RAISING MALAWI'S CHILDREN:
AIDS ORPHANS AND A POLITICS OF COMPASSION

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ABSTRACT

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Malawian orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) are becoming increasingly visible, both physically and ideologically, across different landscapes. Transnational responses earmark resources for OVCs, national government ministries have created OVC divisions, human rights groups have initiated OVC campaigns, and local communities have created community-based organizations (CBOs) around the presence and needs of orphans. These terrains intersect in a complex milieu within which definitions of orphans, resource allocation, and program implementation are contested by a variety of actors. Within this global response, an emerging population of humanitarians characterized as sympathetic individuals not necessarily trained in humanitarianism, development, or childcare is becoming evident. These individuals or non-expert humanitarians are motivated by a compassionate drive to make a difference in the lives of suffering children.

This dissertation examines how a particular identity, orphanhood, is produced and imagined through compassionate humanitarian narratives and suffering iconography, ultimately driving exceptional amounts of funding and resources in one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. As resources arrive and are tied to a particular demographic it becomes a site of contention. It is within the disjuncture between western imaginations and constructions of orphans and the actual experiences and circumstances of the lives of these children that contestations occur. This leads to unanticipated outcomes for orphan projects that are explored in

this dissertation. Data is drawn from lay humanitarians, volunteer tourists, government officials, transnational organizations, and community and religious leaders. The voices of children institutionalized in the orphanages now ubiquitous in Malawi are included, as well as the voices of those orphans who remain in communities but have been drawn out by community members in an effort to secure transnational donor resources.

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory to my mother Arlene Freidus. She inspired this path, and it was her voice that I carried with me along the way. It was a privilege to be her daughter.

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KEY ABBREVIATIONS

ADMARC: Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation

AIC: AIDS Interfaith Coalition

AFC: Ambassadors for Children

ARV: Antiretroviral

CBCC: Community-Based Childcare Center

CBO: Community-Based Organization

CRS: Catholic Relief Services

DOS: Dowa Orphan Support

DSW: District Social Welfare

DSWO: District Social Welfare Officer

ECD: Early Childhood Development

GoM: Government of Malawi

IFRC: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

IMF: International Monetary Fund

LDC: Less Developed Country

MoWCD: Ministry of Women and Child Development

MSF: Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders)

NPA for OVC: National Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children

OSA: Orphan Support Africa

OVC: Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children

PVO: Private Voluntary Organization

SAP: Structural Adjustment Policy

TA: Traditional Authority

UNAIDS: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

VOCC: Village Orphan Care Committee

WFP: World Food Program

INTRODUCTION

In early 2001, *Time* magazine published a photo essay focused on AIDS in Africa titled "Death Stalks a Continent." On the cover was a picture of a grandmother holding a small child with the text: "This is a story about AIDS in Africa. Look at the pictures. Read the words. And then try not to care." Among other things, this story brought attention to the impact the maturing AIDS pandemic was having on children in sub-Saharan Africa. It also marked the decade that would lead to the proliferation of a direct global humanitarian response to the African AIDS orphan crisis (Foster, Levine, and Williamson 2005). This headline also captures a predominant motivation of the orphan response—compassion.

This is the story of compassionate people driven to make a difference in the lives of children touched by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Malawi, most possessing limited or no training in development, humanitarianism, or childcare. These non-expert or lay humanitarians dedicate their time, talents, and funds to making the lives of children better. I intend to show how a particular identity, orphanhood, is produced and imagined through compassionate humanitarian narratives and suffering iconography, ultimately driving exceptional amounts of funding and resources in one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, orphans have become a site of contestation. A variety of actors, including Government of Malawi (GoM) ministries, community organizations, families, and children, are positioning themselves in an effort to capture the orphan-earmarked resources now flowing into Malawi, often in ways little imagined by the funders themselves.

I intend to show that the iconography and discourses that western donors and humanitarians produce do not always reflect the actual circumstances of the lives of children. Westerners, the Malawian state, local communities, and children have varying perspectives on

what orphans are, how they should be served, and what the expected or desired outcomes of orphan projects should be. I will show that this disjuncture between western imaginings of orphans and the lived experiences of these children give rise to contestations often leading to unanticipated outcomes for orphan projects. I will highlight positive outcomes, such as food programs, payment of school fees, and access to AIDS drugs for children, as well as the negative effects of these programs. For example, I demonstrate how some programs create community dissent and jealousy, privilege an orphan identity, foster social and spiritual insecurity for children and program organizers, and disrupt Malawian kinship and family systems.

Some children's lives are improved, but a target-specific response aimed at orphans may not be the best response. I argue that the profound social cleavages emerging in Malawi are not the result of HIV/AIDS or the growth of the orphan population. While the disease impacts Malawian sociality, I argue that growing inequality and the perpetuation of endemic poverty must also be considered, because they are the underlying structural factors—orphans are only a small manifestation of these processes. Indeed, I show how resources targeting orphans are contributing to increasing social and economic differentiation and community unease and discord. Meanwhile, the more pervasive structures that frame poverty, AIDS, orphanhood, and suffering escape the notice of most lay humanitarians.

Throughout this dissertation, I draw on Tsing's metaphor of friction to understand the way in which global power rubs up against local realities that ultimately shape the subjectivities and lived experiences of children. Friction, according to Tsing, refers to "the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference" (2005:4). Like her ethnography, this dissertation is about global connections that play out in the "sticky materiality of practical encounters" (Tsing 2005:1). Global power does not function like a "well-oiled

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machine" operating smoothly and uninterrupted (Tsing 2005:6); the global and the local meet at a site characterized by friction. As a metaphorical image, friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power (Tsing 2005:5). It is the encounter between Malawian cultural practices and ideologies and west-inspired projects based on a particular narrative of orphans that I explore in this dissertation.

In the remainder of this chapter, I situate Malawi within the global geopolitical context. I begin by examining the broad economic transitions Malawi experienced from independence to the more contemporary period. The incursion of AIDS into Malawi is directly related to its economic history and geopolitical positioning. This sets the stage for understanding the forces that produce Malawi's orphans and shape their lives. I conclude by discussing the impact of AIDS and the emergence of lay humanitarians who are now providing services and material resources to orphaned children.

Situating Malawi: Poverty, AIDS, and Neoliberalism

Malawi is a small, but densely populated land-locked country in southern Africa (see figure 1). Malawi's population is estimated at 15,447,500 with a land area of 94,080 square kilometers, which is approximately the

Figure 1: Map of Malawi
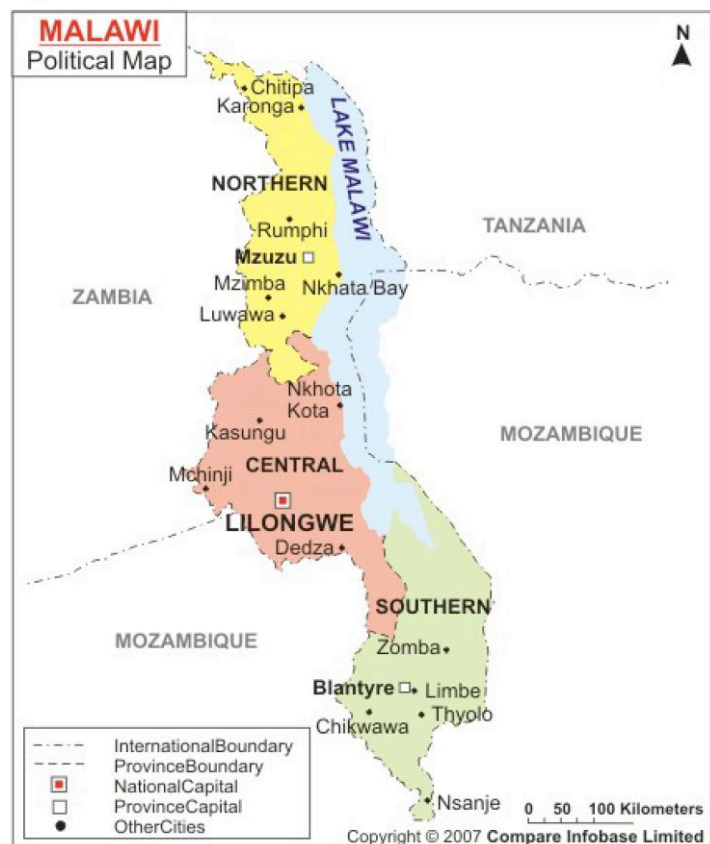
For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

size of Pennsylvania (CIA 2011). To the north, Malawi shares a border with Tanzania. Zambia borders the western side of Malawi, and Mozambique is to the south. Lake Malawi (Nyasa) runs along the eastern border for approximately 580 kilometers. The dominant ethnic groups include the Chewa, Tumbuka, Ngoni, Nkonde, Sena, Lomwe, Yao, and Tonga. The dominant local language in Malawi is Chichewa, which is spoken by 57 percent of the population. The majority of Malawians identify as Christian (79.9 percent). Muslims account for 12.8 percent of the population.

In 1891 Malawi, or Nyasaland as it was referred to, was colonized by the British and remained under colonial rule until 1964. An uprising led by Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda successfully overthrew the colonial regime. Dr. Banda later declared himself "President for Life," and Malawi remained under dictatorial rule for thirty years. In 1994, Dr. Banda's one-party rule ended and multi-party elections took place. Malawi's current president, Dr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, is serving his second term in office after winning the 2009 election. He faces many challenges, including curbing the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its effects, alleviating chronic food insecurity, addressing corruption, and encouraging economic growth.

Poverty is insidious in Malawi. Thirty six percent, or approximately four million Malawians, are living in "deep or ultra poverty," which is equivalent to 60 percent below the poverty line of a dollar per day and is assumed to indicate chronic food insecurity (Harrigan 2008). Sixty-four percent of Malawians are living in poverty, which suggests sporadic periods of food insecurity (Harrigan 2008). Harrigan (2008:238) points out, "Over half of Malawi's nearly twelve million population is both poor and food insecure." How is this possible with 85 percent of the people living in rural areas as smallholder agriculturalists? In the following section I explore the relationship between the changing nature of agriculture and food production as it

relates to the global economy in an effort to trace the path to poverty experienced by so many Malawians. I begin with the initial post-independence boom in 1964. Table 1 provides a timeline that summarizes the significant economic and agricultural trends that occurred during the post-independence period.

Agriculture and Economic Trends in Malawi

Much of Malawi's most productive land was converted to private estates during the colonial period. Tea, coffee, tobacco, sugar, and cotton were the primary exports, accounting for 40 percent of exports during the initial post-independence period (Conroy et al. 2006). The majority of the people remained subsistence or small-scale farmers producing to meet the needs of the local economy. Harrigan (2008) notes that upwards of 90 percent of national employment was tied to subsistence farming due in part to a lack of mineral resources, capital, and skilled labor. For these reasons, the national economic strategy focused on "an export-oriented, agro-based, and labour-intensive expansion path with import-substituting industrialization playing only a secondary role" (Conroy et al. 2006:17).

Economic growth was strong until 1979. These positive gains were garnered exclusively by estate-sector exports of tea, tobacco, and sugar (Harrigan 2008). The contrast between economic growth realized by the estate sector and smallholder growth is telling. During the period between 1964 and 1977, the estate sector registered an average annual growth rate of 17 percent. In contrast, smallholders saw only a 3 percent annual growth rate for the same period (Harrigan 2008). Conroy et al. (2006) argues that the preference for estate-sector growth was particularly detrimental to subsistence farmers for a variety of reasons. First, customary land was annexed to support estate growth, leaving small-scale farmers to cultivate more marginal areas. A result of their dispossession was increased population pressure on less productive or unsuitable

Table 1: Summary of Economic and Agricultural Trends Post-Independence Period (1964-2010)

TIME PERIOD	TRENDS
PHASE 1 (1964-1979) *(Chilowa et al. 2000; Chirwa 1997; Chinsinga 2002)*	Rapid growth in certain sectors of the economy attributed to: (1) Favorable world demand (2) Favorable climactic conditions (3) Growth in large scale agriculture sector (estate) (4) High levels of gross domestic investment (5) Low real wages and labor costs in agricultural sector
(Harrigan 2008)	Role of ADMARC (Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation) (1) Sold fertilizers to small holder farmers as subsidized prices (2) Guaranteed the purchasing price for maize (3) Sold maize to Malawians at a subsidized price to keep it accessible
(Harrigan 2008)	Outcomes: (1) Annual growth rate of 17% among estate producers (tea, cotton, tobacco) (2) Annual growth rate of only 3% among small holder farmers (maize, tobacco, cotton, groundnuts)
PHASE II Beginning in the early 1970s *(Chinsinga 2002)*	First evidence of negative growth – associated with: (1) Rising interest rates on international financial markets (2) Decline in trade terms (3) Closure of Beira-Nacala-Maputo trade corridor (Mozambique Civil War) (4) Influx of Mozambique's civil war refugees (5) Decline in foreign aid (6) Global oil crisis (1978–1980) (7) Southern Africa drought
(Chilowa et al. 2000; Chinsinga 2002)	Structural components identified as contributing to economic decline: (1) Limited export base, too heavy a reliance on tobacco (2) Over reliance on imported fuel/oil (3) Deteriorating parastatal finances (4) Minimal growth of smallholder exports
1980s–1990s *(Harrigan 2008)*	Nature of Smallholder Farming and Associated Negative Impacts: (1) Continued reliance on rain-fed agriculture (2) Variable single season rainfall (3) Extensive soil degradation associated with monocropping, population growth, and faltering crop prices requiring increased production Resulting in a decline in maize production per capita
1981	Malawi accepts World Bank loan to alleviate widespread food insecurity and agrees to market liberalization measures
Early 1980s *(Chinsinga 2002; Harrigan 2008)*	ADMARC impacts: (1) Many ADMARC markets closed (2) Forced to increase producer prices for smallholder export crops (3) Forced to reduce relative producer price of maize (4) Subsidies phased out

Table 1 (cont'd)

1986 *(Conroy 2006)*	Food Crisis hits Malawi. GoM imports 140,000 metric tones of maize
1992–1993	Drought reduces maize production by 50% Two-thirds of population registers for food assistance
1987–1996 *(Chinsinga 2002)*	Public government expenditure declines from 36% to 29% of GDP Simultaneously, debt servicing burden doubles
(Harrigan 2008)	Drought Recovery Inputs Programme (DRIP): free maize seed and fertilizer to 1.3 million households
1994–1995	Subsidies drop again
1998–1999	Subsidies re-instated (Starter Pack)
1981–1998	Government expenditure for health falls from 15.5% to 10% Government expenditure for education falls from 6.53% to 3.17%

land. In addition, subsistence farmers were not permitted to grow certain cash crops, including burley tobacco, tea, and sugar to prevent competition with the estate sector. Maize became their primary crop. To make matters worse, smallholder farmers were paid less than the export parity price by the state marketing board for their maize. During this time, Banda reinvested profits into the estate sector at the expense of public and social service expenditures (especially neglecting the health and education sectors). He did little to devise a strategy to bolster the smallholder farmer economically (Conroy et al. 2006).

The weakness of this economic strategy became apparent in the late 1970s, when a variety of external shocks ended the impressive economic growth immediately following independence (see table 1, phase II trends). In particular, the oil crisis, Mozambique's civil war, and widespread drought led to negative economic growth. These crises resulted in the adoption of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans and Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs).

During the 1980s, Malawi received three different loans that were focused on bolstering the productive and economic growth of smallholder farmers. Export prices were raised and the relative price of maize reduced (Conroy et al. 2006). In addition, subsidies were removed. These

policy changes were guided by the central tenets of neoliberal logic, which theorized that free markets, privatization, and the laws of supply and demand would equalize economic distribution over the long run. It was recognized that there might be an initial "bump," during which those living in poverty would not feel the immediate effects of these policies. This was indeed the case, and SAPs resulted in the poor spiraling downward into even more desperate circumstances (Conroy et al. 2006).

The response from the World Bank in the mid-1980s was to continue to promote trade liberalization and increasing industrialization competition. In the agriculture sector, the World Bank supported programs that targeted subsidies to poor farmers and removed the restrictions that had kept smallholder farmers from growing lucrative exports, especially burley tobacco (Conroy et al. 2006). Conroy et al. (2006) argues that attempts to redress land allocation associated with the estate sector were undertaken in an effort to strengthen the smallholder sector. This, along with the introduction of hybrid maize, made the economic landscape of Malawi look more promising.

Until 2007 sustained economic growth was never realized. Negative trends had become the norm as a result of regular bouts of food crises associated with a reliance on rain-fed agriculture. In addition, the practice of monocropping, first introduced during the colonial period, had proven detrimental to Malawian soil (Conroy et al. 2006). Extensive land cultivation, primarily of maize, led to the depletion of soil productivity. Smallholders now require extensive inputs, including fertilizers and pesticides, which are cost-prohibitive without government subsidies. Several of my research participants pointed to the dramatic loss of soil productivity and the increased reliance on fertilizers as the primary factors creating their food insecurity.

Malawian President Bingu Wa Mutharika decided to defy "experts" who argued for privatization and free-market processes as means for reducing poverty. He reinstated fertilizer and seed subsidies following the 2005 famine (Bello 2008). Research on crop productivity showed a dramatic increase during the 2006 and 2007 growing seasons. Productivity was so high Malawi began exporting maize to neighboring countries (Bello 2008). This latest trend in food security is not shared by all Malawians. Few villages receive enough subsidized fertilizer to reach all households. The result is increasing social differentiation, because some families become more food secure, while others continue to struggle during the lean season. Poverty persists, but it is differentially experienced. Harrigan (2008) notes that Malawi has one of the most uneven income distributions in the world, with only Brazil and Namibia surpassing it. This social differentiation, I will argue, leads to tensions in communities as orphans and funds geared towards them are implicated in increasing differentiation.

Malawi's ties to the global economy are not limited to agriculture strategies, although with 85 percent of the population engaging in smallholder farming this is certainly the dominant mode of production. That being said, a host of other strategies—many initiated during the colonial period—have drawn people out of their rural homesteads and into migration patterns driven by the need and desire to engage in a diverse array of economic pursuits. During the colonial period, people migrated to urban and peri-urban areas to join the service sector seeking jobs such as bicycle repair, carpentry, brick-making, tailoring, trading, and beer brewing (Vaughan 1987). Much of this migration was tied to the imposition of hut taxes, which required local populations to engage in the cash economy to pay the colonial regime. People also migrated across borders, primarily to work in mines in both South Africa and Zambia. People continue to

migrate today between rural and urban areas within the country, as well across borders, in an effort to secure a viable livelihood.

Despite registering some recent successes, many Malawians continue to face endemic poverty. These broadly discussed negative economic trends are tied to poor health and education outcomes. The historical lack of investment in social services and infrastructure, along with food insecurity, perpetuates the cycle of poverty and disease (Conroy et al. 2006). Moreover, the effects of neoliberal reforms set in place by the World Bank and IMF have resulted in limiting the size and scope of government. The neoliberal logic of decentralization and privatization has led to a deliberate shift in social service provision away from the central government toward local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), churches, and the private sector (Schoepf, Schoepf, and Millen 2000; Turshen 1999).

As a result of the adoption of World Bank austerity measures, social indicators— including life expectancy, poverty levels, access to potable water, and school enrollment— deteriorated (Harrigan 2008). These negative trends, coupled with a reduced government, have strained the ability of many communities and families to provide for themselves. HIV appeared just as public health and education expenditure was declining, food insecurity was becoming more widespread, subsidies were being phased out, and negative economic growth was regularly documented.

Introducing AIDS to Malawi

> *HIV…follows the pattern of the commercial economy, straddling the urban-rural divide.*
> (Iliffe 2006:41).

HIV was first discovered in Malawi in 1985. By 1992, HIV/AIDS had become the leading cause of death among adults (Foster, Levine, and Williamson 2005). In 2003, the Ministry of Health and the National AIDS Commission (NAC) estimated a national adult (ages

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15–49) prevalence rate to be 14.4 percent, which translated to approximately 760,000 infected adults (NAC 2003). The number of infected children (aged 0–14) was estimated to be 70,000. An updated United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report puts the number of individuals in Malawi living with HIV/AIDS at 930,000 (UNICEF 2006).

Iliffe's (2006) comprehensive book on AIDS in Africa makes explicit the link between the spread of HIV/AIDS and the global economy. He highlighted the emergence of HIV "hotspots" associated with urban and commercial areas as being the epicenter of a pandemic that would quickly disseminate into rural areas, following the ebb and flow of economic trends. Malawi, situated within the broader global economy, illustrates the link between AIDS, migration, and economic shifts.

Iliffe's (2006:33) work includes a discussion of the "remote rural Karonga District" as the "earliest definite indication of HIV in southern Africa and the best evidence of the silent epidemic anywhere in the continent." Karonga is one of my research sites. The incursion of AIDS into this area is documented serendipitously through a TB and leprosy campaign initiated in 1981 and followed up in 1987–1989 that included the collection of blood samples. The explosion of the epidemic is traced through these samples, which were retrospectively analyzed for the virus. Of those first identified as positive, over half had recently migrated to the area from other parts of Malawi, as well as from Zambia and Tanzania. The majority of the strain types (HIV has several different subtypes) are tied to the southern DR Congo and mines in Katanga and the Zambian Copperbelt. Of the 189 infected individuals discovered in 1987–1989 testing, forty-eight were absentees who had not been in the area between 1981 and 1984, during the initial testing phase. Thirty-nine positive individuals were new immigrants. Iliffe (2006:36–37) states that the disease was primarily tied to mobility outside of the district, and was most

common among "traders, salaried employees, casual labourers, and generally those who were not peasant farmers." It was the global positioning of Malawi, the economic structure, and the mobility of laborers that created HIV hotspots that ultimately left no part of Malawi untouched. Iliffe (2006:40) quotes a Malawian villager's explanation for the spread of HIV tied to global capital flows via tanker driver mobility:

> The wives were spreading the virus to their husbands, the unmarried women were infecting the young men, the young men making money from smuggling were going into Lilongwe and having sex there. People were behaving freely, and they had no idea that anything bad could happen to them…By 1996, twelve years after the trucks first started arriving, the death rate in the village peaked at four a week…Our neighbors from other villages would not come to help people who were sick…We become completely isolated.

Iliffe does say later that most infections were passed from promiscuous men to their wives.

The presence of Malawian miners in South Africa, a prominent site for HIV transmission, is well documented. In fact, Malawians in the mines seemed hardest hit by the pandemic. By 1986, 4 percent of Malawian mineworkers in South Africa were HIV-positive, which was the only national group from Central Africa significantly infected (Iliffe 2006:37). Malawian miners were forcibly repatriated, although the reason why is under debate. The South African government asserted they were a "public health risk," but Chirwa (1998) believes the government was attempting to limit the number of foreign laborers for economic reasons. Regardless of the actual motive that forced them out of South Africa, the ties to HIV/AIDS, migration, and economics are clear.

While initially higher in cities such as Lilongwe and Blantyre, infection rates rose in rural areas as economic decline pushed urban residents back into rural villages (Iliffe 2006). Just as miners may have introduced AIDS upon their return, previous urban dwellers not working in mines may have also brought the disease back with them. President Hastings Kamuzu Banda

remained silent about the epidemic despite the growing visibility of the virus. In the next section

I focus on the impact of HIV/AIDS and poverty on children's welfare.

