party.

It was accorded up to 93% of all positive campaign coverage whereas the opposition was accorded the remaining 7% of airtime, which was largely negative coverage.<sup>12</sup> Radio is the most powerful medium because it reaches out to the most rural areas and can be used by both literate and illiterate. It is against this background that the radio was very crucial in the election campaigns.

Unfortunately for the opposition parties, they were left to rely on direct appeal to voters through rallies and also on the small and struggling private media, and somehow the 'community' radios whose outreach is largely limited to the urban areas. The private media was largely sympathetic towards the opposition in their coverage of the elections. The 'community' radios did not cover election campaign stories comprehensively but instead focused on voter education and other community development issues.

### *1.2.3 Mobile Telephones and the Internet*

When we talk of the electronic media in election campaigns, the mobile telephones and Internet are rarely considered. However, these two new mass media are very important in the communications sector. They have made communication easy for the people who can afford them. There are two mobile telephone service providers in Malawi, Telekom Networks Malawi (TNM) and Celtel. They provide Short Message Service (SMS), which became a popular campaign medium.

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<sup>12</sup> B. DULANI, "The Elections Under Scrutiny: Process – Results – Lessons", In C. BERRIE-PETERS, B. MHANGO, B. IMMINK, - M. OTT, (Eds) *The Power of the Vote: Malawi's 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections*, 12

#### 1.2.4 The Print Media

In 1994 there were three major daily papers, the *Monitor*, *The Nation* and *The Daily Times*. There were also weekly papers in circulation and the most notable were *Malawi News*, the *Inquirer*, the *UDF News*, the *Democrat*, the *Herald*, the *Mirror*, the *Independent*, the *Michiru Sun*, and the *New Express*. Most of these papers folded by 2004 when Malawians were going to the polls in the third democratic elections. Some failed due to unfavorable economic and political conditions.<sup>13</sup> At the time of the general elections in 2004 there were only two daily papers: *The Daily Times* and *The Nation*. There were also five regular and registered weekly papers: *The Chronicle*, the *Inquirer*, the *UDF News*, the *Dispatch*, and *The Malawi Standard*.<sup>14</sup>

The print media was so much restricted to the urban areas due to two major reasons: the circulation of the papers is largely better in urban areas than the rural areas. The reading culture is not as strong in the rural areas as it is the urban areas. Literacy mattered. Few people living in rural areas can read and write. With such a situation the newspapers were not as powerful as the radio was in terms of outreach. Most of the weekly papers were pro-opposition during the campaign except for the *UDF News*, which was the mouthpiece of the ruling party.

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<sup>13</sup>L. Z. MANDA, *Covering the elections: The role of the Media*, In C. BERRIE-PETERS, B. MHANGO, B. IMMINK, - M. OTT, (Eds) *The power of the vote: Malawi's 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections*, 164.

<sup>14</sup>L. Z. MANDA, *Covering the elections: The role of the Media*, In C. BERRIE-PETERS, B. MHANGO, B. IMMINK, - M. OTT, (Eds) *The power of the vote: Malawi's 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections*, 164.

### *1.2.5 The Campaign*

Successful elections are affected by, among other things, the voters' access to reliable and balanced information and the range of choices they are offered and also the circumstance under which campaigning is carried out.<sup>15</sup> The 2004 election campaign was greatly distorted in favor of the UDF. This state of affairs had great impact on the results of the elections since the media are assumed to have influence on the voter's choices. It was against this background that some observers, both local and international, described the 2004 elections as unfair.

The Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) released the presidential and parliamentary results on 23 May, three days after voting. The presidential poll result put Bingu Wa Mutharika, the UDF candidate, ahead with 36% of the valid votes. Tembo, the Malawi Congress Party candidate and Chakuamba, the Mgwirizano coalition candidate came second and third respectively, with 27% and 24% of the valid votes.<sup>16</sup> The result of the presidential election showed that Mutharika's declaration as winner was based on the support of the minority of the electorate. The two opposition candidates combined had more votes than the winner.

## *1.3 Definitions*

### *1.3.1 Mass Media:*

This term is used to refer to communication channels, which enable the sender of the message to reach many people at the same time, such as through radio broadcasting, television, newspapers or magazine. (Denis M'Passou, 1985).

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<sup>15</sup> See *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Malawi Government Gazette, *2004 Presidential and Parliamentary General Elections Results 2,758*: Vol. XLI No. 34, July 16 2004.

The term can also be used as a collective noun for press or reporting agencies. (Traditional media in Africa: class notes, 2005). Most media theorists view mass media as neutral carriers of messages that are meant to inform, educate, and entertain large numbers of people. And therefore the term mass media in this research refers to, the main ways or means that large numbers of people receive information at the same time.

### *1.3.2 Coverage:*

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, this refers to 'the reporting of news and sport in newspapers and on the radio and television'. Coverage in this investigation means the basic reporting of election campaign news on the radio and in the newspapers.

### *1.3.3 Influence:*

'The effect that somebody or something has on the way a person thinks or behaves or on the way that something works or develops', (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Influence in this research refers to a form of power based on the ability to persuade others to share in a desired objective.

### *1.3.4 Election:*

'An election is a process in which a vote is held to choose amongst candidates to fill an office, or amongst political parties offering a slate of potential office holders for a house of representatives.

It is the most used mechanism by which a democracy fills offices in the legislature, and sometimes in the executive, judiciary, regional or local government. Elections are held in many other settings from clubs and societies to businesses'.<sup>17</sup>

It is also a process in which people vote to choose a leader or decide on an issue. In this investigation election refers to the process of choosing leaders from different political parties to fill offices in the legislature, local government and executive. This is part of a requirement for a democratic dispensation.

### *1.3.5 Campaign:*

“A campaign is a series of organized activities over a period of time to reach a political or social goal or to elect a candidate”.<sup>18</sup> This definition brings out what the investigation refers to as campaign: the organized activities of politicians over a period of time in order to be elected into office. With the word ‘campaign’ what comes to mind here are two words ‘politics and elections’.

