

Recognizing Recognition

An analysis of donor-recipient relations using the
example of Sino-Malawian cooperation

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Abstract

The partnership rhetoric is widely spread in development studies and practice. This thesis revisits the debate on partnership using Honneth's theory of recognition. In order to shed light on the role of recognition in donor-recipient relations, Sino-Malawian cooperation on infrastructure projects in Malawi is exemplarily examined. A discourse analysis of original expert interviews with Malawians is conducted. These interviews with representatives of local development nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil servants were conducted by the author in 2013. The analysis reveals the important role of recognition in the constitution of a development partnership; in addition to awareness of material and social aspects. This includes the consideration of symbolic aspects such as visible progress, the importance of fostering transparency of agreements towards the population and the awareness of risking infringement of sovereignty by conditions on aid.

Key words: Recognition, Partnership, Development Assistance, Malawi, Sino-African Relations

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List of abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AFECC	Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Group Co., Ltd
AFRASO	Africa's Asian Options project
Aids	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CPC	Communist Party of China
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
Int.	Interviewee
IR	International Relations
LDC	Least Developed Country
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OOF	Other Official Flows
PRC	People's Republic of China (Mainland China)
ROC	Republic Of China (Taiwan)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. Introduction

“If I've learned one thing covering world affairs, it's this: The single most underappreciated force in international relations is humiliation” (Friedman 2003)

The emerging relevance of the People's Republic of China (PRC/China) in global processes is widely discussed in many current debates in political science. One of the strongly controversial issues is Chinese engagement in African countries: Scholars' assessments of Sino-African relations include positions like ongoing exploitation, empowerment, re-balancing and neocolonialism. These various positions show how debates on development are connected to debates of Sino-African relations. This thesis concentrates on the nexus of the two debates: current approaches to development and Sino-African relations using the example of Malawi.

Sino-Malawian cooperation started only in 2008. The starting point for the cooperation was a package deal on infrastructure projects in Malawi, including a parliament building, a conference center, a stadium, a university and a road from Karonga to Chitipa. So far, hardly any scientific research has been conducted on the relations between Malawi and China. Hence, this thesis aims at introducing the case of Malawi into debates on Sino-African relations. On an empirical level, Malawian perspectives on the package deal will be analyzed so as to understand how experts in the development sector evaluate the projects.

On a theoretical level, this case is used to shed new light on current debates on development. The discussion focuses on the partnership approach to development which is of great importance in current debates. The concept of partnership is commonly accepted for its instrumental value of fostering aid-efficiency. Yet, partnership is not so much discussed from a normative perspective focusing on procedural aspects of development assistance and the constitution of donor-recipient relations. Honneth's theory of recognition explains interstate relations by focusing on recognition and humiliation as decisive factors. His theory has not yet been discussed with regard to donor-recipient relations. However, it sheds new light on the partnership approach and allows for a better understanding of the notion of partnership. Therefore, in this thesis, the theory of recognition serves as an analytical lens to study donor-recipient relations, exemplified by Sino-Malawian relations.

Based on the empirical and the theoretical goals of this thesis, the following research question can be formed: To what extent does the analysis of Sino-Malawian relations from a recognition perspective provide insights to develop a complementary understanding of the partnership approach in development debates?

So as to answer this research question, I first of all give an overview of the current state of research on Sino-African relations and position myself in the field. On this basis, I introduce the theoretical framework of this paper which mainly

focuses on the partnership approach to development as well as Honneth's theory of recognition. Thereafter, I discuss the theory of science of my thesis. This leads to the methodological approach of the research project. The relevance of recognition for development debates and politics is discussed by analyzing semi-structured interviews which I conducted doing fieldwork in Malawi during the months of February and March 2013. Representatives of Malawian development nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil servants of the Malawian government and Chinese actors involved in Sino-Malawian cooperation were interviewed on their insights and evaluation of the cooperation. Based on the interviews, a critical discourse analysis sheds light on discourses connected to recognition. The last chapter of the thesis presents and sums up the results with the purpose of providing an answer to the overall research question.

State of research: China in Africa

One facet in globalization debates is the emergence of new global actors. Over the past decade close attention has been paid especially to the rise of the PRC. Several aspects of China's role on the global stage have been discussed. A frequently recurring topic is China's quest for resources, mainly for crude oil (c.f. Moyo 2012, Villoria 2009:532). Several African countries own abundant resources of crude oil, minerals and metal. Sudan, Angola and Zambia for example have had long-term relations with China and exported resources to the PRC (cf. Kragelund 2009, Asche et al. 2008: 24, Obiorah 2007). There exists a tremendous body of academic literature on 'China in Africa' (cf. Alden 2007, Taylor 2009, Brautigam 2011a, Harneit-Sievers et al. 2010, Manji et al. 2007, etc.). Several academic journals have published articles and released special issues analyzing Sino-African relations.¹ Research institutes and projects focusing on Sino-African relations were founded, as e.g. the Africa's Asian Options project (AFRASO) by the Center for Chinese Studies of Stellenbosch University (Center for Chinese Studies).

Academic debates on the matter of Sino-African relations focus on a wide variety of topics, country cases and theoretical classifications. Important topics discussed are for example matters of economy, development and human rights. Scholars mainly discuss Chinese engagement in African countries with regard to its impact on African countries. In terms of economic consequences, export of African resources, import of Chinese goods and impact of Chinese loans are widely discussed (cf. Asche et al. 2008, Ayers 2012, Giovannetti 2009). Regarding human rights, matters of arms trade, peacekeeping, labor conditions and the Chinese principle of non-interference play a major role in academic debates (cf. Taylor 2009, Chidaushe 2007, Hackenesch 2013).

In terms of theoretical classifications, scholars' assessments diverge, too. Several scholars react to a popular classification of China as a neocolonial power, yet most clearly reject this strong attribute (c.f. Moyo 2012:156-157). While many underline China's responsibility concerning human rights issues, environmental problems and trade imbalances, most scholars first and foremost stress the

¹ Just to name a few examples: *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29(2) 2011; *The China Quarterly* vol. 9; *European Journal of Development Research*. 21(4) 2009.

responsibility of African leaders who have scope for action and the responsibility to shape the cooperation for the benefit of their people (cf. Taylor 2009, Lemos et al. 2007).

According to more optimistic takes, global rebalancing occurs due to East-South partnerships which challenge western dominance in processes of development, economic cooperation and globalization: “the rise of emerging societies is a major turn in globalization and holds significant emancipatory potential. North-South relations have been dominant for 200 years and now an East-South turn is taking shape” (Pieterse 2011:22; cf. Chidushe 2007). Similar to this argument, some scholars underline that new opportunities for African countries evolve because new actors, ideas and practices emerge with the emergence of China (e.g. Brautigam 2011a:310).

A less common understanding of Sino-African relations argues that global economic and political structures force China to expand the market and allocate capital as well as resources. This can be best summarized in this argument: “the ‘new scramble for Africa’ together with the rise of the BRIC countries themselves, are ‘linked and collectively shaped by broader transnational capitalist dynamics, in particular by the establishment and intensification of transnational corporate-controlled cross-border production networks’” (Ayers 2012:24).²

Almost all of the scholars mentioned above also discuss the impact of the cooperation on African development. Many African countries are classified as developing countries or least developed countries (LDCs) (OECD 2012) so that debates on Sino-African relations often border on or meet questions of development. Some scholars also explicitly analyze Chinese development assistance. Deborah Brautigam has done extensive research in the field of Chinese development assistance. Her work is placed at the nexus of aid, investment and trade, while focusing on development assistance and other forms of aid (cf. Brautigam 2011a).

The above points out a tendency in debates on Sino-African relations: Many of them are often quite normative because they relate to matters of development in African countries. Scholars take different positions as to the role of China: How to assess China’s impact? What are desirable outcomes of the cooperation?

Very recent publications on Sino-African relations move away from concentrating on the impacts of Chinese engagement and assessing China’s role. This may be due to several scholars underlining the fact that China just as Africa is not one unified actor (e.g. Taylor 2009:178). Businessmen, the Communist Party of China (CPC), politicians from different African countries, civil society of many different African countries – they all play a role in Sino-African relations. Latest scholarly works have shifted the focus on e.g. African civil society (cf. Harneit-Sievers 2010), African agency (Mohan 2013) and African perceptions (Hanusch 2011). Other scholars concentrate on the implications Sino-African relations have for European countries, e.g. with regard to development cooperation. Hakenesch for example tries to shed light on European cooperation

² A similar argument is also provided by Strange (2011).

with Ethiopia by comparing European and Chinese policies towards Ethiopia (Asche et al. 2008; Hakenesch 2013).

My research project links to the more recent debates on Sino-African relations. On the one hand, I focus on African, more precisely Malawian, perspectives. On the other hand, I discuss in how far these insights allow for new approaches to current academic debates on development. This is a rather postcolonial approach to knowledge production which pleads for an equal dialogue between indigenous knowledge and “current science” (c.f. Bala et al. 2007).

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework aims at introducing current debates on development – mainly the partnership approach – and to critically examine them. One major criticism is that partnership is mainly seen as a means for aid-efficiency, whereas the building up of a partnership is not discussed. Normative aspects of redistribution and deliberation hardly play a role in reflections on partnership. Honneth’s theory of recognition argues that political recognition is highly relevant for achieving equitable, peaceful and sustainable relations. It therefore allows for an alternative perspective on donor-recipient relations and is introduced to provide a complementary way to the conventional understanding of partnership because his focus is on the process of building up equitable relations.

2.1. What is development (assistance)?

Development is a widespread concept with different meanings attached to it. For this reason, it is of great importance to clearly define what understanding is underlying this thesis. Although clearly demarcating the understanding from others, I use a rather broad understanding of development so that the discussion can relate to a variety of development debates. Jönsson et al. understand development as “a matter of re-shaping and improving people's living conditions, through economic, political and social processes” (Jönsson et al. 2012: 18). They emphasize the political aspect which to them mainly means to redistribute resources globally and among generations in order to create “greater welfare for the majority of mankind” (Jönsson et al. 2012: 18). Political processes, to them, can – not only but significantly – be shaped by the action of states. States have the capacity to impact in development by influencing political, economic and social processes (Jönsson et al. 2012:18-19). Based on Jönsson’s definition the scope for this thesis is to look at political means which are initiated at the state level and aim at creating “greater welfare for the majority of” Malawians which are initiated on the state level.

Official development assistance (ODA)

Having a certain understanding of what development means, the matter of *assistance* is not yet covered. In order to link to other cases of donor-recipient relations, this thesis defines assistance according to the standard understanding of ODA. The development assistance committee (DAC) uses the following definition: Funding has to be concessional which means that at least 25% of a loan needs to be a grant with a 10% discount rate. Thus only grants and concessionary loans are ODA (Brautigam 2011b: 203-204).

Modernization and dependency

Development is, of course, not such a clearly definable matter as suggested by the definitions above. Scholars and practitioners disagree on which actors (states vs. civil society) or which content (welfare vs. human rights) to focus on (Elliot 2008:40). Development debates take place on many different levels. On a theoretical level, two main approaches have for a long time demarcated the spectrum: modernization and dependency theory. Many of the current and past approaches can be classified as being close to either one of these two poles.

Both theories focus on completely different issues: Modernization theories argue that a society's industrialization and technologization lead to greater efficiency and therefore facilitate better living conditions for more people (Akude 2011:73-74). The theory has been criticized for following a teleological understanding of world affairs as if every society needed to pass several stages for the purpose of becoming industrialized (Jönsson et al. 2010:44, Sokhey 2010). Modernization theory and arguments for a liberalization of global economy are closely related because of the implicit assumption that progress on an economic level leads to less underdevelopment.

Dependency theories, in contrast, explain underdevelopment as a consequence of global political and economic processes which give rise to the exploitation of the global South (Conway 2008:95). As a consequence, scholars of that school do not assess global capitalism in the same manner as scholars of the modernization theory. Several proponents of dependency theory suggest a regionalization of economic systems so that developing countries can become independent of industrialized countries (Akude 2011:75-79). Both dependency and modernization theories have been criticized for their regional bias: modernization theories for being based on ethnocentric views of western industrialization; and dependency theories for deriving from experiences of Latin American countries during a specific period (cf. Sokhey 2010).

These two major theories in development studies give a rough idea of the field and dominant approaches during the second half of the 20th century (Akude 2011). They make clear that development theories are clearly normative in the way they are arguing about future prospects of global processes. They are all suggesting changes for the better and a certain improvement (Akude 2011: 69). Yet, they argue for different causes of underdevelopment and thus propose various solutions.

Criticism on development: postdevelopment and postcolonial approaches

The variety of approaches clearly shows that there is an enormous debate on what to change and in which way. Development as a concept can therefore be argued to be an “empty signifier that can be filled with almost any content” (Ziai 2009: 183). This criticism of conceptual vagueness relates to the postdevelopment discourse which emerged during the 1980s. Scholars like e.g. Arturo Escobar have criticized the dichotomous understanding reflected in development discourse. To them, a discrepancy between developed and underdeveloped is constructed which in fact serves to maintain a dominance of western concepts on a political and a scientific level (Jönsson et al. 2012: 65). Postdevelopment scholars criticize that the idea of modernizing and improving the situation of the so called developing countries is inherent in any idea of development. To them, this modernization aspect does not take into account cultural heterogeneity on a global level (Ziai 2009: 183).

Postcolonial criticism follows a similar reasoning by “challeng[ing] the meaning of development as rooted in colonial discourse depicting the North as advanced and progressive and the South as backward, degenerate and primitive” (McEwan 2008: 125). Some scholars point out that fostering indigenous ways of societal organization may be of greater benefit than the integration of low-income countries into the global economy (McEwan 2008: 126) because it corresponds to local needs. Others refer to the process of identity construction by differentiating between “us” and “them” during the period of European colonialism which continues up to now (Loomba 2005). The dichotomy of developed vs. underdeveloped is one example for the notion of othering in development studies.

However, postdevelopment and postcolonial approaches are not homogenous in their criticism. Some scholars take a very radical approach pleading for any activity in the development sector to be ended. One well-known example is Dambisa Moyo who takes a rather neoliberal approach. To her, international aid has slowed down and even hindered development in low-income countries. She refers for example to established dependency and corruption which are enhanced through aid (Moyo 2010). Other scholars are in favor of reforms of the development sector. They plead for a reorientation of development from a bottom-up perspective, e.g. involving grassroots movements more intensively. Based on the reform oriented criticism, a lot of changes have occurred in development debates and politics during the past ten to twenty years (cf. Ziai 2009:184).

Changes in the development landscape

The theoretical debates mentioned above are partly reflected in practical approaches in development politics. Criticism from postdevelopment and postcolonial perspectives raises awareness of top-down practices and exclusion of local people and their knowledge in development assistance. Thus, more recent international agreements on development, namely the Millenium Development Goals, the Rome Declaration and the Paris Declaration (and follow-ups), can be argued to partly respond to this criticism (Ziai 2011:27). They mirror a shift in the field of development: on the level of content, social development became the

focus; on the level of political process the principles of partnership and ownership are widely accepted.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) derive from the Millennium Development Declaration of 2000. 147 head of states agreed to achieve the following eight goals up to 2015 (World Bank 2013a): to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger; grant primary school education for everyone; increase gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/Aids and malaria, ensure environmental sustainability; establish a global partnership for development and trade (UN 2013a). The MDGs mainly state contents of social development. Moreover they state the goal of creating a “global partnership for development” which mainly refers to trade and finance.

Subsequently, the Paris Declaration in 2005 and the follow ups in Accra and Busan are concerned with ways of shaping donor-recipient relations in order to achieve aid-effectiveness. Five main principles are set up so as to realize aid-effectiveness: ownership, harmonization, alignment, managing for results and mutual accountability (OECD 2005). The Paris Declaration establishes these principles as “partnership commitments” (OECD 2005:3). Especially the principles of ownership and alignment emphasize mutual responsibility: to “exercise” and “respect” leadership as well as to support “partner countries’ national development strategies, institutions and procedures” (OECD 2005:3). The consensus of these agreements is the idea that partnership fosters aid efficiency.

As exemplified by the brief overview of the MDGs and Paris Declaration, the 1990s and 2000s brought a reorientation and reform of development policies. As outlined above, the principle of partnership reflects a current consensus in the field of development. Furthermore, a focus on social development occurred through the MDGs' focus on poverty, hunger, gender, education and health. Funding for this sector was increased; the share became 60% of the total donor funding (Brautigam 2011a:77). Social development can be realized on a community level by taking participatory approaches, thus working on implementing the idea of partnership on a community level (Ziai 2009:184). Yet, in the international agreements (MDGs and Paris Declaration), partnership mainly refers to the state level. It is frequently criticized that donor-recipient relations on a state-level do not correspond to the ideal of partnership as cooperation between equal counterparts. Barnes and Brown argue that partnership in a normative sense means establishing an equal relation. Only this allows for partner countries to bring in their own needs and suggestions of projects (Barnes and Brown 2011). Based on Barnes and Brown, the notion of partnership is dealt with in greater detail in the following passage.

2.2. Partnership in development debates

As pointed out above, partnership is highly relevant for current debates on development as well as international declarations. But what does the concept of

partnership mean in theory and in practice?

This in-depth discussion originates from Barnes and Browns (2011) depiction of partnership within the MDGs. The two authors develop a framework as to how partnership can be understood in general and what specifically derives from goal 8 of the MDGs. In general, “partnership references the creation of an association of equal participants, with common interests, who agree to approximate a condition of equal burden, equal benefit, and the responsibilities and liabilities inherent in this joint venture” (Barnes – Brown 2011:174). By depicting the discourse on partnership from the 1990s onwards, the two authors point out that the term partnership has a dual meaning. On the one hand, it can be understood in an instrumental way: If recipients of aid are seen as partners, they are expected to take more responsibility for the development of their country. In this understanding, partnership is anticipated to create greater aid-efficiency (Barnes – Brown 2011: 172). There is a consensus among development researchers and practitioners about the instrumental value of partnership and ownership. Many argue that aid needs to be based on recipients’ ideas if it is to be effective. This instrumental aspect is also dominating development debates (cf Molenaers 2012:793). However, some recipients might fear that donors want to shuffle themselves out of responsibility by pleading for partnership and ownership.

On the other hand, partnership clearly has a moral component which “allows the impression that partnership is about transforming power relations in a positive and socially just fashion” (Barnes – Brown 2011:172). In current debates on development, this moral component resonates with the term partnership; however, the dominant component is the instrumental one. In both understandings, however, partnership stays a normative undertaking – something that needs to be striven for (Barnes – Brown 2011:175). In order to answer the question of how to achieve the partnership goal, Barnes and Brown relate to political philosophy and normative criteria for partnership.

Distributive justice and deliberative public reason are the two leading concepts Barnes and Brown discuss with regard to normative criteria for partnership (Barnes – Brown 2011:175). Concerning distributive justice, they point out that the “allocation of benefits and burdens of economic activity and of social institutions” needs to be agreed upon by both parties. Both parties need to establish a contractual agreement so that they can equally benefit and are liable (or otherwise agree to different conditions). Three targets of MDG 8 tackle this goal of greater distributive justice (Barnes – Brown 2011:175-176).