Malawi's Orphans

At its peak in 1998, HIV prevalence rates in Malawi registered at 26 percent (USAID

2010). Rates have steadily declined. Today the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate appears to have

leveled off at approximately 11.9 percent (UNICEF 2006 estimate), but the number of orphans is assumed to continue to grow as already infected individuals succumb to the

Table 2: Orphan Statistics for Malawi

Estimated Number of Orphans (0–18 years)	
Total number of orphans in 2001	937,000
Total number of orphans in 2005	1,008,000
Orphans Due to AIDS (0–17 years)	
Number of orphans due to AIDS 2004	500,000
Children orphaned by AIDS as % of total 2004	48
Total maternal orphans 2004	610,000
Total paternal orphans 2004	660,000
Total double orphans 2004	240,000

virus. Table 2 is taken from Malawi's 2005–2009 National Plan of Action for Orphans and Other

Vulnerable Children (NPA for OPV). As I discuss in chapter 5, an AIDS orphan is defined as

any child under the age of eighteen who has lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS.

Research throughout sub-Saharan Africa has demonstrated the devastating impact of

AIDS on all facets of life (Conroy et al. 2006; Iliffe 2006; Kalipeni et al. 2003). Education

(Kendall and O'Gara 2007), political and democratic engagement (Barnett and Whiteside 2002),

health (Conroy and Whiteside 2006), economics (Conroy and Whiteside 2006), social and

cultural practices, and food insecurity (de Waal and Whiteside 2003) have all felt the effects of

the pandemic. A place like Malawi—already one of the poorest nations in the world with a

human development index ranking of 160 out of 182 countries—has been negatively impacted

by the virus.

The NPA for OPV spells out thirteen "typical harmful effects" related to the pandemic. I have included these effects and added some descriptions to make clear the connections between HIV and the harm done to families and children in table 3.

Table 3: Typical Harmful Effects Facing Malawi's Orphans

1. **Fragmented Households:** the migration of siblings between a variety of extended families, which the GoM suggests is detrimental despite there being a long history of children being split between different households
2. **Child Labor:** sick parents require resources; children often take up the economic burden
3. **Wife Inheritance:** traditional practice of levirate, whereby husband's brothers inherit wives, can spread HIV
4. **Property Grabbing:** extended kin claiming property/land rights, forcing remaining family members, including children, into homelessness and destitution; can lead to risky sexual behavior or survival sex
5. **Grandparents Carrying the Burden:** when their children die, grandparents naturally take in grandchildren, even though the economic support they traditionally receive from their children is lost, causing significant financial stress on already impoverished households
6. **Child-Headed Households:** children being forced to take on the responsibilities of running/ maintaining households
7. **Risk of HIV:** in an effort to ease poverty, women and girls may turn to unsafe strategies, including risky sexual activities that increase susceptibility to HIV/AIDS
8. **School Drop-Out:** children leave school to support sick parents or take on household and economic responsibilities that had once been the purview of parents
9. **Early Marriages:** a strategy to reduce household numbers, young girls may be married off, forcing them out of school as they take on domestic responsibilities
10. **Early Pregnancy:** a variety of factors can lead to early pregnancy, including survival/commercial sex and seeking attention and love in the absence of parental support
11. **Children in Conflict with the Law:** a result of little or no supervision, food insecurity, economic strain, etc.
12. **Institutionalization of Children:** lack of government resources to monitor institutions can lead to abuse and exploitation
13. **Homelessness/Street Children:** children take to the streets because they lose their property to unscrupulous family members, run away from abusive situations when parents remarry, and/or pursue begging as an economic strategy

HIV/AIDS, increasing food insecurity, and inadequate access to healthcare lead to high levels of malnutrition and stunting among the next generation. The impact of malnutrition on cognitive development undoubtedly perpetuates the cycle of poverty. While the numbers are slowly improving, the situation remains precarious (see table 4). According to a UNICEF survey (2008):

Table 4: Malnutrition Statistics for Malawi's Children

13% of infants have a low birthrate
21% of children under five are moderate to severely underweight
53% of children under five suffer from stunting
4% of children suffer from wasting

It is not AIDS alone that is responsible for these "harmful" affects. Metaphorically, AIDS is just one symptom of a macro-level chronic disease with deep historic roots tied to poverty and marginalization. But it is the face of a suffering child impacted by a devastating disease that spurs people to action. Children are proving to be effective bodies for rallying development support.

In an effort to serve the needs of these children and tap into global AIDS resources, the Malawian state has created policies and drafted the appropriate documents that invite NGOs to take over social services they cannot provide. As I discuss in detail in chapter 5, Malawi produced a seminal document in 1992 that opened the door for the mobilization, administration, and distribution of transnational money tied solely to orphan-centered projects. With the guidance of UNICEF, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Food Program (WFP), the GoM wrote and later revised the National Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (NPA for OVC). This policy drew primarily on the guidelines of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and served to legalize, justify, and frame the presence, power, and production of donor visions of orphanhood and orphan-care programming. It is within a neoliberal milieu that compassionate individuals not necessarily trained in humanitarianism, development, or childcare have emerged as powerful actors able to provide resources and services.

Lay or "Do-It-Yourself" Humanitarians[1]

With the Poor

The one thing on which we can all agree, all faiths and ideologies, is that God is with the vulnerable and poor.

God is in the slums, in the cardboard box where the poor play house.

God is in the silence of a mother who has infected her child with a virus that will end both their lives.

God is in the cries heard under the rubble of war.

God is in the debris of wasted opportunity and lives,

and God is with us if we are with them.

> Source: 54th Annual National Prayer Breakfast speech, by Bono, Feb. 2, 2006; also used as the e-mail signature by one of the central AIC supporters

In October 2010 the *New York Times* ran an article by Nicholas Kristof about idealistic individuals tackling social injustices in the developing world. These tend to be passionate self-starters who fall outside the traditional development apparatus. Many have no experience with development theories or practices, but are spurred on by a desire to make a difference. We are told the story of a young Harvard graduate student who became enraged when she discovered girls in the developing country were unable to attend school because of a lack of access to feminine hygiene products. She raised money and was awarded a variety of fellowships to design a cost-effective alternative. Is this a practical and worthwhile venture? Kristof notes that it is questionable. He states, "Anybody wrestling with poverty at home or abroad learns that good intentions and hard work aren't enough. Helping people is hard." He also notes that these do-it-yourselfers are often overly naïve, fail to take into account cultural mores, and are unsophisticated in their understanding of the roots of social injustices and what it takes to redress

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[1] The names of the organizations, volunteers, program coordinators, government officials, and children have been changed when appropriate to protect the anonymity of minors and those individuals who have elected to remain anonymous.

them. Conversely, there are individuals who approach issues with a more nuanced understanding of the local context and develop projects that fulfill their intended goals.

In Malawi, the situation of orphans has captured the attention of westerners who are increasingly supporting do-it-yourself projects. Just as in the *New York Times* article, some of these generous and compassionate individuals approach the situation of orphans with a naivety about their culture, circumstances, needs, and desires. Other compassionate groups are more sophisticated and attentive to cultural attitudes, local realities, and systemic social justice issues. For this reason, I have adopted a critical position, attempting to depict with detail the impact of these projects on the lives of people in Malawi.

Throughout this dissertation I refer to both lay humanitarians (do-it-yourselfers) and volunteer tourists. The distinction between them is blurred. In general, I refer to volunteer tourists as those individuals who travel to Malawi to dedicate time to community/orphan service as well as visit tourist areas. Their involvement with orphans may be limited to their one overseas experience. Lay humanitarian refers to an individual who is dedicated to supporting orphans for a longer period of time.

How does one go about critiquing people who have genuinely good intentions; who sacrifice an exorbitant amount of their time, talents, finances, and heart/soul to better the lives of others? The focus of this ethnographic account is not on the political economic motivations of a group of capitalist neocolonizers attempting to "save" Malawi, but rather the good intentions of people who feel called to make a difference. Some lay humanitarians are successful in listening to local people and incorporating culturally sensitive approaches to caring for children. Others carry with them a naive understanding of the complex and deeply historical cultural and social milieu within which they work. In these cases, the unanticipated and negative outcomes can be

profound and disturbing, especially for children who are divorced from their families and their cultural context.

While my work is critical, I also want to point out that I believe there is potential for lay humanitarians to make a difference that is culturally relevant and appropriately addresses issues of social injustice. Engaging with issues of endemic poverty, human rights, suffering, and disease is becoming more common among self-motivated and compassionate young people. In all of my interviews with volunteer tourists, many of them college-aged students, they reported that their experiences in Malawi changed their worldview—and sometimes even their career paths. Indeed it was my own earlier overseas volunteer tourist experiences in the Dominican Republic and exposure to unnecessary suffering that led me to advanced degrees in Public Health and Anthropology. I, too, acted out of compassion and the desire to "do good." I want to state clearly that I believe there is nothing wrong with compassion; it is how one acts on it. In chapter 7, I suggest that this work should not deter a spirit of volunteerism or humanitarianism, but rather help guide compassionate people who want to make a difference to seek a sophisticated understanding of cultural systems and macro-level forces.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this dissertation I show how Malawian orphans are imagined and constructed within transnational global discourses associated with lay humanitarian organizations that have founded, funded, and implemented orphan-care projects in Malawi. I argue that the imagined orphanhoods created by these organizations become contested by a variety of Malawian actors, including state ministries, community groups, and children themselves, as programs and resources get operationalized. The friction between transnational constructions and local particularities leads to unanticipated outcomes that I explore throughout this study. I conclude

that orphans and their vulnerabilities, both perceived and real, are the expression of deeper structural dilemmas that need to be understood and addressed for sustained impact to occur.

In chapter 1 I focus on transnational organizations initiated by lay humanitarians that target orphans in Malawi. I explore modernity and ideals of "modern" youth, which frame their projects, as well as the orphan narratives they produce, to encourage donor giving. I then contrast these ideals, assumptions, and narratives with Malawian perspectives on children. I include a brief genealogy of the place of children in southern African social systems (especially among the Ngoni and Chewa). There is friction between western perspectives of children/orphans and Malawian ideologies. This tension is expressed when west-inspired orphan projects are implemented in a context that maintains a different worldview.

Chapter 2 presents my research trajectory, including a section on how I came to identify this topic, as well as a note on the importance of contributing to the emerging field of the anthropology of childhood. I identify my research questions; discuss how I selected my research sites; describe my methods and sampling, participant demographics, and the background of the organizations I studied; and end with a section on positionality, the centrality of my research assistant to my fieldwork, and several ethical conundrums that I faced while undertaking this work.

Chapter 3 examines the rise of humanitarian responses to crisis, including a discussion of the emergence of non-professional or lay humanitarians wanting to help orphans in Malawi. I explore the construction of orphan narratives and the ways in which transnational organizations depict the situation of children and their suffering in Malawi. I describe three central characteristics of these lay humanitarian responses, which are dependent upon and shaped by the orphan discourses they employ and disseminate. These include: (1) the presentation of suffering

to trigger a compassionate response among potential donors; (2) the generation of a discourse and iconography that creates apolitical and acultural children living in isolation and dependent on the benevolence of western donors; and (3) the presence of an underlying paternalism rooted in discourses and projects framed by modernity ideology.

In chapter 4 I focus on orphanages and how they are proliferating to meet the needs of children facing a host of vulnerabilities. I review the vulnerabilities children face and the rise of orphanages in southern Africa. I report children's outcomes, both positive and negative, that result from institutionalization. I show how being designated an orphan is becoming a valued identity for some, and a source of vulnerability and exploitation for others. Data suggests that these institutions address material vulnerabilities, yet that they can also lead to increased stigmatization, struggles over belonging, and the disruption of community and family ties.

Chapter 5 examines Malawian constructions of and responses to orphans from the perspective of the state ministries focused on child welfare. Just as with transnational NGOs, there is deliberate maneuvering to make children labeled orphans more visible by certain Malawian ministries and government officials, including Malawi's president. However, the intentions of these different stakeholders and the modes of producing orphans are different. In this chapter I argue that the state is attempting to turn what the NGO industry imagines to be an apolitical response to children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS into a state-building exercise. They accomplish this by drawing on UNICEF definitions and depictions of orphans, engaging with children's rights discourses, and promoting a decentralized response that requires a fully functioning local-level government infrastructure. I show how the state's obvious lack of capacity—especially in terms of resources, funds, and staffing—justifies significant expenditure

of globally generated orphan-earmarked funds in order to ensure children's rights, as well as to monitor and evaluate transnational organizations attempting to serve children.

Despite depictions of orphans as socially isolated, the majority of Malawi's orphans are under the care and guidance of a single parent, another extended family member, or both. Very few children actually fall through these social safety nets and end up in the streets or orphanages. For this reason, the majority of orphan-earmarked resources are funneled to community-based projects.

In chapter 6 I interrogate the idea of "community," which is imagined by donors to be a homogenous, compassionate, socially harmonious body that functions to maintain the good of the whole. I then describe what has been accomplished by community-based programs, such as accessing antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) for HIV-positive children, funding orphans to attend secondary school, and implementing feeding programs. I also describe unanticipated outcomes, which are equally relevant and present their own forms of intelligibility. For example, there is regular misuse of orphan resources, which increases community dissent. In addition, some community members access these funds for their own professional development, at times at the expense of providing for vulnerable children.

Finally, I discuss the disturbing trend of children's involvement in witchcraft. I argue that the failure of the promises of modernity as mobilized through humanitarian efforts contributes to the unequal distribution of resources creating tensions within Malawian villages. This has resulted in increased material and spiritual insecurity, as depicted by emerging occult practices involving all children, not just orphans. The idea of community can be interrogated through the idiom of witchcraft, as it is often considered a gauge of social stability or instability at the village level.

Chapter 7, the conclusion, summarizes how the western construction of a particular type of homogenous aid category leads to the implementation of programs in Malawi that are not always compatible with local needs. I explore the notion of compassion and suggest ways of directing the desire to ease suffering toward projects that are more appropriate and reflective of local needs. Anthropology's role is to guide these groups by helping them avoid the perpetuation of an antiquated paternalism underlying much of humanitarian and development efforts predicated on the western assumption that "we" have to help "them" because they lack the capacity. In this dialectic, there is no sense of partnership. In addition, anthropology can help these groups avoid the practice many westerners have of identifying a "problem" and providing a "technical fix" with limited knowledge about theories of development, cultural particularities, structural violence, and the macro- and micro-economic systems that shape poverty and illness, which are deeply connected to the orphan crisis. Western assumptions need to be challenged, and engaged and involved individuals desiging and implementing these projects need to think critically. By exposing the situation that structures the lives of these children, including an engagement with broader economic, social, and political forces, we can encourage people to think more deeply about how we are connected to and in many ways involved with the structuring of the livelihoods of these children. This, I hope, will move compassionate people to think beyond a simple orphan project towards a lifelong commitment to issues of social justice, activism, and volunteerism.

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEMATIZING IMAGINEDCHILDHOODS IN RELATION TO AIDS, ORPHANS, AND AFRICA

Most people know the classic tale of Oliver Twist written by Charles Dickens. It is the story of an orphaned boy born in England during the early 19th century who is mistreated by the state social welfare system. Unscrupulous individuals attempting to profit from his marginalized status abuse Oliver. He spends the early part of his life living in deplorable conditions characterized by abject poverty, food insecurity, poor clothing, inadequate housing, and little to no care. As fate would have it, Oliver inadvertently takes up with a band of juvenile pickpockets in London, thus exposing himself to potential moral corruption. He is naïve about the criminal element that surrounds him. He is successful in avoiding becoming involved with their illicit activities, thus maintaining his purity and goodness. Throughout the story there are several compassionate individuals with faith in Oliver's moral character. They take up his cause and ultimately provide him with a fairytale ending.

I began with this brief summary of the life of Oliver Twist because it is this character and his life circumstances, although fictive, that the majority of western donors draw upon to imagine what it means to be an African orphan. Volunteer tourists, donors, and even government officials reference Oliver Twist when describing orphans in Malawi. In essence he embodies the homogenous aid category being targeted with an increasing amount of resources by transnational organizations. In chapter 3, I argue that organizations purposefully draw on and construct a discourse centered on an Oliver Twist image to encourage a compassionate response from donors. These children are imagined as isolated or abandoned victims, meaning they have no parental figures or extended family members caring for them. They are poor, living in destitute conditions, and are often exposed to moral corruption, including illicit sexual activities that put them at risk for contracting HIV.

Many children in Malawi do, in fact, live in poverty, and some are vulnerable to mistreatment and exploitation. However, my work suggests that the majority of children labeled orphans do not live in social isolation and are not abandoned as many westerners imagine. What is at the root of the mythologized Oliver Twist-like African orphan? I argue that many westerners when confronted with the term orphan are conceptually biased by their own cultural constructions and assumptions of both childhood and orphanhood. The majority of lay humanitarians is from the upper or middle class and draw upon a distinctly upper/middle-class construction of childhood. An upper/middle-class childhood assumes a nuclear family, provides a protected space of nurture for future economic production, and emphasizes the psychological worth of the child (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1999). This is not necessarily indicative of the social and cultural position of children in Malawian communities. I explore the discontinuity between what these individuals imagine a modern upper/middle-class ideal childhood ought to be and the reality of childhood in Malawi.

What those involved in orphan-care projects in Malawi imagine an ideal childhood to be does not resonate within the west, itself. Childhood takes on various forms dependent upon one's ethnicity, religious background, class, and so forth. For example, Lareau (2003) teases out the impact of class and race on family life and childhoods in the United States in her text, "Unequal Childhoods." Children from upper- and middle-class households are parented in ways that equip them for more "successful" adult lives. For instance, parents are more invested in their childrens schooling and educational development. Children are often enrolled in structured activities or placed in schools that require more adult interaction. These interations develop reasoning, negotiation, and interpersonal skills, which are highly valued and legitimated by the various

institutions they negotiate on a daily basis. She refers to this parenting as more systematic, because parents attempt a deliberate culivation of children's talents and skills.

In contrast, the children of working class and poor families tend toward less structured activities and are parented in more organic ways, allowing the child's development and their inherent talents to unfold naturally. These children spend less time interacting with adults and more time involved in informal activities with their peers. As a result, they exhibit less confidence with adult-child interactions and often demonstrate constraint within the various institutions they must negotiate daily. For example, Lareau notes children from poor families are less likely to make eye contact with adults, develop advanced verbal abilities, or demonstrate familiarity with abstract concepts. She concludes that these children do not acquire the same tyes of skills as their upper-class peers, suggesting that this has implications for the ways in which inequality in the United States is perpetuated. There is a dominant, hegemonic ideal of childhood premised on upper- or upper-middle-class values and cultural mores that are tied to modernity and capitalism, albeit contested, which I explore here. Stephens (1995) argues that it is within the production of this type of modern ideal childhood that Third World childhoods are juxtaposed and deemed deviant.

I begin with a discussion focused on modernity discourses and ideology, seeing that this paradigm largely encapsulates the worldview of those involved in the design, implementation, and funding of Malawian orphan-care projects. I will describe where children fit within this modernity paradigm. I then discuss African conceptualizations of both childhood and the emerging orphan population as they relate to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This discussion lays a foundation for the remainder of this dissertation as I examine the effects of the incursion of

modernity discourses and the culturally incompatible western construction of modern childhood

perpetuated by most orphan-care project designers and implementers in the Malawian context.

Modernity: A Brief Review

Modernity (framed by modernization theory) has proven to be a "messy," problematic,

and ambiguous narrative. At its peak, between the 1950s and 1960s,[2] modernity as a social

theory framed development practices, policies, and institutions (Cooper and Packard 1997).

Modernization theory is teleological, asserting that "primitive and backward" societies will

naturally and inevitably proceed forward toward an advanced, civilized, modern form (Ferguson

1999; Moore and Sanders 2001). The archetype was imaged to be western civilization, and all

other societal forms would inevitably move toward this end. This ideal modern form is

characterized by a "package" of elements that invariably include technological advancements

(including modern transportation and communication), democracy, nuclear families, capitalism,

urbanization, achieved as opposed to ascribed status, rationality instead of superstition,

individual sovereignty, and a secular worldview[3] (Cooper 1997; Cooper and Packard 1997;

Ferguson 2006b). "Progress" is measured according to these domains (Hall 1992 as referenced in

Gupta 1995).

An essential element of modernity ideology is the belief that the transition to the ideal

modern form, if it were to occur, needs to be dictated and guided by knowing professionals.

Western societies were the only ones who could orchestrate proper development (Comaroff and

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[2] Eurocentric, linear modernity discourses are rooted in Enlightenment thinking (social evolutionary theory) (Moore and Sanders 2001).

[3] The ideal form being "secular" is only in theory. Several authors have noted that, in reality, modernity narratives actually emerged within a strongly Judeo-Christian milieu. Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:xii) note that "conversion to a world religion" was a central tenet of the Eurocentric modernity narratives.

Comaroff 1991:xii). Expert knowledge was valued and generously disseminated to needy, ignorant, and backward societies. The idea of the backward primitive society requiring the guidance and governing of colonizers (and even early slave traders) is echoed in postcolonial development projects and their discourses. As Rist (1997) argues, the shift from a discourse of "colonizer"/"colonized" to "underdeveloped"/"developed" was a rhetorical ploy that legitimated the continued presence and power of the northern hemisphere in the post colony. Many of the central tenets of the modernity package were in place and widely circulated within dominant colonial discourses as a means of legitimizing colonial rule over African populations.

Another critical piece of the narrative on modernity is the assertion that change in one domain would result in a domino effect, changing and ultimately substituting previous domains with new ones (Cooper and Packard 1997). The expectation was that traditional "values, attitudes, practices, and social structures [would] break down and [would be] replaced by more modern ones" (Martinussen 1997:56). This evolutionary transition to "developed" would take time and patience while underdeveloped societies marched toward their rightful place at the top of the global order (Ferguson 2006a).

Rostow's "stages of growth," now vigorously critiqued and seemingly abandoned,[4] is one of the most widely cited examples of this Eurocentric and patronizing modernity narrative. Rostow believed that change in the economic domain would lead to unconditional reconfigurations of the entire society (Rist 1997). Traditional societies would evolve through five stages on a continuum from underdeveloped to developed. The initial stage, or "natural state of underdevelopment," included societies that were deemed minimally productive (judged against a western standard) due to a lack of modern technology. Rostow believed that these unproductive

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[4] However, it could be argued that Sachs' (2005) "End of Poverty" is eerily reminiscent of Rostow's long-negated "stages of growth theory."

populations, once exposed to western technology, would gladly embrace these new forms, because everyone innately desired to be modern. In this framework, western society holds the expert knowledge necessary for undeveloped societies to advance toward a more modern, civilized form. According to Rostow, advancement through these stages requires "social and cultural upheavals" in order to make way for modern (western) forms (Rist 1997:98). The apex and goal is the "age of high consumption" whereby disparate populations would merge, reflecting homogenous social, economic, and political systems with access to a particular level of material wealth.

Clearly, Rostow was mistaken and modernity theories (and globalization) have not melded local particularities into a monolithic, single global entity (Appadurai 1990). Moreover, most African economies targeted with Rostow's stages of growth have neglected to take off. In fact, some are worse off today than in the 1950s and '60s. Today modernity is understood to have emerged as a "deeply cultural project" not based on "universal truth." Modernity is produced knowledge constructed by the dominant power structure (Moore and Sanders 2001). With the subjective nature of modernity revealed—at least the older, Eurocentric version—it has been largely discredited as a social theory. Yet it still creeps into development and humanitarian discourse and practices.[5]

While there is some consensus about the central tenants of modernity narratives, they have also been critiqued. Cooper (2005) does problematize modernity, demonstrating that it is exceedingly difficult to talk in generalizations because there are too many shades of grey and contested definitions. Therefore, it is hard to talk about modernity as guiding development and

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[5] The Rhodes Livingston Institute anthropologists are also implicated in constructing narratives using modernity ideology (Mitchell1961; Powdermaker 1962; Schumaker 2001; Wilson 1941). They predicted an assumed transition from "traditional" and "primitive" lifestyles to "modern" and "urban" ones.

shaping people's lives on a theoretical scale with any real confidence. However, like Ferguson (1999, 2006a) and Gupta (1995), I think it is valuable to situate modernity ideology within local experiences, understandings, and expectations. These discourses are present and hegemonic, which do privilege a certain way of being that marginalizes specific populations, often the poor and minorities.