### *1.3.6 Voter:*

‘A Voter is citizen, who has a legal right to vote’. Voting is a method of decision-making wherein a group such as a meeting or an electorate attempts to gauge its opinion—usually as a final step following discussions or debates. ‘Alternatives to voting include consensus decision- making (which works to avoid polarization and the marginalization of dissent) and betting’ (as in an anticipatory democracy).

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<sup>17</sup> ACE PROJECTS ELECTORAL SYSTEM “World Encyclopedia of Parliaments and Legislatures”, *Election guide* <<http://www.aceproject.org/main/English/es/default.htm>>, 16/01/2006, 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> ACE PROJECTS ELECTORAL SYSTEM “World Encyclopedia of Parliaments and Legislatures”, *Election guide* <<http://www.aceproject.org/main/English/es/default.htm>>, 16/01/2006, 1-2.

(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voter, January, 2006) Any citizen who has a legal right to vote and takes part in the decision-making (voting) is referred to here as a voter.

#### *1.4 Literature Review*

Much has been written about the influence that the mass media have upon the presentation, the voter's choice, and the outcome, of election campaigns. Frequently, critics charge that news reporting focuses on the superficial, personal characteristics of candidates and ignores the issues underlying elections.

Observers of the process also target advertising, which they say distorts positions and trivializes important issues. At the same time, it is suggested that the predominance of polling by news outlets turns elections into popularity contests and causes candidates to follow rather than lead voter opinion on contemporary issues. This literature review looks at these and related questions about the relationship between the political process and the media.

Macnamara, J. R. (2003). Observes, "the alleged power or influence of mass media has led to extensive studies of media effects in areas ranging from political campaigns to portrayals of violence, pornography, racism and women". He further points out, "Governments and political parties have focused on the mass media as sources of powerful influence. Editorial in leading mass media has been shown to affect stock prices, lead to corporate collapses, cause falls in sales, result in the resignation of senior officeholders and even bring down Presidents". However, Macnamara says that effects of mass media are often not understood well and have been assumed most of the time. They have not been objectively researched.

A leading media scholar James Curran (2002, 158) says, "The conviction...that the media are important agencies of influence is broadly correct. However, the ways in which the media exert influence are complex and contingent". This assertion by Curran recognizes the complexity of the media and the relationships between media and reality. It is not easy to measure media influence because the users of the media; human beings and are a complex reality.

Macnamara therefore, argues that before drawing any conclusions concerning the possible implications of mass media content, it is of great importance to understand the role and effects of the mass media, and how and when these occur.

Blood, R. Warwick (1991), reported on a research carried out on Australian elections, which suggested that the candidates' use of the media had a strong impact upon those who made up their minds about candidates during the campaign. He argued that such voters were more likely to be swayed by political appeals than were people who had already decided whom to choose before a campaign started. While partisan voters used the media because they were interested in politics, undecided voters referred to media sources for information about parties, candidates, and issues. In his analysis, Blood recognized two types of voters, the partisan voters, those who had already aligned themselves to a particular political party and those who were still looking for parties and candidates to lend support. The influence of the media on these two types of voters was different.

Rosenberg, William L. and W.R. Elliott (1989), are critical about the effects of media coverage of elections.

According to their findings of a study conducted in Philadelphia, in the United States of America in 1989, suggest that media reliance during election campaigns is unrelated to campaign knowledge and activity. They suggest that it has more to do with already existing party affiliation than what the media carries about contesting parties and candidates.

Engstrom, Erika, et al. (1989) asserted that men and women react differently to the media analysis that generally follows political debates. Referring to a study conducted at the University of Florida during the 1988 vice-presidential debates, he said that females took less extreme views of candidates after viewing post-debate analysis. However, he said that by contrast, such analysis had little effect on the extremity of views expressed by politically involved males.

Walker, James R. (1990) observed that whatever its positive or negative effects, exposure to the news media influences public awareness of elections. In a study of the 1988 Southern "Super Tuesday" regional primary elections in the United States of America, researchers found exposure to all media to be positively and significantly related to voter awareness of the campaign.

### ***1.5 Conclusion***

Politics is about influencing people to support a particular ideology, or a particular, political party. For this reason, politicians use every means available to sell their political ideologies or parties. It is against this background that the politicians use the media to persuade voters to support them.

Extensive study and research has been carried out in Europe and United States of America on media influence during election campaigns. Most of the findings of the research have shown that the media have influence on the outcome of an election, though limited and sometimes depending on how the media cover the election campaigns. However, such research has not been a common phenomenon in Africa in general and Malawi in particular.

Therefore, it has been difficult to find out what the trend is like on media influence on elections in Malawi. What we have worked on are assumptions that the media have influence. Perhaps the findings of this investigation will arouse interest for researchers to explore this area.

## **Chapter II**

### **Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter contextualizes and investigates how the media were used during election campaigns in 2004 and their influence on the voter in Chikwawa district in the Southern region of Malawi through a survey conducted there. The investigation explored media exposure and use and how it affects people's political decisions in the district. The findings might not easily be generalized on the whole country because the sampling was restricted to Chikwawa district. However, they might give a glimpse of how the media are used during election campaigns. The methodology of study, sampling criteria, data collection and analysis will be presented in this chapter.

## ***2.1 Background to Chikwawa District***

Chikwawa district is located in the southern region of Malawi. The country is made up of three regions, namely, North, Central and South. It is further divided into twenty-seven districts. The northern region has five districts; the central region has nine districts while the southern region has thirteen districts. The southern region is the most populous and most diverse in terms of ethnic groups. Chikwawa district lies in the Valley of Shire River, the biggest river in Malawi. The other district in the valley is Nsanje. Being a low-lying area, the climate is generally warm and dry in summer and cold and wet in the winter months. There are two ethnic groups in this district, the Mang'anja and the Sena. In Chikwawa the majority are Mang'anja and the Sena are the majority in Nsanje district.