The second normative criterion for partnership – deliberative public reason – touches upon the exercise of power in decision making processes. So as to implement a partnership approach, both parties need to have actual opportunities to influence the decisions. Moreover, they need to be able to call unequal use of power into question. Last, deliberation describes a process which is acceptable and legitimate to all participants (Barnes – Brown 2011:176). The two criteria deliberation and distribution reflect two poles of justice which will be discussed later on: recognition and redistribution or procedural and material aspects of development assistance.

To be able to further discuss the notion of partnership, it is necessary to differentiate between its moral and its instrumental component. Furthermore, the normative criteria deliberative decision making and distributive justice are the guiding principles for discussing the implementation of partnership. The underlying values of these two principles are equality, equality and mutual respect: both partners have a say and freely agree on decisions (Barnes – Brown 2011:172-177). Therefore, by following Barnes' and Brown's propositions of normative criteria, the moral (power transforming) component of partnership is brought back in. Currently, the normative questions of what partnership should be like and how to build it up, are rather underrepresented in development debates (Barnes – Brown 2011:165). The Paris Declaration serves as a good example for this criticism. It assumes that a partnership is already there and states "Partnership Commitments" for creating aid efficiency (OECD 2005). The section below refers to criticism concerning the implementation of partnership. Is the partnership concept mere rhetoric covering up power imbalances? How then, can partnership foster aid efficiency?

"The Paternalism of Partnership" (Eriksson Baaz 2005)

Many scholars argue that the dichotomous thinking criticized by postdevelopment scholars is still taking place; therefore it is hypocritical to speak of a partnership between donors and receiving countries. Lepenies e.g. heavily criticizes statements by the head of the UN Millennium Project advisory body, Jeffrey Sachs. To Lepenies (2009), Sachs' attitude towards development reflects a dichotomous separation of the world into developed and underdeveloped. By arguing that a technology transfer to underdeveloped countries was the solution to fight underdevelopment, Sachs reproduces an understanding of development which is not based on partnership. According to Lepenies it rather reflects the established attitude that western donors know what is good for receiving countries (Lepenies 2009:40-41).

Eriksson Baaz (2005) argues in a similar manner. She points out that partnership is the dominating discourse in development studies and practice. However, this does not imply that relations between recipients and donors have become more equal. In her book "The Paternalism of Partnership", Eriksson Baaz analyzes discourses of development workers and observes a continuing self-conception of donors as superior: "[d]onor and development worker identification involves a positioning of the Self as developed and superior in contrast to a backward and inferior other" (Eriksson Baaz 2005:167).

There is an inherent power discrepancy in development assistance. One obvious reason for this inequality is the access to economic resources (Jönsson et al 2012). Development assistance is to a large degree characterized by one party supporting another one financially or materially. So by nature, the receiving party is less influential within the relationship than the donating party. This is even more so because many donors tie grants and budget support to political or economic conditions (Brautigam 2011a: 148-151, 285-286). Even the establishment of development partnerships can usually only take place if recipients share the donors' objectives (Eriksson Baaz 2005:74).

Since the normative aspect of partnership is hardly touched upon in

development debates the concept can be argued to be an empty signifier (c.f. Ziai 2011). The partnership rhetoric, however, is widely spread. For instance, the terms donor and recipient are oftentimes replaced by the word ‘partners’. Existing power imbalances among donors and recipients are widely disregarded by mainstream approaches (Eriksson Baaz 2005:74). Since partnership is usually understood on an instrumental level and normative aspects hardly play a role in development debates, there is a risk that partnership rhetoric covers up existing power imbalances and therefore hinders the transformation. So the normative aspect of partnership needs to be brought back into debates for two reasons: First, if partnership is believed to be an important means for aid efficiency, knowing how to achieve partnership provides the basis for partnership as an instrument for aid-efficiency. Second, the normative discussion of partnership avoids the risk to cover up existing power imbalances and thus allows for a transformation.

The concept of recognition provides an analytical lens to discuss normative aspects of social relations. It will be presented in the sections below in order to discuss in how far this approach may be a useful extension of or complementary to the partnership approach.

2.3. Recognition in social science

Humiliation³ and Recognition are two sides of the same coin. Both concepts have been discussed in detail with regard to interpersonal relations, yet with regard to international relations (IR) the debate is not too advanced. Of course, legal recognition of a state by the international community has played a major role in IR debates for many years. Some scholars of IR have recently begun to criticize this focus on legal matters because “it only scratches the surface of the recognition phenomenon and particularly a political actor’s quest for self-esteem” (Lindemann 2013:151). So there seems to be a turn in IR theory with regard to debates on recognition; leading to the inclusion of political and social-psychological aspects of recognition.

A related concept to questions of political recognition is the notion of identity. Identity has played a role in certain IR theories with regard to e.g. conflicts involving nationalism or religious convictions (Gross-Stein 2009). In development studies, issues of humiliation play an important role when reflecting on the colonial roots of development assistance (Doty 1996). Yet, debates about identity formation and the concept of identity focus more on internal processes of a group. The concept of recognition allows for a more dynamic perspective focusing on the process of interaction; for recognition involves at least two actors: one who recognizes and one who is recognized.

For the purpose of demarcating the basic idea of recognition, it is necessary to draw on rather social-psychological and philosophic concepts which constitute the base for discussions in IR. In the mid-1990s, both Honneth and

³ In this thesis humiliation is understood as taking place if the population of a state feels degraded concerning the collective self-esteem. This degradation spreads as collective narratives about misrecognition, lacking recognition or even actions of abasement. (Honneth 2010: 195-197.)

Taylor discuss the matter of recognition (Taylor 1994, Honneth 1994). They mainly focus on processes in societal life of formally acknowledging and positively approving various groups of society.⁴ Taylor's approach rests focused on inner-societal processes of recognition. Honneth in contrast moves on and includes a discussion of recognition in IR in his recent publication (Honneth 2010). For this reason, Honneth's concept of recognition is the basis of the theoretical framework of this thesis.

2.3.1. Honneth's early theory

Honneth's theory of recognition can be understood as a "social theory with 'normative intent'" (Haacke 2005:186). He underlines this status by claiming "it is not an ethic of recognition" (Honneth in Marcelo 2013) meaning that motivation for and foundation of recognition are not the focus of discussion but rather its social meaning, its base in communication theory and implementation.

The most prominent publication by Honneth, "the struggle for recognition" (1994), tries to systematize the notion of recognition. He starts off by tracing back Hegel's line of argumentation and then develops a systematic overview of how to understand recognition. According to Honneth, Hegel develops a concept on the emergence of personal self-consciousness and independence vis à vis other human beings. Due to the encounter with other human beings a person has to neglect certain personal desires thereby expressing recognition towards the other person (Honneth 2010:7-32). Honneth uses this concept of recognition in order to develop a concept of social justice which goes beyond materialist understandings of justice.

"Emotional affection", "cognitive respect" and "social esteem" are three different forms of recognition Honneth elaborates on. While "emotional affection" refers to close relationships amongst family and friends, the category of "cognitive respect" refers to legal aspects of accepting a person and granting certain rights (Honneth 1994:179, 211). The third category of "social esteem" is about the appreciation humans experience within society because of their achievements and features (Honneth 1994:183). This form of recognition derives from the cultural self-conception of a society, meaning that cultural values of what deserves recognition decide on the level of recognition a respective person experiences (Honneth 1994:198).

Based on the different forms of recognition, Honneth develops corresponding categories of disdain: physical maltreatment, personal disregard (structural exclusion) and vilification of individual and collective ways of life (Honneth 1994:214-217). Disdain thus plays out differently and also affects individuals or social groups in different ways. It can diminish physical or social integrity but also affect the honor or dignity of an individual or a group (Honneth 1994:211). These experiences of disdain can therefore evoke different reactions

⁴Taylor (1994) focuses on the aspect of multiculturalism, mainly on the difficulty of neither homogenizing nor relativizing difference. He suggests attributing a possibility of finding sth. worth admiring in each person a priori. In his work it becomes clear that recognition cannot solely be based on achievements because certain external factors can harm the development of socially appreciated achievements.

and provoke conflict or resistance which aims at achieving recognition (Honneth 1994:256).

2.3.2. Honneth's theory of recognition and IR

Some scholars of IR take on these reflections about interpersonal recognition and discuss their relevance for interstate recognition and respect (Haacke 2005, Wolf 2008). They question how to understand recognition and how to make use of the concept in IR. Honneth draws on these inputs and includes a whole chapter questioning the extent to which interstate relations can be explained by striving for self-assertion as it often happens in IR. He argues that states are not only striving for self-assertion but also for recognition (Honneth 2010:181-201).

What does recognition mean in the context of international relations? When elaborating on interstate recognition, Honneth points out how important it is to be aware of the terminology which derives from psychological approaches to interpersonal recognition. When theorizing the recognition among states, the same terminology is used, yet it refers to a rather philosophical level of interstate relations (Honneth 2010:184). It is thus very important to not confuse the different levels of the theory of recognition. To Honneth, the main difference lies in the role of state actors. They work on the implementation of political responsibilities but do not possess attitudes, feelings and needs as individual actors (Honneth 2010:186). Yet, the concept of interpersonal recognition can be transferred to interstate recognition because any person who identifies with a respective state will feel recognized or humiliated in a similar way as the state (Wolf 2008:14).

In the same manner as he addresses interpersonal relations, Honneth differentiates between various forms of recognition when it comes to IR: legal and political, diplomatic recognition. Regarding the first aspect, Honneth refers to international law and the formal process of a state being accepted in the international community of states by other states. To him, this process only means to be aware of the existence of a state. The second – more fundamental – form, however describes the actual process of recognizing. In order to be able to recognize another state, there has to be a tolerance/ range for decision-making. *Political recognition takes place if a government takes the free decision to cooperate with another state in a positive way.* This sort of recognition is approached by Honneth in a normative way. He points out that political recognition can be used to improve state relations (Honneth 2010:187-188).

Honneth further substantiates the notion of recognition by starting from the legitimation of foreign politics. In a very detailed manner he describes how the population of a state develops certain collective expectations with regard to foreign policy decisions. While working on rather functional tasks, political actors are expected to represent the country in a way which evokes international recognition (Honneth 2010:187-189).

Honneth presents different ways of how recognition can play out in interstate relations. First and foremost, he explains the importance of symbolic manifestations, e.g. the implementation of metaphors, historic rituals, mimic and gestures. These symbolic acts express respect for achievements of the country and awareness of the collective identity of the population (Honneth 2010:190). However, he does not give any practical examples for this category of symbolic

recognition. A second way of recognition playing out is the direct and outspoken recognition of achievements in a country by the head of state of another country. Honneth exemplifies this way by referring to Obama's speech in Kairo in 2009 when he explicitly valued cultural achievements of Islam (Honneth 2010: 190). Third, Honneth elaborates upon the notion of claiming for international recognition. This however, hardly ever occurs because government representatives aim for national independence; yet, publicly claiming for international recognition would express dependence and weakness (Honneth 2010:191).

When it comes to understanding and theorizing international relations, Honneth points out how important it is to not only consider the goal of wealth, welfare and self-assertion; but also to take into account how government actors strive for their country being internationally recognized. This is driven by public expectations for the leaders to take the collective identity into consideration (Honneth 2010: 192). Honneth emphasizes the impact of such expectations of international recognition within a certain population which shape foreign politics of that country. Every state depends on the appreciation of its population which can be achieved by taking the collective identity seriously (Honneth 2010:192-193). On the one hand, state leaders are expected to achieve an established and respected position within the international community, and on the other hand to work on historical experiences of humiliation or injustice. Honneth uses the picture of a scale to show how both negative and positive expectations can be the driving force for foreign politics. For the negative side, he exemplifies humiliation by referring to Germany during the Nazi regime. The Nazis made use of the experience of humiliation through the treaty of Versailles which was present in the public opinion of the population. For reasons of taking revenge the leaders were legitimized in the public opinion to act in an aggressive way concerning foreign politics. Honneth also gives a positive example by referring to the United States of America. To him, there has been a clear attempt by Obama to reconcile with the international community, because of a “widespread feeling of embarrassing isolation within the population”⁵ (Honneth 2010:193). While his example of Nazi-Germany is based on evidence, Honneth does not give proof for the positive example of the US. His argument on the negative side is therefore stronger. However, Honneth himself points out how difficult it is to specify the “we” of the population. He calls it a hypothetical, not an empirical variable which is based on random and assumed expectations forming collective narratives. These narratives serve as the legitimation for actions in foreign politics. It is even possible for a state to influence the foreign policies of other countries by influencing the population's narratives (Honneth 2010:194-199).

Honneth sums up his essay on recognition in IR by referring to various conflicts (e.g. Israeli-Palestinian, former Yugoslavia, German- Polish). He points out that recognition can be used as a means to deconstruct governmentally used narratives of humiliation and thus create peace. The former German chancellor Brandt, who fell on his knees in front of the Polish government, serves as clear illustration of this reconciling power of recognition. He makes clear that peaceful cooperation between countries is only possible if it signalizes to the local

⁵Translated from German by myself.

population that they are part of a global community of people. Thereby it is possible to create trust among populations of different countries. On this basis, more peaceful expectations of foreign politics arise (Honneth 2010: 199-201).

With regard to conflicts, Honneth's argument is very strong. IR goes beyond conflicts; yet humiliation and recognition still play a role. Wolf (2008) and Haacke (2005) shed light on a broader utilization of the theory of recognition⁶. Haacke for example refers to a number of IR studies on different topics which already include recognition as an explaining factor: works on nationalism, identity formation or international political economy (Haacke 2005:191-192). However, recognition as an overarching concept allows becoming aware of more aspects and thus to develop a more differentiated understanding. Wolf explicitly refers to the field of development studies. Development cooperation in general is striving for equality in terms of possession and rights. Therefore the field of development cooperation especially evokes expectations of recognition, while taking place in an environment of asymmetric interdependency. Development cooperation and politics is thus an important field of IR for applying the theory of recognition (Wolf 2008:36).

Wolf points out that Honneth mainly focuses on the recognition of rights, achievements and features. According to Wolf, this understanding is too narrow: Actors (including states) also strive for being respected as independent actors without delivering proof for achievements (Wolf 2008:10). For this reason Wolf uses the term respect rather than recognition. Yet, respect should not be equated with approval – not paying attention to an actor can be more harmful than criticizing him or her. Any actor wants to be taken seriously (Wolf 2008:11). Furthermore, Wolf underlines that taking an actor seriously means to take his/her need seriously (Wolf 2008:17). Although one can argue that Wolf's understanding of respect is included in Honneth's category of formal recognition/cognitive respect, Wolf's criticism widens the analytical perspective not to dismiss a state's striving for being appreciated as independent actor.

Wolf raises another problem concerning the ontology of respect/recognition in IR. He points out that respect/recognition might not be seen as an independent driving factor because it has also an instrumental nature. So striving for respect can be connected to material goals. This criticism also applies to empirically capturing recognition. How can recognition be demarcated from other interests of states if they are oftentimes interconnected (Wolf 2008:18-19)? On the one hand, Wolf himself mentions that striving for e.g. material interests frequently results from the longing for recognition (Wolf 2008:19). On the other hand, Wolf refers to the importance of intrastate discourses (Wolf 2008:16). So in order to find out about the relation of material interests and interests of recognition, it is reasonable to analyze discourses. But before working on the methodology by introducing an analytical framework, the following section deals with the critical issue of recognition and power imbalances.

⁶ Wolf, however, uses the term “respect” which will be explained later on.

2.4. Recognition and power imbalances

As mentioned above, the concept of recognition traces back to Hegel. His account of recognition uses the master slave relationship so as to illustrate how persons struggle for recognition in their respective role. The core of his reflections on recognition is the discussion of a person's autonomy and independence while emphasizing the social role. To him, independence can only be established if one is recognized by others (Markell 2009)⁷.

Since Hegel uses the master-slave-relationship to discuss recognition, the question is obvious whether or not recognition might lead to the reproduction of hierarchies and power imbalances. Several scholars draw attention to the risk of reinforcing social structures of injustice because the practice of recognition confirms certain roles. Nancy Fraser for example raises the dilemma of "identity-based injustice and the problem of economic injustice" which risk a trade-off in debates on (in)justice (Markell 2009). Honneth also elaborates on this point in reaction to Louis Althusser. The latter sees the institutional practice of recognition as a mechanism to build up subjects who are in conformity with the system, thus reinforcing power structures (Honneth 2010:104). Hence, the issue at stake is a tension between material aspects of justice (redistribution) and procedural aspects of justice in social relations (recognition). Does recognition and identity-based justice lead to a reinforcement of material injustice?

Honneth understands himself as a scholar of critical social theory. Therefore, he takes Althusser's criticism seriously. Yet, he adheres to the importance of recognition. To him, the point of origin is humiliation or misrecognition of a person which restricts her/his independence and personal autonomy (Honneth 2010:105). Furthermore, he stresses the practical aspect of recognition: mere symbolic expressions of recognition are not credible if they do not include corresponding behavior (Honneth 2010:110).

The two main points of criticism I have pointed out are: the risk to underemphasize material injustice by focusing on identity related matters and the problem of reinforcing or reproducing social inequalities by affirmative recognition. However, the criticism by Fraser and Althusser refers to inner-state relations. So how should one react to these problems on the level of interstate relations? In his reflections on recognition in IR, Honneth does not refer to the criticism. Yet, both points are applicable to the level of IR as shown by Eriksson Baaz. She e.g. mentions critics of hers who argue that the emphasis on identity is irrelevant if basic needs have not been fulfilled (Eriksson Baaz 2005:10). It is not possible to solve this problem at this point. However, it is important to bear that in mind and include it in the analytical framework so as to find out whether or not it applies to the case.

⁷ This means that a focus on identity-based injustice, might mean that less attention is paid to material injustice.

2.5. Synthesis: definition and analytical framework

To sum up the theoretical discussion of recognition, there are certain key concepts which should play a role in an empirical analysis of donor-recipient-relations. First of all, based on Honneth, recognition is understood as a possible guiding principle for interstate interaction which, if being applied, allows for processes of reconciliation and building trust. It is important to differentiate between legal and political recognition, to be precise about the range of the respective aspect of recognition. Second, if talking about political recognition, there are subgroups to be considered: Is it about the recognition of achievements and features, or about being respected as an independent actor? If it is about achievements or features – where does the frame of reference come from in an international context? Does public opinion provide narratives about experiences of humiliation which cause certain decisions in foreign policy making? Which sort of humiliation is involved: structural exclusion or vilification of individual and collective ways of life? Which discourses and discursive practices provide some insight into the interconnection between striving for materialist goals versus recognition?⁸

In contrast to an instrumental understanding of partnership, the theory of recognition emphasizes the question of how to achieve desirable interstate relations including symbolic aspects of building up equitable interstate relations. The focus is put on building trust and establishing cooperative relations. As mentioned above, on the interpersonal level Honneth argues that genuine recognition implies actions and thus takes material injustice into account. This undertaking of considering material and non-material (symbolic, procedural, identity-based) aspects of building up equitable interstate relations is very relevant with regard to development debates. The question of how to achieve an equal partnership is hardly tackled in that way. By analyzing how recognition plays out in development cooperation between the PRC and Malawi, the following question will be discussed: in how far are symbolic, procedural and identity-based aspects as well as legal and material aspects relevant for donor-recipient relations?