In my research, modernity discourses are common and powerful. One reason these notions are prevalent is that many orphan projects have been developed and implemented by lay humanitarians. These individuals are engaged in orphan projects out of a sense of compassion and draw on their own assumptions about what progress is and the best way to go about achieving it, which tracks along the lines of modernity ideology (see chapter 3). Some groups are ethnocentric as they assume their own forms or ways of being are superior to others'. Bundled into these assumptions is the neoliberal logic that capitalism is not only the dominant global economic system, but also the answer to alleviating poverty and inequality. The neoliberal subject can gain access to the modern via education, hard work, and individual determination and accountability. For example, Chad, a volunteer tourist working in an orphanage in Malawi, explained his hopes for the children in residence. The emphasis is on individual responsibility coupled with American financial support (the expert, if you will), access to education, and hard work to achieve success:

> [ALF] What are your hopes for these kids? Where do you see them ending up?]
>
> Right. Well, I've talked to a lot with them. I say, "What do you want to do when you leave [the orphanage]?" And, you know, I remember one of them saying, "I want to be a pilot." I always try to say, "That's great! That's awesome! I think that would be really cool. You should do whatever you can to be a pilot." One of them wants to be a doctor, which is amazing. I hope that never changes in his heart because Malawi needs a doctor. As hard as it is to become those things in Malawi I don't think that it's impossible, largely because they have sponsors that are willing to pay for them to be those things. So, I really hope that each kid will understand that it is possible for them to be what they

want to be. They're free to dream here, whereas in other places they may not even be able to dream because they're so caught up in trying to survive. So I really hope that they have the desire to at least pursue their dreams if not obtain them, because I do think if we raise a generation in an orphanage, speaking outside Miracles walls, that they will go on to be better than those who were not raised inside an orphanage. I mean, if you take all these kids that were raised in orphanages and provide them with the path to get to what they want to be, in their pursuit of doing that they will be better for the country than those who do not have that opportunity. So you have a population of people who has come out of childhood educated, well fed, and prepared to be the next working class in Malawi. And if their standards are higher than the ones below [in the surrounding villages], I see that as a chance to climb out of poverty.

Chad makes reference to and contrasts life in the orphanage with life "below." This statement reflects the physical and ontological divide that exists between the orphanage and those who are chosen to inhabit it and the rural villages that surround the complex. The orphanage stands out as a modern symbol that both materially and ontologically cultivates certain expectations of modernity for the children brought into the facility. Running water, food, electricity, clothing and Nike shoes, movie nights, Coke, soccer balls, swing sets, painting

Figure 2: Rescue Children's Village, Lilongwe

supplies, and library books are readily accessible to those children found within the walls of the facility. Villagers living just thirty feet away have a different material reality. Ontologically, children within the orphanage are considered privileged and seek a modern lifestyle that emphasizes a way of being characterized by independence (less tied to extended kinship systems), technology, self-actualization, consumption, upward economic mobility premised on hard work (achieved), and a more urban lifestyle (figure 2). Children in villages may express some similar desires, but exist within a different ontological and material reality (figure 3).

Chad asserts that providing a quality education and access to food and healthcare will in some ways provide children with better employment opportunities, as well as a higher quality of life than that experienced by their peers in villages. It was not uncommon for me to hear volunteer tourists

Figure 3: Dowa District Research Site

express their views that if these children could access education then they were certain to achieve success. Success, for them, is defined primarily in economic terms. This individual-centered worldview negates those larger systems at work that create poverty, cyclical food insecurity, and breakdowns in social, political, and even community support.

High rates of unemployment, limited access to both quality education and higher education, and the common practice of employment being offered first to family members limit the opportunities of many children in Malawi. In chapter 4, I explore in more detail the failed expectations of modernity children face when they graduate from orphanages. Nearly all of those I interviewed expressed a sense of disharmony as they straddled the urban and more cosmopolitan lifestyles they desired yet were unable to achieve because they could not find urban employment or relate to the rural villages and families from which they originally came.

In the remainder of this dissertation I employ the use of modernity much like Ferguson, as a myth that "is not just a mistaken account but a cosmological blueprint that lays down fundamental categories and meanings for the organization and interpretation of experience" (1999:13–14). It is clear that modernization theory is "bad social science" (Ferguson 1999:14) and, I would argue, similar to theories of biological race. Just as the fallacy of biologically

distinct racial categories has been proven, the reality of race as a lived experience shaping the ways in which people experience, act, and conceive of their worlds cannot be denied. Modernity—flawed, misconstrued, and Eurocentric—still works to shape individual experiences, understandings, and expectations, and is embraced by both lay humanitarians and often the Malawians with whom they work. In subsequent chapters I will demonstrate the presence of elements of modernity discourses—at both the transnational and local levels—which profoundly shape African social systems, ideologies, and subjectivities.

Since this dissertation is focused on children and childhoods, the differences and/or similarities between western—often deemed modern—visions of childhood and the ways in which Malawians conceptualize children need exploration. Western notions or assumptions of childhood, similar to modernity ideology, frame the way images and grand narratives of African children labeled orphans are interpreted. This, in turn, affects how orphan projects get designed and implemented. As I demonstrate in chapter 3, orphan narratives used to generate donor support can consciously and unconsciously perpetuate a vision of Malawi and orphanhood that carries particular assumptions and reifies certain power constellations leading to unanticipated outcomes. I now turn to a discussion of the rise of modern families and childhoods tied to economic shifts and the dominance of global capitalism.

Modern Families, Modern Childhoods

Ariès (1962) argues that the contemporary modern construction of childhood as a distinct life stage separate from adult life began in Europe as early as the 15th century and became more ingrained during the onset of the industrial revolution. Previously, children had been perceived as "little adults" after the infancy stage (Stephens 1995). The industrial revolution is cited as a watershed moment that engendered this shift to a sacred childhood space in large part constituted

by the codification of a gendered division of labor pivoting around the construction of the ideal modern family (Foucault's "Medicalization of the Family" 1980a). Mothers stayed at home and performed domestic duties, especially childcare, as fathers went off to work to earn a family wage. The modern ideal family is a nuclear family. Today, the assumption that nuclear families are the ideal and universal form of social organization for children is captured in the UNCRC, which assumes that "biologically based relations between parents and children are more fundamental and natural than other sorts of family relations" (Stephens 1995:37).

In this arrangement, children were no longer identified as individuals with economic value. Instead, they were taken out of the work force and relegated to the private, domestic, and intimate space of the conjugal family (Ariès 1962; Christensen and Prout 2005). The period of childhood became a time of seclusion as parents were expected to protect children and prepare them for their futures. Ariès (1962) does note that only upper-class members of society were able to actualize the ideal modern form of childhood because they had the financial freedom to invest heavily in the development of their children. The children of lower- and middle-class families worked to support themselves and their families. Zelizer (1985) reports that children were initially highly valued industrial laborers because of their small fingers and great dexterity. She asserts that, as economies grew, technologies flourished, requiring higher-skilled laborers. At the same time, education became standardized and compulsory. With increasing incomes associated with the industrial revolution and improved education, families embraced sending their children to school instead of the factory.

Within this modern paradigm, children were recognized as developing subjects needing strict surveillance, often by their mothers, and discipline, often by their fathers, in order to ensure a healthy and productive future (Christensen and Prout 2005). Parents were obligated to invest

heavily in the physical and psychological needs of their children, including providing material resources, psychosocial support, healthcare, and a space for exercise and play, with the purpose of fostering a healthy, productive adult (Foucault 1980a). What emerges is a construction of children as immature and innocent beings valued for their future and not necessarily their present potential (Christensen and Prout 2005). It is expected that they will grow into independent, individual, self-reliant, and most importantly productive workers. I argue that the emphasis on children's imagined futures is a critical terrain wherein many development organizations map out their projects and ideological agendas.

Despite the modern form of childhood being unattainable for the majority of European families during the 18th and 19th centuries, it became the ideal norm that most people sought, as evidenced by the burgeoning of institutions geared toward children. These institutions came into being to distinguish children from adults for the purposes of socialization, discipline, and physical nurturing. Education, healthcare, and legal systems emerged as technologies of governance meant to shape the ideal, modern child (Stephens 1995). Modern children are to be protected from the productive or economic sphere and given a sacred and pure space, which is often characterized by time for fantasy, play, and extensive parental attention (Stephens 1995).

Anthropologists and other social scientists recognize childhood as an historical and social construction, a category not necessarily translatable across time and space (Gottleib 2004). Not everyone subscribes to this imagined modern childhood. The ideal has been shown to be something constructed by and for upper- and upper-middle-class western families. It was and remains today a controlling discourse that those in less powerful positions are unable to challenge. A reward system is established that favors those already occupying the upper rungs of the social structure, thus reinforcing their position. Social class dynamics go relatively

unchallenged within this paradigm (Lareau 2003). This constructed ideal of childhood was not the reality for the majority of the population in the United States or Europe then, and it continues today to be an ideal achieved only by those in positions of power with access to economic resources.

Yet, it is easy to assume an ideal version of modern childhood despite the anthropological evidence and conviction that childhood is wholly a cultural construct (Chin 2003; Gottleib 2004; Stephens 1995). Today, powerful transnational organizations, such as UNICEF, define the parameters of childhood, laying out universal rights and freedoms that should be protected premised on a biological age and a nuclear family. I will problematize the hegemonic western definition of childhood—embraced by many of the lay humanitarians I encountered—that is assumed to be normative and ideal, leading to its unchallenged exportation to Malawi and other non-western countries. I do this throughout the dissertation via ethnographic examples of the friction that arises when local practices of childraising and constructions of the social value of children collide with the hegemony of western constructions of childhood and the ideal child.

Transnational ideology tends to be inconsistent with local realities, constructions, and values that shape lived experiences and worldviews of children in southern Africa. Reynold's (1989) work in South Africa speaks to these differences. She draws on western childhood assessment tools to try and capture Xhosa children's cognitive development, including understandings of kinship and personhood. These tools or cognitive tests proved to be utterly inadequate for understanding Xhosa children's understandings of kinship relations. She notes that this is due to such factors as the fluidity of persons living within homes, the nuclear family not being the primary social structure within which children are embedded, and the practice of children referring to individuals with kin terms premised on their desired social relationship and

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not necessarily their biological connection. Children in South Africa are socialized into broader family structures from an early age, which is not comparable to the hegemonic upper- or upper-middle-class nuclear family assumed by many westerners to be the ideal and norm.

Broadly speaking, Malawian constructions of childhood value the "social personhood" of a collectively imagined child. I am reminded of the African word *ubuntu*—"a person is a person through other people" (Farber 2003). Traditional responses to orphaned children reflect the sociality and cohesiveness of the African social context. These systems are being challenged by increasing poverty, global capitalism, and rising AIDS rates (Ghosh and Kalipeni 2003), which is an issue I examine in chapter 6. I will argue that children are being maintained within extended family structures, but there are signs that point to resentment, suspicion, and anxiety (see also Peters, Kambewa, and Walker 2008). Subsequently I trace the historical place of children among the Ngoni and Chewa, the ethnic groups I studied, to create a point of reference for understanding the contemporary context. I then discuss the impact of HIV on these social systems. The purpose is to demonstrate that children in these contexts are often thought of and related to in ways that are unique to their cultural context and not necessarily reflective of the western, hegemonic ideals of childhood many westerners bring with them to Malawi.

Brief Genealogy: Children among the Ngoni and Chewa

The UN definition of an orphan includes anyone under the age of eighteen who has lost one or both parents through death. This definition is based on the western assumption of the centrality and importance of the biological conjugal family (Chirwa 2002). As will be discussed in chapter 5, the Malawian government and many other organizations have adopted this definition for strategic reasons, especially in their efforts to access the abundance of financial and material resources earmarked only for orphans. In reality, southern African social systems

conceptualize family as extending well beyond biological parents, and the adopted UN definition

obscures what it means to be an orphan in Malawi.

The following literature review highlights the centrality of children within broader social

networks.[6] I articulate these differences in meaning and constructions of personhood because

transnational projects are often premised on western assumptions of orphans. Malawian children

face different circumstances and vulnerabilities than those imagined by the majority of western

donors and lay humanitarians. Here I present a brief genealogy that explores two different

Malawian ethnic groups and their kinship systems to better understand the place of children

within these societies. I also include a discussion of the impact of AIDS on these systems. Are

they changing to reflect western modern constructions or are they proving resilient in their

complexity and depth? Or is some combination emerging?

Read (1959) provides an extensive description of how children are raised in Ngoni

society. The Ngoni are both matrilineal and patrilineal (Brantley 1997), although Read (1959)

argues that they were primarily patrilineal during the time of her 1939 Nyasaland nutrition

survey.[7] Patrilineal groups trace descent through the male line. Women marry into men's

villages, and the offspring they produce belong to the male's side of the family. "Ngoni children

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[6] There is an obvious lack of ethnographic data focused on children in southern Africa. For this
reason I have included ethnographies that move beyond the Chewa. Read's work is pertinent
because she discusses the Ngoni who have ties to my field site in Dowa District. In fact, there are
several respondents in my sample who identify Ngoni ancestry. In addition, the Ngoni are
patrilineal and share similar ideas of kinship with the Nkhonde and Tumbuka. The Nkhonde and
Tumbuka are prominent in my northern research site. I also briefly reference works done on the
Zambian Copperbelt by Rhodes Livingston Institute anthropologists.

[7] Brantley (1997) closely examined Read's data and concluded that it was not uncommon for
Ngoni men to marry Chewa women. This is referred to as a *chitengwa* marriage. In this
arrangement women lived in their husbands villages and men took on the responsibility of the
matrilineage. Today, marriage that crosses lineage types is common, leading to even more
complicated systems of care and responsibility concerning orphaned children, which I describe
later.

were indeed the children of their fathers from the time of their birth onwards" (Read 1959:63). If a woman dies or is divorced the children remain in the care of their father and his relatives (Read 1959:63). Often co-wives, paternal grandmothers, nurse girls, and older sisters will become responsible for these children.

Woven throughout this ethnography is a constant reference to those who care for and are responsible for children in influential ways. Read's descriptions of Ngoni rituals involving children focused on birthing, weaning, naming, teething, and puberty and demonstrate the child's complex web of social relations. Different community and family members play important roles in socializing and caring for children, thus creating bonds that situate children beyond the borders of their biological family. According to Read (1959:71) the Ngoni believed, "A child belongs to the village. They can all cherish him and correct him."

Read maintains that during the colonial period, which included a proliferation of missionary activities, the Ngoni were even more deliberate in their socialization of children as a means of maintaining culture amidst rapid social, economic, political, and religious change. She reports:

> Ngoni pride of race, and a consciousness that they had a culture worth preserving, inspired them to put up a fight against all that threatened the values inherent in their way of living…In order to safeguard their society and maintain their culture they exercised a fairly rigid social control over the upbringing of their children (1959:27–28, 30).

I argue later that, although Malawi continues to undergo rapid change associated with global processes, such as capitalism and the spread of disease, the extended family systems remain resilient and able to incorporate children who lose one or both biological parents.

Looking beyond the rearing of children, Read (1959) also attempts to capture the Ngoni system of values. She posits that central to Ngoni values is "keeping together," stating "The focus of much of their thinking was on maintaining cohesion" (1959:152). This value is clearly

depicted in one of the Ngoni creation stories, The Story of Heva. It is said that Ngoni herds

became smaller because of the separation between two brothers, Heva and Malusi. Heva was

protecting the sun with his mother, Golela. Malusi was supposed to be looking after the cattle.

Instead, Malusi was "disturbing the cattle." Golela became upset and cast away Malusi. She did

allow her son to take whatever cattle he wanted, which significantly reduced the herd. It is said

that Heva's descendants have suffered from poor cattle herds ever since. This story was told to

Ngoni children as "a warning against quarrels between brothers" and to illustrate the negative

impact of family fissures on society as a whole (Read 1959:39).

This extensive investment in the lives of children and diligence in socializing offspring,

along with the centrality of group cohesion within their value system, factor into the absence of

truly abandoned children. It is not surprising that Read makes virtually no mention of orphans.

The only explicit reference she makes is to mention that if a child loses his/her mother during

childbirth the paternal grandmother, nursemaid, or father will suckle the child using cow's milk

(1959:59).

The Chewa, descendents of the Maravi, are matrilineal and matrilocal and maintain a

very different system of responsibilities concerning their children (Tew 1950). Specifically,

"guardianship of the child is vested in the father until its initiation, when it passes to the maternal

uncle" (Tew 1950:47). If a child's mother dies then the uncle, not the father, will assume

responsibility.[8] This is because siblings of the biological parents are considered "junior" parents

(Chirwa 2002). In contrast to western constructions of family that situate children under the

supervision of their biological parents, Chewa children have multiple sets of parents and are

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[8] Chirwa (2002) and Peters, Kambewa, and Walker (2007) note that who takes on the
responsibility of children is highly variable according to age of the orphans, their gender, and the
material conditions of their relatives. Younger orphans often stay under the supervision of their
older siblings.

connected through a complex network of kinship structures determined by blood relations (Chirwa 2002; Peters, Kambewa, and Walker 2008). This means that children move deliberately through these systems if parents pass away. They go first to their maternal uncle, and if he passes away then custody of the children goes to their deceased mother's other brothers and then on to the mother's other sons (Hodgson 1933). In cases of divorce, the women always maintain custody of the children.

Yet fathers remain vitally important in the lives of their children (Peters, Kambewa, and Walker 2008). For example, the Chewa believe in *mdula*, or misfortune, which can translate into illness. Several recognized causes revolve around the care of children (Hodgson 1933). For example, if a father "fails to achieve connection after [an unweaned child's birth]" or commits adultery while the child is in the house, he can be expected to face misfortune (Hodgson 1933:129). If wives/mothers pass away, then men often play a central role in the lives of their children (Peters, Kambewa, and Walker 2008). I draw attention to these beliefs to emphasize the importance of the entire kinship structure, both paternal and maternal, in caring for children.

These descriptions highlight the place of children both within and beyond the biological family. Malawian children are positioned within the broader social context, even when orphaned. According to Chirwa (2002:98), a popular Chichewa proverb highlights the ways in which fostering can benefit both the child who is orphaned and the family that decides to take the child into their home:

> Mwana wa mnzako ndi wako yemwe
> Ukuchenjera manja udzadya naye.
>
> Your friend's child is your own child
> If you are flexible (or fast) with your hands
> You will benefit from him/her.

This proverb also draws attention to another difference between the ways in which westerners and Malawians imagine childhood. The modern child envisioned by most westerners is considered sacred or "economically worthless, emotionally priceless" (Stephens 1995). In Malawi and on rural farms in the United States, especially among poor families, there is no sacred childhood space. Children in most parts of the world tend to be workers who produce for their families either in the domestic sphere or by engaging in other forms of labor outside the home (Abebe 2010; Lancy 2008; Reynolds 1991). This economic value of children may also be a contributing factor in the near-wholesale incorporation of children into extended family systems. One of my research participants, Mery Jackison, is a widow taking care of seven children—two

are nephews from her deceased elder sister. She explained that initially it was difficult to feed all of the children, but as they have aged they have been able to engage in *ganyu*[9] labor so the older children are now able to contribute to the household food supply (see figure 4). As a result, she notes that their food insecurity has decreased, although her house

Figure 4: Children and Informal Labor in Malawi

would still be considered food insecure, with family members eating one meal per day during the rainy/hunger season.

The extended family system has proven resilient despite overt attempts to "civilize" Africans into adopting the western, modern, nuclear family social structure beginning with colonization. Early colonial writings produced by Rhodes Livingston Institute anthropologists hypothesized that Zambian migration and urbanization associated with mining in the Copperbelt

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[9] *Ganyu* labor refers to "short duration casual labour contracts for unskilled work paid in cash or kind...involving exchange labor of neighbors or relatives" (Bryceson 2006:187).

would lead to the adoption of nuclear family structures and movement away from family life characterized by extended kinship systems (Mitchell 1961; Powdermaker 1962; Wilson 1942; Wilson and Wilson 1968). These anthropologists were guilty of perpetuating modernity myths.

Modernity theory assumes that a change in one aspect of societal organization will automatically bring about a progressive shift in other aspects. It was assumed on the Copperbelt that colonial politics, Christianity, western education, urbanization related to mining, and the adoption of an industrial capitalism would lead to changes in Zambian social structure. Miners would move to the Copperbelt with their womenfolk and become more Europeanized, which included a "shift in family life, with 'traditional,' 'extended' families giving way to 'modern,' 'nuclear' ones" and ultimately the abandoning of rural ties (Ferguson 1999:170). Ferguson (1999) notes that colonial officials reflected this assumption in their implementation of housing, welfare, pension, and property ownership policies based on the adoption and preference for nuclear, conjugal families. Ultimately, these anthropologists discovered, much to their surprise, that despite colonial and religious pressure to adopt a nuclear family form, most Zambians maintained complex extended familial relations. Ohadike's (1981) historical review of households on the Copperbelt between 1968 and 1969 found that urban households actually had greater numbers of inhabitants who represented a more diverse set of kinship ties than rural households.

The nuclearization of families never became the dominant social structure on the Zambian Copperbelt.[10] The same can be said about family structures in Malawi. In my research, I note that patrilineal and matrilineal intermarriage is common. As a result, those families with a

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[10] However, Ferguson (1999) reports a variety of tensions within extended family systems that are tied to migration, modernity, and capital accumulation. I highlight these tensions here because in chapter 6 I argue that they are evident in Malawian villages and may be indicating a shifting of Malawian ideas of sociality.

certain amount of financial stability or who are geographically situated to provide better access

to education, jobs, and/or healthcare tend toward a more diverse mix of relatives living in the

same home. For example, one of my research respondents who is a faculty member at the

University of Malawi's Chancellor College explained the complicated makeup of her household

in the following way (taken from my field notes):

> The respondent is of Lomwe descent from the southern region of Malawi, which
> traditionally practices matrilineality/matrilocality. Her husband is Ngoni from the central
> region of Malawi. As previously discussed, the Ngoni tend toward
> patrilineality/patrilocality. She said they tend to follow the patrilineal descent practices,
> as illustrated by her choosing to go and live with him and "his side."

> TIMELINE:

> 1991 ~ Respondent's husband's brother passes away. The family had paid a dowry so the
> children belonged on the husband's side. The wife (who later passed away in 1993) came
> to live with them. She brought nine children. Today there are three children remaining in
> the respondent's custody. The other children have moved out to marry or work.

> 1992 ~ Respondent's sister's husband passes away. Respondent's sister is unable to
> provide enough resources to her children. Respondent takes in her sister and her sister's
> four children.

> 1996 ~ Respondent's husband's sister and her husband divorce. The husband is Lomwe,
> which the respondent explains is the reason he has very little responsibility for his
> children. He provides no resources or support. Later that year, her husband's sister passes
> away, leaving five children. One of the five is currently living with the respondent. In
> addition, the respondent is taking care of one grandchild belonging to one of the five
> children. She is taking care of this child because she wanted to send the child's mother to
> school.

> 2000 ~ Respondent's uncle, on her mother's side, and his wife pass away, leaving
> another five children. Three of them are living with the respondent. At this time, the
> respondent hired a girl to help care for all of the children. She has grown fond of this
> child and is now "taking care of her as if she were my own."