### ***2.1.1 The Social-Economic Situation***

Chikwawa is a semi-urban district with three main centers, Chikwawa, Nchalo and Ngabu. The main employer in the district is a sugar factory whose major shareholder is the Illovo Sugar Group, a South African company. Nchalo, where the sugar factory is located, is the busiest and most important center in the district. People from different corners of the country are attracted to this town due to economic reasons. Chikwawa hosts the district headquarters. The majority of the working class at this center are civil servants.

Ngabu is the center for agricultural department of the government in the district. The working class is largely civil service. The majority of the populations in the district are peasant farmers living in rural areas.

## ***2.2 The Methodology of Research***

The Researcher used both the quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method was done by carrying out a survey on a selected sample in Chikwawa district, south of Malawi. The survey was conducted by a self-administered questionnaire to selected respondents in three centers of the district.

Closed-ended types of questions were used in the questionnaire. They provided the respondents with a list of answers from which they selected their answer.

These questions were used because they provided greater uniformity of responses and because the answers are easily quantified. The centers selected were Chikwawa, Nchalo and Ngabu.

The qualitative methods were also used in order to compliment the findings of the survey, which needed further exploration, and explanation of some patterns discovered. On qualitative method the Researcher carried out in depth interviews with six people to get deeper insights on the findings of the survey.

## ***2.3 Sampling Criteria***

The Researcher used stratified sampling. The investigation was carried out on lower and upper middle class professionals working either for government departments or private sector in the centers of Nchalo, Chikwawa and Ngabu. This was done in order to achieve a homogeneous subset of the population. Homogeneity helped to reduce sampling error. The respondents were in the age bracket of 25-54 and the majority is employed. They were in two major categories: the formally employed and the self-employed. The questionnaire was administered to one hundred and fifty respondents.

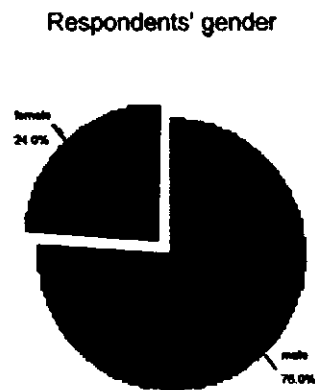
One hundred and ten were filled and given back, the other forty were never recovered because the respondents could not be traced. And only one hundred were valid for analysis.

## ***2.4 Data Analysis***

SPSS is an acronym, which stands for Statistical Program for Social Scientist. This is a statistical software program used for analyzing data statistically by social scientists when conducting surveys and quantitative research.<sup>19</sup> The SPSS was used in data analysis in this research.

### *2.4.1 The Respondents*

#### **Pie Chart: I**



Pie chart I above indicates that out of the one hundred respondents analyzed 24% were female and 76% were male. The discrepancy in gender representation was not out of design but accidental.

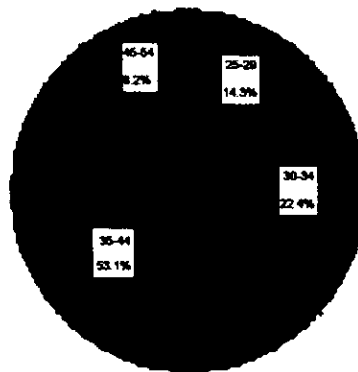
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<sup>19</sup> ON LINE TUITION, "Spss, lessons for Beginners", <[http:// www.vgputa.com/products/spss.html](http://www.vgputa.com/products/spss.html)>, 10/12/2005.

The survey was unable to capture a balanced representation of the gender divide probably because the questionnaires were administered at work places and the majority of the formally employed people were the men folk.<sup>20</sup>

### **Pie Chart II: RESPONDENTS' AGE IN CATEGORIES**

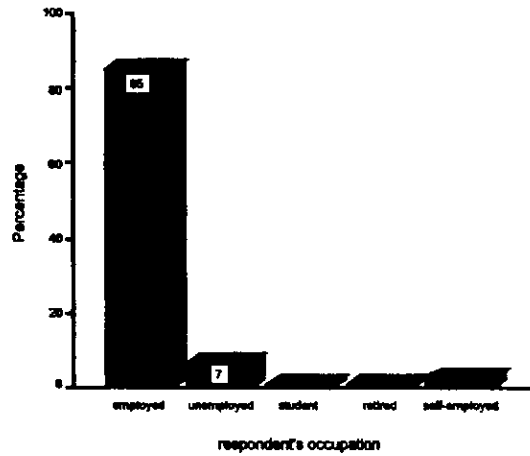
Respondent's age in categories



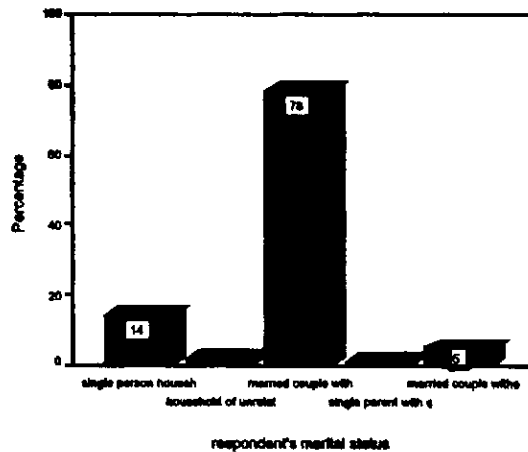
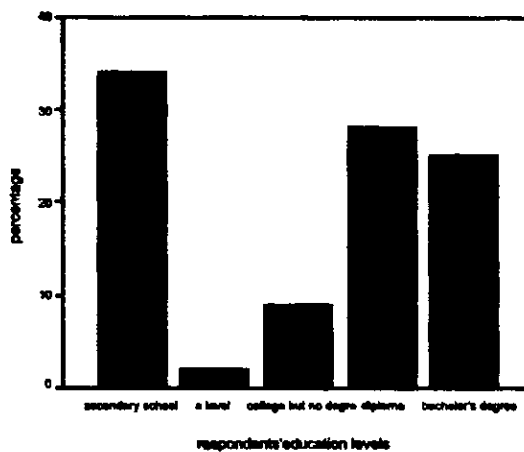
Pie Chart II above indicates that in terms of age distribution, the survey was able to capture respondents from the different age subsets between 25 and 54. However, the age subset 35-44 formed the largest group of the respondents representing 53.1%. The graphic representations on page 27 enable us to observe some characteristics of our sample in terms of occupation, marital status and education levels.