3. Theory of science

The theoretical framework for this thesis is based on two debates: recognition as a factor in IR and the partnership approach in development studies. One component of the concept of partnership – Barnes and Browns argue – “is about transforming power relations in a positive and socially just fashion” (Barnes – Browns:172). The same intention underlies Honneth’s theory of recognition which emphasizes the force of recognition to foster reconciliation and to empower actors to greater autonomy (Honneth 2010:201, 111). Thus, the two debates framing this thesis

⁸ Table 1a in the appendix shows an overview of the different discourses and questions according to the sections they will be discussed in.

underline the transformative aspect of social sciences. So the underlying understanding of social science in this thesis belongs to critical approaches to social science.

This positioning as critical approach is also reflected in the epistemological and ontological assumptions of this thesis. Following Jackson's (2011) distinction of epistemological and ontological understandings within IR, this thesis belongs to critical realist approaches to social science. Jackson points out that critical realists presuppose that there is a reality which is mind-independent but still goes beyond what "our perceptual and technologically augmented detections would suggest" (Jackson 2011:104): there are unobservable factors which have an influence on social and political processes. Not only material factors play a role when explaining IR but also matters of identity and symbolic interaction (Jackson 2011:73). The most important unobservable factors discussed in this thesis are recognition and humiliation. Recognition and humiliation are understood as explanatory and transformative factors for interstate relations, so that this thesis can be labeled as having a "transfactual" understanding of observed phenomena (Jackson 2011:37). With regard to this thesis, it means that the donor-recipient relations are not only explained by material factors but also by using recognition as an explanatory factor.

Norman Fairclough's approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA) shares similar ontological and epistemological assumptions: there is a social reality which social scientists try to make sense of, yet this reality is also produced and reproduced by discourses. To him, it is possible to understand as well as transform social reality by analyzing the relation of discourses to other aspects of social practices (e.g. material, values, etc.) (Chouliaraki – Fairclough 1999:4,16). Since Honneth also refers to narratives with regard to recognition and humiliation, CDA is a theoretically and methodologically justified way to approach donor-recipient relations of China and Malawi. For this reason, CDA was chosen to provide the methodological framework of this thesis.

4. Method

Discourse analysis, especially CDA, has been argued to be the best possible choice in order to find out about recognition in donor-recipient relations. Nevertheless, it is not yet clear what should be the material for CDA and how to proceed.⁹ Analyzing political recognition means to analyze how a respective population creates meaning regarding interstate relations. Based on Clifford Geertz, one can say that context related factors as societal expressions and symbols therefore play a major role in this undertaking (Simonis 2008). In order to understand the discourses, the context needs to be considered. Hence, to do

⁹ In order to develop a methodological framework, it would be useful to take other empirical studies of recognition in IR or in development studies into account. As already mentioned, political recognition has only very recently become popular within IR so that no such study provides the basis for this thesis. Eriksson Baaz' (2005) work on identity matters in development assistance is one of the few works giving some guidance on that matter.

justice to the relevance of context, this thesis performs an in-depth one-case study. So particular aspects, how recognition impacts on donor-recipient relations are most likely specific to the case of Malawi. Nevertheless, Malawi can be argued to be representative of developing countries in general. If recognition matters in donor-recipient-relations in Malawi, it will most likely matter in other developing countries, too. Yet, the particular outcome might differ.

Case selection

The selection of Malawi as a case is based on quantitative and qualitative criteria. On the quantitative level, the choice is based on factors which indicate that Malawi belongs to the group of so called developing countries. The main indicators are low income and low GDP (World Bank 2013b) which imply a need for economic development. Moreover, the Human Development Index gives a summary of shortages including social aspects. In 2012, Malawi was ranked 170 out of 187 countries (UNDP 2013). Hence, there are economic as well as social reasons to choose Malawi as a case. Yet, why to choose Malawi and not another developing country? At this point, qualitative criteria come in. Sino-Malawian cooperation has started very recently in 2008. There is hardly any research done which focuses on this cooperation. So in order to fill this gap, I decided to research the Malawian case. Furthermore, the five main projects decided upon in the initial package deal qualify as ODA (cf. Brautigam 2011b: 203-204). All of them are – except for the stadium – finished by now. Thus, after five years of cooperation, this point in time provides a good starting point for the purpose of fieldwork on Malawian assessments of the five main projects and the cooperation in general.

4.1. Data collection: semi-structured expert interviews

As there has hardly been any scientific research on Malawian relations to China, this thesis contains an explorative element (Streb 2009). The main focus, however, is theory-driven: to analyze donor-recipient relations from a perspective of the theory of recognition.

Concerning the theory-driven aspect of the research, the theory of recognition itself suggests focusing on discourses. Yet, the question of material still remains. In order for the discourse analysis to answer the research question, the material has to fulfill certain criteria. First, it has to allow for informed insights into development processes in Malawi. Second, it must deal with the case of Sino-Malawian cooperation. Third, the data needs to provide insights into Malawian understandings of recognition; so the data should reflect Malawian perspectives. These three aspects can hardly be found in written documents: newspaper articles might talk about Sino-Malawian relations but only marginally cover the aspect of development; documents of Malawian NGOs can provide insights into Malawian development processes yet not explicitly refer to Sino-Malawian cooperation. Therefore, interviews are the best possible source of

information to combine all three aspects.¹⁰

The selection of interviewees follows qualitative criteria (Flick 2007:154-155). So as to get insights from persons who are informed about development matters as well as Sino-Malawian relations, I focus on experts in both sectors: Malawian civil servants who work in ministries related to the cooperation or development matters and representatives of Malawian development NGOs. This selection is based on the idea that both groups have detailed insights and knowledge in processes of development and political processes in the country. Their expertise provides a good basis for collecting data to discuss the theoretical problem of recognition and donor-recipient relations by relating it to the specific case of Chinese infrastructure projects (cf. Flick 2007:216-218). Moreover, the interviewees can be argued to reflect more general insights than their personal views because of their expert positions at the interface of government and population. Hence, discourses occurring in their statements are likely to reflect a broader group of Malawians.¹¹

The term “expert” is of course controversial. Especially in the field of development it can be argued that there cannot be an “expert” if the goal of development is to create “greater welfare for the majority of mankind” (Jönsson et al. 2012:18). Wouldn’t it make sense to rather interview a broad selection of people from different backgrounds? How can experts or elites know about the welfare of e.g. marginalized parts of society? Even though there is a valid point in this criticism, I decided to conduct expert-interviews. The interviewees represent a broad range of different entry points to the field of development: some are working on the governmental level, others in the non-governmental sector; some work on rather community related matters, others on economic development or on human rights issues. Hence, the interviewees have broad and comprehensive insights into the field. To a certain degree they know positions of marginalized people (e.g. int. 20 who is working on slum-upgrading) and at the same time they have insights into the political situation of the country. Therefore they are most likely able to evaluate development matters in a quite differentiated matter.

The overall aim of the interviews is to shed light on aspects of recognition in Sino-Malawian cooperation. Interviews help to establish the interviewees' assessments of the Chinese infrastructure projects with regard to Malawi's development and the donor-recipient relation. In general, they provide insights into particular aspects of recognition. However, they might be biased if participants are asked directly. Against this backdrop, interviewees first have to be asked general questions about the projects. Based on these general insights, one can go on to ask in a direct manner. Semi-standardized interviews are the most reasonable way to gather this sort of data. They allow for open interview-

¹⁰ Discourses on recognition are, of course, also reflected in public media. So in order to complete the discourse analysis, it could have been useful to also consider Malawian media coverage of the topic. The scope of the thesis, however does not allow for such an extensive analysis. For being able to answer the research question, the connection between development and recognition plays an important role. Therefore, I decided to focus on experts in the development sector.

¹¹ In the following text, the interviewees are denoted by numbers. So “int. 20” means interviewee number 20. In appendix 2 you can find a list of all interviewees and their working positions which also indicates the place and date the interview took place.

questions to get an understanding of the interviewees' overall assessments. Moreover, closed questions are also possible to elicit theory-driven insights. At the same time, the interviewer does not have to ask every single question in case the interviewee mentioned the answer already (Flick 2007:194-221). The underlying idea of semi-structured interviews is that a better understanding of the interviewees' position is possible if the interview is rather conversational instead of sticking to a strict number and order of questions. Yet, certain important aspects need to be covered so that the data can be compared (Mikkelsen 2009:169). With regard to my fieldwork, I start off by posing open questions and become more specific towards the end (See appendix no. 7). Thereby I try to avoid two problems which can occur in the process of interviewing: not to influence the interviewee by initially asking too specific questions but still to gain specific insights I need for my research goal.

It is difficult to operationalize the concept of recognition. There are only a few indicators which can deliver information about the interviewees' assessment of recognition within the field of development (cf. Mikkelsen 2009:164). By starting off asking open questions about the participants' evaluation of the projects, I obtain knowledge about their context and overall assessments which help to interpret answers corresponding to leading questions (Kvaale – Brinkmann 2009:171). By posing questions about partnership, visibility and symbolism, I aim directly at issues of recognition.¹² However, these questions risk to be leading the interviewee in terms of which aspects to emphasize. One clear example is the question “The projects bring a visible change to the landscape of Malawi (Lilongwe especially). How do you evaluate this visibility?” By asking about visible changes, I risk to guide the interviewees. Yet, the interviewees answered in very different ways (interpreting visibility in various ways). Furthermore their previous answers help to evaluate how important they weigh the issue of visible changes. Many actually mention visibility by themselves before explicitly being asked about it.

The reflections above deal with the quality of the attained data. By choosing a conversational approach and conducting semi-structured interviews, I aim at attaining information about the case, the interviewees' evaluation of the case and the context of the interviewee. On that basis, I obtain insights on aspects of recognition in development discourses in Malawi.

My role as a researcher and ethical concerns of interviewing

So far, only data-related criticism on interviews has been discussed. Nevertheless, there are also ethical concerns. In general, development research has to reflect upon unequal power relations which are inherent in the field itself: The normative dimension of development research has already been mentioned – to study low income countries as a researcher from a high income country necessarily implies a differentiation between “us here and them there” (Mikkelsen 2009:326). The dominance of western science in development studies is a factor reinforcing power relations (Mikkelsen 2009:326). As a German student at Lund University, I am part of the dominant group within the field. Whilst conducting research in the

¹² An overview on the guiding questions can be found in the appendix (no. 8).

field and analyzing the findings, I have to pay attention to this imbalance in power. It can for example be argued that interviewees do not answer in a free way because they feel restricted by power imbalances. In my case, however, the fact that I interviewed elites and experts helps to partly circumvent this problem (Kvale – Brinkmann 2009:147) because their institutional power is a lot greater than mine as a student. Furthermore, I attempt to create a comfortable interview situation by visiting the interviewees at their workplace and by communicating in a friendly manner. Overall, the interviewees' answers reflect quite diverging and even critical positions. I would therefore argue that the imbalance in power does not come severely into effect.

Another important aspect to reflect upon is the process of getting access to interviewees. For the purpose of not being one-sided, I use different entry points into the field. Therefore, I make use of different channels for accessing interviewees: the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Norwegian embassy, private contacts to an NGO and a lawyer, internet research and an e-mail-list for ex-patriots living in Lilongwe. Then I asked every interviewee for help to find other possible participants according to the snowball-system (Rathbun 2009)

Further ethical concerns relate to the privacy of the interviewees and their personal interests (Kvale – Brinkmann 2009:174-175). In order to not abuse the participants' information, I offered to send them the statements included in the thesis by email so that they could check if they agreed with the way I understood and represent their answers. Most of them agreed; others were fine by being quoted without a second consent. Furthermore I do not include the interviewees' names in my thesis: their working position and type of organization provide sufficient information to contextualize their insights.

4.2. Data analysis: critical discourse analysis

As mentioned above, Honneth's theory suggests considering narratives of humiliation which influence the foreign policies of a country (Honneth 2010:194-199). Honneth thus suggests focusing on collective ways of understanding and interpreting so as to shed light on recognition, respectively humiliation. In general, discourse analysis likewise aims for uncovering ways in which meaning is attributed. Hence, a discourse analysis is a very useful way to locate the role of recognition in donor-recipient relations as perceived by Malawians.

Discourses can be understood epistemologically as "abstract entities established on the basis of repetition and recurrence over time and in diverse social sites" and "ontologically they appear in the concrete form of particular texts" (Fairclough 2009:324). These "abstract entities" are based on a common understanding and a shared ascription of meaning to certain phenomena (Jorgenson – Phillips 2002:10-12). A major focus of discourse analysis is language as instrument to ascribe meaning. Discourse analysts assume that "our access to reality is always through language" (Jorgenson – Phillips 2002:8). Yet, meaning is not only ascribed by language, but also by other "semiotic elements",

e.g. nonverbal communication and images (Chouliaraki – Fairclough 1999:38). Hence, discourse analysis aims at finding out how meaning is ascribed and which understandings are most common and dominating.

Even though all discourse analysts agree that language is a key to accessing social phenomena, the role of language is debated. There are radical constructivist approaches as well as critical ones. CDA does not consider language to be the only social practice constructing reality. Other factors are also understood to be relevant, e.g. material factors or values (Chouliaraki – Fairclough 1999:6). However, language and other semiotic processes allow for accessing and framing these factors. According to Fairclough, it is important to analyze the “relations between semiotic and other social elements” (Fairclough 2010:231). Not language itself is central but rather the “linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures” (Meyer et al. 2007:146). Concerning the “critical” aspect of CDA, the scholars agree that it should address social problems (Fairclough 2010:235; Meyer et al. 2007:146).

The starting point for this thesis – unequal donor-recipient relations – fits to this agenda of dealing with social problems. As discussed in the previous section, this problem clearly corresponds to economic structures. So in the context of discussing development, a critical approach to discourses is reasonable; for the whole concept of development is dealing with social phenomena beyond the ascription of meaning, as e.g. material injustice.

The above gives an overview of discourses in general and the agenda of CDA. The question of how to conduct the analysis is not yet answered. Fairclough himself suggests two intertwining approaches for critical discourse analysis: He emphasizes that the analysis should follow three steps; namely to start by closely analyzing textual features, then putting them into context with other discursive practices and finally consider sociocultural practices (cf. Meyer et al. 2007:152; Fairclough 2010:238). Moreover, he outlines a broader framework of how to address a social problem making the social problem the starting point. This framework focusses on eliciting obstacles and solutions in order to overcome this social problem (Fairclough 2010:235-243; Chouliaraki – Fairclough 1999:65).

The analysis of the interview material adopts Fairclough’s and Meyer et al’s approach in a modified way. Fairclough states that theory and method cannot clearly be distinguished in CDA (Fairclough 2010: 234). As this statement suggests, it is difficult to derive clear instructions on how to conduct CDA. The methodological framework thus has to be guided by the research interest. For this paper, it means to use aspects of CDA to help uncover the role of recognition in donor-recipient relations as perceived by Malawians.

How to proceed

Based on the above, the following paragraphs introduce the methodological proceeding for the analysis. First of all, it is important to identify the relevant discourses within the interview material. This means to find out current issues at stake or a general understanding of social processes and social coexistence.

According to Honneth (2010:195) narratives are based on a hypothetical, not an empirical “we” of the population. He furthermore draws attention to the ethnic and cultural diversity within a state (Honneth 2010:185). So it is not

possible to speak of only one collective identity and one single narrative. Hence, when conducting discourse analysis, it is necessary to pay attention to dominating discourses as well as sub- and counter-discourses. There are different ways to make sense of one topic. Within one thematic discourse there is usually one dominant discourse which affects the whole field. Moreover, there can be one or more sub-discourses which do not correspond to the dominant one but provide alternative or contradictory ways of creating meaning. Therefore, within one discourse there can be reproductive and transformative aspects (cf. Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999:63). Against this backdrop, the “we” Honneth refers to, provides difficulties for the analysis because it cannot be grasped clearly. In this thesis, the group recognition refers to, is the interviewees’ perception of their country and population as a community which belongs together in view of other international actors.

So as to better understand the aspect of recognition, it is thus not only necessary to look at one dominant discourse but also to consider sub-discourses and to question why a certain understanding is more dominant than another one. For this reason, the context the discourses evolve in also has to be considered – in a socio-cultural and historical as well as an intertextual way (Meyer et al. 2007:146). Why does a certain understanding dominate? Who says what in which context? How does a discourse relate to other? In order to answer these questions, one must also consider non-discursive social practices. The economic situation and job position of a person may very well influence his/her ways of creating meaning.

For the analysis of the text as such, it makes sense to use a rather content related analysis instead of a linguistic analysis (cf. Jorgenson – Phillips 2002:69;82). Features such as the chain of arguments are more likely to reveal the significance of recognition with regard to donor-recipient relations. This assessment is based on two main arguments. Firstly, language barriers play a role for me as a researcher and for the interviewees. For none of us English is the mother tongue and our use of language has developed in different contexts. Hence, in this case linguistic features are less reliable than content related ones. Secondly, all of the relevant aspects of the theory of recognition outlined in section 2¹³ relate more to contents of answers than to their linguistic features.

The concept of “warrants” provides a useful tool for this content related form of textual analysis. Stephen Toulmin breaks down arguments in different parts. He differentiates between claims (the conclusion that should be accepted) and evidence (which provide reasons to believe the claim). A “warrant” is the reasoning used to connect the two aspects of claim and evidence (Schuetz 2009). The three aspects of claim, warrant and evidence help to better grasp the interviewees’ arguments and reveal discourses relating to recognition in their answers.

On the basis of the above, the following steps derive for the proceeding of the analysis. First of all a rather text focused analysis is performed which focuses on content; mainly the chains of argument. Moreover, comparisons of the

¹³ These aspects are discourses on the recognition of achievements, features, humiliation, independent agency of the state, acceptance in the international community.

discursive practice as reflected in the different interviews are discussed, as is the interplay between the discourses, including the interplay between dominant discourses and sub- or counter-discourses. Furthermore, sociocultural practices are important when investigating how certain discourses become dominant whereas others remain marginal. A second part of the analysis uses a more theory driven approach when analyzing the overarching social practice of recognition and donor-recipient relations.

4.3. Organizing the interview material

I conducted more than 20 interviews (see appendix 2). 17 of them are relevant for the discourse analysis¹⁴ because these interviewees are either working for local Malawian development NGOs, as civil servants for the ministry of development, ministry of foreign affairs or of finance; or they are working in another field which makes them experts on development issues. As every interview lasted around 45 to 60 minutes, the amount of material is quite large. For this reason, it is necessary to organize the interview material in a well-structured manner in order to analyze it.

In general, both inductive and deductive ways can be used to approach texts. An inductive way of e.g. open coding allows eliciting patterns and exceptions in the text (Mikkelsen 2009: 182). One might argue that by starting off from the textual basis there is a smaller risk of imposing one's own biased and theory driven perspective on the interviews. However, critics of inductive approaches argue that a researcher always has certain concepts in mind. By not making them explicit, the analysis can be even more biased. So as to avoid this bias, I use a hermeneutic approach to organize the data. Hermeneutic means that the relation between a specific part and the context can only be understood in a dynamic process of considering both aspects and their reciprocal effects on each other. (Meyer 2001). With regard to finding out discourses at stake, a hermeneutic approach therefore means to also consider theoretical insights which tell something about the context.