> The respondent also explained that other family members come and go, but these are the
> ones that have stayed in her home on a more permanent basis.

> This respondent's experience is not unique. The increased movement of people, rapid

urbanization trends, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic has impacted families and kinship systems. I

observed that these changes reflect a resiliency as families continue to rely on their extended kin for a multiplicity of reasons, in both urban and rural areas. That being said, my data suggests a shifting or reconfiguring of these social systems. Nuclearization may be happening on a small scale, even though it is not yet the norm.

In this dissertation, I demostrate how a variety of actors, including the Malawian state, lay humanitarians, and volunteer tourists, are presenting orphanhood in Malawi as a particularly precarious form of childhood—one based on innocence lost and suffering that ought to be addressed by those with the power, knowledge, and resources to make a difference. Orphan iconography and discourses emphasize aloneness and despair that need to be met via western donor involvement (see chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion of orphan iconography). Orphans, in the minds of donors and westerners, are left to fend for themselves (see figure 5). Ruddick explains:

> This is the tight-shot close-up photograph of a single child—usually (apparently) not older than ten or eleven looking, wide-eyed, directly into the camera… This "Child" comes to stand as the universal child of developing nations, disconnected from context, with few clues as to his or her culture or background. To the extent it is included, context simply signifies excessive and incessant labour and/or poverty. What I am asked to consider is this person's aloneness—his/her absolute dependence on me as a funder, political supporter, volunteer for his/her welfare. Support mechanisms—kinship structures, village context—are absent. This absence intrigues me: it makes invisible a context that might be disrupted by my intervention, and it allows me to fill the emptied space with fantasies of my own idealized interpretation of childhood. Moreover, it is precisely this context in which I am asked to collude—the construction of buildings around the child are imagined structures of the modern world (2003:342).

Figure 5: Typical Close-Up Shots of Children

When context is included, as suggested by Ruddick's research, it tends toward depictions that suggest deviance, because they explicitly challenge the western, upper- or upper-middle-class ideal, sacred space of childhood. Children are imagined as laborers, both domestic and commercial, or are criminalized as street children engaged in illicit activities. Or, children are thought of as starving and/or suffering physical abuse. We are encouraged to chose between two tropes—the upper-class ideal, happy, carefree, western version of childhood or a dark, deviant, third-world childhood characterized by suffering and solitude. Stephens explains why this is significant: "…within the provisionally structured coherence of high modernity, the 'deviant childhoods' of third world children could be interpreted as local particularities and instances of backwardness and underdevelopment, thus justifying expanding efforts to export modern childhood around the world" (1995:19).

There is seldom, if ever, mention of orphaned children in historical writings on Malawi, because the idea of a socially isolated child left to fend for him- or herself is rare. Yet in the most extreme circumstances, such as Vaughn's (1987) work that discussed the Malawian famine of 1949, there are accounts of children being abandoned and walking the streets as they begged for food. Vaughn (1987:36) says that oral histories suggest this only occurred under the direst of conditions, and even then Malawians recognized it as "definitely abnormal." This is the only account I could find that suggested children in Malawi could face abandonment. This raises the question—is HIV proving to be just such a cataclysmic disease that it is resulting in the proliferation of truly abandoned and socially isolated children?

HIV/AIDS: Producing "Orphans"

Madonna says in her documentary, "I Am Because We Are," that there are a million orphans who are living in the streets and under bridges or are abducted and trafficked as a result

of AIDS. In my own experience, as I regularly drove through and walked along the streets of Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, it was not uncommon for children to beg for money, food, or other forms of assistance. When traffic would get backed up at congested intersections, there were usually children pushing disabled people in wheelchairs or walking alongside blind people as they tapped on car windows and held their hands out asking for donations. Are these the AIDS orphans Madonna is referring to? Are these the isolated, homeless, hungry, AIDS-affected, and parentless children embodied in Madonna's and others grand narratives of orphanhood?

In an effort to understand this population, I conducted interviews with Sister Rita, the director of Tikondane, a Catholic charity that "Rescues and rehabilitates" street children. In addition, I interviewed several street children who were residing at another Rescue home, Safe Haven, meant to be a temporary shelter. I should note that, while I ran across some of these children walking the streets, their numbers were not staggering. There certainly were not a million of these children inhabiting the streets of Lilongwe, Blantyre, and Mzuzu (the major metropolitan areas).

Sister Rita established Tikondane in 1998 to reunite street children with their extended family members. She explained that nearly all of the street children she had come across had families in rural areas, but were living in the streets for a host of reasons. Some children ran away from home because of familial conflict. Some were migrating as laborers and found themselves unemployed and then unwilling or unable to return to home villages. Others expressed preference for street life over village life. Some children had been accused of witchcraft and were cast out of villages. Some faced abuse by stepparents. She believed that most children could either be placed back in their homes or they could be placed with alternative

family members. Her experiences and successes in reuniting street children with their kin prove that this is the case for the majority of these children.

In our interview, she said that they had placed approximately five hundred children with extended family members. Thirty-three of the five hundred children were sent to boarding schools because their home life was in some way inadequate in meeting their needs. She gave examples of children who came from food-insecure homes or homes where there were signs of abuse. She explained that these children were still able to maintain ties with their extended family members even though they were not living with them. All but two of these thirty-three children went home during the school breaks to visit their families. Tikondane hired and trained social workers to monitor and evaluate them to ensure that their basic material needs were being met. In addition, if there was concern about abuse then the children would stay at Tikondane's facility in Lilongwe. At the time of this interview there were only two children unable to stay with their extended family members either permanently or when on break from school.

The few street children I interviewed have extended family members still active in their lives. Sherman, a sixteen-year-old boy who had been living on the streets since he was fourteen, not only has family but visits them regularly. He has two brothers and three sisters living in Area 25, which is a neighborhood within the Lilongwe city limits. His mother died; his father is still alive and working as a driver. His grandmother lives in Chisapo. In addition to these family members, he also has an uncle living in South Africa who is working as a mechanic. Sherman said he still stays in contact with his uncle, although the last time he saw him was in 2003. When I asked why he lived in the streets he could not give a straightforward answer. He said he did not remember why he left home. Later he said he was in the streets to beg for food.

Amari, another resident of Safe Haven, is thirteen years old and had been living on the streets for three years. He has siblings, and his mother is still alive. She comes to visit him from time to time, but he complains that she primarily begs him for money. He says he is at Safe Haven because they assist him with his education. When he was reliant on his mother he was unable to go to school because she could not afford school fees, the required uniform, and other education materials. He is not alone. Many children are either giving up or in some way diminishing their ties to poor families in an effort to tap into orphan-earmarked resources and the promises of modernity that are often prevalent in west-funded projects (see chapter 4). He did complain about the organization and its founder. He felt that a lot of the resources being raised were lining the pockets of the main administrator and his family. This criticism was echoed by all of the boys in Safe Haven that I interviewed. It is an issue I take up in chapter 6. I draw on these ethnographic examples to demonstrate the complexity that lies behind the orphan label and ultimately addresses the question: What constitutes an orphan from the Malawian perspective?

Chirwa attempts to answer this question in one of the few articles that explores what orphanhood means in the Malawi context and as a result of HIV. He provides a more concise definition of the term orphan, one reiterated by various research respondents throughout the course of my fieldwork:

> In most Malawian languages the terms used to define an orphan and orphanhood include loss of parents; the rupture of social bonds; lack of family support; the process and situation of deprivation and want; and the lack of money or means of livelihood. Some of these are, in indeed, the effects of orphanhood. However, the Malawian equivalents of orphanhood treat these as integral parts of the totality of the process of orphanhood (Chirwa 2002:96).

He goes on to say that orphanhood "is a social category or/and status, as well as a material condition for those who have lost their parents. It is both a process and a situational or/and structural condition. It can be heightened and highlighted, or suppressed, depending on

the material and social conditions of those who experience it at any particular time" (Chirwa 2002:97).

Chirwa's discussion of what it means to be an orphan highlights that a myopic focus on the loss of a single parent masks the myriad ways Malawians think about orphanhood and the ways they care for children (see also Peters, Walker, and Kambewa 2008). It assumes the vulnerability and risk of a broadly defined segment of the population that does not necessarily capture what is happening in villages. Among the Chewa in rural areas around Zomba District, Peters, Walker, and Kambewa point out that the death of a single parent does not necessarily indicate increased vulnerability in relation to other children in the village:

> The fairly high rate of divorce and remarriage and the common pattern of children living with grandmothers or mother's sisters for all to part of their lives all indicate the problems of placing too great an emphasis on the death of one parent, especially a father, as constituting the negative state—"orphan" (2008:36).

Adoption of western notions of orphanhood and family opens the door to the penetration of transnational organizations into the private, personal lives of many Malawian families and communities. Just as in the past, children in Malawi today are connected to family through broad, extended family networks. These networks generally ensure that those who lose parents or whose parents are unable to care for them do not end up having to fend for themselves (Peters, Kambewa, and Walker 2008).

These systems are adaptive, and new strategies to care for orphaned children are emerging (Chirwa 2002). For example, some children choose to stay in their homes, usually under the care of the eldest sibling, to protect property rights and maintain the cohesion of the family instead of splitting up siblings between different homes (Chirwa 2002; Ghosh and Kalipeni 2003). Community members, often relatives, oversee these child-headed households to

ensure their wellbeing. In other scenarios, children migrate between households, staying for varying lengths of time (Ansell and van Blerk 2004).

In my study, Wilson, a sixteen-year-old paternal orphan decided to live with a teacher in the military barracks adjacent to his natal village. In exchange for school fees, food, and clothing the boy provided companionship and domestic duties to an unrelated man who had not married and had no children. Moreover, there is electricity in the military barracks, which Wilson said afforded him the opportunity to study in the evening. Prior to making this arrangement, Wilson was unable to attend school regularly because of a lack of clothes and shoes. Wilson said he was thankful for the opportunity and also appreciated the guidance he received from the teacher, which he felt replaced the guidance he was missing after his father's death. Other studies have affirmed that migration can serve children's own needs, such as moving to urban areas or locations that have better access to education (Ansell and Van Blerk 2004). My research confirms that extended family members quickly absorb children into social systems, providing a setting not unlike that of their circumstances prior to the death of their parents (Meintjes and Giese 2006).

Children who have lost a parent are not isolated and are not conceptualized as disconnected (Peters, Walker, and Kambewa 2008). Meintjes and Giese writing on South Africa (2006) demonstrate that many children labeled orphans are still living with mothers and may not experience life in dramatically different ways than when they were living with both parents. The same is true in Malawi where just under half of the estimated orphan population is categorized as "paternal" orphans. In Zomba District, Peters, Walker, and Kambewa (2008) demonstrate that many children never live with both parents because of high rates of divorce and migration. In my research, one guardian, Gloria, said that her six children were actually better off after the loss of

her husband. She said, "…now it is better because when my husband was alive I was struggling to assist the family all by myself. My husband, who was a drunk, would use up the money I had made doing piecework."

In my own work, there were no cases of orphan-headed households in Dowa District. In the northern region, there were three cases—but all were either located on the same compound as extended family members or within close proximity. Peters, Walker, and Kambewa (2008) found that in their research in Zomba District, Malawi, no orphaned children were completely disconnected from familial systems. The same was true in a large retrospective study conducted in Karonga, one of the sites of my research (Floyd et al. 2007). Floyd et al. (2007) followed a sample of 487 children with HIV-positive parents between 1998 and 2000. None of these children became part of orphan-headed households.

Data emerging from studies conducted in both northern (Floyd et al. 2007) and southern Malawi (Doctor 2004) further demonstrates the resilience of extended family systems in caring for orphans. In both cases there was no significant difference between non-orphans and orphans in terms of school enrollment. In a study conducted in the southern region, there was no significant nutritional difference between orphans and non-orphans (Panpanich et al. 1999).

However, I should note that just as these studies are emerging, there are others that contradict these findings, pointing to social system fissures and a variety of increased vulnerabilities premised on an orphan status (Bicego, Rutstein, and Johnson 2003; Oleke et al. 2006). This contradiction will be resolved over time; however, data from this study supports the former assertion that extended family systems are under pressure, but are not buckling. Poverty impacts all children, but there is the potential for orphans to be impacted in differential ways.

AIDS is also considered a factor, as one respondent, Eunice, a seventy-three-year-old

grandmother taking care of a granddaughter, explained:

> These days, because of HIV/AIDS, children are losing both parents, which is painful. For
> example, in our family there are fourteen orphans from my late sisters and they have also
> lost their fathers. Some of the children are with me, some are with other relatives in
> Lilongwe, and the elder ones are off working. In the past, orphans had a lot of food, but
> they were lacking school fees. Nowadays, food is scarce because things are expensive
> and the orphans are not being kept properly as they should be. For the school fees, the
> organizations are supposed to be paying those, but the organizations which are supposed
> to be working in this area are only benefiting themselves.

Eunice highlights two factors that she believes are stretching extended family systems:

AIDS and poverty. Nevertheless, it is significant that none of these children are actually

abandoned. She demonstrates the versatility of these systems and the ways in which the children

have migrated to different households within the extended family. A grandmother taking care of

orphans in the same village echoed similar sentiments. Janet Kasauka, fifty-eight years old, who

is caring for four orphans stated:

> Nowadays it is difficult to take care of orphans because things are now expensive and
> children are demanding expensive things like fashionable clothes and shoes, especially
> girls. In the past, orphanhood was not common like it is today. Then it was being
> orphaned, but by a single parent. These days it is both parents dying, which is painful. In
> the past there were no organizations to help orphans like there are today. Although there
> are organizations, in this village we can say there are no organizations because DOS
> committee members are just benefiting themselves.

Many interviewees said that the difference today was the presence of orphan-care

organizations, although many people complained about their non-distribution of resources, an

issue examined in chapter 6.

Nonetheless, many Malawians are now ascribing to the UN orphan definition, broadly

speaking, a notion of orphanhood as consisting of a child who has lost one or both parents. This

notion is different from older ideas involving the socially excluded, uncared for, and abandoned

child. One possible explanation for this ideological shift is the power and material resources

associated with the term orphan, which discursively frames a population and constructs a discrete

demographic targeted for aid. It pays, literally, to claim orphanhood.

Charity, the mother of one of the orphans in my sample from Dowa District, again

mentions the impact of AIDS and poverty on the changing experiences of children. In addition,

she touches on the issue of discrimination. There is some question as to whether or not

discrimination against orphans occurred in the past, and to what extent it is actually occurring

today. Peters, Walker, and Kambewa (2008) found few, if any, reported cases of discrimination

against orphans in Zomba District. In those cases that are reported, it is difficult to know if the

discrimination is a result of the explicit loss of parents, the implicit stigma associated with AIDS,

the drain these children are on already stretched and poor extended family members, or the

financial/material privileging of a particular group in a context defined by endemic poverty. It is

most likely a combination of all of these factors. Charity explains:

> In the past people were keeping orphans without any problems because things were cheaper than nowadays. Those days there was a lot of food than these days as you know that even nowadays the rains is not coming the way it was in the past. In the past there were not a lot of diseases which are now common like HIV/AIDS that they kill both parents within a short period of time. Because the disease kills both parents most of the orphans are being mistreated by other people. In the past children were orphans through single parent for a long time. Nowadays things are a little bit better because there are different organizations, which help orphans than in the past. But for our organization in the village is very unfortunate that they are not helping orphans but they benefit themselves. Had it been that the organization in this village is good I would not have any problem because people have written down names but nobody received things in my family. What I see is that people are using our names to have things from donors and using it as personal things

Chrissie Sefasi, the mother of one of the orphans in my sample, explained that traditional

systems are present, but are changing, which she implies is tied to poverty. Her statement

suggests that poverty is driving most of the vulnerabilities children face, especially when it

comes to discrimination. She does not suggest a total collapse of the extended family system, but

rather highlights an obvious strain tied to the incursion of global capitalist systems and related ideologies (see introduction and chapter 6):

> In the past… things were cheaper. People were planting maize without fertilizer, but they were harvesting a lot of maize, so it was not hard to take care of orphans like it is nowadays. In the past, there was no discrimination, but nowadays people are giving all the orphans to one person. Like in my case, my children have their relatives from the male side, but they have left all the children with me. They don't want to take care of orphans. In the past, people were discussing in their family and giving one child to one relative to make things simple for the caretaker. These days fertilizer is expensive, and I cannot afford to buy it. Nowadays there are organizations in the villages, but it seems like they only benefit themselves and not orphans.

Peters, Walker, and Kambewa (2008) also found that some orphans ended up with relatives as a "social default," meaning nobody else was willing to step in and claim responsibility. This touches on the issue of social cohesion in villages discussed in chapter 6. I argue that the romanticized notion many lay humanitarians have of community in southern Africa is masking profound changes and a turning inward of family systems, even if they are proving resilient in terms of absorbing children.

Chrissie suggests that discrimination is a result of poverty, and not necessarily explicitly tied to AIDS. The point here is that the majority of children in Malawi are not completely falling through social safety nets in the ways Vaughan (1987) discussed as happening during the famine of 1949. Instead, they continue to be absorbed into a host of different familial arrangements, arrangements that are under economic and social strain. There is friction between western ideas of orphans and local Malawian perspectives. The national early childhood development (ECD) director, in the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), explained it to me as follows:

I think we can't deny that there is a stigma surrounding that word [orphan/*ana amasiye*[11]]. If communities they are using it, they are using it because of donor support that people are looking for—but when you just take the literal translation of *mwana amasiye* it's a child who has been left alone and needs to be cared for. But when you take it in a technical sense, in a traditional sense, there is no child who has been left alone; there is always a community around. That is why for us we devised this program, community-based childcare, and encouraged the communities to use that for their projects, community-based childcare, that and the like. We have a number of guidelines to that CBCC (community-based childcare center). Instead of saying "orphan care and the like" because CBCC is inclusive. This pressure that is coming from outside is keeping people going back to the word.

Throughout this dissertation I explore the friction that arises as western imagined and assumed ideas of modernity and orphanhood meet Malawian understandings and experiences.

Conclusion

This discussion is meant to highlight the disjuncture between a west-inspired, homogenous aid category, which assumes one million children in Malawi are facing separation, isolation, and social deprivation (Meintjes and Giese 2006; Peters, Walker, and Kambewa 2008). I argue that this singular focus on children who are targeted with substantial amounts of resources in an impoverished context is engendering new social and cultural configurations that may prove detrimental to children.

Meintjes and Giese (2006:411) argue that the definition of orphan "frames the focus of children's experiences on the basis of dead as opposed to living parents." These children are then constructed and (mis)represented within an orphan discourse that refers to a mythologized Africa as diseased and producing a vast population of children who collectively experience alienation, stigmatization, isolation, physical and emotional abuse, psychosocial distress, and potential vagrancy, all leading to societal disorder and decay as I discuss more fully in subsequent chapters. Meintjes and Giese argue, "If it is a decisive rhetorical strategy to bring attention to a

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[11] *Ana amasiye* in the Chewa language is used to describe "children who have been left behind" (Peters, Kambewa, and Walker 2007:31).

desperate situation, we are troubled by the inflammation of the orphan mythology, for in longer terms this is a powerful and counterproductive form of othering…[that is] exacerbating misunderstandings of the actual circumstances of children's care" (411–412). It also obscures the needs and problems facing innumerable Malawians dealing with poverty, disease, and hunger as alluded to by Chrissie in the earlier quote. Whether a rhetorical strategy or not, the emergence of orphans has led to the injection of a considerable amount of resources into Malawian communities.

Orphans are being produced and westerners, especially lay humanitarians, are responding. Their programs are often premised on the production and perpetuation of grand orphan narratives framed within a modernity paradigm that imagines an Oliver Twist-like child. In the remainder of this dissertation I examine in detail the process of producing orphan narratives/discourses, program development, and the outcomes that result from these activities.

Transnational discourses about orphans are effective at generating money and resources, as well as structuring the orphan-care projects that are implemented. Plans are made, projects are put into action, and Malawian communities feel the effects. Ferguson (1994) writes that, whether intentional or not, there is an intelligibility to the outcomes of such projects. I explore the intelligibility connected to orphan projects by examining the places where transnational discourses and projects meet Malawian cultural particularities. I discuss some of the outcomes, planned and unplanned, associated with orphan-care projects. What outcomes emerge from these projects that move beyond a simple material assessment of success or failure? How does the situation of orphans reflect larger changes or social and cultural shifts that are occurring in Malawian communities?

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH SITES

At the orphanage one late afternoon I was sitting with a young boy, Ziketo, as he was coloring. He turned to me and asked in broken English, "Andrea, do you know Arnold Schwarzenegger?" I was a little surprised at the question and mentioned that I knew him from films, but that I never actually met him. I asked how he knew about him, and he said he had seen him in a movie. Ziketo inquired, "Did you know he is also the governor of California? Do you live near him?" I drew a map of the United States to show Ziketo where I lived and explained that it would take a few days driving in a car to reach his home. As Ziketo drew we discussed a variety of topics, ranging from George Bush, political parties, Spiderman, and soccer to what the inside of an airplane looks like. He asked these questions wearing Nike tennis shoes and what looked like a Gap t-shirt. We later watched Pirates of the Caribbean together and performed moves meant to imitate Jackie Chan.

Ziketo's story illustrates that Malawi, like most places around the world, is not immune to the extraordinary rate of globalization characterized by the rapid movement of ideas, people, and things across time and space (Appadurai 1990). As children like Ziketo are exposed to western culture, depictions of Malawi, especially of orphaned children, are being transmitted to the west. Thanks to celebrities such as Madonna and Angelina Jolie, orphans in Africa are capturing the minds and pocketbooks of westerners, leading to new relationships that bridge distances and cultures. The impact is profound. For this reason, this study is not a traditional ethnography focused on a single place, but rather a multi-sited exploration of global connection (Marcus 1995) that has emerged around a particular identity: orphanhood.

This research examines how orphanhood is produced through imagined and mythologized ideologies and practices situated primarily in the west. I follow the ways in which

these programs focused on orphans are created and then flow into and play out in the "sticky

materiality of practical encounters" (Tsing 2005:1). I ask: How are Malawian orphans imagined

and constructed within these global discourses? What happens in the space where a west-

constructed notion of childhood premised on upper-class values meets Malawian cultural

realities? What are the implications for children as new collaborations develop through

increasing global flows?

I answer these questions by drawing on research conducted in Malawi over a fourteen-

month period between May 2006 and December 2008 at three different sites, as well as in the

capital city. These three sites are funded by two different donor agencies. One organization funds

two community-based projects I studied, and the other funds an orphanage. I traveled to

California to conduct research with the founders and donors who supported the orphan-care

research sites in which I worked. I also visited Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, to conduct

interviews with volunteer tourists who worked in one of my Malawi research sites. In this

chapter, I explain how I identified this research project, explain the value and difficulty of

studying children, provide a detailed description of the Malawian sites and the two US-based

organizations that founded and fund these sites, and describe the means by which data was

collected. I include a section on my positionality, my research assistant, and some important

ethical conundrums that I faced during the course of this research.