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<sup>20</sup> Sample was drawn from the lower, upper middle class; the majority of the formally employed were men. Women were not well represented in our sample due to this fact.

**Graph: I**

Eighty-five percent of the respondents of the survey were formally employed either by the government or the private sector. Only seven percent were unemployed and less than five percent were self-employed.

**Graph: II****Graph: III**

### 2.4.2 Mass Media Use and Influence

Using the measure of information, entertainment, spiritual nourishment and education, we asked the respondents to state what they use the media for. About 86% of the people interviewed used the radio for information. About 39% used the television for information and about 68% used the newspaper for information. Out of the three channels of communication radio had the highest percentage of users seeking information. Television had the lowest; about 41% of those using television were seeking entertainment. Tables I, II and III below illustrate the point.

**TABLE I: Reasons for radio use**

Reason		Frequency	Percent
Information		85	85.9
Entertainment		7	7.1
Spiritual nourishment		7	7.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE II: Reasons for television use**

Reason		Frequency	Percent
Information		31	38.8
Entertainment		33	41.3
Spiritual nourishment		12	15.0
Education		4	5.0
Missing	System	20	20
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE III: Reasons for newspaper use**

Reason		Frequency	Percent
Information		56	68.3
Entertainment		13	15.9
Spiritual nourishment		7	8.5
Education		6	7.3
Missing	System	18	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The people interviewed used the radio and newspapers largely for information and television was largely used for entertainment. But to find out the influence of the information sourced from the media during elections, we asked the respondents to describe media influence on their choice of candidates. About 50% of the people interviewed said sometimes the media influenced their choice; about 34% said the media never influenced them. About 2% said they were influenced most of the time and only 4% said they were influenced all the time.

To cross check media influence we asked the respondents to describe their belief in the information from the media during election campaigns. About 57% of the respondents said they sometimes believed what the media carried, 29% said most of the time they believed the media and only 9% said they believed the media all the time. These statistics indicate that media influence on the voter's choice of candidate exists but it is limited and it also varies from individual to individual. The statistics also show that the media is heavily used for information but this use does not translate into influencing choice of candidates all the time during elections. Tables IV and V on page 30 indicate media influence and belief respectively:

**TABLE IV: Influence of the media on voter's choice of candidates**

Influence	Frequency		Valid Percent
All the time	4		4.0
Most of the time	12		12.0
Sometimes	50		50.0
Never	34		34.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE V: Belief in information from media during elections**

Media belief		Frequency	Percent
All of the time		9	9.0
Most of the time		29	29.0
Sometimes		57	57.0
Never		5	5.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 2.4.3 Mass Media's Role During Elections

**TABLE VI: How much was learned from media about candidates**

	Frequency		Percent	Cumulative Percent
Learned a great deal	7		7.1	7.1
Learned quite a lot	16		16.2	23.2
Learned a few things	27		27.3	50.5
Did not learn much	25		25.3	75.8
Did not learn anything new	24		24.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>		<b>100.0</b>	

To examine the role that mass media play in elections we looked at how much the voters learned about contesting candidates and parties from the information disseminated by the mass media. We asked the respondents to describe how much they learned from the mass media about contesting candidates and parties.

About 27% of the respondents said they learned a few things, about 25% said they did not learn much, 24% said they did not learn anything new and about 16% said they learned quite a lot. Only about 7% said they learned a great deal. Again our statistics indicate that the respondents who learned a few things to those who learned nothing new constituted 76% combined. It shows that the media disseminated information but voters did not benefit a lot in terms of election related information. Table 6 above indicates the statistics.

How much information was learned from the media was further examined by usefulness of what was learned. We asked respondents to describe how much the media helped them understand issues, candidates and political parties contesting in the elections.

About 26% of the respondents said the media helped somewhat, 21% said the media helped slightly and 28% said the media made no difference at all. Only about 17% said the media helped very much and 8% said the media helped quite a bit.

**TABLE VII: Crosstabulation: access to radio and its influence on choice of candidates**

		Media influence on choice of candidates				Total
		All the time	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	
Access to radio	Yes	4	12	50	34	100
Total		4	12	50	34	100

**TABLE VIII: Crosstabulation: personal radio and its influence on choice of candidates**

		Media influence on choice of candidates				Total
		All the time	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	
Own radio	Yes	4	10	48	32	94
	No		2	2	1	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>99</b>

We further examined the influence of the most powerful medium, the radio in voters' choice of candidates in elections by asking respondents to describe the influence of the media on their choice.

About 50% of the respondents said the media sometimes influenced their choice. About 34% said the media never influenced them. 12% said they were influenced most of the time and only 4% said they were influenced all the time. Table VII on page 31 and VIII above indicate these statistics.

According to findings from our sample we have established that radio is the most commonly used and owned medium as compared to television and newspaper. 100% of the respondents have access to radio and 94% have personal radios.

For television only 68.7% of the respondents have access and 55.6% have personal television sets. Whereas for the newspaper 74.7% of the respondents have access and 28.7% can afford to buy their own newspaper.