After transcribing the interviews, they were organized to find out about the most frequently occurring discourses. This means, I first of all organized the material according to frequently occurring topics and ways of ascribing meaning. On this basis, I structured the topics according to broader groups. These groups represent what I name a 'discourse': an issue at stake or a general understanding of social processes and social coexistence, e.g. sovereignty, which is not necessarily directly mentioned by the interviewees but touched upon in their way of ascribing meaning to certain topics. Within one discourse, there usually is a dominant discourse and several sub-discourses. Thereafter, the different discourses have been clustered according to aspects of recognition they relate to.

¹⁴ The other interviews serve as sources of information on Sino-Malawian relations in general (e.g. with the Director of the Political Section and Press officer at the Chinese Embassy in Malawi (int. 8); with the Deputy Project Manager of the Malawi International Conference Center and Business Hotel (Shanghai Construction Group General Company) (int. 16), or helped to facilitate contact with other interviewees.

By grouping the statements according to the forms of recognition and theoretically oriented subgroups, it seems as if the discourses on recognition are demarcated very clearly. This, however, is not the case and different forms of recognition may be illustrated in the same discourse. Nevertheless, categorization is necessary for analytical reasons. The organized interview material can be found in the appendix (tables 3-6).

5. Analysis

As a result of the theoretical and content-related discussion above, the analysis aims at two goals.¹⁵ First, the importance of recognition in the context of development assistance is discussed focusing on Chinese infrastructure projects in Malawi in order to generate a deeper understanding. Secondly, on the basis of these findings it is discussed, in how far recognition as a concept can enhance debates on partnership in current approaches to development. However, first of all, the case needs to be introduced.

5.1. Introduction of the case: Chinese infrastructure projects in Malawi

Sino-Malawian relations have hardly been subject of scientific research. The fieldwork I conducted in Malawi thus also aimed at getting insights into the agreements between China and Malawi, the sectors of cooperation and the current state of the projects in focus.¹⁶ The following overview only concerns governmental cooperation, no private investments.

Sino-Malawian relations were established on December 28th 2007 and the cooperation was launched in the beginning of 2008 (Lin 2008). At that time, Malawi ended diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan) in order to be able to start the cooperation with Beijing. With the purpose of fostering the One-China-Policy, the PRC does not maintain or establish diplomatic relations to countries which consider the ROC an independent state (Brautigam 2011a:67-70).

The launch of the cooperation was manifested in a package deal: an agreement to take over the construction of the Karonga-Chitipa road and the parliament building which had been started by the ROC; and to construct a new stadium, a conference center and five-star hotel and a university. The construction

¹⁵ An overview of the analytical framework of this thesis can be found in the appendix (table 1b).

¹⁶ The information in this section is based mainly on interviews with the Director of the Political Section and Press officer at the Chinese Embassy in Malawi (int. 8); with the Deputy Project Manager of the construction company building the Malawi International Conference Center and Business Hotel (Shanghai Construction Group General Company) (int. 16); the Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance (interviewee 18) and his assistant who works at the Chinese desk in the ministry (int. 19). Moreover, I rely on official documents of the Malawian government as well as newspaper articles.

of these five projects has now been finished, except for the stadium. The total cost is around 291 Million US-Dollars (Government of Malawi; int. 19).

The budget for constructing the parliament building (40 million US-Dollars) was offered as a grant. It was completed in June 2011; enforced by the Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Group Co., Ltd. (AFECC), to be exact the *Sogecoa* company.¹⁷ It is located in the capital city of Malawi, Lilongwe (see appendix no. 8). The road from Karonga to Chitipa in the North of Malawi was offered as a grant, too, costing around 11.5 Million US-Dollars¹⁸. It was finished in June 2012.

The other three projects were funded by concessionary loans from the Export-Import Bank of China (Exim Bank) (Aid data 2013a, int. 8, 19). The conference center, five star Hotel and presidential villas required a budget of 95 Million US-Dollars. However, only 92,5 Million US-dollars were offered as a loan by Exim Bank, the rest was advanced on loan by the Shanghai Construction group in charge of this project (int. 16). The conference center was to host the summit of the African Union in 2012. For this reason the construction needed to be expedited and was finished in April 2012. However, due to political reasons, the conference did not take place in Malawi. The conference center and hotel are currently operated by Sunbird hotels which already run two hotels in Lilongwe. Yet, the government has not provided an operator yet to be fully in charge of the conference center (int. 16).

Construction of the University of Science and Technology in Thyolo (Southern Region of Malawi) was finished in 2012 requiring an 80 Million US-Dollar loan. It was also constructed by *Sogecoa* (int. 19; Aid data 2013c). Construction of the stadium has only been started in 2012 and is not yet finished. The 65 Million US-Dollar project is also implemented by *Sogecoa* (int. 19).

Sogecoa has played a major role in the realization of the projects agreed upon in the package deal of 2008. Three out of the five projects were implemented by them. At the same time, the company has become involved in oil exploration in Lake Malawi. In 2012, it acquired the license for oil exploration by the Malawian government without a formal application that was required by all other potential candidates for oil exploration (malawi today 2012). This fact evokes the impression that the agreement of 2008 included certain additional, non-transparent conditions. However, I could not obtain any concrete information on that issue.

Malawian and Chinese cooperation has continued beyond the initial package deal. The most recent publication on foreign aid by the Malawian government (Malawi Aid Atlas 2010/2011) states that the PRC has become increasingly important as a donor (providing a support of 96 Million US-Dollars in 2010/2011). Only four donors exceeded the input by the PRC, namely USAID (\$125 Million), the World Bank (\$124 Million), the British DfID (\$110 Million) and the EU (\$97 Million) (Government of Malawi 2011), making China the third

¹⁷ While interviewee 8 says that *Sogecoa* is a “private construction company”, other sources state that the AFECC is a Chinese state-owned enterprise (Aid data 2013b).

¹⁸ I converted the value from the budget indicated in a report by the Malawian government. It was indicated in Malawi Kwacha. Due to the high instability of the Malawi Kwacha exchange rate, it is not possible for me to indicate the exact amount of money granted for this project.

largest bilateral donor to Malawi in 2010/2011.

Apart from infrastructure, China has increasingly become involved in other sectors of development in Malawi: agriculture, health and education. With regard to agriculture, the following projects can be named: construction of an Agriculture Development Center in Salima was started in 2012 (int. 2) and 6000 boreholes were installed all over Malawi (int. 8). A three-party cooperation between Malawi, China and the Food and Agriculture Organization coordinated the knowledge exchange between Malawian farmers and Chinese technicians and experts for agriculture technologies (int. 8). Concerning education, China supports Malawi mainly by granting scholarships for university studies (40 per year) and for training and seminars in China (200 per year) (int. 8). The health sector was supported by China in form of providing medication, machines and a medical team of 15 doctors (int. 8). Ever since the cooperation between Malawi and China started, there has also been a massive increase in Chinese trade with Malawi. The manager for planning and research of a Malawian government organization working on investment (int. 10) stated before establishing “diplomatic ties with China, FDI from China was rare but it grows significantly after the diplomatic ties have been established and it grows by far.” According to him, the main investments from China concern sectors of light manufacturing, agro-processing, food processing, beverages, cornflakes and electronic assemblage (int. 10). Yet, due to protests in rural areas of Malawi, the national assembly has passed law in September 2012 in order to restrict these trade activities to urban areas. However, this law is not yet operational (int. 3).

As shown by *Sogeco*’s involvement in oil exploration and the increasing trade relations with China, there are many unresolved questions regarding details on intergovernmental agreements between China and Malawi. When questioned about repaying of the loans, the Director of the Political Section and Press officer at the Chinese Embassy in Malawi states “up to now, they haven't come to that stage of paying”. However, neither the interviewees of Malawian governmental agencies and ministries, nor the Chinese interviewees were able to provide detailed information concerning the agreements.

5.2. Text based analysis

5.2.1. Legal recognition: acceptance in the international community¹⁹

Formal recognition shall be focused on first because diplomatic relations between two states are the foundation for any other form of recognition. With regard to the analytical framework, there are supposed to be two separate sections: one on Malawi’s acceptance in the international community and another one on Malawi as an independent actor in the international arena. Yet, considering the empirical findings, the two aspects are not separated easily, but quite intertwined as shown by the following analysis of formal recognition. For this reason, the following section discusses both categories simultaneously.

¹⁹ See table 3 in the appendix for an overview of the statements this section is based upon.

The main discourse at play here is Malawi's sovereignty. Sovereignty can be understood as "absolute control [by the government] of a territory in a legal sense" (Nye 2009:168). This definition implies both: the possibility for a government to act independently as well as acceptance as an independent actor in the international community.

Even though only the sovereignty discourse can be demarcated clearly, content wise there are several subgroups relating to this major discourse. These subgroups are discussed in order to reveal the interviewees' underlying understanding of Malawi as a sovereign state.

Launch of diplomatic relations

First and foremost, many interviewees refer to the establishment of Malawi's and the PRC's cooperation. Malawi ended diplomatic relations with the ROC (Taiwan) so as to cooperate with the PRC (Mainland China) in 2007 (Brautigam 2011a:68). The interviewees do not reflect upon this matter very much but mention it as a natural occurrence in Malawi's history (int. 10, 18, 9, 2). Therefore, the interviewees' answers reflect a self-evident understanding of Malawi as a sovereign state. Malawi is seen as free to agree to or end diplomatic relations with other states. There is no doubt about Malawi's sovereignty in this sense. Therefore, there is no doubt about legal recognition as such. However, one can argue that the PRC offered greater financial support and therefore Malawi was not totally free in the decision whether or not to agree to the offers. Economic constraints are definitively involved.

Aid conditionality

The sovereignty discourse is also found in the interviewees' assessment of China's aid policies. In particular, almost all of the participants referred to the fact that China does not pose conditions on Malawi with regard to political matters. A chief economist in the Ministry of Development gave the following answer when being asked to compare western and Chinese aid:

"China; they do not demand any conditions for their aid [...]. It means they are giving you freedom. They are not tying you down. [...] So this aid with no conditions can [...] maybe aid a developing country more" (int. 17).

His claim is that aid without conditions is more helpful than help with conditions. The evidence he provides for the claim is Malawi's freedom and independence to make choices because of not being constrained by conditions. Interviewee 17's argument follows the logic that it is most effective to follow own decisions instead of being told what to do. He therefore shows an understanding of sovereignty as the right of a government to autonomously take decisions. China's non-interference policy therefore means to Malawians that Malawi is taken seriously as an independent actor. The warrant used by interviewee 17 occurs similarly in many interviews (int. 19, 20, 21, 17, 13, 12, 11, 6, 2; partly by 5, 9). Several interviewees characterize the partnership as "simplified and straight forward" (int. 21), "empower[ing]" (int. 13), "for the people" (int. 12). Others refer to China as "a friend in need" (int. 11) or having "love to give freely" (int. 6). At the same time, some interviewees underline how conditions to aid create problems for

developing countries (e.g. int. 13, 2). So the interviewees' answers show that China's non-interference to them expresses recognition of Malawi as a sovereign state because Malawi is not restricted by conditions.

However, there is also a counter-discourse occurring in the interviews when it comes to the matter of conditions: the discourse of non-transparency. Some interviewees (int. 5, 9, 14) mention a suspicion about China not imposing conditions. They fear upcoming conditions which might create massive problems for Malawi. This discourse will be tackled in more detail in part 5.2.2.2.

Support of projects without funding from western donors

Following the discourse on Malawi's sovereignty, many interviewees point out how China enables projects which would not be supported by other donors (int. 18, 12, 7, 4, 3). One of them is the director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance:

“The main comparative advantage that I see with the Chinese aid is that the Chinese are willing to go into areas where very few other cooperate partners are willing to go and that is in infrastructure. I don't think you can easily convince most of our cooperate partners to come and construct a stadium for us. I don't think you can easily convince most of our cooperate partners, traditional donors, to construct these buildings, so the parliament, the conference center and so forth. So the Chinese are coming in to address those resources which would have otherwise been difficult for us to mobilize. So I think that's the main comparative advantage that I see with the Chinese” (int. 18)

As pointed out by Deborah Brautigam (2011a:28,77), the focus of dominant approaches to development is on social development. This assessment is reflected in interviewee 18's response. He argues that there is a gap in donor-support of infrastructure projects; yet this is needed in Malawi. Thus, his answer expresses that Malawi's actual needs are embraced and taken seriously by China. This, again, implies recognition of Malawi's sovereignty: the needs detected by Malawi are taken seriously by China without questioning their necessity. Malawi's perception of these projects as genuine need for the country's development is accepted by China. Interviewee 7 brings in a supplementary aspect by referring to the Paris Declaration, thus combining the aspect of conditionalities and self-assessment of project-needs:

“Then you say, okay if you are giving us aid without preconditions, then that's what we need. Why, because that is [...] somehow in line I think with the Paris Declaration. Because what you are saying is: every country has to develop its own strategy and the donors have to be there simply to support, what the recipient country feels is good for them.” (int. 7)

Both – China's proceeding of not imposing supplementary political conditions and China's support of projects which are not funded by other donors but represent genuine needs for Malawians – are part of the Chinese principle of non-interference (Brautigam 2011a:134). This principle means to the interviewees that Malawi's sovereignty is recognized, mainly in terms of decision making. For

this reason, the Paris Declaration's principle of ownership is a reasonable point to be mentioned by interviewee 7. He raises the question if ownership and sovereignty are compatible with conditionalities and non-support of projects which are important in Malawi's assessment? This question will be revisited in part 5.4.

The dominant discourse within the discourse on sovereignty is the understanding of China as a donor who does not force conditions upon the Malawian government: neither political and economic conditions nor strict requirements concerning the type of projects constructed. So the interviewees mainly perceive China's role as a donor who is supportive of Malawi's agency and sovereignty. Nevertheless, the counter-discourse expressing suspicion about China not imposing conditions is relevant with regard to Malawi's sovereignty. It reflects the underlying comprehension that China is a powerful actor with the power to harm Malawi.

5.2.2. Political recognition

While the aspect of legal recognition has already shed light on obstacles concerning the constitution of an equitable donor-recipient relation, the analysis now focuses on discourses relating to the aspect of political recognition and symbolic interaction between states.

5.2.2.1. Recognition of achievements or features²⁰

Three discourses are relevant regarding different ways of recognition for achievements or features: modernization, internationalization and prestige.

Modernization

As mentioned above modernization theory can be briefly summed up as a theory of societal progress deriving from economic growth and integration, technological advancement and efficiency. With regard to modernization discourse, the statement by a principal economist of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development exemplarily reflects the idea of progress: "by the end of the day we want to see Malawi go forward" (int. 7). The use of the word "go forward" returns in several other statements by other interviewees using similar vocabulary: e.g. "move out from where we are to the next level" (int. 10), "cannot live the past life" (int. 6). The notion of progress is mirrored in more concrete explanations about changes on the level of economy, efficiency and technology. Interviewee 11 for example points out that "[w]hat they have built is modern technology. It's high, it's good" (int. 11). As interviewee 11 equalizes high with good, the majority of the interviewees connects the new projects as such with progress on different levels and evaluates this positively (int. 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12). Moreover, efficiency plays a major role with regard to modernity coming into effect on two levels. On the one hand, many interviewees value highly the very efficient realization of the infrastructure projects: "I can see that it's moving at very fast pace" (int. 18, cf. 19, 4). On the other hand, the interviewees emphasize that the projects have drastically improved efficiency of everyday life. They mainly refer to the time

²⁰ See table 4 in the appendix for an overview of the statements this section is based upon.

saved when traveling from Karonga to Chitipa, as e.g. interviewee 4 “11 hours to 2.5 hours: is that not development?” (cf. int. 3, 4, 5, 11, 14, 17). Overall, the interviewees’ chain of argumentation with regard to modernization is as follows: They claim that technological etc. changes installed by Chinese projects are necessary, due to an ultimate need for progress and efficiency.

Nevertheless, there is criticism concerning the quality of the projects. Repeatedly, the low quality of Chinese products is criticized. The interviewees transfer their experiences with Chinese products to the durability of the constructed projects (e.g. int. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 20). “They are not durable but you still have a new thing” (int. 7) is an exemplary assessment of the situation. New is equated with progress so that even supposedly non-durable but new buildings are equated with a certain degree of progress. Certain interviewees likewise criticize the projects’ focus on infrastructure while to them it would be more urgent to address rural poverty (int. 2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 14, 20). Some only see rural poverty addressed in the road project (int. 2, 17, 11). Nonetheless, these interviewees appreciate the overall progress reflected by the projects. Interviewee 2 for example points out that the “modern structures” in the capital are difficult to be appreciated by people in rural areas where the majority of Malawians live. However, his argument follows the logic of a trickle-down effect: he suggests that the development in the cities will encroach on rural areas later on. This critical sub-discourse therefore still follows the logic of modernization discourse.

Only one interviewee clearly reflects a counter-discourse: dependency theory. Interviewee 9 points out that “[i]f they were bringing in industrialization when you have machines – that would create employment for the people! But these [Chinese] developments, they are just done”. Furthermore he notes that “the conference center right now is not useful. Right now they don't use it [...]. So I think, it came earlier just to beautify the city” (int. 9). In his view, the cooperation clearly leads to an increasing dependence because the knowledge about industrialization remains with the contractors. Also other interviewees criticize the fact of Chinese laborers working for the construction (int. 2, 17, 21). Yet, only interviewee 9 goes as far as denigrating all of the projects “To me, beauty coming before time, it's not beauty”. He is very much in favor of community based social development.

The above shows that modernization theory is the dominant discourse in the interviewees’ ways of argumentation. It serves as a framework of evaluation. Progress in terms of economy, efficiency and technology is an achievement which is valued with regard to Malawian development processes. Yet, so far, nothing has been said about the matter of recognition. By analyzing discourses on internationalization and prestige, it becomes clear how the achievements of modernization are related to recognition.

Internationalization and prestige²¹

Certain interview questions aimed at gaining insights into the aspect of prestige. For example, I asked about the symbolic value and visibility of changes in Malawi caused by Chinese infrastructure projects. The beauty of the buildings and the

²¹ See table 4 in the appendix.

significant changes in the capital were two main issues coming up in many interviews. “Beauty” and “prestige” can be illustrated by the example of interviewee 12:

“In terms of the capitals [cities in Africa] Malawi is almost the last in terms of beauty. So when the Chinese have built the new things, people are happy to say now: our capital is coming up! We want to be compared with other countries.”

Analyzing the linguistic features of this statement, several aspects are striking. The word “beauty” is equalized with progress (“coming up”) and is seen as measurable on a scale (“be compared”, “almost the last”). Interviewee 12's statement reflects a desire for being proud of the capital and for being “compared with” other countries. The last sentence implies the idea of having a status comparable to other countries and to be recognized by others. There is a chain of arguments here: beauty implies progress which again implies recognition by others. This chain can be found in many other interviewees' answers (int. 14, 12, 11, 9, 13).