Research Trajectory and Justifying Research Site Selection

When I was twenty-two, I decided to move to the Dominican Republic to volunteer at a

medical hospitality house. Patients from rural areas came to the capital, Santo Domingo, to

receive treatment that was not accessible in their communities. They stayed with us during these

trips to the city. It was a difficult job because the public health system in Santo Domingo was in

disarray. Patients were offered substandard medical care, and many sick Dominicans were suffering or dying from preventable illnesses. These issues of social injustice and health disparity became personal when I picked up Luz Marie from the bus stop. Luz Marie was a young Dominican woman with breast cancer. She had two small children, but she always came to receive chemotherapy alone. Luz Marie and I formed a strong friendship. I always looked forward to her monthly stay at the hospitality house. I was deeply saddened when I learned that Luz Marie died shortly after I left the hospitality house in 2004. She was just thirty-six years old. I relate this story because it laid the groundwork for this dissertation. Like Luz Marie, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer in her mid-thirties when she had two small children. That is about all they had in common. My mother's birthright and high socioeconomic status afforded her access to some of the best cancer treatments in the world. She died just shy of her fiftieth birthday when I was nineteen and my brother twenty-one. My brother and I can say that we knew our mother and that she profoundly impacted who we are as adults. Luz Marie's children were so young that they might not be able to say the same.

I was, and continue to be, opposed to the social inequality and violence that framed Luz Marie's experience. I have also often thought about Luz Marie's children. I wanted to better understand the nature of the inequalities I had witnessed, as well as imagine responses that would address them. For this reason, I pursued an education that would allow me to focus on issues of health disparity and structural inequality among vulnerable populations, especially women and children.

Children in sub-Saharan Africa captured my attention long before celebrities brought notoriety to their plight by adopting them. When I was in Kenya in 1998, I regularly felt uncomfortable around the innumerable street children begging for money and food. I vividly

remember many of them carrying plastic bottles to sniff industrial strength glue. I was unclear as to why there were so many of them or what was being done for them. I think it was my discomfort and a sense of guilt about my privileged position and material wealth that brought me back to southern Africa with a research project focused on children.

In 2006, with the guidance of Dr. Anne Ferguson and armed with a Foreign Language and Area Studies Summer Fellowship and an International Studies and Programs pre-dissertation research grant, I began to investigate the situation of orphans in Malawi. It became obvious that only a small portion of the social services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children was under the direction of large, well-known development organizations. Instead, projects and social service provisions were being initiated and implemented by smaller, often non-credentialed, development organizations (Hefferan 2006). It was these organizations—not dissimilar to the hospitality house where I worked in the Dominican Republic—that sparked my interest. While in Malawi, I made contact with individuals from two small-scale orphan-care organizations. These initial contacts allowed me to solidify access to these research sites and get letters of affiliation from both groups, as well as the University of Malawi. I received a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad grant to return to Malawi in January of 2008 to conduct research for this study.

Site Selection Criteria

Before I provide a detailed description of the methods used and the demographics of the participants, I will explain the key reasons I selected my sites and the programs that I studied. First, the programs represent different models of orphan care. One program operates an orphanage, while the other sponsors community-based or local grassroots projects and a short-term nutrition care center. Within these different sites a variety of services is provided, including

alleviating malnutrition, paying school fees, providing transportation for HIV-positive children to receive ARVs, tutoring, bible study/psychosocial support, women's empowerment, and community daycare.

I also chose these sites because they had a focus on children's health, which was a central research focus when this dissertation was proposed. Two sites are connected to hospitals or clinics, and all sites address malnutrition through feeding programs. As this research project evolved, the scope shifted to include characteristics of orphan care that moved beyond health and nutrition.

Another central component to site selection was volunteer tourism. Both of the funding agencies based in the United States that I studied encourage volunteers to visit Malawi in an effort to connect with aid recipients, learn about the situation, and for some to participate in orphan-related projects.

These sites were also easily accessible and the contacts I had were open and excited about the prospect of my research focusing on their organizations. They assured me ready access to their programs, documents, and participation in volunteer tourism activities. I was also invited by both organizations to visit them in the United States. I was given the opportunity to interview US staff, as well as observe stateside fundraising drives.

Finally, scholarly work focused on larger organizations, such as Save the Children (Bornstein 2005; Manzo 2008) and UNICEF (Henquinet 2007), already exists but there are few studies of smaller, alternative development models run by lay or non-professional development workers (Hefferan 2006), which today are proliferating in the arena of orphan care. These smaller organizations often function with a different logic and within a different set of parameters than larger transnational organizations that fall within the conventional development

and humanitarian paradigm, hiring experts and premising program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation on contemporary development theory (Hefferan 2006).

A Note on the Anthropology of Childhood

Aside from the work of Margaret Mead, until recently anthropologists have engaged in few ethnographic studies of children (Gottlieb 2004; Hewlett 1991; Levine et al. 1994; Scheper-Hughes 1987). Anthropologists often perceive children as "in process" and therefore not worthy subjects of direct anthropological inquiry (Christensen and Prout 2005; Gottlieb 2004). Historically, the few instances where children appear in anthropological research draw on the assumption that they are passive or immature beings awaiting socialization and the imprinting of culture and knowledge (Schwartzman 2001). For example, children have been anthropometrically measured "specimens" used to prove or disprove the existence of race, as in the work of Boas and Krdlicka (Schwartzman 2001). In the 1950s, Benedict, Mead, and Whiting focused their attention on the socialization process to study the way culture becomes imprinted and social beings are shaped by particular institutions (Christensen and Prout 2005). There are numerous studies on rituals and rites of passage or initiation ceremonies (Kaspin 1993, 1999; Longwe 2006), which examine those transitional periods around puberty, marriage, and childbirth. These studies reveal some dimensions of southern African childhoods, but do not necessarily capture the breadth of children's experiences as anthropological subjects. In many ways, they reaffirm the notion that children are to be studied only in process and not as valuable ethnographic subjects of their own right.

While this work is insightful, today there is a movement to recognize children as active agents in the construction, dissemination, and reproduction of culture (Christensen and Prout 2005). Children should be approached with an appreciation for their current value and as subjects

of anthropological examination (Christensen and Prout 2005; Clacherty and Donald 2007). Fundamental to this movement is a concerted effort to deconstruct the category of childhood as the universalized, biologized, naturalized state that I discussed in chapter 1. The UNCRC is credited with this theoretical shift in the social sciences from perceiving children as passive recipients to considering them social actors able to express their own fears, concerns, and desires (Christensen and Prout 2005; Clacherty and Donald 2007; Farber 2003; Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1999). Fortunately, anthropology is now heeding this call. Anthropological publications focused on childhood are beginning to appear (Cheney 2007; Lancy 2008; Montgomery 2009). In 2007 the Anthropology of Children and Childhood Interest Group was organized, and as of early 2010 they estimate having over 740 members (Cheney 2010). At the American Anthropology Association meetings in Philadelphia in 2009, there were seventeen organized panels on children, childhood, and youth sponsored by the Anthropology of Children and Childhood Interest Group (Cheney 2010). In keeping with the spirit of this new wave of anthropological inquiry, this dissertation is not simply about issues of development and globalization focused on children, but includes methodological approaches that seek to capture the voices of children and allow them self-representation.

Conducting research with children is challenging. A significant dimension that needs to be addressed is the disparate power relations inherent in adult-child interactions (Clacherty and Donald 2007). Clacherty and Donald (2007), discussing research in southern Africa, emphasize the need to build trust with children. Children should feel empowered to make decisions about participating in the research, and they should feel secure in sharing their opinions and knowledge. This is accomplished through long-term interactions with them, as well as speaking their language and being familiar with their cultural context (Clacherty and Donald 2007).

With the aid of my Malawian research assistant, I was able to address some of these power dynamics by spending time with the children in their social settings, learning Chichewa, and presenting myself as a student of their lives, culture, and language. In many ways, they felt as if they were the teachers or "experts" and took pride in being able to guide me in knowing about their lives. I believe this adds to the authenticity and validity of the data presented in the following chapters.

There were children, most notably girls, who behaved shyly during interviews despite my attempts at getting to know them. I am not sure these participants would ever feel confident in an interview-type situation or with my presence. On three occasions, I left my research assistant to conduct storyboard drawings with children without me to assuage any fears or discomfort children projected. On all three occasions, my research assistant said that the children seemed to respond the same with or without my presence. In the future, I would attempt to overcome this barrier to building relationships with these girls by including a methodological approach that is more group-oriented. I witnessed that children, especially girls, seemed to have more confidence within a larger social network.

Sites

Transnational organizations based in the United States funded the sites I studied. Like many small, lay organizations working with orphans in southern Africa, the two organizations I work with are faith-based (Foster 2005). I briefly describe the nature of each organization's religious affiliation and the ways in which each affects local programming. Finally, I include descriptions of my three field sites in Malawi, including a brief history of each, the sample that was selected, and the ways in which data was collected, in order to provide a context for the chapters that follow.

Southern Allied Missions: Miracles Orphanage

> *Miracles exist to glorify God through the care of orphans and the sharing of the good news of Christ around the world…*
>
> *All of this is done in the name of Jesus and to live out the great commandments, the great commission and James 1:27.*
>
> Jim Chardy, Founder of Miracles

The vision for Miracles Orphanage began in 2005 when Jim Chardy, a prominent member from a Church of Christ in Alabama, decided to participate in a mission trip to Malawi. While there, he was overwhelmed by the large number of hungry children and decided to start his own non-profit organization called Southern Allied Missions to raise money to build an orphanage. Southern Allied Missions is a 501(c)3 organization that now funds orphanages in several different countries, including Moldova, India, Mexico, Zimbabwe, and Malawi. At times, Southern Allied Missions partners with other church groups or local agencies. What is unique about the Malawian orphanage, Miracles Village, is that it is the only orphanage that Southern Allied Missions funds which it is fully in charge of operating.

Miracles is located just outside the capital city, Lilongwe, and approximately two kilometers from the international airport. Construction began in late 2005 and is ongoing. It currently houses 144 children, the majority of whom come from villages in and around the central region. It is on a property that also houses a clinic and a porridge processing plant. The director of Miracles is a young Malawian man in his late twenties, but Southern Allied Missions' board members in Alabama do the majority of decision-making. Miracles is considered resource abundant (Phiri and Tolfree 2005). The children are housed, clothed, fed, sent to school, and have access to medical care.

The founder, Jim Chardy, made the decision to build an orphanage predicated on the ideals of a conservative Christianity that called him to evangelize and develop Malawi. His goal

is to materially, socially, and spiritually provide for suffering children, encourage an entrepreneurial spirit, and create a locally sustainable institution. Miracles is an example of a "faith-saturated" organization, which is characterized as an institution that manifests religion in all aspects of its work, including in fundraising and program design, as an expected outcome or goal, in staff hiring, and in the day-to-day workings of the organization (Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009). The place of religion is explicit in Miracles's mission, constituting the logic behind the inception of the organization, as well as in the lens used to approach all issues dealing with the orphans in their care. All employees are expected to practice a form of Christianity that is in keeping with the spirit of the Church of Christ in the southern United States. All orphans are encouraged to attend a local Church of Christ and are regularly visited by a Malawian Church of Christ pastor. Volunteers from the US Church of Christ visit the orphanage annually to conduct vacation bible schools. Following is a breakdown of the demographics of children in the orphanage who participated in my study and the research methods used to collect data. I was in residence at Miracles just under one month, starting at the end of January, but I made regular visits there over the course of the year to participate in a variety of activities.

Participant Demographics and Methods

Sixteen children between the ages of eight and sixteen who were designated as orphans participated in this study. They were selected at random. The median age of these children was twelve years old.[12] The average age of the girls was twelve, with the youngest being eight and the oldest sixteen. The average age of the boys was thirteen, with the youngest being nine and the oldest fifteen. Table 5 provides information on the participants' orphan status. A maternal

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[12] Their ages are estimated because many of the children and the administrators did not have actual documentation of ages. Some of the children gave contradictory responses when their stated age was compared to the intake forms the administration used to document their arrival.

orphan refers to a child whose mother has died. A paternal orphan is a child who has lost his or her father. A double orphan has lost both parents.

Table 5: Miracles Participants' Orphan Status (n=16)

	Maternal Orphan	Paternal Orphan	Double Orphan	Total
Male	2	3	6	11
Female	1	1	3	5
Total	3	4	9	16

Thirteen of the sixteen orphans came from Dowa District, which is a matrilineal area in central Malawi. One orphan came from Lilongwe and two came from Kasungu District, which is just north of Dowa. It is important to note that nearly all children have extended family members and often siblings living outside of the orphanage. For example, only seventeen (12 percent) of the 144 residents did not have identifiable family members in rural areas. All children included in the sample were self-identified and/or identified by the community as orphans, and all were given the choice to participate using appropriate methods of gaining informed consent. Verbal informed consent was attained for children aged eight to twelve. For older participants, written informed consent was obtained.

Data was collected from the majority of children using storyboard drawings. The children were given several sheets of paper and asked to draw their lives before coming to the orphanage, their lives at Miracles, and where they see themselves in the future. Children were interviewed individually to discuss their drawings, including their needs, fears, future dreams, and thoughts about family and relatives. All children were given the opportunity to draw, but older orphans sometimes preferred to simply tell their life history.

Open-ended interviews were conducted with all seven of the orphanage's "housemothers." In addition, three administrators were interviewed, including the Malawian director, an onsite American manager, and a teacher. These interviews focused on the history of

the institution, daily operations, the process of enrolling children, positive and negative aspects of institutional care, and how they perceive outcomes for children.

Participant observation was ongoing throughout this project. Primary activities included playing soccer with the children, helping with preschool activities, "chatting" with the girls, watching movies at night, playing games with the older kids, including organizing races and other competitions, participating in daily milk distributions, and helping organize and distribute clothing donations to the children. I was also able to observe the daily workings of Miracles from the administrative side. Cindy Chardy, the daughter-in-law of Jim Chardy, was residing at Miracles for a year to observe and direct the orphanage's operations. Her presence there resulted from concerns about unscrupulous activities, including the misuse of funds and lack of adequate care of the orphans. I befriended Cindy and became her regular confidant (see section on ethical conundrums). She often presented issues that arose at Miracles to seek my advice because she had intimate knowledge of my research experience and considered me an expert in the field. Participant observation was recorded in field notes.

Finally, I was able to acquire documents from Miracles, including the organization's profiles of the children that participated in my study. These profiles were the basis of US child sponsorship fundraising drives. I was also given access to the intake evaluations of each child, which were conducted by the previous Malawian director. Finally, I was given the general donor solicitation materials and pamphlets that circulated in the United States to raise money. Southern Allied Missions also has a web site that I visit regularly to collect materials, get project updates, and gain insight into how they present themselves to a broader, primarily western, audience.

Because Miracles is relatively new, having started residential care in 2005, there were no orphans who had "graduated" to live outside the facility. I felt it was important to gain the

perspective of children who have experienced residential care and were no longer living within the facility, because they could provide retrospective insight on their experience. They are able to speak about outcomes as they perceive them. Therefore, I attempted to contact orphans from a more established orphanage in the country, Rescue Children's Village. I was able to interview three orphans from Rescue Children's Village who had graduated, including two men and one woman. They were all double orphans. Additionally, in both 2006 and 2008 I participated in a guided tour of Rescue with other foreign visitors. I also interviewed the previous director of the Lilongwe Rescue Children's Village, as well as the South African employee in charge of donor solicitation and child sponsorship drives.

AIDS Interfaith Coalition (AIC)

AIC, originating in California, supports Malawian-led projects focused on HIV/AIDS, including orphan care, HIV/AIDS education, home-based care projects that train villagers to care for dying AIDS patients, and mobile health clinics that visit rural villages. They have also incorporated women's empowerment into their overall development agenda. Specifically, they fund women's income-generating activities, which include beekeeping, mushroom cultivation, piggeries, and microfinance trainings.

AIC was founded by an Episcopal priest, Steve Cross, in 2000 who wanted to address a global health issue through religious structures at the local level by working alongside mosques, churches, and other faith-based organizations (personal interview, S. C., July 2008). AIC has expanded and now works with a variety of organizations. It follows a liberal, non-denominational, community participatory strategy that aims to transform entire villages. Its development approach seeks to incorporate local perspectives by calling for grant proposals from grassroots organizations including clinics, churches, schools, and CBOs. These proposals must

be written in English, typed, and submitted electronically to the central selection committee in

the United States. Once proposals are approved, two local Malawian directors distribute the

funds and monitor the projects. My data was collected from two sites supported by AIC, Dowa

Orphan Support (DOS), and Hope.

AIC is an example of a "faith-affiliated" or "faith-background" organization (FBO)

(Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009). Religion is manifested in peripheral ways. AIC

promotes social justice and humanitarianism in the context of the AIDS pandemic. It is adamant

about not evangelizing. Its projects, mission, and language do not contain overt religious

language. The use of "interfaith" in their title refers to the structure of their board that represents

numerous religious denominations and the multiplicity of religious groups they are willing to

work with in their fight against AIDS and in easing the suffering of orphaned children. Their

activities reflect goals of heterogeneity and openness, rather than exclusivity. The AIC web site

addresses the question of why it works with many different religious groups:

> We partner with community and faith-based organizations to reach rural areas where the
> majority of Malawians live. Religious groups, both Christian and Muslim, are frequently
> the only providers of desperately needed services like home-based orphan care. AIC is a
> non-governmental, non-religious organization and does not proselytize or work with
> organizations that do.

The central region director, a local Malawian nun and nurse named Sister Brenda
explained:

> [ALF] What role does religion play in AIC?
> My perspective is that AIC is working with different religions, faiths. It does not look at
> whether someone is Muslim, Anglican, Catholic, Pentecostal, or if someone has no
> religion or they have different beliefs other than what we believe—AIC will work with
> them provided they are promoting human dignity.

In contrast to Southern Allied Missions, AIC purposefully avoids overt religious

discourses in an effort to incorporate more participants on the US donor side as well as in their

Malawian programs. Drawing on a particular religion is seen as limiting as opposed to expanding and connecting.

I conducted in-depth, open-ended interviews with several key stakeholders associated with AIC. I was able to interview the founder, Steve Cross, as well as an influential leader and former board member who escorts volunteers to assist in Malawian clinics and hospitals for short periods of time. He has been pivotal in developing a Malawi Transformation trip that brings church members from Steve Cross's former Episcopal Church in California to Malawi to visit AIC-funded sites. I was also able to interview the central area director for AIC, Sister Brenda, and a technical assistant who was a former social welfare assistant for the MoWCD.

Participant observation was central to my research with AIC. I have participated on two Malawi Transformation trips that lasted two weeks each (see Ethical Conundrums for a further description), and traveled twice to California to experience AIC fundraising events. In Malawi, I conducted participant observation of a AIC grant writing workshop for a small CBO, a blanket and school uniform distribution, and several field site visits with AIC staff to check on the progress of one of the CBOs they fund.

Dowa Orphan Support (DOS)

DOS, one of the two AIC-funded sites I studied, began receiving funding from AIC in July 2005. It is a small CBO located in Dowa District in the central region of Malawi approximately 70 kilometers from the capital city. Dowa is one of the poorer districts in Malawi, which development workers find surprising because of its close proximity to Lilongwe. Sister Brenda mentioned her frustration with the area saying most development organizations pilot their projects in this district because of geographic convenience, but little if any change has occurred. The three villages in my catchment area would be considered some of the poorest in the district.

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There is no running water or electricity. Nobody in the central village in my cluster has a metal roof, which is considered a sign of wealth. The road that merges off of the highway to Salima is rudimentary, but somewhat maintained because of the military barracks that sit just a few kilometers from the village center.

The close proximity of my catchment area to the military barracks is significant. Military personnel are a fixture in this community. Some men have married women who live in this area, others have "girlfriends," and there are many men who just visit the area to drink locally brewed beer. It was not uncommon for me and my research assistant to encounter inebriated men walking between beer huts and the barracks. We were instructed not to walk between the villages in the evening without a male escort because drunken military men were known for violence. I carried mace. Military personnel, beer drinking, and close proximity to impoverished communities lends itself to the spread of HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS rates in Dowa District are high, estimated at 14.8 percent at the urban sentinel site, Mchinji District Hospital, and 6.3 percent at the rural sentinel site, Thonje Health Clinic (NAC 2003).

For this reason, AIC was eager to fund DOS. In addition, Orphan Support Africa (OSA) (http://www.orphansupportafrica.org), UNICEF, and NAC (with funding administered by World Vision) also are currently supporting DOS activities. The District Social Welfare (DSW) office is aware of DOS and has monitored funds they received through NAC that is being distributed by World Vision International. It is not uncommon for CBOs to secure funding from a variety of sources. Once organizations understand the small grant writing process, they often submit similar if not identical grant proposals to a variety of agencies. This can lead to unscrupulous behavior when a CBO secures money from multiple agencies for the same project (being double funded)—a practice discussed more fully in chapter 6.

DOS has a board that is comprised primarily of members of the same family. The chairperson is a man named Pitirani. The Secretary is Noah. Both are young men in their early 20s. Noah wrote about DOS's mission and projects,

> The mission of DOS is to respond to the growing number of children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in our catchment area. DOS is currently offering the following services and resources—material assistance to orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC), material assistance to people living with HIV/AIDS, and transportation for HIV positive children to the pediatric clinic (Baylor) where they receive ARVs (antiretrovirals) and other treatment. However, we would like to also provide nutritional support to these HIV positive children.

My initial contact with DOS was on February 16, 2008 when I accompanied Sister Brenda and a private donor from the United States to a blanket and school uniform distribution event (see figure 6). Orphans and their guardians gathered to receive these items as well as a traditional Malawian meal. I was the designated photographer.

Figure 6: Blanket Distribution in Dowa

After gaining consent from the community, including the village headwoman, I returned on April 1st to secure housing. I stayed in Mvera until early July. I usually left on the weekends to return to the capital city to write field notes, transcribe data, and replenish food and water supplies. I was accompanied to the field by my research assistant Bridget Mwali. Interviews and storyboard drawings were completed in late June, but regular site visits were continuous throughout my eleven-month research period.

A random sample of twenty-two children from three villages in Dowa district under the Traditional Authority (TA) Mseu participated in this research. The three villages selected were

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Chinsisi Village, Mtsika Village, and Mwenda Village[13] because they were the primary

recipients of orphan aid from DOS.[14] A list of all children enrolled in DOS orphan-care

activities was obtained and the children were randomly selected. Fourteen of these children were

orphans. As table 6 shows, four children were maternal orphans, seven were paternal, and only

three were double orphans. There were no orphan-headed households in the sample. I included

eight children who were non-orphans to compare differences in access to material resources,

education, and perceived stigma or discrimination. The average age of children in the sample was thirteen.

Table 6: DOS Participants' Orphan Status (n=22)

	Maternal	Paternal	Double	Non-Orphan	Total
Male	2	3	2	3 + 1 vulnerable	11
Female	2	4	1	3 + 1 vulnerable	11
Total	4	7	3	8	22

The average age of the girls in the sample is twelve years with the oldest girl being seventeen

and the youngest eight. The average age of boys in the sample was fourteen years old. The oldest

boy was eighteen and the youngest nine. All participants were from matrilineal kinship systems.

Most of my research participants self-identified as Chewa, with a few individuals stating they

were Ngoni.

I also conducted participant observation with DOS. When this organization received

funding from NAC, I traveled with their members to the *boma*, or district center where local

government offices are located. I was able to observe how the DSW office and World Vision

handled the distribution of these funds. I was also able to observe the blanket and school uniform

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[13] Village names have also been changed to protect the anonymity of research participants and children.

[14] One other village could have been included in the sample; however, the village headman was a notorious drunk and harassed Bridget and me on multiple occasions. On one occasion he asked to search her bag for money or other consumable items, which he called payment for allowing access to his community. After consultation with DOS volunteers and Sister Brenda, I decided to avoid research in his village.

distribution, several committee meetings, various youth activities, AIC field visits to DOS, and a visit from OSA. I participated in daily activities and become a fixture in the community. I regularly gathered water, washed clothes, cracked peanuts for processing, prepared maize for pounding, and scared little children who had never seen an *azungu*, which is a commonly used term for foreigner. In many ways the community did accept me as a student and was eager to teach me about Malawian culture.