**TABLE IX: Crosstabulation: Clarity of information from media and its influence on voter's choice of candidates**

		Media influence on choice of candidates				
		All the time	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Total
Clarity of information	Extremely good	3		1		4
	Very good	1	6	11	2	20
	Quite good		5	18	2	25
	Somewhat good			7	1	8
	Slightly good			11	12	23
	Not at all good		1	2	17	20
	<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>34</b>

Table IX above crosschecks influence against clarity of information from the media. We asked respondents to describe the clarity of information from the media. About 18% of the respondents said clarity of information was quite good, 17% said that the clarity of information was not at all good, 3% said the information was extremely good and only 1% said the information was very good.

## Chapter III

### Presentation and Analysis of the Findings

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the survey, linked to relevant communication theories that help explain specific trends found out in the research. It concludes with a summary of the findings.

#### *3.1 Mass Media Access and Use*

The survey has established that radio is the most popular medium. Statistics have indicated that 100% of the respondents have access to the radio and about 95% have personal radio sets. Access to newspaper is at 74.7% and access to television is at 68.7%. And about 56% of the respondents have personal television sets and only about 28% afford to buy their newspapers. Some of the reasons established for the popularity of the radio are:

- a) Radio is cheap and portable: almost all respondents said they preferred radio because it is cheap to buy and they can listen to it at anytime they want even during working hours.  
  
This suggests that they either carry portable radio or if they drive they have car radios and therefore accessibility is made easier.
- b) Reach: radio's coverage is by far superior in comparison to the newspapers and television. Reference was made to the state controlled radio stations which reach about 98% of the country's land mass.

- c) Instant: respondents said that they preferred radio because they could get breaking news. Radio has a larger capacity to cover breaking news, than newspapers and television.

The survey has also established that radio is largely used for information. The statistics indicate that about 86% of the respondents use the radio for information. About 68% use the newspaper for information and only 39% use the television for information. Television's use for entertainment is slightly higher than the use for information. It is at 41%.

### ***3.2 Mass Media Usefulness During Election Campaigns***

The survey has established that the media was somewhat useful in disseminating information during election campaigns. A total of 51% of the respondents' descriptions ranged from helped somewhat (26%), helped quite a bit (8%), and helped very much (17%). This was crosschecked by the respondents' description of how much they learned from the media, about 27% said they learned a few things, 16.2% said they learned quite a lot and 7.1% said they learned a great deal, making a total of 50.3%. These statistics indicate that the media was useful to half of the respondents and helped them become aware of contesting candidates and political parties during election campaigns. 25.3% said they did not learn much and 24.2% said they did not learn anything new.

### ***3.3 Mass Media Belief During Election Campaigns***

The survey has established that the respondents occasionally believed in the information they received through the media during the election campaigns.

About 57% of the respondents said they sometimes believed in the information received through the media, 29% said they believed most of the time and 9% said they believed all of the time. Only 5% said they never believed.

### ***3.4 Degree of Satisfaction with Mass Media Coverage of Election Campaigns***

The survey's outcome has shown that the respondents are largely not satisfied with the media coverage of election campaigns. About 20% said they were not at all satisfied, 22% said they were slightly satisfied, 17% said they were somewhat satisfied. About 24% said they were quite satisfied, 13% said they were very satisfied and only 4% said they were extremely satisfied. These statistics indicate the dissatisfaction with media coverage of elections to a greater extent. Some of the reasons given for dissatisfaction were media bias, untruthfulness, political affiliation and manipulation.

### ***3.5 Mass Media Influence on the Voter's Choice***

On media influence, about 50% of the respondents said sometimes the media influenced their choice of candidates in elections. About 34% said the media never influenced their choice of candidates. These statistics suggest that voters used the media and according to our sample the most popular medium was the radio. However, there is no direct correlation between media use and the choice of candidates in the election, according to our findings, because the bigger percentage (84%) of the respondents said they were sometimes influenced or never. This suggests that there were other variables that that helped determine their choice.

According to our findings through in depth interviews, factors such as, peer and family influence, political and tribal affiliations also played a great role in influencing choice.

### 3.6 *Communication Theories*

#### 3.6.1 *Minimal or 'Limited Effects' Theory*

In the late 1950s and 1960s research was carried out that refuted claimed direct effects of the mass media, known as the 'hypodermic needle' theory. This research showed that mass media power was overestimated. Major contributors to this research were Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) and Joseph Klapper (1960), (*Mass Media and Society*, class notes, 2005). Klapper concluded from his research, "mass communications ordinarily do not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects".<sup>21</sup> He concluded therefore that mass media were more likely to reinforce existing attitudes than change them or create new attitudes. His findings became known as Klapper's 'law of minimal consequences'<sup>22</sup> and ushered in a 'limited effects' theory of mass media.

According to our survey's findings we can conclude that the mass media coverage of elections has limited influence on the voters' choice. Our findings have indicated that many of the respondents, more than half were sometimes influenced by the media's coverage. This suggests that the respondents had either other agencies that influenced them such as friends or family, or the mass media simply reinforced their perception or understanding of particular candidates they were already supporting. According to our findings there is no direct correlation between mass media use and choice of the voter in the elections.

#### 3.6.2 *'Uses and Gratification' Theory*

Proponents of this theory claim that people use mass media to gratify human needs.

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<sup>21</sup> J.CURRAN, *Media and power*, 132-159

<sup>22</sup> See *Ibid.*, 132

“Instead of asking what the media do to people, ‘uses and gratifications’ theory turned the question around: what do people do with the media?”<sup>23</sup> Harold Lasswell (1948) claimed that the mass media performed four basic functions for society: surveillance to provide news and information; entertainment (diversion from routine); socialization and personal identity.

Findings of our survey show that the respondents used the media for four main reasons: information, entertainment, spiritual nourishment and education. Use of radio for information was the most prominent of all other uses. This suggests that our respondents had the need to know what was happening during the election campaigns (surveillance). The information was necessary for the respondents to become aware of the electoral process. This information might not have necessarily led to influencing their choice of candidates in the election.