The feeling of happiness is connected to the upcoming beauty interviewee 11 talks about. This connection is also expressed in other interviewees' answers (int. 5, 12, 14, 4). Interviewee 4 for example refers to his experience of visiting the Parliament in a very positive manner, also connecting happiness with beauty: “It was wonderful, very very magnificent building and I was happy to be there”. Beauty can also work as encouragement for Malawians, as Interviewee 14 points out “The beauty [...] will encourage the people to look at things in a positive way.” To him, a beautified city necessarily creates beauty of the citizens. To sum up this argument, there is a number of interviewees who agree on the idea that the construction of new buildings increases the beauty of the capital and consequently transmits beauty onto the nation and the citizens. It allows for increased national pride. This understanding is the dominant discourse reflected in the interviews. However, there are several counter-discourses, too. All interviewees appreciate the beauty of the new buildings, yet some are critical about it: “To me, beauty coming before time, it's not beauty” (int. 9). Interviewee 9 points out, how many social problems exist in Malawi which should be solved first instead of constructing impressive buildings. To him, it is mainly disturbing that the conference centre is not in use and thus only serving as a “landmark” with no significance. Nevertheless, such doubtful remarks concerning the beauty are less common among the interviewees. The dominant narrative is that the projects create beauty allowing for greater pride of the country. The fact that this beauty is created through foreign grants and loans does neither diminish the beauty nor the pride.

The terms “beauty” and “magnificence” are mentioned numerous times (int. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14, 20) with regard to the projects. These positive attributes refer to the visual aspects of the projects. In a similar manner as the interviewee above, the following interviewee illustrates the relation between beauty and pride of the capital “Lilongwe is our capital. So if our capital city is seen as beautiful, it's the pride of the country” (int. 13). Furthermore he points out that it is especially relevant to have visible signs of importance in the capital “when someone comes in a foreign country” (int. 13). So prestige is on the one

hand relevant for the population and on the other hand it is valued by the population for reasons of recognition by non-Malawians. The argument thus goes as follows – prestige adds value to the country which leads to international recognition.

This nexus of prestige and international recognition is also reflected in the interviewees' emphasis on Malawi's internationalization. The director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance states that Malawi was the “only country in the region which did not have a proper international conference center but now we do have one and we can now host international meetings, we can now host head of states” (int. 18). The word “international” occurs twice and interviewee 18 refers to “head of states”. This statement reflects that the conference center contributes to Malawi’s internationalization. Malawi has not only become more integrated in processes of cross-border activities, it is now perceived as an actor of importance in international political events. Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union (AU) meetings were mentioned by several interviewees (int. 4, 14, 16). Apparently, the interviewees value the fact that influential international actors are now more likely to visit Malawi.

Moreover, several interviewees assume an increase in international tourism because of the five-star hotel (int. 17, 13, 12, 4). Apparently internationalization is not only of value because of high-level visits by presidents. Interviewee 13 points out: “People, at the end of the day will be able to know that there is Malawi on the world map” (int. 13). The argument concerns two aspects. First, the newly constructed buildings lead to Malawi being noticed internationally because they attract international visitors or politicians. Second, the newly constructed buildings add value to the appearance of Malawi, especially the capital Lilongwe.

At this point the connection to the modernization discourse becomes evident. The parliament, especially the conference center and the stadium are argued to be beautiful, adding prestige and turning Malawi into an internationally integrated place. The modernization discourse constitutes the benchmark for this assessment: As the projects correspond to criteria as efficiency, technological changes and economic growth, they symbolize Malawi's progress. In this light they are reflecting beauty: the beauty of progress and success. Due to these obvious changes in the capital, the international importance is argued to have increased because Malawi has more to offer internationally (conference center, beautiful buildings, presidential houses). The changes hence reflect achievements which lead to international recognition.

In the interviews, international recognition of Malawi's achievements is mainly framed by a discourse following modernization theory. Since the modernization discourse is so dominant in the interviewees’ answers, they seem to feel mainly recognized by international actors (presidents and tourists) for achievements of modernization. Counter-discourses on dependency and social development, however, do play a role. As mentioned above, several interviewees point out the importance of solving rural poverty and therefore criticize certain aspects of the Chinese infrastructure investments. To them, incorporating Malawians into the construction process for employment purposes is of great

importance. Social development therefore plays an important role, too. Nevertheless, the end products are valued highly by the interviewees for their modernizing value. The aspect of progress remains important.

Two main findings can be summarized. First of all, achievements of prestige – such as beautiful buildings and progress in technology or efficiency – play a role in order for the interviewees to feel worthy to be recognized and to feel recognized. Secondly, when analyzing recognition, it is important to pay attention to the dominant discourse which frames the achievements to be recognized for, in the case of Malawi it is the modernization discourse.

Of course, it can be argued that the research focus lies on infrastructure projects which are more likely to be associated with modernization than e.g. education or health projects. So there is a risk of circular arguing: Looking at modernization related projects, the modernization discourse of course turns out to be the dominant one. So should all the above be dropped again? It may not be possible to argue that modernization is more appreciated with regard to development in Malawi than e.g. social development. However, it is impossible to investigate matters such as prestige and symbolic recognition, if not focusing on a case which connects to these aspects. So the choice of these five projects is still justified. The argument becomes even stronger: Even interviewees who are mainly working for social development (int. 20, 14, 12, 11, 9, 6, 5, 4, 13) point out the importance of efficiency, technology and economic growth which they associate with the beauty, visibility and prestige of the infrastructure projects. Clearly, the interviewees see the projects as symbols of progress making Malawi worthy to be recognized internationally.

5.2.2.2. Humiliation: discourses on power-imbalance²²

When discussing humiliation, Honneth suggests that oftentimes public opinion provides narratives of humiliation which serve as a basis for decision-making processes in foreign politics. Several experiences of humiliation play a role in the interviewees' lines of argumentation; namely nontransparent processes, Malawi as a non-powerful actor/ least developed country (LDC) and – to a minor degree – domination by western countries.

Non-transparency

Regarding non-transparent processes, there are two slightly different lines of argumentation. On the one hand, interviewees criticize the lack of public involvement of citizens. On the other hand, many participants express concerns about the future of the cooperation and possible upcoming demands by China. The former is distinctly brought forth by interviewee 9:

“Because still now, many Malawians don't know – what is a grant among the projects and which one is a loan. Because the executive does that and there is no proper communication to the local level, to the ground – so everyone can be aware. The impact is that we might end up with a lot of infrastructure that have been done by the Chinese without our full involvement. Because we are not fully

²² See table 5 in the appendix for an overview of the statements this section is based upon.

involved.” (int. 9)

In his account, the cooperation is only taking place at governmental level, as the word “executive” implies. There is no “involvement”, thus no agency of the majority of the population. The great majority even rests uninformed. The statement reflects the projects as top-down approaches which do not take into account the majority of Malawians: decisions are made without their consent. Hence, he reflects a civil society oriented understanding of governance: governance should be based on and including civil society (Chambers et al 2009). This concern is shared by other interviewees (int. 14, 6) but does not represent the dominant understanding reflected in the interviews. Yet, these three interviewees point out a relevant aspect concerning the question of recognition/humiliation. Just as in other African countries, negotiations in Malawi mainly took place without consulting the national parliament (Dubosse 2010:80; int. 2). The centralised decision-making processes thus tend to exclude the people's representatives. Hence, exclusion of the public from decision-making processes is somewhat humiliating for the Malawian population. However, this is rather unimportant to most interviewees – only interviewees 14, 6 and 9 point out the lack of civil societal participation.

Another concern about non-transparency that is very frequently expressed touches upon a different level. It is shared by several interviewees (int. 2, 5, 9, 11, 20). “What is it these guys are getting from us [...] It could be people at top government level are aware of that but I'm not” (int. 2) is stated by a chief legal officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This officer was even present in negotiations about the parliament and conference center but points out that the contracts are closed. At the same time he expects similar developments in Malawi as in other African countries which cooperate with China. These concerns refer to a dominant discourse concerning African-Chinese cooperation: resource extraction/exploitation. While some of the interviewees neglect that China might be aiming for Malawian resources (int. 8, 12), interviewee 9 brings up *Sogecoa*'s involvement in oil-exploration in Lake Malawi (see section 5.1.). In any case, concerns exist that there are negative ramifications to come which cannot be foreseen at present by the majority of Malawians. It can be argued that this uncertainty contains a moment of humiliation; for the citizens are not informed, thus not taken seriously (or just ignored). Moreover, they expect unpleasant surprises of resource extraction. In the line of argumentation of the interviewees, these non-transparent processes reflect a clear power imbalance.

Vulnerability

The moment of power-imbalance is also reflected by many statements about Malawi being a developing country, LDC and a small state. These statements can be labeled as the vulnerable state discourse (c.f. Lee – Smith 2010). One of the principal economists at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development points out, “In a case you are a country that is so much looking for aid, you have a case where there are no preconditions, then it's good for you” (int. 7). By using the emphasizing expression “so much”, the interviewee clearly depicts Malawi as a powerless actor: help is desperately needed. This account of Malawi's incapacity of acting independently is also depicted in answers by other interviewees. The

whole country is subsumed in a generalizing account as being “poor” (int. 12, 6), in need of outside “assistance”, “aid” or empowerment (int. 4, 7, 11), being unknown (int. 13). On the one hand, this vulnerable state discourse serves as a narrative legitimizing the need for foreign grants and loans. On the other hand, it has a connotation of humiliation because Malawi's government and population are depicted as utterly in need of support and thus powerless. So the warrant in the argument works as follows: the interviewees claim Malawi being in need of outside support which they proof by stating how poor and vulnerable Malawi is on its own. This warrant, however, obviously reinforces the power-imbalance between donor and recipient because it suggests that Malawian agency is only possible with outside help.

Domination by western countries

Only a few interviewees explicitly criticize western supremacy in Malawi. “But for the west we find, there's nothing they do apart from squeezing you” is remarked by interviewee 12. This metaphor expresses a clear power-imbalance in Malawian relations to western states. A more nuanced depiction of this power-imbalance is given by a chief economist in the Ministry of Development. He refers to “problems accessing your markets, for instance in Europe” (int. 16). Due to western dominance, Malawi is powerless – that's the essence of this discourse. Both interviewees tie in with dependency theory. Nevertheless, the discourse of humiliation by western supremacy is not dominating the interviews. They reflect a general understanding of Malawi as a rather powerless actor in international relations and development processes in general. This applies to Sino-Malawian cooperation as well as Malawian cooperation with western countries.

Concluding the analysis of aspects of humiliation, it is necessary to discuss the extent of humiliation. The discourses drawn upon in the interviews do not relate to narratives of active humiliation of Malawi by another country. They rather describe an overarching narrative of Malawi as vulnerable and powerless which is exemplified by many different situations in interstate relations. While this assessment of power-imbalances mainly concerns interstate relations, the interviewees also mention elitism in the political system: only very high-level governmental officials are fully informed and included in the decision-making processes.

5.2.3. Which discourses dominate and what is the reason?

This section aims at joining the depiction of the main discourses with the empirical foundation and theoretical framework. So as to discuss the importance of recognition for donor-recipient relations, it is indispensable to consider why certain discourses become dominant. In the discourse analysis, the following dominant discourses were identified: sovereignty, power-imbalance, non-transparency, prestige, modernization and internationalization. The former three are interrelated as are the latter three. That is why the two groups will be discussed in separate sections.

Power (im)balance: sovereignty and non-transparency

The overarching discourse here is power (im)balance. However, it concerns two different levels: the interstate level (sovereignty) and the intrastate level (transparency). The interviewees' answers refer to both levels and link to the overarching discourse on power-imbalance. The sample of interviewees provides helpful links in order to find out reasons why the discourse on power imbalance may be dominant.

In sum, the interviewees' societal and employment related positions are at the intersection between high-level government and civil society. In this spectrum – based on their positions – the NGO representatives are closer to civil society whereas the civil servants are closer to the government. Neither of them belongs to the most powerful elite within Malawian society (Cammack 2012:376) and neither of them is part of the hardly influential rural population. Yet, they have insights into both groups. For this reason, it can be assumed that the interviewees have both levels in mind when reasoning.

The dominant discourse within the discourse on sovereignty is the understanding of China as a donor who does not enforce conditions upon the Malawian government; neither political and economic conditions nor strict requirements concerning the type of projects constructed. So the interviewees mainly perceive China's role as a donor as rather supportive of Malawi's agency and sovereignty. Nevertheless, the suspicion about China not imposing conditions that is expressed in the sub-discourse is relevant with regard to Malawi's sovereignty. It implies the underlying comprehension that in the end, China is a powerful actor which might harm Malawi. This sub-discourse is, however, represented by only three interviewees who are representatives of NGOs (int. 5, 9, 14). Yet, they still evaluate Chinese non-interference as supportive of Malawi's agency and sovereignty. What might be the reason behind this rather positive assessment of non-conditionality? The interviewees are all engaged in political activities in Malawi – either on the governmental or on the non-governmental level. Only one of them is a representative of an NGO working on human rights issues; the vast majority works on development, be it in NGOs or in the Ministry of Development (int. 21, 20, 19, 18, 17, 14, 13, 11, 9, 7, 6, 5, 4). Hence, the majority of the interviewees is likely to be familiar to issues of donor funding and conditionalities. The Chinese policy of non-interference leaves scope for action and decisions. It is thus very likely that representatives of the development sector value this unconditional aid. It would be very interesting to include more representatives of human rights organizations into the sample and compare their assessments. The example of interviewee 14²³ suggests that human rights activists would be more concerned about China's non-interference.

The dominant discourse on non-transparency relates to power imbalance at intrastate level. As mentioned above, the interviewees are at the intersection between high-level government and civil society. Hence, only one of them (int. 2) participated in the negotiations and none of them has clear insights into the

²³ Interviewee 14 states: "The Chinese say, we'll build you a stadium. But we have nothing to do with whether the people going to the stadium will be slapped on their way going to the stadium" (int. 14).

agreements. So the discourse on non-transparency is very much related to the interviewees' role in society: On the one hand, they are engaged in the political processes related to Malawi's development but on the other hand, they are not fully informed about decision-making processes. Because of their political engagement, they are very much aware of issues the government keeps secret. So the dominance of the discourse on non-transparency can be explained by the interviewees' role in society. Their informed but restricted role in political processes might be their reason to criticize the non-transparency of Sino-Malawian cooperation. Therefore, it is plausible they are tying into a civil society oriented understanding of governance which pleads for transparency of political processes²⁴.

Even though the interviewees reflect critical perspectives on the level of intrastate power imbalance and the relation between political elites and less influential political actors, they do appreciate the fact that the Malawian government has greater decision-making power due to the Chinese policy of non-interference.

Prestige, internationalization and modernization

In the discourse analysis the interrelation between these three discourses has already been explained. In general, the interviewees share a positive assessment of the modernization related features (mainly progress and efficiency) concerning the projects of the package deal. Their reasoning is as follows: The modernizing aspects of the projects add on the prestige of the country and thus allow for international recognition. So the modernization discourse frames the assessment of the projects. Their prestigious value is mainly based on their modernization attributes – but why?

At this point, the previous reflections about current debates on development are helpful. In particular the criticism of postdevelopment positions serves as a framework to explain why the modernization discourse is so dominant. Scholars in this field criticize that the idea of modernizing and improving the situation of so called developing countries is inherent in any idea of development. It is therefore inevitable that progress and efficiency are widely spread values in the field of development (Ziai 2009:183). Thus, aspects of modernization are very likely to be found in any discourse on development. As the vast majority of the interviewees work in the development sector, it is also very likely that they reflect aspects of modernization discourse in their reasoning and assessment.²⁵

The above points out reasons why the discourses analyzed in the discourse analysis are the dominant ones. The reasons mainly relate to the interviewees' positions in society and their work place. Based on these reflections, the question arises whether or not the findings can to some extent be generalized. Are the

²⁴ Transparency International is one of the leading actors influencing the global discourse on transparency. Their definition of transparency is as follows: "Transparency guarantees that governments and companies provide open, accessible, timely and understandable information about their activities, funding and spending." (Fagan 2013:2)

²⁵ To develop a generalizable argument from the modernization discourse, a second empirical study would need to take place: ordinary people who do not work in the development sector need to be included in the sample of interviewees so as to avoid a possible bias.

results relevant for the majority of Malawi's citizens? Of course, the interviewees reflect the understanding of a certain group of people engaged in development matters. Yet, they are at the intersection between high-level government and civil society. So based on their societal position and political role, it is very likely that they not only reflect their working place positions but also have in mind vast parts of civil society and governmental actors.

5.3. Criticism on recognition in development: recognition vs. redistribution

The discourse analysis examines recognition as a factor in international relations. It is thus mainly concerned with symbolic aspects and matters of identity regarding development assistance. Drawing on the basic understanding of development as “a matter of re-shaping and improving people's living conditions, through economic, political and social processes”, the most obvious criticism against this thesis is to question the relevance of recognition for development. To put it in another way, one can ask if this thesis aims at displacing projects of poverty reduction with the construction of representative buildings. Do symbolic aspects actually matter in a field dealing with poverty reduction, water supply and food security (Eriksson Baaz 2005:10)? Or might focusing on recognition lead to consolidation of unequal power-relations?

In the discussion of the theoretical framework, this has already been reflected upon from a more abstract perspective. Honneth counters this criticism with two arguments. First, he points out that the aim of recognition is always to increase the counterpart's autonomy (Honneth 2010:105). Second, he argues that mere symbolic action is not credible if not corresponding to actions such as material changes (Honneth 2010:110).

At this point the criticism and counterargument must be related to the empirical findings. Concerning the criticism of a possible trade-off which replaces LDCs' material needs with recognition, Honneth's argument is proven right by the interview material. All of the interviewees highlight the economic and social benefits of the projects in the same manner as the symbolic aspects when being asked about the projects' value (see table 6 in the appendix). They refer to an increase of foreign investments, capacities of higher education and improvement on the level of democratic institutions. Hence, the interviewees attest a clear social and material value to the projects, not only a symbolic one. Yet, the sub-discourse on rural poverty reflects criticism that rural poverty is only marginally tackled by these projects. The interviewees' assessments thus reflect this tension of recognition versus redistribution. On the basis of the empirical material one can therefore argue that both aspects are important for development cooperation. Indeed, both aspects are also accredited to the package deal.

The above implicitly answers the question whether or not recognition consolidates power imbalances. Since the interviewees are very aware of material as well as recognition needs of their country, they do the opposite of consolidating power imbalances. Their critical awareness of both aspects proves a realistic possibility of transforming power relations. Following Honneth's argument of

recognition fostering autonomy, one can argue that by feeling recognized as an international actor, it becomes more likely for politically engaged people in Malawi to speak out against matters of injustice in general. Here too, the empirical material provides evidence: Interviewees e.g. criticize power imbalance and non-transparency – they do speak out against power imbalances. Of course, this empirical observation does not prove a causal relation. There is no evidence to assume that it is recognition making them speak out and work against power imbalances. However, the interview data also does not prove the contrary. There is no reason to conclude that recognition consolidates power imbalances. In order to prove this criticism right or wrong a more focused empirical analysis would need to be performed.