Hope Orphanage and Community-Based Orphan Care

Hope, the second AIC-funded site I studied, was founded in 1997 by Sister Bea Chimudzi who is a Malawian nun affiliated with the Rosarian Sisters under the Catholic Diocese of Mzuzu (St. Mary's Parish) in the northern region of Malawi. Sister Bea started Hope after noticing a group of street children stealing at the local bus depot. She befriended these children, many of whom were orphans. An American Catholic Marianist brother was working in Karonga and became interested in her project and is now a full-time staff person and fundraiser. Sister Bea relates the circumstances that led to the beginning of Hope in a newsletter:

> My heart was moved with compassion and I was stirred to do an impossible thing, I wanted to save [the orphans]. I wanted to not only save them from stealing, but to keep them from other bad things which they encountered as street children living in empty houses without parents.

Hope emphasizes a community-based approach to meeting the needs of OVCs. They are located in the Karonga city center (*boma*). Their resources, primarily focused on meeting nutritional needs, are distributed through a network of sixty-four villages. Each village has established a village orphan care committee (VOCC) to provide the basic infrastructure with which to systematically apply for, accept, distribute, and monitor nutritional resources coming from Hope.

Hope estimates that they serve nine thousand orphans and other vulnerable children through eleven different projects. Table 7 gives the title of each project, a brief description, and an estimate of the number of orphans served.

The Children's Village at Hope was constructed as a temporary residential facility at their central offices. There are approximately fifty children in residence. Sister Bea stresses that this is a temporary arrangement as the children who reside on the premises are there for emergency reasons, including malnutrition, abuse, or the sudden loss of a parent in childbirth. These children are meant to be rehabilitated if they suffer from a health issue, and then returned to their guardians. It they are unable to receive proper treatment or if there is the potential for abuse at home, the children are supposed to be relocated to an alternate guardian.

Hope began as a local NGO with little or no outside support. Over time, the size and scope of the project has expanded, in large part due to the support of a group of Marianist Brothers living in the area. Peter Demello has been pivotal in connecting Hope with outside funding sources, especially donors from the United States. Peter regularly travels to the United States and speaks in a variety of venues, especially in churches, to solicit donor support. An anonymous donor became interested in the work of Hope and has become their primary funding source. In an effort to ensure accountability and transparency, the donor has involved Catholic Relief Services (CRS). CRS manages the majority of funds coming into Hope, which submits to CRS their project proposals, budgets, and reports as required by this particular donor.

Hope submits project proposals to other funding sources as well, because the CRS donor only wants to fund nutrition-related projects. This is how AIC became involved with Hope. Hope is receiving funding from AIC to pay school fees for orphans. I became interested in Hope as a field site for three reasons. First, I had an acquaintance at CRS who made regular visits to Hope

Table 7: Hope Activities, Program Description, and Number of Orphans Served

Program Name	Program Description	Estimated Number of Orphans Served (as of early 2008)
1) Infant Care and Feeding	For newborns up to two years old, emergency nutrition programs for children who have lost mothers in childbirth or whose mothers are too sick to breastfeed.	200
2) Community-Based Childcare Centre	For two- to five-year-old children not yet enrolled in primary school.* Serves as a nursery school that provides food. Meets five times a week.	3,750
3) Village Nutrition Centre	For children, primarily newborns to five-year-olds, identified as extremely malnourished.	800
4) Community Feeding Centre (CFC)	For older children (six to ten) who require supplemental feeding during the lean season. Only operates from November through March when food insecurity is at its height.	3,100
5) Orphan-Headed Households (OHO)	Distribution of nutrient-rich food baskets to children living in communities without guardians.	900
6) Youth Program/HIV Awareness	A focus on promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and Christian values.	Fluctuating
7) St. Thomas Technical School	Vocational training for orphans and other vulnerable children. Courses include carpentry, tailoring, and irrigation farming.	130
8) Home-Based Care (HBC)	Providing emotional and nutritional support for people living with HIV/AIDS.	600
9) Bursary Program	Paying school fees and other school-related incidentals for OVCs to attend secondary (high) school.	350
10) Agriculture Program/Food Production	(This program is being reevaluated for efficacy/efficiency.) Providing agricultural inputs to VOCCs to raise their own food to support OVCs, especially for CBCC feedings.	At all VOCC sites
11) Children's Village	Residential facility, similar to an orphanage. See details later in the text.	50

In Karonga, primary school children are automatically enrolled in a school feeding program funded by the World Food Program. These children receive a daily meal.

and was very positive about their program. Second, Sister Brenda from AIC went to visit Hope

before they would release the funds. She was impressed with their structure, program design,

implementation, and monitoring. Third, I wanted to be in a research site that was far removed

from the central region and capital city. It was also an attractive site because of the diversity of

projects, including the use of institutional and community-based approaches to serving orphans. I

Table 8: Hope Orphanage: Orphan Status (n=10)

	Maternal Orphan	Paternal Orphan	Double Orphan	Total
Male	1	2	0	3
Female	3	0	4	7
Total	4	2	4	10

was able to conduct interviews and storyboard drawings with the children in residence, as well as

with children living in three villages that receive aid from Hope. Table 8 records the status of the

orphans who participated in this research and were in residence at Hope.

Using a random sample, I conducted interviews and storyboard drawings with ten children living at Hope (see figure 7). The average age of the sample children was sixteen.[15] The average age of the girls was sixteen years old, with the youngest girl being eleven and the oldest twenty-two. Three of the orphans, all girls, were

Figure 7: Children Participating in Storyboard Drawings

older and attended a secondary boarding school in Mzuzu City. I was able to interview them

because they were home on a holiday break. The oldest boy being interviewed was eighteen and

the youngest fourteen. Three housemothers were also interviewed at Hope. More females than

males were interviewed, and there were few paternal orphans in this sample. The same research

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[15] The majority of the children in residence was under the age of eight and therefore did not qualify for my research. I randomly sampled only those children who were over the age of eight in keeping with IRB restrictions.

methodology used at Miracles was employed at Hope (see earlier section for details), but the predominant language used was Tumbuka.

Similar to the community-based research conducted in Dowa, I sampled twenty-one children from three villages receiving aid from Hope. The three villages were selected for their ease of accessibility in addition to their extended involvement with Hope. These villages included Mwanyongo, Mwanganda, and Mweninyumba. A random sample of children enrolled in the Hope programs was used to determine participants. Table 9 records the gender and orphan status of children enrolled in this research who were living in communities.

Table 9: Hope Community-Based Participants' Orphan Status (n=21)

	Maternal	Paternal	Double	Non-Orphan	Total
Male	1	3	1	2	7
Female	3	1	6 (3 orphan-headed households)	4	14
Total	4	4	7	6	21

The average age of participants was fourteen. The average age of the girls in the sample was fourteen, with the oldest girl being eighteen and the youngest twelve. The average age of the boys in the sample was fifteen, with the oldest boy being eighteen and the youngest thirteen. All participants spoke Tumbuka and came from patrilineal kinship systems, identifying as either Tumbuka or Nkhonde. Storyboard drawings and in-depth interviews were used to gather data.

The children in this sample fell within the catchment area of three different VOCCs. We interviewed the heads of each committee. Additionally, we interviewed the founder/director of Hope, the assistant director of Hope, the Hope field officer who monitors the VOCCs, the assistant social welfare officer, and the chairperson of the CBO who oversees the VOCCs in this catchment area.

Volunteer Tourists ("Voluntourists")

On my flight to Malawi during the summer of 2006, I witnessed a growing trend that would become an important thread of this research: volunteer tourism. It seemed the majority of non-Malawians on my flight were associated with some type of organization going to Malawi to volunteer as well as enjoy some of Malawi's tourist attractions. These groups were fairly obvious because many wore matching t-shirts touting a map of Malawi or Africa and indicating some type of partnership or linkage (often clasped hands) between themselves and Africa.

I incorporated research with voluntourists into my project because both AIC and Southern Allied Missions receive voluntourists at their project sites. Many of these volunteer tourists are funders of orphan-care projects in Malawi. In fact, Miracles Village came into being because of a voluntourist's experience. Staff at Miracles estimated that they receive over two hundred international visitors a year. I wanted to understand what these connections meant to both children and the volunteers who engaged with them.

I conducted a total of twenty-one in-depth, open-ended interviews with volunteer tourists (see table 10). Five interviews were at the Miami University of Ohio with members of a chapter of the Ambassadors for Children (AFC) organization. AFC sends volunteer tourists to various locations around the world, including Miracles Village. I conducted four interviews with students and another interview with the faculty sponsor. The Miami of Ohio chapter of AFC sent a group of students to Malawi for two weeks during the summer of 2008. I was at Miracles when they

Table 10: Volunteer Tourism Interviews (n=20)

	AIC	Miracles/South Allied Missions	Ambassadors for Children (Miami of Ohio Chapter)
Male	3	2	0
Female	4	7	5
Total	**7**	**9**	**5**

arrived and participated in some of the activities, including helping to paint the orphanage's library.

I also conducted nine interviews with voluntourists from a Church of Christ group located in the southern U.S., which has direct links with Southern Allied Missions. While in Malawi, I traveled with this group on a food distribution drive, we visited a field school that teaches Malawian farmers about innovations in agricultural production, and I participated in orphanage activities they facilitated, such as painting, soccer, and movie night.

Finally, I traveled with two groups of voluntourists connected with a group from an American Episcopal Church on their Malawi Transformation Trip. They were associated with AIC and primarily visited AIC-sponsored projects, including a trip to DOS. All of these groups stayed in Malawi for approximately two weeks.

Other Key Stakeholder Interviews

While in Malawi, I was able to conduct formal and informal interviews with twenty-one key stakeholders, as well as collect documents related to orphan care in Malawi. Table 11 sorts these interviews into three broad categories: (1) Religion-based; (2) Government-based; and (3) Other (which refers to interviews conducted primarily with other NGOs working on similar issues related to orphans). For example, Raising Malawi is Madonna's organization, which also funds the Network of Organizations for Vulnerable and Orphan Children. Questions focused on a variety of topics, including the nature/characteristics of orphans and orphan care; poverty and development; the efficacy and justification for different models of orphan care; the collaborations that develop between various stakeholders emerging around orphan-care initiatives; and issues regarding the rights of the child. I was able to collect numerous documents from these organizations, particularly UNICEF and NAC.

Table 11: Key Stakeholder Interviews

Religion-Based	Government – Malawi and US	Other
Center for Social Concern, Director	USAID Health Team, USA, Nutritionist (informal interview)	Raising Malawi/Raising Trust, in-country Director
St. Francis Diocese, Pastor	Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS Principal Secretary (informal interview)	Raising Malawi/Raising Trust, Program Director
VisionLedd Director, and former SOS Children's Village Director	District Social Welfare Officer, Dowa District	Safe Haven, Street Kids Outreach (previously sponsored by GAIA), Director plus four resident street kids
Lilongwe Street Kids Rescue (Tikondane), Director (Catholic Church-affiliated)	District Social Welfare Assistant, Dowa District (informal interview, participant observation for early childhood development, ECD training)	Network of Organizations Working with Vulnerable and Orphaned Children (NOVOC), Program Manager
	National AIDS Commission (NAC), Socioeconomic Policy Director	Red Cross, OVC Program Manager
	Ministry of Women and Child Development, Director of Child Development	Consol Homes, Executive Guardian (Madonna-sponsored NGO, winner of UNICEF Red Ribbon Award)
	Assistant Community Development Worker, Dowa District	UNICEF, Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program Manager
	Assistant Social Welfare Officer, Karonga District	
	Ministry of Women and Child Development, Senior OVC Officer	
	District Social Welfare Assistant, Zomba District	

Answering My Research Questions

The first of my three research questions is:

- How are Malawian orphans imagined and constructed within transnational global discourses associated with organizations that have founded, funded, and implemented orphan-care projects in Malawi?

Data collected to answer this question involved asking individuals and organizations working and volunteering with AIC and Miracles orphan-care projects, government officials, orphan-centered CBO directors, religious leaders, and all of my research participants, including

children and their guardians, how they conceptualized orphans. Some of these interviewees had substantial experience working with orphans, while others were simply interested in their plight and decided to attend fundraising events. In addition, I collected materials that contained representations of orphans, including donor fundraising materials, documentaries and films focused on orphans,[16] newspaper articles in Malawi and the United States related to OVCs, and official government documents. I also witnessed two fundraising events in the United States and noted how orphans were represented.

In my analysis, I presented the relationship between Malawian ideas of orphans, transnational definitions as articulated in official documents produced by organizations such as UNICEF, and western donor and volunteer visions of orphans. I explored how these varying conceptualizations influence different organizations' program design and expected outcomes.

The impact of these views of orphans, which provided the base and justification for orphan-centered projects, is profound and leads to my second research question, which is:

- What happens in the space where western imaginations about orphans, which structure transnational organizations' donor drives and project designs, meet Malawian cultural constructions?

To answer this question, I collected data through interviews and participant observation at the Malawian sites of these orphan-care projects. I asked Malawians—those caring for orphans as well as those who were not—about the changing nature of orphanhood and the perceived impact of the transnational response to the orphan situation in Malawi. I asked children about being labeled orphan and the effects of this identity. I asked a variety of community members, including community leaders and government workers, about the workings of community-based

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[16] Madonna released the documentary, "I Am Because We Are," in 2008. It is focused on the situation of orphans in Malawi.

childcare centers (CBCCs) and their impact on children's welfare. In the analysis, I compared the purpose, design, and justification of the transnational projects to what is happening in local communities, finding some unanticipated outcomes.

My final research question focuses specifically on children's experiences and perspectives:

- What are the implications of an orphan identity for children who adopt it and how do they understand and experience being targeted with resources via collaborations that develop through increasing global flows of people, resources, and discourses?

Data collected to answer this question came from the storyboard drawings and in-depth interviews with children labeled orphans. Interviews with older orphans were pivotal to answering this question, as they have had more time to process what this identity means. By collecting data from children who are institutionalized, as well as those being cared for within villages, I was able to compare what impact the orphan identity has on shaping children's subjectivities.

Positionalities: Researcher and Research Assistant

Generally speaking, I can say that Malawians I worked with were very open and amenable to my research and participated actively in my project, but they expected something in return because of obvious wealth differences between us. This was evident in both urban and rural settings. On one occasion, an upper-level Malawian government official in the MoWCD called me back to his office seeking advice on how to apply to MSU for graduate training. In villages, I was regularly asked for daily incidentals, such as soap, money for transportation, food, or clothing. These requests did not surprise me, but what did was the inability to feel connected with local Malawians, aside from a select few individuals.

I remember one day, when I first arrived in Malawi, driving out to Bunda College, listening to my iPod, wearing new clothes and shoes, with my cell phone tucked neatly beside me. I watched as Malawian women walked up and down the highway barefoot, with enormous, heavy bundles balanced neatly on their heads and sweat pouring off their brow. I should have realized then that my entrée into the world that most Malawians inhabit would be circumscribed, at best. While in Malawi, I slept in a village, ate nsima, walked with water jugs balanced on my head, cleaned corn, cracked ground nuts, played soccer, and washed my clothes in a river. Regardless, I was always on the fringe. Children often cried and ran away when they saw me; when I walked through villages or even the city center, men and women often stared or laughed; and strangers regularly asked me for things because I was seen for what I had and not who I was.

My experience of standing out, or being a foreigner, would read the same as other dissertations written by white, unmarried, childless women going to do research in Africa. Malawian women felt sorry for my perceived barrenness and singlehood, and most men wanted to marry me. I was considered privileged and rich, despite being a student. And, comparably speaking, I was. The very nature of my skin color afforded me a privileged identity and acceptance into places women might not normally be welcomed. Yet, I found it difficult to relate with and feel accepted by many Malawians in urban and rural settings. Fortunately, I hired a young Malawian social worker to assist me throughout the course of my research. We became friends, and I am indebted to her in innumerable ways for helping me bridge what at times seemed like a vast divide between me and the communities within which I was living and working.

Bridget Mwale: Social Worker, Research Assistant, and Friend

I asked my in-country advisor, Dr. Daimon Kambewa, to help me locate and hire a research assistant. I preferred a local Malawian woman with basic computer capabilities, experience conducting research, and preferably someone tri-lingual (speaking Chichewa,

Figure 8: Bridget Mwali, Research Assistant

ChiTumbuka, and English). He suggested Bridget Mwale, who is the niece of the Dean of the College of Nutrition at Bunda College of Agriculture in Lilongwe (see figure 8). She had just received her certification from a NAC-sponsored program to train and place junior social welfare officers throughout the country. This funding was part of a larger Global Fund Initiative to improve services to orphaned and vulnerable children. Unfortunately, the government did not have the capacity to place these trainees in each district and provide them a regular salary. Her training in social work, as well as proficiency in both qualitative and quantitative research methods acquired through participation on her aunt's research projects, made her an ideal candidate.

Bridget worked with me for eleven months during 2008. She became a good friend and an asset to my work. She was able to bring a critical eye to the work and many times would educate me on more subtle Malawian cultural practices. Her status as a cultural insider enabled her to tap into gossip networks in the communities within which we worked in ways that I could not because of my foreigner identity. This was informative to my research in ways I had not anticipated. For example, on one occasion we had invited a teenage boy to come over to the house where I was staying to participate in the research. Late that evening, the secretary of the

CBO told Bridget that we should not invite this teenager to the house because he was a notorious witch who had killed an older woman in the village (see chapter 6). Bridget was able to learn and later share with me a significant amount about ongoing issues and perspectives within the community through these informal conversations.

As a junior social welfare officer with extensive experience working in rural communities and conducting research, she was also able to identify and interpret situations in ways that were beyond my own abilities. In our first village site, Bridget was told about some potentially unscrupulous CBO activities, especially the mishandling of funds. She knew this was not uncommon because of previous experiences in the field with CBOs working with orphans. She brought this to my attention, and we decided to investigate the situation further. We traveled to a village community approximately ten kilometers from our field site to visit with the chief. We were able to ask about their experiences with the CBO. This unscheduled trip directly informed my research questions as we incorporated new issues into our data-collection activities.

Finally, Bridget's extensive experience conducting qualitative research was beneficial to this project for several reasons. First, she was able to make research participants feel comfortable with our presence. It was obvious that the Malawians we interviewed felt amicable towards Bridget. Secondly, she was personally engaged with the research and brought a natural curiosity to the data collection and preliminary analysis. She regularly brought emerging themes to my attention, and we revisited the research tools on several occasions to make sure we were capturing respondents' ideas in authentic ways. Third, she was attentive. She listened carefully to what the respondents had to say and was quick to ask follow-up questions, at times without my probing. Finally, Bridget was a good friend and confidant to me during the course of the research

project, which was pivotal in helping me remain focused, engaged, and encouraged. This research would not have been possible without her.

Ethical Conundrums: Miracles

One of the major ethical issues I faced was at Miracles. Over the course of my year in Malawi, I spent a significant amount of time at Miracles Village and had befriended the American woman, Cindy, and her daughter, who came to Malawi to address problems with the operation of the orphanage. She was very friendly—allowing unsupervised and free access to the children, housemothers, and staff with complete confidence. She also allowed my research assistant and me to stay in her house. She regularly prepared meals for us and constantly asked my opinion on matters related to the orphanage. I genuinely liked her. Through the course of our friendship she disclosed privileged information that I know would not be discussed with other researchers or investigators, including issues related to politics, religion, internal fighting, power struggles, witchcraft accusations, controlling sexual relationships among orphans, and the orphanage's illegal status with the government. I asked her about these topics in our formal interview. This is information I would not have been privy to had it not been for our friendship.

In addition, she often asked for advice. At times I gave my opinion, and for the sake of the welfare of the kids I directed her to consult other orphan-care program operators, especially the former director of Rescue. I recognized the value in being objective, but when it comes to issues that directly impacted the lives of children I felt it was my responsibility to give advice and direction. The American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics suggests that your responsibilities lie first with seeing that no harms come to the people you study. I felt I was able to ensure the best outcomes for my participants through my conversations with Cindy and connecting her with someone who had years of experience running an orphanage in Malawi.

Just as I befriended Cindy, I developed a strong relationship with an older couple that works closely with AIC. At one point, the husband was a AIC board member, and he continues to be involved in fundraising. This couple facilitated my access to AIC and to the village sites where I worked. When I traveled to California for AIC fundraisers I stayed with them, and we still talk regularly on the phone. I was considered an "adopted daughter." I have deep respect and admiration for both of them and their commitment to bettering the lives of individuals both in the Unites States and abroad. For this reason, I found myself not only being a participant on a voluntouring expedition during the summer of 2008, but also a driver and guide.

In 2008 I asked to participate in the Malawi Transformation Trip sponsored by an American Episcopal Church in California. I had been a participant during the summer of 2006. These trips often include doctors and nurses who spend part of their time in Malawi volunteering at local clinics and hospitals, which are often health facilities sponsored by AIC. Other participants have included influential donors, young people interested in volunteering or having a cultural experience, and religious leaders or teachers. In addition to volunteering at clinics, the group travels to a variety of AIC projects and visits a few tourist attractions. The older couple I have befriended are pivotal to this experience. They are in charge of coordinating all of the details of these trips and acting as a liaison between trip participants, AIC staffers, and local Malawians.

At the end of June I received a frantic phone call from the couple.[17] Papa D, the husband, explained that his wife had fallen and broken her hip. He was in Blantyre while she was at the

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[17] They couple had arrived in Malawi just a few weeks prior to this call. They were there to set up details about the Malawi Transform Trip's itinerary and establish new contacts. I had dinner with them shortly after their arrival and knew they would be returning to the capital in a few days

hospital. She was in traction, and they would not be able to meet the Malawi Transformation

Trip participants at the airport in Lilongwe where I was living. He asked if I would be willing to

help facilitate the trip since I was familiar with Malawi and could speak Chewa. I agreed. The

shift from trip participant to facilitator altered the way in which I was perceived by Malawi

Transformation Trip participants and impacted the overall spirit of the trip. I became a leader

amongst a group of people I was meant to objectively observe. I was asked to make decisions

about a variety of scheduled activities. I was considered an expert on all things Malawian,

despite my constantly reminding them that I, too, was here to learn. My perspective, knowledge,

and presence did shape their experience and is reflected in the interviews that I conducted with

each participant at the end of the experience.

I recognize that this is the participant part of participant observation, and it sometimes

conflicts with being an observer. The ethical point is not to harm but to help people, and I believe

I was always able to stay true to that principle. My standpoint was always made clear.

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to meet the trip's participants. I was scheduled to participate in the experience as part of my
research.

CHAPTER 3: LAY HUMANITARIANISM, ORPHAN NARRATIVES, AND COMPASSION

My first reaction is the feeling of helplessness, and hopelessness. Seeing so many eyes of the orphans, innocent and pure, makes me feel a little overwhelmed…Poverty and HIV/AIDS, malaria, are now all over southern Africa…Without a heart of compassion and love, without a true passion in helping and offering, Madonna could not do this. So I give more credit to her now than before, and I see this as a gift to Malawi rather than a tool of celebrity propaganda.

–MSU undergraduate student after viewing Madonna's documentary on Malawi

As an assignment for an advanced women's studies undergraduate course I was teaching during the summer of 2009, students viewed the film "I Am Because We Are." This documentary was produced by Madonna to raise awareness about her non-profit organization, Raising Malawi. It focuses on the situation of orphans and AIDS in Malawi. Students were asked to respond to the content of the film, including their perceptions of Malawian orphans, their overall reaction to the film, and the film's impact on their desire to be connected or involved with these issues. This quote is just one of many that captured the ability of celebrities and other humanitarians—and the organizations or projects they support—to use the media and other outlets to produce a discourse about suffering children that fosters an emotional and compassionate response. This response is based on the recognition of an interconnected humanity and the need to address suffering. The student's reaction highlights the power of the image of the orphan and the iconography focused on these children to bring about a sense of compassion drawing on the innocence of orphans. Nearly all students in the course were moved by the images of the sick and dying AIDS patients, the children left behind, and the overall poverty evident in the film. Several students responded that they wanted to go to Africa to "see it for themselves" or become involved and help these children.