### *3.7 Summary of the Findings*

The survey has verified the following assumptions:

- a) Respondents used the media and particularly the radio during election campaigns in order to become aware of the electoral process and to know candidates and parties contesting in the elections.
- b) Respondents were helped by mass media coverage of campaigns to know contesting candidates and political parties taking part in the elections.
- c) Radio was the most powerful medium according to our sample.
- d) Mass media coverage of campaigns has no clear correlation with the voter’s choice of candidates.

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<sup>23</sup> J.LULL, *Media, Communication, Culture*, 101

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

### SOCIAL IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION

This essay set out to understand the role of the media, the extent of influence of media coverage and the extent to which the media shaped opinions, perceptions and attitudes in the voter during the 2004 election campaigns in Malawi. Through the survey and in depth interviews the research established that the media played an important role of disseminating critical information needed by the voters during the electoral process. The media made voters aware of candidates who were contesting in the elections and what they were promising to achieve if voted into office.

The research was also investigating the extent to which media coverage influenced the voter's choice of candidates in the 2004 elections. From the findings, the essay has established that there were no clear correlations between media coverage of elections and the choice of voters, at least according to our sample. However, findings from the in depth interviews conducted on the same topic indicated that there was a difference between an urban voter and a rural voter. In the rural areas the voters have limited alternative sources of information. In their case the media, especially the state controlled radios, had more influence on their choice of candidates than the voters in the urban areas.<sup>24</sup>

The research has also established that the media's important role of information delivery was blurred by the voter's perception of media bias. The in depth interviews revealed that the voters question the credibility of the media.

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<sup>24</sup> From findings of in depth interviews conducted between 15 and 28 February 2006, by the author at the following places: Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kileleshwa, Kolping, and Lavington, Nairobi, Kenya. Interviewees were Malawians living in Kenya some of them are students.

They said that the media did not give fair coverage to all contesting candidates. The state controlled media houses backed the ruling party's candidate. The private media houses sympathized with the opposition. Because of this perceived bias voters looked for alternative sources of information. Many ended up being influenced by their friends, family members, civil society organizations and ethnic groups. The perceived bias made people turn to themselves and other social groups for reliable information. In a way people developed stronger social relationships by identifying themselves with other communities that shared their views on political activities.

## CRITICAL REMARKS

The 'vicious circle' of media influence:<sup>25</sup> Media influence according to Jim Macnamara can turn out to be a 'vicious circle' because while audiences turn to other sources of information such as interpersonal relationships, political parties, civil society organizations among others, these too are media consumers. For example, a voter telling a friend that she/he has heard on radio that a particular candidate belonging to a particular party is the right person for presidency. The friend may agree saying, "Yes, I have heard that too", which provides a reassuring 'third party' endorsement for the voter. However, the friend may have heard from the same radio message. So at the end of the day the media have stronger influence on voters' choice of candidates while they continue to say they are influenced by other factors.

Reinforcement of voter's beliefs and perceptions is itself a powerful and significant influence. By reinforcing the status quo or existing political party affiliations or other social groups, the mass media exert a major influence in society.

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<sup>25</sup> J.R. MACNAMARA, *Mass Media Effects, A Review of 50 Years of Media Effects Research*, <[http://www.masscom.com.au/papers\\_media.html](http://www.masscom.com.au/papers_media.html)>, 06/12/05, 1-10.

People may consider this normal but actually it is the media keeping it normal to the audiences. So Mass Media coverage of elections and its influence on the voter cannot be ruled out whether the voter is from the rural or urban area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

James Curran says: "...the media are powerful ideological agencies not in the simplistic form of brainwashing ..."<sup>26</sup> We would like to highlight the power of the media in society. The media have enormous responsibility because society relies on what they carry in order to make sense of the social reality. Therefore it is of paramount importance that the media create and maintain credibility in their critical duty of relaying information. Due to stiff competition in the media industry today, Mass Media houses widely promote themselves as providers of 'the truth' and some programs and newspapers make claims to present 'how it is', 'the one you can trust', and many other slogans. This sort of promotion further erodes audiences' critical abilities. In the long-term they will indeed trust the media house. So what is important for the media house is to fulfill their duty responsibly.

This can be achieved through balanced reporting and sensitivity to the needs of the audiences. The media houses should not just remain at the level of profit making. It is for this reason that we recommend the adoption of community media as a viable option. It is only through community media that people become subjects of their own process. Through their participation they are able to critically assess performance of political leaders and make well-informed choices. We believe that through community media manipulation of the people is kept at the minimum.

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<sup>26</sup>J. CURAN, *Media and Power*, 165.

Understanding media influence in society is not a simple task because society is dynamic. Things are always changing and at the same time there are many other agencies of influence. Research on media influence in politics or other areas of life should be an ongoing task. It is not possible to claim a conclusive media influence research project conducted only once. And so we recommend that this project should continue and probably deepen in the next phase.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AFORD	Alliance for Democracy
CONU	Congress for National Unity
ISP	Internet Service Provider
MACRA	Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority
MAFUNDE	Malawi Forum for Unity and Development
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MEC	Malawi Electoral Commission
MGODE	Movement for Genuine Democracy
MP	Member of Parliament
MIJ	Malawi Institute of Journalism
NCD	New Congress for Democracy
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PAC	Public Affairs Committee
PETRA	People's Transformation Party
PPM	People's Progressive Movement
RP	Republican Party
SPSS	Statistical Program for Social Scientist
TVM	Television Malawi
UDF	United Democratic Front

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

### TANGAZA COLLEGE THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA NAIROBI, KENYA

Dear Friend,

I am Matthias George Chiwanda, a Student of Social Communication at the above-mentioned college. I am conducting a survey to find out the influence of media coverage during election campaigns on the voter. The information you will give will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The survey is for academic purposes only. Please tick the box next to the answer of your choice where you are required to do so, or fill in the space provided with your most fitting answer. There is no right or wrong answer; your opinion is what matters. Please do not write your name. Thank you for your time.