Finally, Wolf's (2008) criticism needs to be addressed. He emphasizes the difficulty to empirically distinguish the aspiration of recognition/respect from the striving for material goals or other interests. In his opinion, an empirical investigation should therefore focus on situations where neither material interests nor materially disadvantaged actors striving for respect are involved. This strategy may be reasonable with regard to conflicts, yet does not make sense with regard to development cooperation. As shown by the discourse analysis both aspects are important in development assistance: being recognized as an independent actor whose achievements manifest value as well as redistribution of material imbalances. So when analyzing development cooperation – as compared to e.g. conflict processes – it is even more difficult to empirically distinguish recognition from other factors. As argued above, it is the nature of development assistance to first and foremost address material needs and inequalities. In this field, recognition and redistribution are inevitably intertwined. Therefore, it is very difficult to clearly distinguish the two factors. Mere symbolic recognition, which does not imply action, does not create a relationship of recognition but appears insincere. Mere material redistribution can be interpreted as paternalistic action and thus reinforce power imbalances (cf. Eriksson Baaz 2005). Wolf's (2008) criticism hence does not really apply to the field of development assistance.

5.4. Theory driven discussion: recognition and donor-recipient relations

At this point, the empirical findings have to be combined with the theoretical goal of this thesis. To do so, we shall recall the research question: To what extent does the analysis of Sino-Malawian relations from a recognition perspective provide insights to develop a complementary understanding of the partnership approach in development debates? In addition to the original goal, the empirical insights shall also be used to shed light on Honneth's theory. Certain aspects can be amplified by the empirical data in order to make the theory of recognition more fruitful for development debates and IR.

In the discussion of the package deal the significant role of recognition in development assistance becomes evident. The discourse analysis points out specific discourses exemplifying how recognition and humiliation may come into

effect: prestige, internationalization, modernization, sovereignty, power imbalance and non-transparency.

Sovereignty and donor-recipient relations

The sovereignty discourse is linked to what Honneth calls legal recognition. Following Honneth, the aspect of legal recognition concerns only the question whether diplomatic ties exist between two states and if the state is approved by the international community. Hence, legal recognition is about the international community accepting a government's sovereign governance of a territory. With regard to Malawi, there is no doubt about its legal recognition in the international community because Malawi was the state who had the power of decision regarding the PRC's status as opposed to the ROC.

In Honneth's theory, legal recognition only plays a minor role (Honneth 2010:187). Yet, the interviews show that sovereignty matters in many additional ways as opposed to the mere question of existing diplomatic ties. Aid conditionality and the focus on funding certain projects are being perceived as interfering with Malawi's decision-making power. Hence, donors seem to interfere with Malawi's sovereignty. It becomes clear that sovereignty interference is relevant to development assistance.²⁶

In IR theory, state sovereignty has been the focus of many debates, e.g. on conflicts. One important scholar in the field is Joseph Nye. According to him, state sovereignty refers to the government's control over a territory in a legal way. However, the actual control can be affected in multiple ways (Nye 2009:168). If defined in a wide sense, intervention "refers to external actions that influence the domestic affairs of another sovereign state" (Nye 2009:166). Nye argues that even speeches and economic aid are forms of intervention although representing rather soft forms. Moreover, he points out that intervention in terms of capacity building may also be supportive of sovereignty (Nye 2009:168-169). Yet, in addition, the concept of sovereignty refers to a government's responsibility towards its people (Glanville 2011). So if a state does not take this responsibility, there may even be a need to intervene.

Nye's reflections on sovereignty and intervention help to grasp the aspect of sovereignty in the field of development more clearly. On this basis, it can be argued that state sovereignty is a very sensitive issue, especially in development cooperation. As argued before, the colonial experience and continuous structural inequality are immense obstacles when it comes to the matter of establishing equitable donor-recipient relations. This difficulty is reflected in the sovereignty discourse. The fact that China's non-interference is valued very highly by the interviewees shows how political interference appears as a threat to sovereignty. Several interviewees' statements about western dominance support this argument. In this sense, sovereignty seems to be threatened by political conditions and decision-making beyond Malawi's reach. So as to build up an equitable relation, donors have to be aware of the gradual nuances in interference. How could

²⁶ The interviewees in general state that China does not establish political or economic conditions. Yet, one can argue that the One-China-Policy and the need for Malawi to end diplomatic relations with the ROC, are political conditions China imposes on Malawi. However, since the interviewees do not refer to this fact as a constraint, it is not further touched upon in this thesis.

ownership and partnership take place or develop if the recipient is not treated as sovereign country? And what does it mean to be treated as a sovereign country?

In 2011, several donors decided to cut down budget support for Malawi, including the World Bank, the EU, Great Britain, the African Development Bank, Germany and Norway (Tran 2011). Their decision was primarily based on the human rights record of the country, e.g. violations of the right to freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of press and the persecution of homosexual women (BMZ 2011). Since Malawi's government changed in 2012 following the death of former president Bingu Wa Mutharika, Malawi's relation to the donor community improved. The new president Joyce Banda rapidly implemented multiple reforms. Therefore donors, as e.g. Germany, confirmed to increase budget support again (EPO 2012). In Malawi, the experience of being constrained by political conditions is very present. However, interviewee 14 caricatures the Chinese policy of non-interference: "the Chinese say, we'll build you a stadium, but we have nothing to do with whether the people going to the stadium will be slapped on their way" (14). Here it becomes clear that this form of non-interference can even be argued to be a form of intervention because it implicitly supports the government not taking responsibility towards its people.

This discussion of aid conditionality is not supposed to offer an answer whether or not or to what extent donors should interfere with political and human rights matters in recipient countries. If anything, it is supposed to depict certain dilemmas with regard to (non-)interference in development assistance. This difficulty and the debate on sovereignty interference go beyond the aim of this paper. Yet, for development theory and practice it is important to be aware of this sensitive matter and the inequality which can be expressed by interventions such as political conditions. The Accra Agenda for Action shows that international donors are aware of this dilemma. The document states that they "will continue to change the nature of conditionality to support ownership" e.g. by working "with developing countries to agree on a limited set of mutually agreed conditions based on national development strategies" (OECD 2008:20).

The example of aid conditions for Malawi and the discussion about sovereignty and conditionality show that intervention is inherent in interstate relations. By only marginally discussing legal recognition, Honneth does not do justice to this complexity. In Honneth's line of argumentation, political recognition is more important for achieving reconciliation and peaceful, equal interstate relations than legal recognition. Yet, through the empirical analysis and theoretical discussion it becomes explicit that the question of infringing sovereignty is more complex than the mere question of acceptance in the international community. Based on the importance of the discourse on sovereignty one can argue that it depends on multiple additional aspects if a state is accepted by the international community.

Wolf (2008) also criticizes the narrowness of Honneth's theory. To him it is important to differentiate between more than formally accepting the existence of a state on the one hand; and building up political relations on the other hand. Concerning the matter of sovereignty, it is not easy to determine if encroachments

on a states' sovereignty belong to the political or to the legal sphere of recognition. There is a grey area at the interface of the two poles.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the discussion of sovereignty. First, Honneth's theory of recognition can become more fruitful for IR if discussing sovereignty interference more in depth. As depicted above, sovereignty is and has been a major issue in IR, even with regard to donor-recipient relations. Hence, one might e.g. consider establishing a third category in between legal and political recognition which deals with the grey area of sovereignty interference. Second, Honneth even undermines his own argument: by not paying close attention to the matter of sovereignty, he loses a chance to stress the importance of political recognition. If the goal of achieving sustainable, peaceful, equal interstate relations is at risk because of the sensitive matter of sovereignty interference; it can easily be argued that political recognition is even more relevant for interstate relations because it may even out the perceived injustice.

Achievements and features

This aspect of the theory of recognition allows for insights on the political, rather symbolic level of state interaction. The results of the discourse analysis point towards alternatives to the partnership approach and extend the concept of recognition. When it comes to achievements, two aspects are of great importance: internationalization and prestige. The dominant line of argumentation in the interviews is as follows: Malawi needs to build up prestige and international facilities in order gain greater international importance. This reverses the logic of Honneth's statements. In the case analyzed, achievements need to be created to be recognizable, whereas according to Honneth achievements are already existent and a country simply longs for their international recognition.

The projects of the package deal have a clear symbolic value. They represent progress in terms of internationalization and technology and are valued for their modernizing effect. In the context of development assistance, this observation sheds new light on donor-recipient relations. For the establishment of an equitable relationship, it may be necessary to some extent to follow the counterpart's dominant understanding of development. As the discourse analysis shows, the modernization discourse plays an important role for the understanding of development in the Malawian context. This means that the focus on social development of the MDGs does not fully do justice to a modernization oriented understanding of development in Malawi. On the basis of the discourse analysis it can be argued that prestige and progress symbolized by buildings such as the conference center, allow for Malawians the feeling of increased recognition within the international community. The discourse on internationalization shows that in Malawian self-perception, Malawi needs to become more important within African and Global affairs. So to treat Malawi as an equal partner, donors may need to consider supporting Malawi in building up international stance; for a greater international stance means also a greater stance in bilateral relations. The Paris Declaration (OECD 2005:3) emphasizes alignment as one principle forming part of the partnership commitment. According to the Paris Declaration, alignment means that “[d]onors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures” (OECD 2005:3). Hence, it is

reasonable to incorporate the dominant understanding of development in the respective place to realize the principle of alignment. In the case of Malawi this might mean to support projects not only because of their social or economic value but to be aware of the importance of aspects symbolizing progress and prestige, thus modernization and internationalization.²⁷

The relevance of prestige and internationalization which is reflected in the discourse on achievements therefore underlines the importance of symbolic action in development. This is not to say that social development is not important but to state: In order to build up equitable relations in development processes, the dominant discourse in the country should be kept in mind in order to show respect and recognition for predominant values can be expressed. This can be of great support for the relationship and thus enable creating a real partnership.

Humiliation

When it comes to the discussion of humiliation, the aspects of vulnerability, power imbalance and transparency were discussed in the discourse analysis. With regard to the discussion on legal recognition, the discourses on vulnerability and power imbalance constitute two discourses which are interrelated with sovereignty: the fact that Malawi receives and depends on aid is a challenging matter for the country's sovereignty. Hence, this aspect of humiliation has already been covered and does not need to be discussed in further detail. The matter of transparency, however, adds a new facet. The interviewees' answers reflect uncertainty about the future outlook of the cooperation. Will there be demand for resources in order to pay back the debt? Will there be other constraints or conditions? Uncertainty and non-transparency arise if decisions are taken at the highest level of government and kept concealed not only from the great majority of the population but even from quite influential persons as most of the interviewees are.

How does transparency relate to donor-recipient relations? Deliberative public reason is the key here. Obviously, in the case of Sino-Malawian relations, the vast majority of Malawians is left in the dark about the agreement's terms and conditions. It is therefore not open to them whether or not Malawi has equal opportunities to influence the decisions (Barnes – Brown 2011:176). This means that they cannot influence the decision-making processes either, not even through parliamentary representatives. By analyzing Sino-Malawian relations from the humiliation perspective, it becomes clear that non-transparency is a hindrance for building up an equitable relationship. This fact underlines how relevant it is for donors (and recipient governments) to be open to all parts of society and include the parliament.

Transparency towards and participation of citizens, however, play a role in debates on development already; as e.g. grassroots oriented approaches to development show (cf. Ziai 2009:184). By working with and supporting initiatives on the ground, persons affected are already included from the beginning. Thus,

the communication between donors and the affected is not mediated by the government. For this reason grassroots approaches may well be more transparent to citizens. However, this does not tackle transparency of governmental cooperation which is the focus of this thesis.

In development debates on transparency, relations between the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States have also played a role. They have been criticized for not being open about Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA). It is frequently argued that EPAs are more beneficial for the EU than for ACP states (cf. Gomes 2013). At the same time, scholars criticize that the agreements are not made fully accessible to the public (Burnett – Firoz 2005). So the matter of non-transparency towards citizens as a humiliating factor plays an important role in development assistance. Just like China, other donors may need to work on this issue in order to build up equitable relations.

In sum, the discourse on non-transparency and reflections on transparency by development scholars point out that involvement of the whole population is of great importance to the population. The plea for participation is not very strong in the interviews; yet, many interviewees criticize the lack of information on the agreements. The seclusion of intergovernmental cooperation symbolizes to the population that partnership only concerns the governmental level but ignores the population. So for the constitution of a comprehensive sustainable partnership, the population may need to be informed closer.

6. Conclusion

This thesis attempts an alternative approach to the analysis of Chinese engagement in African countries and to discuss the relevance of emerging donors' strategies for debates on development. These debates are historically dominated by empirical insights from North-South cooperation. According to Zimmermann and Smith who argue that mutual learning and cooperative work among donors provide new opportunities (Zimmermann and Smith 2011), Sino-Malawian relations serve as an exemplary case for gaining new insights into ongoing approaches to partnership.

This alternative approach is no attempt to prove loyalty to the Chinese regime: Various aspects of Sino-Malawian cooperation have been criticized based on the empirical findings of the study; mainly non-transparency is brought into focus. The goal of the research question is simply another one: It uses the package deal as a case for analyzing the role of recognition in donor-recipient relations. In the case of Sino-Malawian relations, aspects of recognition as well as humiliation play a role.

To sum up this thesis' results, empirical and theoretical aspects must be named. On an empirical level, this thesis provides explorative insights into Sino-Malawian relations for scientific research on Sino-African relations. Moreover, the theory of recognition is applied empirically for research in International

Relations, namely development studies, which allows becoming aware of two main methodological problems: the difficulty to conceptualize the recognized group and the difficulty to operationalize recognition/humiliation. Since “vague does not mean unimportant” (Sawyer 2000: 17), I nevertheless use the concept of recognition for empirical research. Hence, this thesis provides a basis for other researchers to conduct more precise empirical research of the role of recognition in development assistance and IR.

The discourse analysis reveals the need for amplification of Honneth’s concept of recognition: Honneth does not do justice to the concept of sovereignty in international relations. His approach considers formal recognition as a minor obstacle with regard to building peaceful interstate relations. Yet, Sino-Malawian cooperation shows that the formal recognition of a state’s sovereignty is not a simple process at all. There are subtle differences with regard to interfering into a state’s sovereignty and even open criticism can be viewed as interference. In order to increase the relevance of the theory of recognition for IR theory, Honneth should discuss legal recognition and the aspect of sovereignty in greater detail, e.g. by introducing a third category.

Through application of the theory of recognition, several aspects emerge which shed light on sensitive issues in donor-recipient relations. Three main aspects can be named: visible progress, transparency and sovereignty.

First, the discourses on prestige, internationalization and modernization draw attention to two matters. On the one hand, these discourses reveal the need to engage with the recipient countries’ views, narratives and discourses. The understanding of recipient countries’ criteria for evaluating development projects (e.g. modernization theory in Malawi’s case), enables an understanding of their perspectives and thus helps to improve the overall relationship. On the other hand, it becomes evident that it may be necessary to not simply understand development as poverty reduction. Symbolic aspects of development also matter: Prestige of the projects reflects progress in the eyes of most interviewees. Hence, these projects display additional symbolic value allowing for international recognition. By definition, the core business of development assistance rests to create “greater welfare for the majority of mankind” (Jönsson et al. 2012: 18); yet by considering symbolic aspects, the donor-recipient relation may be perceived as more equitable because they express political recognition of the recipients.

Second, the discourse on transparency points out that involvement of the whole population is of paramount importance to the people – especially in terms of providing information. It symbolizes to the population that partnership does not only concern the governmental level but includes the population. Thus, involvement of the whole population can help strengthen equitable relations.

Third, the discourse on sovereignty spotlights the connection of a partnership approach to development and interference in recipient countries’ sovereignty. This discussion does already play a role in development debates. If practices such as imposing aid conditions take place, sovereignty becomes an important point of discussion for donor-recipient relations. However, since development cooperation – as all interstate relations – inevitably involves interference with sovereignty (c.f. Nye 2009), this is not an easy issue to solve.

Therefore, symbolic aspects of political recognition are very relevant because they allow building up a partnership even if sovereignty is infringed.

On a theoretical level, this thesis combines the recognition perspective with debates on partnership in development. Shortcomings of both – the partnership approach as well as the theory of recognition – have become obvious. However, in general Honneth's approach proves to be of value for development debates. It combines symbolic, procedural and identity related aspects with legal and material factors when analyzing IR. Hence, it provides a comprehensive perspective. The analysis shows that both aspects – redistribution and recognition – play a role in Sino-Malawian relations. Thus, recognition can serve as an analytical lens to guide such research. By analyzing donor-recipient relations from a recognition perspective, factors both hindering and fostering equitable donor-recipient relations are revealed. At the same time, the theory of recognition can serve as a guiding principle in development assistance to work on equitable relations.

Executive summary

This thesis analyzes Sino-Malawian cooperation on infrastructure projects from the perspective of Honneth's theory of recognition in order to provide insights for a complementary understanding of the partnership approach in development debates.

The impact of Sino-African relations on African countries has been in the focus of research in this area for some time. This thesis takes a different perspective tying in with current approaches in the field which focus on African perspectives and consider the possibility of mutual learning. Thus, the case is analyzed in order to shed new light on a field which has been dominated by empirical insights from North-South relations for a long time.

The theoretical framework of the thesis combines theoretical insights from development studies with Honneth's theory of recognition. The partnership approach is widely spread in development studies and most scholars agree on its instrumental value through the fostering of aid efficiency. Although normative questions hardly play a role in partnership debates, the concept has a moral component which "allows the impression that partnership is about transforming power relations in a positive and socially just fashion" (Barnes – Brown 2011: 172). Honneth's theory of recognition delivers a useful approach to reintroduce this normative aspect of partnership in the discussion. Honneth (2010) states and exemplifies that recognition and humiliation are relevant factors in IR. He differentiates between a legal and a political form of recognition. While legal recognition is about a state's acceptance in the international community, political recognition is about the interaction of states whilst building up deeper relations. The latter takes place on multiple levels, including symbolic interaction and positive appraisal on the intrastate level, as well as narratives on experiences of humiliation within the population. According to Honneth, recognition serves as a guiding principle for interstate relations hence allowing the constitution of equitable, peaceful and sustainable relations. For this reason the theory of recognition provides good analytical lens to analyze donor-recipient relations.

The data for the conducted analysis of Sino-Malawian relations derives from semi-structured expert interviews with representatives of local development NGOs and civil servants working on the cooperation or in the development sector. I conducted the interviews in early 2013. Interviewees were questioned about their evaluation of the Sino-Malawian cooperation in general; with particular focus on their assessment of five main infrastructure projects decided upon in the initial agreement of the cooperation.

Being inspired by Fairclough's discourse analytical approach (CDA) I analyze the discourses relating to recognition in the interviews. I follow Fairclough's three step approach. This includes a text based analysis, the analysis of interdiscursive aspects and the linkage to sociocultural practices and theories. There is, however, slight deviation from Fairclough's approach in order to structure the analysis according to aspects of recognition and focusing on content related aspects of the texts.