Madonna's documentary is also effective in framing the situation of orphans as an emergency, placing it within a humanitarian response matrix. Many orphan-care projects solicit

donations by using this crisis rhetoric, which is explicitly tied to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. AIDS has been cast as an emergency by numerous organizations, as well as various governments (Nguyen 2009). Nguyen (2009) asserts that humanitarian emergencies decree a "state of emergency," suspending history and disabling local politics. This process disrupts local institutions, thus initiating a mobile sovereignty. Nguyen (2009) makes the case that the AIDS epidemic in Africa, which is continuously framed as a "humanitarian emergency" requiring urgent intervention, is a recent occurrence that has mobilized a massive response. This crisis rhetoric and its subsequent humanitarian call to action are exemplified in the introductory story Madonna tells in her video. Victoria Keelan, a local Malawian woman, calls Madonna, pleading for assistance for the million children orphaned by AIDS. Victoria says that there are not enough orphanages and that children are sleeping on the streets, in abandoned buildings, and under bridges. Children are being abducted, kidnapped, and raped. We are told, "This is a state of emergency." Madonna is elevated to the position of a humanitarian capable of and required to make a difference, despite having limited knowledge about Malawi, orphans, or AIDS. This new role resulted in the creation of her NGO, Raising Malawi, and the affiliated orphan-care projects she funds and implements. Madonna is not alone. Innumerable others of less fame have followed suit.

In this chapter I examine the rise of individuals such as Madonna, or lay humanitarians, who are not experts in issues related to development, humanitarianism, or childcare, but become engaged in orphan projects. In this dissertation I focus on a variety of humanitarian responses, ranging from those that have limited understanding of the situation of orphans and children in Malawi, such as Miracles Village, to others that are adopting a more culturally aware and context-specific approach, such as AIC. Central to this chapter is an exploration of the power of

discourse, especially circulated through the media, in creating an aid category that western

donors feel compelled to support via a sense of compassion for the suffering. Orphan narratives

generate donor dollars and inform orphan-project design. I argue that mythologized ideas about

Africa persist, capturing the minds of program organizers who actively incorporate them into the

discourses they produce about Malawi, about orphans, and about HIV/AIDS. This leads to the

development of programs that do not necessarily resonate with Malawian needs.

Lay Humanitarians

My work examines the rise of a particular type of humanitarian—the lay humanitarian,

similar to the "lay development worker" referred to by Hefferan (2007). Many lay humanitarians

have limited experience with cultural difference or with development/humanitarian theories and

practices, and they have little knowledge of the political, economic, historical, and cultural

contexts within which they work. They tend to be volunteers who have minimal or no training in

humanitarian activities, and their involvement in these programs is not their primary occupation.

Many may put into practice programs that have unanticipated outcomes as a result of their

insufficient understanding of the Malawian cultural, social, political, economic, and historical

milieu. Director Kilembe in the MoWCD captures this phenomenon:

> The other issue is with the donors. You know they come here and confuse the situation.
> This is especially the case with churchmen, religious organizations, and even tourists who
> come to Malawi just on vacation or just passing through. They become moved by their
> emotions and the things they see around them without knowing anything about the
> situation and how complicated it is. They think they are going to have some kind of
> impact. These people start these organizations because of these emotions of feeling bad.
> And the communities accept their money and projects. It is frustrating because we, [in the
> Ministry of Women and Child Development], know better the situation on the ground,
> the gaps, the things that will work best to alleviate these situations, but very few people
> come and chat with the government to find out what to do and the proper channels for
> going about doing it.

This quote highlights central features of this emerging response to orphans. First, Kilembe identifies the emotionally charged nature of many donors' reactions as they experience or perceive the suffering of orphans through a western lens. Although some donors and project organizers do not travel to Malawi to have these experiences first-hand, they rely on exposure to orphans and discourses of their suffering via fundraising campaigns, documentaries like Madonna's, web sites, and other forms of print and news media that I describe later in this section. I will demonstrate how lay humanitarians involved in these projects actively generate a particular orphan discourse to elicit a powerful emotional response from donors (Meintjes and Giese 2006).

Second, this response is often coupled with a limited understanding of local social systems and Malawian needs or "gaps," as Kilembe says. This can result in responses that are inappropriate, and often prove to be framed by modernity ideologies. Third, Kilembe suggests these organizations often bypass the state, resulting in unscrupulous behavior or the implementation of projects that run counter to government policies and community needs and expectations. I highlight these effects in chapters 4 and 6. Finally, Kilembe mentions that communities willingly open themselves up to west-inspired projects because of the potential to access material resources in a context characterized by endemic poverty. In these impoverished contexts, power relations play out around orphans. Throughout this study I demonstrate how friction arises as a result of inequitable and often volatile interconnections between transnational actors, the state, communities, local leaders, families, and children themselves.

Another central feature of lay humanitarian projects is the emphasis on a narrow problem that makes intervention appear manageable (Kristof 2010). The ability of untrained, but compassionate, individuals to make a difference must seem plausible—one child at a time. Thus,

fundamental to their endeavors is reliance on an apolitical and circumscribed solution. In some cases this allows humanitarians to assume local populations are to blame for their own problems or difficult circumstances, or they simply ignore macro-level processes that structure poverty, inequality, and poor health outcomes. Solutions, then, can be imagined as contained within these demarcated places. Larger systems implicated in inducing problems are erased or completely ignored. The obvious problem with these approaches is that they are only bandaids, which do not disrupt the systemic cycles that shaped these locally experienced issues in the first place. Moreover, failures associated with these projects can thus be blamed on the local context.

Lay humanitarian responses, while targeting a specific issue, can be varied. In the next sections I describe AIC and Miracles to give a sense of this heterogeneity.

AIC

AIC's founder had little or no experience with Malawi or international development/humanitarianism, and he was not trained as a physician or healthcare provider. He is an Episcopalian priest motivated by compassion and the desire to help others—"God is with us, if we are with them." He contacted a friend and educated himself on the issue of HIV and its forms of transmission. Using what he did know, religious institutions, he began to imagine a way of addressing the AIDS situation in villages in southern Africa. He explained how his organization chose a particular issue he felt was manageable, albeit somewhat narrow in nature, and devised a solution:

> I went to [a colleague who is also Chief of Surgery at UCSF] and asked him naively if there was a health problem global in scope that could be addressed at the local level. He gave me an article on single dose nevaripine to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. We realized that the majority of people in Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa, lived in villages and the best way to reach them was through religious organizations, such as churches, mosques, and faith-based organizations…

This concentration on a very specific issue has both strengths and weaknesses. While many organizations are quick to act—often prematurely involving themselves in establishing and running orphan-care activities or projects—they can also be responsive to the local context and expand their initial narrow focus. For example, AIC has begun to think long term with a focus on systemic change. The founder of AIC noted this shift over time:

> Another trend is that we rigorously cleave to funding things that are HIV related. When we started in 2001 that was the purpose, but we have finally understood that HIV is broader than just those who are positive. So now we are doing things that are related to TB and malaria and we are expanding our projects.

The other projects he mentioned that AIC is supporting include women's empowerment, orphan care, bed net distributions, nursing scholarships, and distributing food during times of hunger.

Although many of those involved in these humanitarian organizations only visit Malawi once, those who return frequently can become more knowledgeable of local circumstances, and more deeply involved in social justice activities, both at home and abroad. One of the volunteers and fundraisers working in Malawi with AIC, an emergency room physician, dedicates his time to volunteering in hospitals for varying lengths of time; encourages students and older professionals to visit Malawi and volunteer their own time; raises funds for AIC projects; and has gone back to school to study liberation theology and sustainable development on a part-time basis. He regularly discusses and debates issues related to development, social justice, and Malawi with a variety of audiences.

Similarly AIC's founder has begun to co-author papers in peer-reviewed journals on AIDS and community-based responses in Malawi. He was able to do this by connecting with a scholar at UCSF who was funded by NIH to conduct research on AIDS, gender, and religion. As a consequence, some programs and activities better correspond to local needs than was the case in the past.

Southern Allied Missions

As discussed in chapter 2, Southern Allied Missions and Miracles orphanage came to fruition as a result of a volunteer tourist experience initiated by a church group in Alabama. Southern Allied Missions' founder, Jim Chardy, a real estate developer, came to Malawi to bear witness to poverty and disease. He reported being overwhelmed by the number of children he perceived to be orphans that he saw in villages. He decided he wanted to help these children.

Chardy established an orphanage, an institution that the Government of Malawi explicitly opposes, favoring instead community-based care similar to the projects undertaken by AIC. Chardy did this because of the misperception that there were large numbers of orphans with no families or means of support. He assumed these children to be abandoned, without anyone to care for them.

This institutionalization of children has a variety of repercussions that I discuss in chapter 4, which include creating a privileged identity for orphans, fostering community dissent and jealousy, developing institutional dependency, and stressing traditional kinship systems. Southern Allied Missions is a cautionary tale. Chardy is an example of a compassionate individual driven to make a difference with no understanding of either local cultural systems or macro-level factors that influence poverty, AIDS, children, and inequality. The consequences are profound, because 140 children now rely on him for sustaining their lives and ensuring the "better future" he has promised. It is unclear if he will be able to follow through on his promises and if he will have the resources to support this costly institution.

For example, Chardy plans to utilize the farmland attached to the orphanage so the children can grow their own food and raise livestock. In his vision, the excess grains and animals would be sold for a profit that could then be used to pay the institution's expenses, creating a

sustainable orphanage not reliant on donor funds. This has proven unrealistic because the harvests have been inadequate and there has not been enough capital to invest in livestock. The financial demands of running the institution—including paying school fees and salaried staff, and finishing construction and renovation of the complex to meet minimal state standards—have been substantial. Despite a lack of sustainable and stable funding, he relies heavily on his Christian faith by regularly describing the miracles that Jesus performed, including feeding the 5,000. The following ethnographic example highlights the potential for benevolent intentions to be at odds with local needs.

I received a phone call one day from the American administrator asking if I had contacts at the US Embassy who could help her obtain visas for all of the children. Chardy wanted to take them to Disney World. He would fly them across the ocean, put them up in hotels, let them experience a variety of rides and shows, and then fly them to his home in the United States to sing at a fundraiser. I explained that it would be nearly impossible to get visas for children, as he does not have legal custody of them. I argued that there were potentially negative psychological impacts of such a journey for these children. In addition, it seemed impossible to justify this trip in financial terms. It would cost approximately US $3,000 per child. Miracles's funding sources are precarious. They rely on donor drives that have proven fickle in the current economic climate. As a result, Miracles is lacking much-needed funds. At the time of this research, some buildings housed twenty-five children together with one housemother. Government guidelines call for a maximum of twelve children per household/housemother. Miracles did not have the funding to hire more housemothers.

One of the purposes of the trip was to bring the children to the United States to sing in front of influential donors. In his mind, the money raised in such an encounter would justify the

trip's expenditure. When his daugther-in-law and I expressed our misgivings, he reminded us of the many miracles that Jesus was able to perform and that nothing is beyond the power of God.

Chardy has an exorbitant amount of control over the lives of these children and is disconnected from the context of their lives and the forces that will structure their realities once released from the institution. Children who have graduated from another well-established orphanage are having difficulties finding jobs, and the orphanage itself is now supporting these adults past an age they had originally planned (see chapter 4). Although his intentions are benevolent and founded on principles of easing the suffering of vulnerable children, he has the power to affect the lives and futures of people in vastly different ways than he intends (see chapter 4).

Lay Humanitarian Similarities

AIC and Southern Allied Missions have distinct approaches to meeting the needs of orphans; however, there are similarities tied explicitly to the homogenizing orphan narratives they they simultaneously buy into and produce. I will explore three features that are present within these organizations, which are dependent upon and shaped by the orphan discourses that they employ and disseminate. These include: (1) presentation of suffering to generate a compassionate response among potential donors; (2) a discourse and iconography that creates apolitical and acultural children living in isolation and dependent on the benevolence of western donors; and (3) the presence of an underlying paternalism rooted in discourses and projects of modernity ideology. In many cases, Malawians are presented as underdeveloped and needing the west to Rescue them to a more developed state, assumed to be western in nature. In essence, it is the suffering and abandoned child without culture or place/politics that is ideally situated to be

"saved" and shaped into a proper modern subject. Before I examine these three features I discuss more broadly the power of discourse that has directly shaped transnational orphan projects.

The Power of Discourse: Creating an Aid Category

> *It's not what we don't know that's dangerous; it's what we do know that's not true.*
> Bohannan and Curtin (1995:3)

Writing about Africa during the late 17th until the early 19th centuries was almost exclusively done by colonizers, explorers, slave traders, and missionaries. These literatures were produced during the time of slavery and colonization. Achebe (1998), Bohannan and Curtin (1995), and Harris (1987) remind readers that this context is significant, as texts were strategically produced to justify the enslavement of another, while also reinforcing Christian sensibilities and the need to save Africa from its degraded self (through colonial rule). The motivations of these particular purveyors of knowledge about Africa became clear. Slave traders relied on a discourse and image of a less-than-human African (Harris 1987). Christian missionaries called upon an image of an immoral, savage, and even innocent African in need of saving (Bohannan and Curtin 1995). Imperialists relied on depictions of Africa as degraded, backwards, and in need of colonial governance and direction to develop. These images and discourses were produced and disseminated through a variety of genres, including slave trader journals, explorer reports, missionary letters, and novels.

Early colonial settlers were often medical missionaries and explorers who created an image of Africa that associated the continent and its people with disease, heat, contagion, filth, odor, porousnesss, dampness, cannibalism, infestation, grease, "dank rottenness," "marshy miasmas," and as "a repository of death, disease, and degeneration" (Bohannan and Curtin 1995; Comaroff 1993; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Vaughan 1991:2). Physicians such as Dr. Hugh Stannus took notes with enthusiastic detail about new diseases, photographing them and

publishing reports in European tropical medical journals (Vaughan 1991:29–54). Examples of diseases comprehensively documented include elephantiasis, leprosy, yaws, and trypanosomiasis (African sleeping sickness) (Vaughan 1991:31–32). Many of these diseases present with shocking visual deformities that elicited reactions from readers that included disgust, fear, and anxiety over contagiousness. These reports were significant because, as Vaughan notes, "[t]he image of the 'sick African' and of Africa as a 'sick continent' to be pitied and despised is one which, though not entirely of the missionary societies' making, was greatly influenced by the reports which they sent home, and one which retains a strong hold even now" (1991:74).

Mythologized images and understandings of Africa continue to shape the way contemporary development and humanitarian workers think about the continent. Achebe (1998) and Bohannan and Curtin (1995) argue that misrepresentations about Africa have become so deeply rooted in the western consciousness that they become almost impossible to challenge. Negative, false, "fairy-tale" depictions of Africa are so pervasive that, when authentic accounts of African culture, tradition, and history are presented, they are not accepted because of the sharp contrast that arises between them and the previously invented Africa (Achebe 1998:109). Therefore, it is not surprising that the image of the backward, pestiferous, dark Africa continues to permeate western society with profoundly negative consequences for both Africa and the west. Unfortunately, institutions, including NGOs such as Save the Children, UNICEF, World Vision, and Madonna's Raising Malawi, often perpetuate instead of challenge this "backward" and "uncivilized" image, via discourses and iconography broadcast through mass media and the use of new technologies such as the Internet.

Within a globalizing world, the role of these institutions in articulating and circulating ideas, knowledge, news, history, and so forth becomes increasingly evident. Uneven power

relationships and global inequalities can be seen in the production and consumption of various forms of media and the associated discourses disseminated through them. Socially dominant populations shape and filter what is produced, disseminated, and consumed (Fairclough 1995). This is possible because the power of discourses and iconography is predicated on the belief that it is able to mirror reality (Fairclough 1995:64). People turn to news stations with the expectation that the stories they hear and the images produced are authentic and legitimate. For these institutions to maintain legitimacy, their discourses and iconography must be perceived as having some level of truth. Therefore, these institutions, especially reliant on iconography and discourses distributed through a variety of media outlets, are "able to naturalize dominant ideological representations of reality, which often result in the perpetuation of asymmetrical power relations" (Fairclough 1995:64–65; Hall et al. in Fairclough 1995:64). These institutions and the discourses and iconography produced are then able to influence the way consumers (donors) understand, interpret, and construct their world, including their social relationships.

Bohannan and Curtin (1995:5) argue that, historically, media has played a particularly important role in shaping global images of Africa for western consumption:

> The worse the failure, the more lurid the reporting. In the 1970s, spectacular tyrants like Idi Amin in Uganda or 'Emperor' Jean Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Empire got more space and air time than the spectacular but peaceful economic progress and comparative freedom of an Ivory Coast or Cameroon.

This type of one-sided reporting continues today and serves to reify in the minds of many westerners an uncivilized, hyper-sexualized image of Africa whereby tribal warfare leads to unimaginable atrocities and HIV/AIDS is rampant because of uncontrolled sexual behavior.

Few Africans are able to represent themselves or their lived experiences because of the power of western media to filter and interpret particular discourses, events, cultures, histories, and livelihoods. Why are western or socially dominant voices and discourses privileged over

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others? One explanation is the inability of many Africans to access mass media. For example, in Malawi a major impediment to self-representation and monitoring of these discourses is lack of access to computers and the Internet. Most Malawians remain silenced because they cannot create web pages, post commentaries, communicate via e-mail, telephone, fax, and so on. Access to the Internet is limited to cities where there are a handful of Internet cafes.[18] Bunda College, part of the University of Malawi system, is connected to the Internet through a dial-up connection that is often overburdened and thus painstakingly slow.

In Malawi, it would be very difficult to produce and monitor global discourses and images, which are created so easily in western countries. The result of these unequal power relations and unequal access to resources is the ability of west-based institutions to mold an image of Malawi for global consumption, often without input from Malawians themselves. This branding of Malawi is evident as NGOs employ discourses to raise money for and awareness of the HIV pandemic and the orphan crisis. Aside from unequal access to resources, how do these organizations have the authority to create images and speak on behalf of Malawians?

According to Bourdieu (1991a; 1991b), discourses that are produced to reify social relations by building upon preconceived ideologies are more likely to be accepted as legitimate. In addition the producer of a particular discourse must be in a position that is recognized as legitimate by the consumer or donor. Institutions, he argues, have the power to create (act of social magic) discourses that are more likely to be accepted as legitimate. Institutions, through the production of discourses, shape a reality that is used to justify their particular investment, purpose, or role in addressing/governing that reality. Discourses produced and disseminated by

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[18] In a country plagued by poverty, it can be assumed that paying to use the Internet is isolated to the small elite or middle-class Malawian population. In addition, 85 percent of Malawians live in rural areas that have no electricity or only sporadic electricity.

NGOs (or institutions, in keeping with Bourdieu's vocabulary) are privileged and therefore conceptualized by donors as valid descriptions of particular processes at work in Malawi. In addition to gaining legitimacy through a discourse that reproduces and builds upon ingrained ideology and social structures, NGOs gain legitimacy from the US government when they are granted 501(c)3 tax-exempt status. Given this authorization, these discourses have the power to shape the image of Malawi that is circulated, as well as the beliefs and ideologies of the audience exposed to these representations. Fairclough (1995) and Bourdieu (1991b) both contend that discourses serve to establish, maintain, or change social positions and relationships, not always for the better.

These discourses produce unanticipated outcomes when they inform humanitarian and development programs that are implemented in local contexts. Ferguson (1994) provided a cogent example of the power of a circulating, hegemonic discourse to impact rural Lesotho lives. In *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1994), he explored the way the development apparatus discursively creates and often misconstrues actual facts about Lesotho to present the country as having problems associated with underdevelopment and poverty. Lesotho is thus constructed as a particular type of underdeveloped country that can be targeted with a technical and packaged solution. For example, Lesotho is portrayed as being aboriginal and thus able to be transformed for inclusion in the modern world/economy. It is presented as agricultural, which would suggest that it could prosper under agricultural improvements and extension/technical advancements to shift from subsistence to cash cropping. Lesotho is presented as having a national economy and thus perceived as independent of South Africa. Finally, according to Ferguson (1994), Lesotho is constructed by the development community as being open to governmentality, meaning the government is stable enough for economic programs to be effective.

These characteristics make Lesotho an "enormously promising candidate" for development (Ferguson1994:69), yet they are inaccurate. Lesotho has long engaged in global economic systems; agricultural production contributes just 6 percent to rural household incomes; and "concepts such as national economy and governmentality are more than usually absurd" (Ferguson 1994:72). The purpose for constructing Lesotho in these terms is to "set up a target for a particular sort of intervention: the technical, apolitical, 'development' intervention" (1994:28).

Central to Ferguson's argument is the notion of discourse as conceived of by Foucault (1980b). Broadly speaking, Foucault posits that discourse, or utterances and statements, do not exist in a social vacuum, but rather are situated and given meaning by the social context. In the case of Lesotho, the development industry makes statements about Lesotho that are intelligible to those who have a stake in casting Lesotho as a technical problem able to be targeted with a development solution. This discourse and construction of Lesotho will aid in the perpetuation of the development apparatus, and is generally accepted as truth.

Foucault (1980b) also notes that discourse is actually responsible for constituting the social context within which the discourse is being produced. As Ferguson (1994) demonstrates, Lesotho literally becomes the less-developed country it is imagined to be as evidenced by its status as a Less Developed Country (LDC), leading to the implementation of particular types of development interventions. Certain economic policies are implemented premised on the aforementioned, yet misconstrued, characteristics of the country. LDC status also impacts Lesotho's overall geopolitical positionality and its relations with foreign investors, other countries, and transnational lending agencies. Discourse is simultaneously informing and informed by the social context. Because of this, any attempt at understanding social or cultural processes must be rooted in an examination of the discourses that shape one's reality.

Both Foucault (1980b, 1980c) and Ferguson (1994) recognize that hegemonic discourse is contested and exists alongside alternate discourses, thus introducing power dimensions into this theoretical discussion. In fact, for every discourse there is often a counter-discourse—for instance, feminism, environmentalism, or rights-based approaches to development. This site of contestation, or friction, is central to understanding what is being experienced within the social milieu. In fact, it is their contestation that also impacts one's subjectivity and frames the ways in which one thinks and interacts. This discussion of the nature of discourses and the recognition of hegemonic discourses that are granted more legitimacy and power over others is relevant to the ways in which the situation of orphans is being produced at the transnational level. The production of orphan discourses by lay humanitarians and the power to construct a particular population/subjectivity based on western ideologies get refracted and reconfigured by the very Malawian children being created by this discourse. In later chapters I take up the friction that arises when these various stakeholders and their discourses meet. Here I examine the production of orphans via particular hegemonic western discourses and their centrality in framing transnational responses to the situation faced by children in Malawi who are labeled orphans.[19]

The Moral Imperative: Invoking Compassion

Lay humanitarians working with orphans address the moral imperative to bring relief to suffering and to save lives. They, along with more established NGOs, draw on a particular discourse of childhood and innocence that engenders an ethics of compassion. Orphans are an effective trope for rallying transnational support because the suffering of a child is emotionally charged and ethically deplorable. Humanitarian organizations often legitimize their presence and

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[19] In the next chapter, I demonstrate how the state is also adopting these discourses to capture resources, even though they acknowledge the discontinuity between these hegemonic discourses and the actual on-the-ground social configurations emerging around children.

generate material support through a specific iconography or discourse of a sick, suffering, or innocent child (Lamers 2005; Manzo 2008; Ruddick 2003). This suffering must be palpable enough to spur action from compassionate funders and volunteers. AIDS is particularly effective in evoking a response.