1. Do you have access to: (Please tick the answer that **best applies to you**).

Radio      YES     NO     DVD player    YES     NO

Television    YES     NO     CD player    YES     NO

Newspaper    YES     NO     Magazines    YES     NO

Internet      YES     NO     Mp3 players    YES     NO

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which form of media do you prefer? (**Number your three most favorite and write the number in the box**)

Radio                            Magazines     

Television                          Video shows     

Newspapers                          Cinemas         

Internet                            Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you prefer your NUMBER 1?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you have your own?

(Please tick the answer that **best applies to you**)

Radio       YES    NO                       DVD player  YES    NO

Television  YES    NO                       MP3           YES    NO

Newspaper  YES    NO                       CD player     YES    NO

Internet  YES NO

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many hours on average do you spend consuming the media?

(Per week including weekends)

	Below 6hrs	7-14 hrs	15-21hrs	22-28hrs	over 28 hrs
Radio	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Television	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Newspaper	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Internet	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
CD player	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other (specify)	_____				

5. What do you use that media for? (Number in order of priority and write the number in the box)

	Information	Entertainment	Spiritual nourishment	Education
Radio	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Television	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Newspaper	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Internet	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
CD player	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. List in order of priority three programmes (from radio or television) and three articles (from newspaper or magazine) that you enjoy most

Programmes (from radio or television)

- i. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

Articles (from newspaper or magazine)

- i. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you believe in everything you get through media? (Please tick one only)

All of the time  sometimes   
 Most of the time  never

7(a) Why? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Whom do you generally use the media with? (**Please tick one only**)

- Alone
- With friends
- With family
- With children
- Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which of the following phrases best describes your overall satisfaction with media coverage of election campaigns of 2004? (**Please tick one only**)

- Extremely Satisfied
- Very Satisfied
- Quite Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Slightly Satisfied
- Not at All Satisfied

10. Does the media you relate to help you decide on whom to vote for during elections?

(**Please tick one only**)

- All the time                       Sometimes
- Most of the time                       Never

11. Which of the following phrases best describes the **clarity** of the information on contesting candidates and political parties during the campaign from the media you relate to? (**Please tick one only**)

- Extremely Good
- Quite Good
- Very Good
- Very Good
- Quite Good
- Somewhat Good
- Slightly Good
- Not at All Good

12. Which of the following phrases best describes how the media coverage of elections helped your appreciation and understanding of the contesting candidates and issues raised? (**Please tick one only**)

- Helped Very Much
   
  Made No Difference  
 Helped Quite a Bit  
 Helped Somewhat  
 Helped Slightly

13. Which of the following phrases best describes how much you feel you learned about the candidate you voted for from the media? (**Please tick one only**)

- Learned a Great Deal  
 Learned Quite a Lot  
 Learned a Few Things  
 Did Not Learn Much  
 Did Not Learn Anything New

14. Your gender (**Please tick only what applies to you**)

- Male  
 Female

15. Which box corresponds to the category that includes your current occupation? (**Please tick one only**)

- Employed
   
  Retired  
 Student
   
  Self-employed  
 Unemployed  
 Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

16. Which box corresponds to the highest level of education that you have completed? (**Please tick one only**)

- Primary school or less  
 Secondary school
   
  College but no degree  
 Bachelors' degree
   
  A level  
 Masters degree
   
  Diploma  
 Doctorate degree

17. Which box corresponds to the category that includes your age? (**Please tick one only**)

- 18- 24  
 25- 29  
 30- 34

- 35 -44
- 45 -54
- 55- Years and over

18. Where do you live? (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

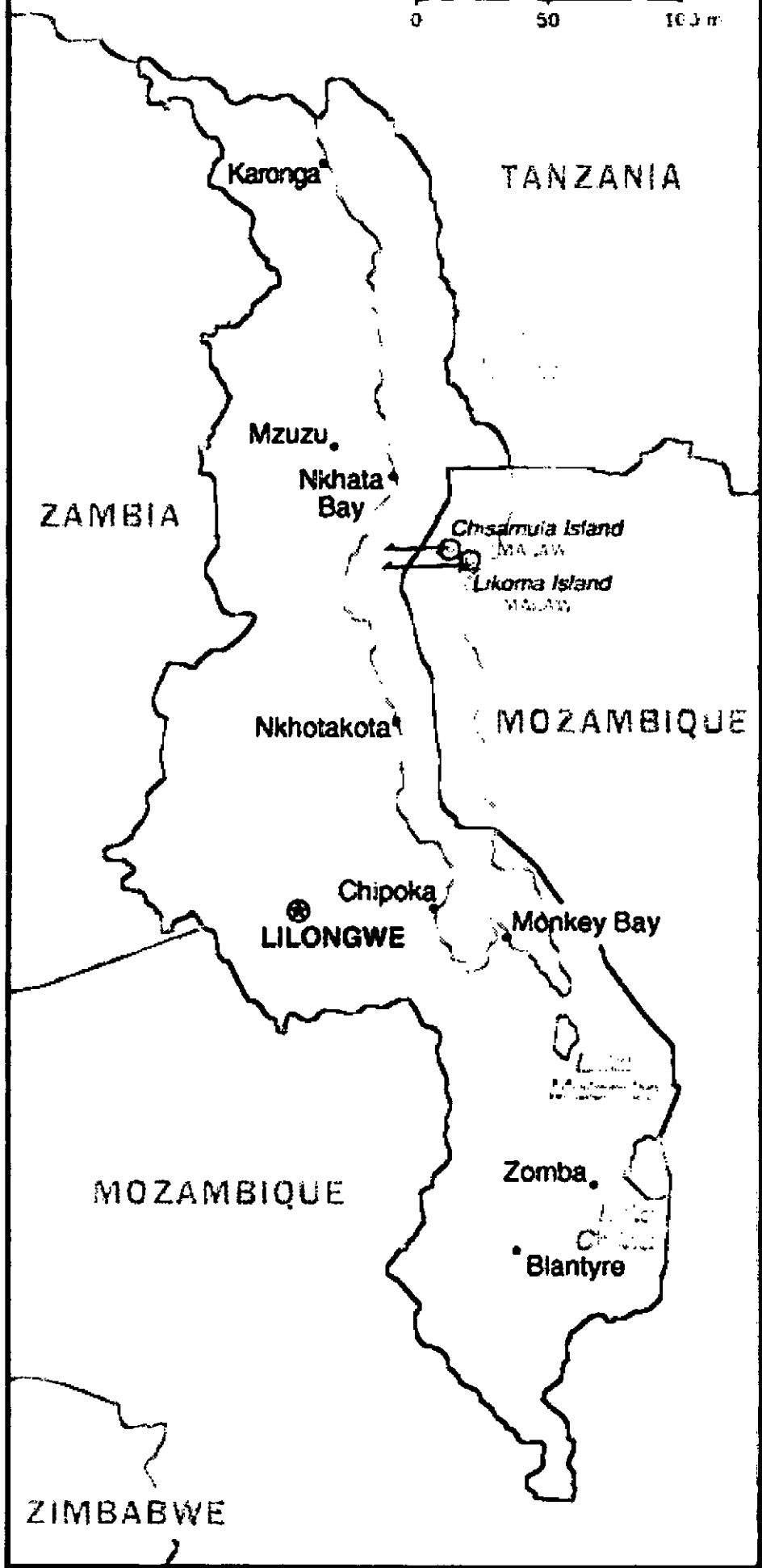
19. Which box corresponds to the type of household in which you live? (**Please tick one only**)