The first part of the analysis focuses on the line of argumentation the interviewees use to ascribe meaning to different topics. Sovereignty, power imbalance, non-transparency as well as internationalization, prestige and modernization are the dominant discourses at stake. Based on a discussion of these discourses, several implications for the partnership approach as well as the theory of recognition itself can be determined which are discussed in the following parts of the analysis. If aiming for an equitable relationship, donors may need to take into account dominant discourses at stake (as in the case of Malawi modernization discourse). At the same time, non-transparency on relevant decisions in bilateral agreements seems to signalize that the population is not taken seriously. It symbolizes to the population that partnership mainly concerns the governmental level and excludes the population. Moreover, the sovereignty discourse points at the problem of infringing sovereignty by establishing conditions on aid. Conditions on aid are an obstacle when aiming for equitable donor-recipient relations. When imposed, other aspects of political recognition as mentioned above become even more important to strengthen the partnership. Based on the importance of the sovereignty discourse, I argue that Honneth's theory of recognition can gain relevance within international relations theory if taking legal aspects of recognition further into consideration. Overall, Honneth's approach proves to be a helpful analytical perspective for discussing procedural and identity-related aspects of interstate relations, namely Sino-Malawian relations.

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Table 1a: Theoretical aspects of the analytical framework

Discourse Analysis		Critical reflections on the basis of the analysis
Legal recognition	Political recognition	Recognition vs. redistribution
Discourses on the state’s acceptance in the international community	Discourses on achievements or features of the state	Is striving for materialist goals and striving for recognition both taking place?
	Discourses on the state as an independent actor	Does the focus on recognition imply a trade-off so that the material needs of LDCs are at risk?
	Discourses on humiliation	Does recognition consolidate power imbalances?

Table 1b: Analytical framework

Analytical steps	Topics to be covered	
Text based discourse analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arguments and content - Discursive practice - Which are the dominant discourses and why? 	Formal recognition	Deep recognition
	Discourses on the state’s acceptance in the international community	Discourses on the state as an independent actor
		Discourses on achievements or features of the state
		Discourse on humiliation
Theory driven discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social practice of recognition and donor-recipient relations 	Discussion of findings of the text based discourse analysis with regard to the theoretical framework of recognition and donor-recipient relations	
Critical reflections on the basis of the analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition vs. redistribution 	Is striving for materialist goals and striving for recognition both taking place?	
	Does the focus on recognition imply a trade-off so that the material needs of LDCs are at risk?	
	Does recognition consolidate power imbalances?	

Appendix 2: List of interviewees

Bold: Interviewees whose answers are relevant for the discourse analysis

Normal: Interviewees who serve as informants

1.	Advisor at the Norwegian Embassy (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-02-13)
2.	Chief Legal Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-02-13)
3.	Legal Advisor at the Ministry of Trade (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-02-13)
4.	Project Manager at NGO working on the integration of people with disabilities (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-02-14)
5.	Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health, rural area Northern Region (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-02-15)
6.	Project Manager of an education project and Superior of a congregation (interviewed in a small town in the rural area of Malawi's central region, 2013-03-01)
7.	Principal Economist at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-05)
8.	Director of the Political Section and Press officer at the Chinese Embassy in Malawi (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-05)
9.	Director of NGO working on community development in Lilongwe (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-06)
10.	Manager for planning & Research at the Malawian Governmental Organization working on Investment and Trade (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-06)
11.	Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education in Mzuzu, Northern Region (interviewed in Mzuzu, 2013-03-08)
12.	News Analyst & Senior Reporter of a regional branch of the newspaper <i>the Nation</i> (interviewed in Mzuzu, 2013-03-08)
13.	Coordinator at NGO working on microloans in Mzuzu (interviewed in Mzuzu, 2013-03-08)
14.	Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights in Mzuzu (interviewed in Mzuzu, 2013-03-08)
15.	Anonymous interviewee
16.	Deputy Project Manager at the construction company building the Malawi International Conference Center and Business Hotel (Shanghai Construction Group General Company) (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-11)
17.	Chief Economist in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and development (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-14)
18.	Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-15)
19.	Assistant Director of the Debt and Aid Division, Ministry of Finance, Chinese Desk (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-15)

20.	Communications, Research and Advocacy officer at an NGO working on slum upgrading, sanitation and housing in Blantyre and Lilongwe (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-15)
21.	Employee in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (interviewed in Lilongwe, 2013-03-14)

Table 3: Respected as an independent actor/ Malawi’s legal recognition by the international community

Different discourses and matching statements	Interviewee (number and position)
<i>No aid conditionality</i>	
<p>“Tying aid to certain conditions has been very difficult for African countries” (2)</p> <p>“The relation is that the Chinese they don't have strings the west, they'll give you strings, whereby China they don't give you strings. When you say 'Do this' they will do it fully without any string ... they don't interfere into politics-... They don't say: You look first at the issues of corruption, adress this do that. China doesn't do this. They say it's part of the partnership” (5)</p> <p>“I congratulate Chinese government because they don't condition us. ... We feel they are doing it freely. They have that love to do it, to help.” (6)</p> <p>“If there is an advantage to their support that remains the single advantage, the main advantage. They don't have any conditions attached to it. Eh but even though they don't have any condition attached to it – sometimes if a country would put a condition, then you know ... what this is all about. But what we don't know. There is no condition, but why?” (9)</p> <p>“These other donors’ conditions – ah – it’s too many conditions. But China when it's giving – ah there are not many conditions. The conditions are not tough as other countries’.” (11)</p> <p>“And when others countries, donors, stopped assisting Malawi, China was there assisting us. [...] So really – that's a friend in need.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 2 (Chief Legal Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) - Interviewee no. 5 (Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health) - Interviewee no. 6 (Project Manager of an education project and Superior of a congregation) - Interviewee no. 9 (Director of NGO working on community development) - Interviewee no. 11 (Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education) - Interviewee no. 12 (News Analyst & Senior Reporter newspaper <i>the Nation</i>) - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans) - Interviewee no. 14 (Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights) - Interviewee no. 17 (Chief Economist in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and development) - Interviewee no. 18 (Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance) - Interviewee no. 19 (Assistant Director of the Debt and Aid Division, Ministry of

<p>(11)</p> <p>“Aid from the west and aid from China – most governments prefer aid from China. The reason is that aid from the west has got conditions while aid from China doesn't have those conditions.” (12)</p> <p>“So I think if we end the relationship with China, Malawi will suffer a lot because it will not be easy to be getting money from the west.” (12)</p> <p>“When someone is struggling, you want to empower the same person, at the same time you're asking for difficult conditions, it may be difficult.” (13)</p> <p>“The Chinese say, we'll build you a stadium. But we have nothing to do with whether the people going to the stadium will be slapped on their way going to the stadium” (14)</p> <p>“British would say: people [...] should understand their rights, should not be oppressed, should have freedom to talk” (14)</p> <p>“The fact that the Chinese do not give conditions, does not show that it is positive or it is good for Malawians. And the fact that the British give conditions does also not show that the British are bad to Malawians.” (14)</p> <p>“There are no conditionalities to the relationship. Usually with other donors obviously there will be conditions. Don't do this – or do this if you want to get this. That's the major difference. China they do not demand any conditions for their aid.” (17)</p> <p>“It means they are giving you freedom. They are not tying you down.” (17)</p> <p>“So this aid with no conditions can ... maybe aid the developing country more.” (17)</p> <p>“Both economically and politically, I have</p>	<p>Finance, Chinese Desk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 20 (Communications, Research and Advocacy officer at an NGO working on slum upgrading, sanitation and housing) - Interviewee no. 21 (Employee in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development)
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<p>never seen a condition where they would say unless you have done abc you cannot be to lend from us.” (19)</p> <p>“I think that's where the Chinese are beating the North. They don't like dictating. Africa now is looking to the east because they are very flexible [...] the north would have told us something different – that we don't need the university, we need hospitals. [...] People see we are malnourished and very sick” (20)</p> <p>“I think that [the Chinese] are investing on your priorities” (20)</p> <p>“China and Malawi relations it's strong because you know it's like there are not many conditionalities so it's simplified a little bit. There are a lot of short cuts, they don't link it to human rights. It's ususally because those are the thorny areas. They just give it, they don't care. So their relationship with Malawi is a little bit simplified and straight forward. There are not a lot of conditions.” (21)</p>	
<p><i>Support of projects without funding from western donors</i></p>	
<p>“China is pretty much focused on first level cooperation. Infrastructure development and very visible changes or signs of the cooperation. Unlike western countries – although they have a role of course, for example the European Union in ... they playing a big role in infrastructure development, they go a little further to focus on other types of cooperation. For example relating it to governance, ehm. Private sector development and so forth.” (3)</p> <p>“Within a very short time, here we are, we see physically the buildings. We have had other development partners for over 40 years but there's nothing to show.” (4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 3 (Legal Advisor on Business Environment at the Ministry of Trade) - Interviewee no. 4 (Project Manager at NGO working on the integration of people with disabilities) - Interviewee no. 7 (Principal Economist at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development) - Interviewee no. 12 (News Analyst & Senior Reporter newspaper <i>the Nation</i>) - Interviewee no. 18 (Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of

<p>“Then you say, okay if you are giving us aid without preconditions, then that's what we need. Why, because that is in line somehow – somehow in line, I think with the Paris declaration. Because what you are saying is every country has to develop its own strategy and the donors have to be there simply to support, what the recipient country feels is good for them.” (7)</p> <p>“All these years, I don't know what was happening. But it had to take China to do all that. Now China has built all that, it means people are able to congregate and discuss.” (12)</p> <p>“The main comparative advantage that I see with the Chinese aid is that the Chinese are willing to go into areas where very few other cooperate partners are willing to go and that is in infrastructure. I don't think you can easily convince most of our cooperate partners to come and construct a stadium for us. I don't think you can easily convince most of our cooperate partners, traditional donors, to construct these buildings, so the parliament, the conference centre and so forth. So the Chinese are coming in to address those resources which would have otherwise been difficult for us to mobilize resources. So I think that's the main comparative advantage that I see with the Chinese” (18)</p>	<p>Finance)</p>
<p><i>Malawian government is able to take independent decisions</i></p>	
<p>“Except for aid from Europe, I think, they also take into account the Paris Declaration where the issue of a country having its own strategy is a major issue. [...] So aid for Malawi has to be aligned to the Malawi Growth and development strategy. [...] for China I'm not quite sure if the Paris</p>	<p>- Interviewee no. 7 (Principal Economist at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development)</p>

<p>declaration has played a major role.” (7)</p> <p>“Then you say, okay if you are giving us aid without preconditions, then that's what we need. Why, because that is in line somehow – somehow in line, I think with the Paris declaration. Because what you are saying is every country has to develop its own strategy and the donors have to be there simply to support, what the recipient country feels is good for them.” (7)</p>	
<p><i>Launch of diplomatic relations</i></p>	
<p>“It [the cooperation] came like an IR thing” when Malawi ended relations with Taiwan (2)</p> <p>“So that's how they build the good image of their country. They build a lot of things and we have a lot of them.” (9)</p> <p>“For the moment that we have established diplomatic relations in 2008, they have made sure that we feel their presence that they are here as a brother.” (10)</p> <p>“I'm sure you're already aware of the background that originally Malawi was cooperating with the Republic of China up to 2008” (18)</p> <p>“When we switched we quickly agreed to the program of support” (18)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 2 (Chief Legal Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) - Interviewee no. 9 (Director of NGO working on community development) - Interviewee no. 10 (Manager for planning & Research at the Malawian Governmental Organization working on Investment and Trade) - Interviewee no. 18 (Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance)

Table 4: Recognition of achievements and features

Different discourses and matching statements	Interviewee (number and position)
<p><i>... achievements of progress and modernization</i></p>	
<p><i>Efficency</i></p> <p><i>...created by projects</i></p> <p>- less time to travel from Karonga to Chitipa (3, 4, 5, 11, 14, 17)</p> <p>“Chitipa was a cut-off district. It was almost inaccessible” (3)</p> <p>“11 hours to 2,5 hours: is that not development?” (4)</p> <p>“So you know you can do a lot in 5 hours. But only use it for travelling? [...] [Because of the road], you now still have 4 hours in which you can use it productively” (17)</p> <p>- moving agriculture products is now possible (nos. 4, 17)</p> <p><i>... of the projects’ implementation</i></p> <p>“We are only 2 or 3 years in a relationship with China. But look what has been done” (4)</p> <p>“What I have heard is that the Malawi-Chinese cooperation is the best ever because within a very short time, here we are, we see physically the buildings.” (4)</p> <p>“I can see that it's moving at very fast pace” (18)</p> <p>“The implementation is faster as compared with other donors” (19)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 3 (Legal Advisor on Business Environment at the Ministry of Trade) - Interviewee no. 4 (Project Manager at NGO working on the integration of people with disabilities) - Interviewee no. 5 (Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health) - Interviewee no. 11 (Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education) - Interviewee no. 14 (Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights) - Interviewee no. 17 (Chief Economist in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and development) - Interviewee no. 18 (Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance) - Interviewee no. 19 (Assistant Director of the Debt and Aid Division, Ministry of Finance, Chinese Desk)
<p><i>Progress</i></p> <p>“before you could see a park and a botanical area (where the parliament is)” (2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee 2 (Chief Legal Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

<p>“it wasn't anything and then when you compare the other infrastructures we have in Lilongwe, you see that these are the changes, that at least here we have modern structures as compared to the ones just across the street.” (2)</p> <p>“But we are very proud about it on the positive part because it has added something to Malawi. Something we never had before” (6)</p> <p>“We cannot live the past life we used to live. Things are changing nowadays. We need to have something also.” (6)</p> <p>“Place looks really clean” (6)</p> <p>“That's basically what we do because by the end of the day we want to see Malawi go forward” (7)</p> <p>“We want to move out from where we are to the next level” (10)</p> <p>“In terms of visibility they (the buildings) have helped to change the face of Malawi” (12)</p> <p><i>Technological change</i></p> <p>“storey buildings... just as you have there in Germany ... for the sake of landscape” (6)</p> <p>“They have built is so modern technology. It's high, it's good” (11)</p> <p><i>Economic growth</i></p> <p>“football can be a career” (4)</p> <p>“people [in Chitipa] are now able to sell their products” (11)</p> <p>“People are able to invest in Chitipa now” (13)</p> <p><i>International trade</i></p> <p>“Malawi government can generate a lot of foreign exchange out of the buildings” (4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 4 (Project Manager at NGO working on the integration of people with disabilities) - Interviewee no. 6 (Project Manager of an education project and Superior of a congregation) - Interviewee no. 7 (Principal Economist at the Ministry of Economic Planning) - Interviewee no. 10 (Manager for planning & Research at a Malawian Governmental Organization working on Investment and Trade) - Interviewee no. 11 (Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education) - Interviewee no. 12 (News Analyst & Senior Reporter newspaper the Nation) - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans)
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<p><i>Sub-discourse: dependency</i></p> <p>“The conference center right now is not useful. Right now don't use it.... So I think, it came earlier just to beautify the city” (9)</p> <p>“If they were bringing in industrialization when you have machines, that would create employment for the people but these developments, they are just done” (9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 9 (Director of NGO working on community development)
<p><i>Sub-discourse: cheap products and low quality</i></p> <p>“The only benefit that I would assume is, you see, that Chinese projects are always cheap.” (2)</p> <p>“ Everytime you talk of Chinese items, people have the impression that it's low quality, it's short leave, it's not durable but if we talk of the UK [...] you say this is durable” (4)</p> <p>“It's symbolic to the people who are coming because, for example the hotel, it's of good quality for international people, tourism. To stay there, no local person can manage.” (5)</p> <p>“I'm very keen on following developments which are happening in China. And recently, maybe 2012 and 2013, a lot of roads and highways, bridges, have collapsed in China. And this means of course a lot of accidents. This means that what they are doing is of cheap quality of low quality. And the thing we have started just now with the cooperation, they look good but we don't know about the quality. And we don't know in the long run, how the road will be after three years, how will the hotel be after three years – will it not collapse? I think, they are collapsing the country. [...] Our assumption is that maybe they have given us things of bad quality.” (5)</p> <p>“When they were building the parliament on the positive side I would say we feel good, appreciate, that there is that relationship. [...] But most of the Malawians were questioning to say –</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee 2 (Chief Legal Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) - Interviewee no. 4 (Project Manager at NGO working on the integration of people with disabilities) - Interviewee no. 5 (Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health) - Interviewee no. 6 (Project Manager of an education project and Superior of a congregation) - Interviewee 7 (Principal Economist at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (Public Sector Investment Program). - Interviewee no. 20 (Communications, Research and Advocacy officer at an NGO working on slum upgrading, sanitation and housing)

<p>but is it going to be strong? Is it not going to fall down just as we are having with these other thing like electricity appliances, clothes ... How about with the parliament – is it not going to be the same?” (6)</p> <p>“There are people in Malawi that feel that Chinese products are not durable. Of course you have a new product but it doesn’t last long. So you have all these perceptions from different sections of society. But others have argued, they say, of course they are not durable but you still have a new thing.” (7)</p> <p>“The parliament building [...] – already the ceiling was falling off” (20)</p> <p>“You know the word China [...] in Malawi, if you say China, what you mean is something that doesn’t last long.” (20)</p>	
<p><i>Sub-discourse: rural poverty</i></p> <p>“It’s quite difficult to answer. You know, the majority of Malawians live in the rural area. If the developments are only taking place in town, obviously you are only targeting 20% of the population. So it will be very difficult for the majority of the people to appreciate things like those.” (2)</p> <p>“Maybe some would say that you start with developments in towns and then you go out because that’s where the money comes from anyways.” (2)</p> <p>“They needed to boost more agriculture in the rural masses” (9)</p> <p>“There’s a very big gap with what’s happening there and how people are suffering. [...] It shows as if we were somewhere but we are very far. [...]It’s not in line with the poverty levels” (9)</p> <p>“The politicians ... and the Chinese are benefiting” (9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee 2 (Chief Legal Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) - Interviewee no. 5 (Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health) - Interviewee no. 9 (Director of NGO working on community development) - Interviewee no. 11 (Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education) - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans) - Interviewee no. 14 (Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights) - Interviewee no. 20 (Communications, Research and Advocacy officer at an NGO working on slum upgrading, sanitation and housing)

<p>“If they can come to assist us [...] in terms of agriculture, it will help us. If they can also change their focus. As I’m telling you, food security is also a problem” (11)</p> <p>“This road has really empowered the people in Malawi [...]. People are able to invest in Chitipa now” (13)</p> <p>“What I’m saying: The Chinese are benefiting most” (14)</p> <p>“Development has to start from the family and then grow to common persons livelihood” (20)</p>	
<p><i>... achievements of internationalization</i></p>	
<p><i>New opportunities for international tourism</i></p> <p>“investment in tourism infrastructure” (4)</p> <p>tourism is fostered (12)</p> <p>“The conference center attracts tourists” (13)</p> <p>“We believe as government that tourism can drive the country's development process. The only problem is that it's still growing and it needs a lot of support. [...] The hotel contributes to tourism” (17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 3 (Legal Advisor on Business Environment at the Ministry of Trade) - Interviewee no. 12 (News Analyst & Senior Reporter newspaper the Nation) - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans) - Interviewee no. 17 (Chief Economist in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and development)