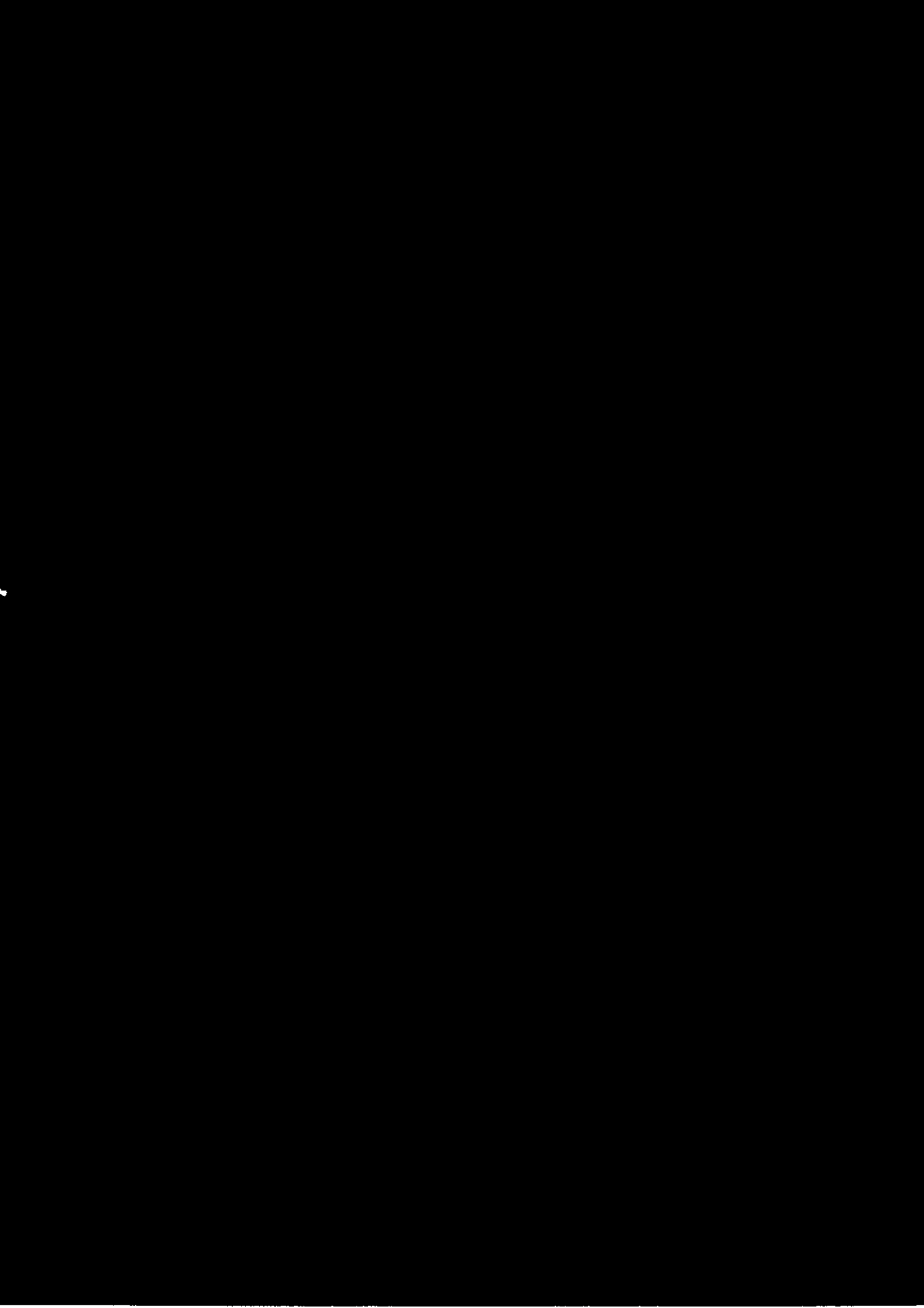
- Single person household
- Household of unrelated adults
- Married couple with children under 18
- Single parent with children under 18
- Married couple without children under 18
- Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

20. Which box corresponds to the category, which includes your combined household income per annum before taxes? (**Please tick one only**)

- Under M34, 999
- MK35, 000 to MK49, 999
- MK50, 000 to MK74, 999
- MK75, 000 to MK99, 999
- MK100, 000 to MK149, 999
- MK150, 000 to MK199, 999

**Thank you very much for your time and your collaboration!**





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