<p><i>Now possible to hold international conferences</i></p> <p>“Malawi will now be able to host international meetings at that conference center, SADC meetings in that conference center” (4)</p> <p>“international conferences are now possible” (5)</p> <p>“So Malawi will be recognized as a place where you can have meetings” (12)</p> <p>“the conference center has international standards” (13)</p> <p>“Now we can be able to host international events ... SADC meetings” (14)</p> <p>“In the past it has not been possible to have the summit of the African Union in the country because it was not possible to accommodate people” (17)</p> <p>“only country in the region which did not have a proper proper international conference center but now we do have one and we can now host international meetings, we can now host head of states” (18)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 4 (Project Manager at NGO working on the integration of people with disabilities) - Interviewee no. 5 (Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health) - Interviewee no. 12 (News Analyst & Senior Reporter newspaper the Nation) - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans) - Interviewee no. 14 (Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights) - Interviewee no. 17 (Chief Economist in Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and development) - Interviewee no. 18 (Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance)
<p><i>International sports</i></p> <p>“international games” (13)</p> <p>“international tournaments” (14)</p> <p>“Stadium of international standards” (18)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans) - Interviewee no. 14 (Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights) - Interviewee no. 18 (Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance)

<p><i>...achievements of prestige</i></p>	
<p><i>Beauty and magnificence of the parliament building and conference centre</i></p> <p>“before you could see a park and a botanical area (where the parliament is)” (2)</p> <p>“it wasn't anything and then when you compare the other infrastructures we have in Lilongwe, you see that these are the changes, that at least here we have modern structures as compared to the ones just across the street.” (2)</p> <p>“It is something that our politicians like a lot: having visible signs of change. So it serves the politicians quite well as well.” (3)</p> <p>“[...] that parliament building. It was wonderful, very very magnificent building and I was very happy to be there.” (4)</p> <p>“What they have constructed, they are beautiful things and they are making our cities more beautiful” (5)</p> <p>“But we are very proud about it on the positive part because it has added something to Malawi. Something we never had before” (6)</p> <p>“one of the landmarks in the country in the future” (9)</p> <p>“To me, beauty coming before time, it's not beauty” (9)</p> <p>“So it has really beautified the city.” (9)</p> <p>“The landscape has changed. The scenery has changed” (10)</p> <p>“They are adding on beauty. It's beautifying the country now. It's beautiful, it's nice.” (11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 2 (Chief Legal Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) - Interviewee no. 3 (Legal Advisor on Business Environment at the Ministry of Trade) - Interviewee no. 4 (Project Manager at NGO working on the integration of people with disabilities) - Interviewee no. 5 (Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health) - Interviewee no. 6 (Project Manager of an education project and Superior of a congregation) - Interviewee no. 9 (Director of NGO working on community development) - Interviewee no. 11 (Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education) - Interviewee no. 12 (News Analyst & Senior Reporter newspaper the Nation) - Interviewee no. 14 (Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights) - Interviewee no. 20 (Communications, Research and Advocacy officer at an NGO working on slum upgrading, sanitation and housing)

<p>“In terms of visibility they (the buildings) have helped to change the face of Malawi” (12)</p> <p>“If you look at the University of Chiolo, Ndata, you couldn't believe to see the structure. It's just magnificent” (12)</p> <p>“The magnificent parliament building”(14) “centre of beauty or attraction” (14)</p> <p>“gives people courage that these are the things we are supposed to have”(14)</p> <p>“The beauty will give, will encourage the people to look at things in a positive way [...] or to be associated with good things.”(no. 14)</p> <p>“Asthetically they are superb but functionally, I think they are also good of course, but I think ... I mean the parliament building ... already there was a ceiling that was falling off” (20)</p>	
<p><i>Capital has status symbols now</i></p> <p>“parliament is a symbol of importance” (5)</p> <p>“In terms of the capital (in Africa) Malawi is almost the last in terms of beauty. So when the Chinese have built the new things people are happy to say now: our capital is coming up! We want to be compared with other countries.” (11)</p> <p>“Yeah because we are able today to say 'this is our capital city' when someone comes in a foreign country [...] Automatically it is already uplifting the standards of Malawi as a whole as well as out there. People, at the end of the day will be able to know that there is Malawi on the world map as well as in Africa.” (13)</p> <p>“Lilongwe is our capital. So,if our capital city is seen beautiful, it's the pride of the country” (13)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 5 (Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health) - Interviewee no. 10 (Manager for planning & Research at the Malawian Governmental Organization working on Investment and Trade) - Interviewee no. 11 (Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education) - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans) - Interviewee no. 20 (Communications, Research and Advocacy officer at an NGO working on slum upgrading, sanitation and housing)

“I think the two on the presidential, the conference Chinese. It is quite dignifying these days at least when you go to the city center because that's the city center. In the past there was actually nothing to point that this is it. But I think this has actually changed the outlook of the city.” (20)

Table 5: Humiliation: public opinion providing narratives about experiences of humiliation

<p><i>... small country/ LDC = non-powerful actor</i></p>	
<p>“Malawi on its own was never going to achieve such kind of developments withing such a short period of time” (4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 4 (Project Manager at NGO working on the integration of people with disabilities)
<p>“Malawi on it's own cannot pass through all these stages up to industrialization stage without any assistance outside. It's not possible.” (4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 6 (Project Manager of an education project and Superior of a congregation)
<p>“We need such structures in Malawi of which it is not easy to have such structures because of our economy in Malawi” (6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 7 (Principal Economist at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development)
<p>“But for us, all what we are saying is: We have the following debts which have to be filled. Whoever donor is available to fill this gap, is very much welcome in Malawi.” (7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 11 (Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education)
<p>“In a case where you are a country that is so much looking for aid you have a case where there are no preconditions, then it's is good for you.” (7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 12 (News Analyst & Senior Reporter newspaper the Nation)
<p>“Malawians now they can afford to put on a shoe thanks to China – we can put on a dress like this, thanks to China” (11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans)
<p>“we expect them to empower us. Because I don't believe in that – you give me a fish, but why don't you teach me how to fish?” (11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 14 (Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights)
<p>“Malawi is a poor country. Most of the projects China has carried out could not have been done. Cause there is no money to do that” (12)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 17 (Chief Economist in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and development)
<p>“People, at the end of the day will be able to know that there is Malawi on the world map as well as in Africa. Because previously people could be asking “Where exactliy is Malawi?” This time, I'm sure people will be able to say: this part of Africa.” (13)</p>	

<p>“There’s many Chinese product, how can a small Malawian business person grow?” (14)</p> <p>“Very few people can even answer to the questions you were asking me because very few people have very few information about current affaires are in their own country” (14)</p> <p>“The idea is that we want to develop to a certain level where we can begin to reduce dependence on the donors” (17)</p> <p>“Malawi being an LDC we only borrow on concessional terms, so when we do our calculations using the IMF template in terms of calculating the grant element”(18)</p>	
<p><i>...nontransparent processes</i></p>	
<p><i>Nontransparent processes: what are they getting from us?</i></p> <p>“what is it these guys are getting from us ... It could be people at top government level are aware of that but I'm not” (2) [participated in talks about parliament, conference center...principal for all agreements and treaties...]</p> <p>“it's not good [there are no preconditions,] china in ten years, they'll also come with their own strings” (5)</p> <p>“Citizen they fear what will result out of what is happening” (9)</p> <p>“Eh but even though they don't have any condition attached to it – sometimes if a country would put a condition, then you know ... what this is all about. But what we don't know.” (9)</p> <p>“Sometimes the agreement between the two countries, like Malawians, most of Malawians they are not aware of the terms. The people are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 2 (Chief Legal Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) - Interviewee no. 5 (Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health) - Interviewee no. 9 (Director of NGO working on community development) - Interviewee no. 11 (Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education)

<p>not aware of it. So sometimes people are reacting because they don't know what is the content of the agreement. I hope that if Malawi is signing a memorandum of understanding for example, the cooperation, full parliament, full what, the masses also should know what to expect from China. ... Sometimes they are kept somewhere and the majority of the people have no access. If we have access it's through our own ways of getting information. At least it should be people driven. This is a democracy. People should know about the cooperation, what China is to assist Malawi and then we can come up with suggestions.” (11)</p> <p>“Transparency is not there” (11)</p>	
<p><i>Lack of public participation of society/ citizens</i></p> <p>“but I don't know what agreement between the government and those Chinese people.“ (6)</p> <p>“Because still now, many Malawians don't know – what is a grant among the projects and which one is a loan. Because the executive does that and there is no proper communication to the local level, to the ground – so everyone is aware. So the impact is that we might end up with a lot of infrastructure that have been done by the Chinese without our full involvement. Because we are not fully involved.” (9)</p> <p>“Issues of International Relations, they are not put as open issues to local people you only read them in one article in a newspaper” (14)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 6 (Project Manager of an education project and Superior of a congregation) - Interviewee no. 9 (Director of NGO working on community development) - Interviewee no. 14 (Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights)
<p><i>... domination by western countries</i></p> <p>“If I compare that to the traditional donors – maybe the only problem is that those traditional donors will try as much as possible to let you know that they are the ones who are giving you the money. And then for a poor person this may be very annoying, very annoying. You wouldn't wanna be reminded that you are poor, you know.” (2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 2 (Chief Legal Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) - Interviewee no. 12 (News Analyst & Senior Reporter newspaper <i>the Nation</i>)

<p>“(If it's ended) Malawi will suffer a lot because it will then rely on the west. And the west, they are good in putting tough conditions on the money.” (12)</p> <p>“But for the west we find, there's nothing they do appart from squeezing you” (12)</p> <p>“We have problems accessing your markets, for instance in Europe” (17)</p> <p>“If you open markets then you don't need to pump in a lot of resources into developing countries.” (17)</p>	<p>- Interviewee no. 17 (Chief Economist in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and development)</p>
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Table 6: Economic and social benefits of the package deal projects

Different discourses and matching statements	Interviewee (number and position)
<i>Economic benefits of the projects</i>	
<p>“cut down the travel time by close to three hours” (3)</p> <p>“sensible projects” (3)</p> <p>“Chitipa was a cut-off district. It was almost inaccessible ... the people there felt cut out from the rest of Malawi” (3)</p> <p>“it does intensify economic activity” (3)</p> <p>“And Malawi may even host international meetings. And this has implications of economic value to Malawi.” (4)</p> <p>“Malawi government can generate a lot of foreign exchange out of the buildings” (4)</p> <p>“Now it takes only 2.5 hours to travel from Karonga to Chitipa” (4)</p> <p>“People are able to sell their products” (from Karonga and Chitipa) (11)</p> <p>“banks opened in Chitipa and Karonga” (11)</p> <p>“Before no one was controlling the businessmen using the old road, now they have to pay taxes” (11)</p> <p>“Economically there is a big change because people are able to invest in Chitipa now.” (13)</p> <p>“The conference center attracts tourists” (13)</p> <p>“All things they used, all materials, they came from China” (14)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 3 (Legal Advisor on Business Environment at the Ministry of Trade) - Interviewee no. 4 (Project Manager at NGO working on the integration of people with disabilities) - Interviewee no. 11 (Vice Chairman of the board, headmaster of an NGO working on education) - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans) - Interviewee no. 14 (Programme Manager at NGO working on Children Rights) - Interviewee no. 17 (Chief Economist in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of economic planning and development) - Interviewee no. 19 (Assistant Director of the Debt and Aid Division, Ministry of Finance, Chinese Desk) - Interviewee no. 18 (Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance)

<p>“transport cost and time is reduced by the tarmac road” (14)</p> <p>“Now we can be able to host international events which can bring in money” (14)</p> <p>“Reduction in travel time has brought to the people of Malawi in that area a lot more opportunities in terms of trade and moving agriculture products from point A to B.” (17)</p> <p>“It is a very important project opening up areas where [a] few years ago were no proper links where transport of people, goods and services was a big problem” (18)</p> <p>“We did not have a proper parliament building ... in old capital, Zomba – old building” (18)</p> <p>“For the international conference centre it's a bit of a challenge. It has not been put into use” (19)</p> <p>“Opportunity of generating income” (19)</p>	
<p><i>Social benefits of the projects</i></p>	
<p>“The parliament is very important to the political development of our country. That's where laws are made and any country that is democratic weighs a lot of its importance in this infrastructure” (4)</p> <p>“There is an influx of Chinese businesses in Malawi -a lot of people have been employed.” (5)</p> <p>“Having an own parliament, it's free and not dependent on the president” (5)</p> <p>“Last time when the parliament was at the state house if you talked ill of the president, one MP would complain and say 'Am I going to leave this place safe?' So these things were also making the MPs not [...] express</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 4 (Project Manager at FEDORA (Federation of Disability Organisation in Malawi)) - Interviewee no. 5 (Director of an NGO working on HIV and community health) - Interviewee no. 12 (News Analyst & Senior Reporter newspaper the Nation) - Interviewee no. 13 (Coordinator at NGO working on microloans) - Interviewee no. 17 (Chief Economist in the Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Economic Planning and development)

<p>themselves openly. But now they are outside the state house they are able to speak [...]. This time, the Members of Parliament are free to debate their issues.” (12)</p> <p>“Because of the university, now more people can be trained inside Malawi and do not have to leave the country” (13)</p> <p>“No capacity for many Malawian youths to get into tertiary education” (17)</p> <p>“In Malawi we have issues of available space at University-level” (18)</p> <p>“At university level, there is a capacity problem” (19)</p> <p>“And the university in Chiolo that again is something fabulous because I think in terms of the education sector in Malawi it's very much constrained by the available infrastructure. SO we know if a country is to develop, it means that it must educate its people. (20)</p> <p>“If there is this infrastructure development, I think the social aspect can always fit in because infrastructure can create a platform where people can do different things. [...] So for example the university that should employ more than 500 people.” (20)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewee no. 18 (Director of the Debt and Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance) - Interviewee no. 19 (Assistant Director of the Debt and Aid Division, Ministry of Finance, Chinese Desk) - Interviewee no. 20 (Communications, Research and Advocacy officer at an NGO working on slum upgrading, sanitation and housing)
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Appendix 7: Interview questions

7.1. Interviews with representatives of local development NGOs

About the organization

- Please describe your organization briefly!
- How does your organization understand development?
- What goals do you as an organization have?
- How do you pursue these goals?
- How big is the organization, how many employees are there?

About the evaluation of the package deal

- What do you know about Chinese-Malawian cooperation?
- How do you evaluate Chinese-Malawian cooperation in general?
- What is the perception of the Chinese presence in Malawi?
- What has changed in the development of Malawi since the cooperation started?

→ Introduction of the case: In 2007 a package deal has been set up and the cooperation was launched. This package deal included the construction of a new Parliament, a conference center, a university, a stadium and the longtime planed Karonga-Chipitha road.

- How do you evaluate the impact of this package deal on development processes in Malawi?
- If you think of these projects, what value do they have for Malawian development? In total and one by one...
 - new Parliament
 - conference center and hotel
 - university
 - stadium
 - the Karonga-Chitipa road
- Do the projects create or intensify economic activities?
- What is the value of infrastructure for the development of Malawi?
- Who benefits most from the infrastructure projects (Malawian politicians, Malawian population, Chinese government, Chinese businessmen)?
- Do you think the projects reflect Malawian needs?
- Do you see a symbolic value in the projects?
 - If yes – What is the symbolic value of the projects?
 - If no – Why not?
- How do you evaluate the visibility of the changes caused by the projects?
- Do you think it is important for the development of Malawi to be able to see changes in the country – as e.g. through the projects of the package deal?
- How would you describe the relation between Malawi and China compared to other donors?
- How do you evaluate the impact of the grants and loans? Do they express China's trust in Malawi's potential or do they make Malawi dependent?
- How do you evaluate China's policy of not implementing political or economic conditions?

- What do you think will happen if China's support was ended?
- Some scholars say, Chinese engagement in African countries is another form of colonialism/ exploitation others say it is challenging western dominance and thus empowering African countries. What is your stance with regard to the projects launched in 2008?
- Do you have anything to add?
- Do you have any suggestions of other organizations I should talk to?

7.2. Interviews with Malawian civil servants

About the ministry or agency

- Please describe your ministry/agency and your working place briefly!

About evaluation of the package deal

→ My main interest is the infrastructure aspect of Chinese Malawian Cooperation; especially the projects launched in 2008: parliament, Karonga-Chitipa road, conference center & hotel, university, stadium.

- Did I forget any important projects? What and where?
- Do you have more detailed information about the agreements?
- How do you evaluate the impact of this package deal on development processes in Malawi?
- If you think of these projects, what value do they have for Malawian development? In total and one by one...
 - new Parliament
 - conference center and hotel
 - university
 - stadium
 - the Karonga-Chitipa road
- Do the projects create or intensify economic activities?
- What is the value of infrastructure for the development of Malawi?
- Who benefits most from the infrastructure projects (Malawian politicians, Malawian population, Chinese government, Chinese businessmen)?
- Do you think the projects reflect Malawian needs?
- Do you see a symbolic value in the projects?
 - If yes – What is the symbolic value of the projects?
 - If no – Why not?
- How do you evaluate the visibility of the changes caused by the projects?
- Do you think it is important for the development of Malawi to be able to see changes in the country – as e.g. through the projects of the package deal?
- How would you describe the relation between Malawi and China compared to other donors?
- How do you evaluate the impact of the grants and loans? Do they express China's trust in Malawi's potential or do they make Malawi dependent?

- How do you evaluate China's policy of not implementing political or economic conditions?
- What do you think will happen if China's support was ended?
- Some scholars say, Chinese engagement in African countries is another form of colonialism/ exploitation others say it is challenging western dominance and thus empowering African countries. What is your stance with regard to the projects launched in 2008?
- Do you have anything to add?
- Do you have any suggestions of other civil servants I should talk to?

7.3. Interviews with employees at the Chinese embassy

- My focus is on infrastructure projects but I would like to know in general in which sectors the Chinese and the Malawian Government cooperate?
- How do you evaluate the impact of the cooperation on Malawian development?
- How does the PRC benefit from the cooperation?
- As I already stated, my focus is on infrastructure projects which started when the cooperation was launched in 2007.
 - Can give detailed information about the agreement which was set up in 2007?
 - How high were the loans and grants for each of the projects?
 - How does Malawi pay back?
 - How do you evaluate the impact of these projects for the development of Malawi?
- The projects bring visible changes to Malawi's landscape – Is there a specific goal to this visibility?
- In general, how do you evaluate the role of infrastructure for development?
- What reactions of the Malawian population did you experience?
- What reactions of the Chinese population did you experience?
- How would you compare Chinese cooperation with Malawi to other/ traditional donors?
- Do you have anything to add?
- Do you have any suggestions for other people to contact?

7.4. Interviews with representatives of Chinese construction companies

- Please give me a brief overview of the process of construction: start, end, process!
- How many employees did/do you have?
- How many employees are Malawians, how many are Chinese?
- Can you give an overview of the financial structure, the funding of this project?
- What was the total cost of the projects?
- What are the conditions of the implementation? When does the money have to be paid back?
- Who is/was responsible of the design of the project?
- Who is/was responsible of the architecture of this project?
- Whose ideas are guiding the construction process?

- Who is in charge of the maintenance?
- What are future prospects of engagement for your company in Malawi?
- How are the reactions to your projects you experience in Malawi?
- Do you have anything to add?
- Do you have any suggestions of persons I should talk to?

Appendix 8: Pictures of the package deal projects in Lilongwe²⁸

The conference center and hotel



The conference center



The five star hotel

²⁸During my field visit I could only visit the projects which are placed in Lilongwe because of time constraints. So I was not able to take pictures of the Karonga-Chitipa road and the University of Science and Technology.



One of 15 presidential villas, part of the conference center and hotel complex

The Parliament complex



The parliament building



The entrance to the parliament complex