In Malawi, most of the cacophony perpetuated by organizations and the Malawian government tethers the vulnerability of children to HIV/AIDS discourses and images, which encourage a powerful emotional response (see Meintjes and Giese 2006 for a discussion of South African orphan discourses). Global concern about the wellbeing of children imagines a diseased and sexually immoral Africa culpable for producing a generation of vulnerable, innocent, and needy children. UNICEF's promotional material reads:

> There are about one million orphans in Malawi. Half a million of these children have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Losing a parent to AIDS is terrible for any child, but children living in developing countries who lose parents to AIDS face unthinkable hardships. Anecdotal evidence speaks of orphans forced into domestic work by their caretakers to earn their keep. Reminiscent of Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist, pauper children are vulnerable to ill treatment. Orphaned girls are particularly at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. Stigma and discrimination trail these children everywhere they go.

In this statement, a clear connection is drawn between orphans and AIDS, despite the fact that the majority of Malawi's orphans remain with a living parent or are taken in by extended family members. I will show in chapter 4 that NGOs may be creating stigma and discrimination as they target specific children living in areas of endemic poverty with material resources.

The UNICEF excerpt is just one example of the emerging hegemonic orphan discourse that discursively creates a homogenous aid category for a targeted intervention. Orphan discourses partnered with a particular iconography of suffering children are simultaneously producing and being produced by most organizations focused on these children. Larger transnational organizations, such as UNICEF, Save the Children, and World Vision, have a

longer history of presenting suffering children to a global audience. They have been critiqued for their depictions, which some argue are an offense to children's rights. As a result, some larger organizations have signed codes of ethics that agree to not present children in suffering and deplorable conditions. However, many continue to do so (Manzo 2008). The UNICEF quote was taken from their 2006 promotional material, demonstrating their persistence.

AIDS is central to the suffering orphan discourse, which was evidenced by tourists from the United States who were volunteering in my research sites. They stated that they raised funds by quoting HIV/AIDS figures, life expectancy, and numbers of orphaned children. As one respondent said:

> HIV, you know, well it sells in America. You play up HIV in your letters and you get all this money cuz it's like, "Oh, you know, AIDS, help AIDS!"

Voluntourists also ascribed to the image of a diseased, helpless African orphan population. For example, all respondents, when asked what percentage of the one million orphans in Malawi were HIV positive, significantly overestimated the figure, some quoting numbers as high as 70 percent. It becomes the moral obligation of the west to Rescue these needy, poor, and vulnerable children. As Fassin (2007) asks, "Who can't get behind the image of a child?"

Arendt (1963) notes that compassion is most effective in intimate interactions between those who suffer and those who do not. This is accomplished by the Miracles web page, as well as the "orphan profiles" distributed at churches and other fundraising events. These materials contain pictures of individual children and compelling stories of their suffering. Children talk about hunger, illness, exposure to the suffering of dying parents, abuse, sadness, and need—lack of education, healthcare, and love. The orphan profile that describes the situation of a particular child at the orphanage, Pilirani, reads:

When her mother and father could not care for her young Pilirani went to live with her aunt. Her aunt could not care for her and problems grew. Pilirani tells of the other children in the house eating porridge with sugar on it, but she was given salt for her porridge. She also remembers the pain of going outside to play, but being forced to play beyond sight of the house while the other children could play near home. When she was given support (resources from organizations, neighbors, etc.) her aunt took it away from her. She can remember sleeping outside for there was not enough room in the house, and often going without food, because there was not enough food to go around. Then her aunt deserted her, and returned her to her mother. In time both her mother and father died and Pilirani found herself alone, except for a young neighbor girl, Emily, who helped her by giving her a place to sleep.

These ubiquitous appeals are constructed to draw potential contributors into face-to-face virtual encounters/relationships with children. Anyone late at night channel surfing has watched an advertisement for Save the Children or a similar sponsorship program. It is during these moments in the comfort of their homes that many Americans come face-to-face with the suffering of children in extremely impoverished circumstances. As Paul Farmer advocates in Madonna's documentary, "I Am Because We Are," the ability to "link the desire to help people have a future and feel good about their own engagement, that is the most powerful thing we can do."

Volunteer tourism takes these encounters a step further by physically transporting individuals from their homes directly into the lives and spaces of Malawians for a literal face-to-face experience. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers from diverse north-based groups embark on touristic adventures that include a humanitarian component meant to provide an opportunity of these travelers to give back and serve the poor. In some countries, the powerful allure of these children's plights rivals more traditional forms of tourism today. AIC takes a handful of influential donors (many affluent members of the clergy or medical professions) to Malawi, and they visit a variety of the programs AIC sponsors. These potential donors act as liaisons between Malawian children and transnational capital. The pictures taken are powerful fundraising tools in

their home communities in the United States and are included in web site picture galleries and used at fundraising events.

I traveled for two weeks as an observer on one of these tours, with a group of Americans who came to experience the suffering of Malawian men and women in an effort to learn about HIV/AIDS and its effects. As part of the tour we were taken on home-based care visits. We journeyed into rural villages accompanied by local gatekeepers who displayed dying patients outside of their homes as a testimony to the need for global support. Several American participants said the experience of bearing witness to suffering was necessary for them to go back and "tell the story" of AIDS in Africa to raise funds for programs and support the innocent children left behind. Photos were taken and minimal words exchanged in these encounters, yet it was imagined as a space for American donors to experience and understand suffering through an intimate encounter.

Figure 9 is an example of these encounters. It was taken after a brief visit with a man dying of AIDS. We stood out as we drove two vans filled with *azungu*s (a phrase that means

Figure 9: Volunteer Tourism Visit with Home-Based Care Patient

foreigner, but usually refers to white people) into the center of village. Vehicles rarely travel into the center of these villages, and it is even more rare to see them full of foreigners. Plastic chairs were set up around the entrance of the AIDS patient's home, and he was brought out to sit on the front porch. People from throughout the village came out to see what was happening. Children ran toward us shouting "Azungu! Azungu!" After the visit, several of the voluntourists expressed

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anxiety and anger at having participated in this home-based care excursion. They felt they had violated this man's privacy and were complicit in processes that perpetuated stigma and discrimination. Other group members disagreed saying it was a way of honoring the man's life and death. Several took pictures, one of which is the photo included here. While I can appreciate the attempt at making the situation of AIDS "real" to westerners who might feel disengaged by the pandemic, for me the exchange was short and awkward. Most people did not speak directly to the dying man nor did they ask the translators to engage in any conversation with him. I sat next to the man (pictured here in the blue shirt), greeted him, and introduced myself. Beyond that, I was at a loss for what to say. When I asked a satisfied participant to explain his thoughts about the encounter, he said:

> I'm not inclined to say it's worthless to visit the very sick. I don't think you want to do that full time, or anything remotely close to that. But to me, I know intellectually there's many, many, many, many sick people and VERY sick people and I don't see them and I…and most people in the United States don't ever want to see them, but somehow I feel that it's important to see a few of them to remind me of one of the things that we [AIC] are doing. And when I give money to AIC, it's much more meaningful to me to give to them and you know, whether it's seeing the orphans, or seeing the very, very sick, or seeing the hospitals and how lousy the stuff they have is, they don't have enough surgical gloves, they don't have enough sterile equipment, they don't have enough blankets, you know, they don't have enough of ANYTHING! It's good to see that, for me.

In general these encounters visiting sick patients typically lasted less than five minutes. I do not know how the patients felt or if they would be honest with us if we asked them. It is possible that they felt it is positive and that they were happy to have the company and attention. It is also possible that they feel obligated to entertain us because they are recipients of AIC project funds. Either way, these experiences could be interpreted as proof that Malawi is a diseased, dark place producing dying adults and innocent children in need of saving, an image that effectively raises donor altruistic intentions as noted in the quote.

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One patient we visited did seem genuinely appreciative of our presence. She was much

healthier than the others we had visited, and she lived in a more secluded area that had fewer

Figure 10: Volunteer Tourism Visit with Second Home-Based Care Patient

peering eyes (see figure 10). She laughed and joked with us and wanted her picture taken. Trips to visit very young children were perceived by everyone as productive, because volunteers believed that simply holding the children could provide comfort. Figure 11 was taken on the "orphan tour" when we visited Open Arms Nutrition and Rehabilitation

Center. Many infants who lose their mothers in childbirth or whose mothers are too poor to

provide for their children are brought to

Open Arms, where they are given

nutritional supplements and access to

healthcare. We were encouraged to hold the

babies, feed them, and try to stimulate them

to encourage their motor reflexes. The

evident malnutrition overwhelmed many of

the visitors, and some cried openly,

Figure 11: Volunteer Tourism Visit to Open Arms Nutrition and Rehabilitation Center

expressing their distress about bearing witness to this type of suffering. While upsetting, these

trips continued to be endorsed by most of the participants. One volunteer tourist explained her

purpose and expectations for participating in these orphan tours in the following way:

> I expected that I'd be with Malawian people. That I would somehow find a way to
> communicate with them even though I didn't know Chichewa. That I'd be able to see
> them in a number of different settings, the urban as well as the rural/village settings, that I
> would be able to touch them, you know, hands on, shake their hands, that I'd somehow
> feel my heart moved by them and not in pity, but feeling touched that there was
> something that was common between us. I guess those are the main things.

It may be possible to find a place of compromise that allows these visitors and the people they meet to validate each other's experiences and humanity. Without my presence, there seemed to be little opportunity to gain an understanding of Malawian perspectives on AIDS and orphans, and no discussion of the structural processes that lead to poverty, inequality, and disease. However, the group appreciated my knowledge, and they were obviously interested in better understanding what they were seeing and experiencing. They constantly complimented me on my ability to communicate in Chewa and asked an inordinate number of questions about Malawi, orphans, AIDS, poverty, and development when we were not in the presence of patients. I was one of the drivers, and several participants asked that there be a rotation between the two vehicles so that the various group members could ask the resident anthropologist different questions. There was a genuine hunger for knowledge among all the participants that I found encouraging and endearing.

In these encounters, children and adults function as "depoliticizing" agents. They are sites of benevolent humanitarianism, whereby capital is redistributed, but can be critiqued, because western consciousness of structural violence, global inequalities, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic is made invisible. By creating relationships based on empathy, voluntourists come to feel that it is their moral obligation to care for these innocent children. In the next section, I will explore how children framed within such a moral milieu are often inadvertently depoliticized—this compassionate gaze largely overlooks the broader political and social dimensions that lead to their situations.

Bare Life: Depicting Apolitical and Acultural Subjects

Another central characteristic of humanitarian discourses and representations of orphans that emerged from my study is how the broader historical, social, political, and economic

contexts are erased. In the discourses and ideologies of humanitarian organizations, recipients of

aid are often reduced to passive and innocent victims, objects of charity rather than active

subjects (Malkki 1995, 1996). Bodies become labeled, targeted, and ultimately governed within a

new structure that can be vastly different from that from which they came (Malkki 1995, 1996).

For Malkki, it is the refugee as constructed by humanitarians who is taken into a camp and

provided the barest existence, who is reduced to an ahistorical, universal victim existing in an in-

between space without state, land, or citizenship. The refugee is "stripped of the specificity of

culture, place, and history—is human in the most basic, elementary sense. As bare humanity, the

refugee stands for all of us at our most naked and basic level" (Malkki 1995:12). It is this

simplification and standardization of a particular state of being, refugee—or in this case

orphan—that, once defined, becomes manageable and governable.

Ticktin (2006), drawing on Agamben's (1995) conceptualization of *zoē* or "bare life,"

makes a similar argument in her work on African immigrants to France who have to prove they

are severely ill and cannot be treated in their own countries in order to stay in France. They must

adopt an identity of suffering and potential death to retain their French immigration status. Illegal

immigrants may embrace an illness identity that, although it may gain them some more time in

France and the future possibility of French citizenship, divorces them from ties to family and

community in France and in their countries of origin. Malawian orphans, most of them too young

to be aware of these tradeoffs, have these decisions made for them when they are placed in

orphanages. Other children actively pursue this tradeoff. As I discuss in chapter 4, some orphans

initially accept the community jealousy and the potential for being a target for malevolent

witchcraft that comes from living in an orphanage. They are willing to be ostracized if it means

being able to access the material support and education orphanages provide. Conversely, as these children start to mature, some are beginning to exhibit mixed feelings about these tradeoffs.

The morality of humanitarianism, based as it is on a politics of compassion, gives rise to images of circumscribed lives focused on suffering and potential alleviation via western assistance. The concept of bare life is reflected on most of the web sites and other means I have examined that are used to recruit contributions and volunteers to humanitarian causes. Many of the web sites present orphaned children as existing in a social and political vacuum. Much of these children's compelling appeal resides in this separation from family and community, even though in reality many of those in orphan care at rehabilitation centers and in formal orphanages have nuclear and extended families. Moreover, these children become our fictive kin—they become our children. For example, Rescue purports that for a mere US $28 a month the lives of youngsters can be enriched. They can be provided an education, food, basic health amenities, a roof over their heads, and even a family—yours. Miracles's recent Malawi Update e-mail letter stated, "We are constantly trying to encourage our kids and remind them that they no longer wear the names 'abandoned & forgotten'! God has been so good!" And through child sponsorship every donor dollar goes to raising a Malawian orphan.

Madonna's work in Malawi is premised on the idea of an isolated and abandoned child. She purposefully has extracted children from their social milieu in order to "save" them to a western lifestyle. In both her adoption cases she sparked controversy, and in David Banda's case even a human rights lawsuit to prevent his adoption. The children she sought to adopt were not living in isolation, but rather were members of extended kinship systems and communities. David Banda, her first adopted child, has a living father and other extended family members. Chifundo "Mercy" James has a grandmother who fought to keep her in Malawi. In her quest,

Madonna erased the social systems and cultural configurations within which Malawian children live, contending that her western-style affluence was superior.

Many of the voluntourists interviewed in the course of this study held a view of Malawian orphans as completely abandoned, isolated, and stripped down to the barest form of humanity. One voluntourist working at Miracles orphanage explained her understanding of an orphan:

Figure 12: Personal Photo of Malawian Child, Orphanage

> When I had heard the word orphanage before, orphan, it made me think like, you know, they all live in one room, they all get one bowl of pea soup a day, and none of them have clothes, and they don't have anything.

Hegemonic orphan discourses and iconography deliberately exclude the social context. The orphan is understood as having nothing, not even culture. Ruddick (2003) discusses the iconography of children in developing countries as purposefully hiding or blurring their context in an attempt to make them appear acultural and isolated. Pictures focus on close-ups of faces or eyes or

Figure 13: Personal Photo of Malawian Child, Karonga District

bodies, without an attempt to capture their sociality. Looking back on my own photos, I realized that I could also be accused of snapping similar shots (see figures 12 and 13). Such an erasure or misrepresentation of culture is harmful, but it allows donors to imagine their own vision of childhood for aid recipients—a vision usually reflecting a hegemonic modernity paradigm (Ruddick 2003). These same processes occur with Malawi's orphans as evidenced by the volunteer tourist quoted earlier and by the case of Pilarani previously mentioned. The depictions of context, when they exist, situate children within deplorable conditions and often tie them to the suffering of AIDS. Madonna's documentary on orphans presents stories of witchcraft and traditional healing, including an attack on a young boy

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whose genitals were cut off, purportedly for purposes of occult practices. While this may occur in Malawi, it is not as prevalent as her documentary suggests. She is presenting Malawian culture and practices as heathen and harmful to the lives of children, which I will argue invokes a response of abhorrence by western donors who then want to "save" children to a better life imagined within a western modern paradigm.

These children are not simply displayed on web sites, handouts, or videos without their context, but we are also told explicitly that death has isolated them. For example, a July 5th CNN report included an interview with Madonna about her Malawi project. When discussing her reason for adopting David Banda, she said that when she visited Malawi it was like a death camp because of HIV/AIDS. She said she felt the need to save Malawi's children, including saving David from certain death. She also noted that the adoption saved her by helping her see what resilience and courage were about and allowed her to feel more appreciative for what she has.

These acultural, apolitical, and emptied subjects allow donors to "think of the wholesale 'gift' of modernist structures as the 'solution'" (Ruddick 2003:342). This process, which is often unknowingly framed by a sense of paternalism, serves to reify certain inequalities as programs attempt to modernize Malawian orphans.

From "Backwards" and AIDS to "Developed" and "Modern"

Upon returning from a research trip to Malawi, I went to visit family and neighbors in Montana. Many were interested in my travels and inquired about my study. I explained that my research was exploring different models of orphan care in relation to human rights, humanitarianism, and development with a focus on both state involvement and the role of transnational organizations in caring for children. A typical response was that, although such work was noble, I was wasting my time because HIV/AIDS is a Malthusian response to

overpopulation in Africa. Another related and more frightening response was that if Africans would control themselves sexually, there would not be a problem; as it stands, they are getting what they deserve. These opinions reinvigorate a modernity ideology that assumes the west is best and all other forms of humanity are less evolved and thus less than human or backward.

These ideologies aid in situating orphans within a moral framework that obscures other factors related to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Instead, HIV/AIDS is depicted as due to immorality, specifically hedonistic and barbaric sexual appetites, traditional backward practices of scarification, polygamy, female circumcision, virgin and widow cleansing myths, and prostitution (Fassin 2007; Packard and Epstein 1991; Schoepf 2004; see Rushing 1995 for an example of these stereotypes). There were early reports that African heathen sexuality is what drew HIV into humans from apes (Fassin 2007). Africans thus are often presented as culpable for the rampant spread of HIV due to individual risky behaviors and cultural practices.

Madonna, in her video, presents AIDS in this way. She discusses the traditional practice of widow cleansing, whereby widows have sex with a designated person in the village to cleanse them after the death of their spouse or child. She argues that AIDS is being spread primarily as a result of Malawian cultural practices, which all the more justifies western intrusion. These images and stories, reminiscent of early colonial writings, present Malawi's culture as backwards and morally degraded. The orphans produced are the result of this hedonistic sexuality and culture.

Women, in particular, are to blame. An example drawn from the Miracles web site is a health education program targeting girls that solicits international support. The program preaches abstinence only and conversion to a moral Christian worldview to ensure health and wellbeing. Girls are depicted as the gatekeepers of promiscuous sexual activity, when in reality they wield

limited power. This discourse on girls' promiscuity is transmitted to a global audience, as potential contributors are encouraged to donate funds to save these African orphans spiritually and physically.

It is within this discourse of blame that innocent victims emerge—children. Pure, untainted, and immature children, the focus of many humanitarian interventions, should not be blamed for the sexual impropriety of their parents, but rather saved and shaped into responsible, moral, and upstanding adults. Children depicted as *tabla rasas* or emptied of social, cultural, political, and religious baggage can be saved, through emergency humanitarian intervention, from the fate that took their parents.

A well-known example of this practice is again drawn from Madonna's work in Malawi. Her 2006 web site contained a clip from her 2005 Confessions tour, which publicized her Malawi orphan NGO. In the concert she uses powerful images of orphaned children. She is dressed in red, wearing a crown of thorns, and standing in front of a cross. In the background, on either side of the cross, flash images of children's faces (presumably orphaned children in Malawi). These pictures are engulfed in red, fiery imagery. The following scriptures appear: "When I was hungry, you gave me food," "I was naked, and you gave me clothes," and "Whatever you did for one of the least of my brothers…you did it for me." She concludes the song by falling slowly to the floor, as if sacrificed, laying on her stomach with her arms outstretched. This imagery suggests that a white Madonna sees herself as a savior for these black bodies/children, and that she is able to help them escape the hell that is their reality in Malawi. In her video, "I Am Because We Are," Madonna tells the story of how she came to Rescue baby David. According to her, David was on the verge of death from malaria and tuberculosis, and she had to heed her own call for a more global engagement and take up the responsibility by saving

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this one life. She had to be willing to "stand in the front of the line." This discourse idealizes the west as being the key to a better, happier, and healthier life for a poor, diseased child from Africa (Sharra 2006). Madonna assumes that baby David, who she adopted, will benefit from her wealth and fame, thus suggesting that money and a "key to the global North" (Sharra 2006) will assure this child a rich, full life not obtainable in Malawi.

As an ironic twist, on October 4, 2007, *Slate Magazine* ran a satirical article that turned the tables—its implausibility was meant to elicit western laughter while at the same time confirming its superiority. The title of the story was "Save the (Celebrity) Children! African Family Adopts Brittany's Kids" (Tarlin 2007). In it, a Malawian couple sought to adopt Brittany Spears' children to protect them from narcissism, scientology, cell phone abuse, and being dangled over hotel balcony railings. This article, written in jest, evokes feelings of amusement and absurdity. Much like the Madonna controversy, these media depictions highlight the continued racial assumptions of African backwardness that help form many of the web-based appeals and other humanitarian fundraising efforts.

In sum, I have argued that discourses and iconographies, produced to generate a compassionate response premised on a child's suffering, are coupled with a construction of orphans that empties them of their social, cultural, and political contexts. This apolitical, acultural, suffering child is in need of saving. As Abu Lughod argues, there is an implied directionality in saving another (2002). What is the orphan being saved to? Some of the programs I studied were either consciously or unconsciously hoping to shape children into developed, refined, modern subjects. These questions should be taken up by Malawians.

Needless to say, a discontinuity exists between hegemonic orphan discourses premised on a mythologized Africa and the ways in which Malawians actually conceptualize children,

including their roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the future. In the following chapters I explore the friction that results when these disjunctive ideologies meet. Projects imagined from a western modern paradigm and then implemented in a context that ascribes to a different worldview can accomplish some tasks, but can also create unexpected conflicts. The Miracles Malawian supervisor, Titani, mentioned these tensions between Malawian program officers and outside donors:

> The negative thing is I feel like most of them [donors] dictate things—how they should be done. Each and every one—I mean, let's say in the orphanage or whatsoever, they forget sometimes they are taking their own culture, which can not work here because we are Africans, and forcing us to do things the way that they want them done. So you find that we are paralyzed, and then [donors] feel like we are abusing them. But yet we want things to be done the way Africans do things. So in those, they have got their own negative things.
>
> [ALF] For example?
>
> The [donors from outside Malawi] want the orphans not to be working. [Orphans] should be staying idle. They should just have some other people to be working for [orphans]. [Donors] are forgetting that we, as Africans, once [the orphans] are out [of the orphanage] they will have some other problems to cope with, dealing with their own culture. The way I feel like it would be better for those whites to say that they should just be sending some money and [the donors] should just come to monitor how we have used the money, instead of saying that for some years, we will be with you.

Titani works for Miracles and has mostly positive things to say about what Southern Allied Missions is doing, including the programs they are running. However, he does articulate a profound cultural divide. US donors and program managers conceptualize childhood within a particular western framework. It is difficult for those who have limited experience with other cultures and worldviews to consider alternative ways of being. The result, in the case of the orphanage, is the production of children who have adopted western worldviews, including particular expectations of modernity, which may prove to be unrealistic in a context characterized by endemic poverty (see chapter 4 for a detailed discussion). Finding a feasible

solution—one that will bring together the various and heterogeneous scores of stakeholders focused on orphans and the children themselves in such a way to dialogue about the difficulties children are facing and possible programs that are culturally relevant—is proving exceedingly difficult.

Conclusion

> *Africans are not really interested in compassion, whatever it means; they ask for one thing alone—to be seen for what they are: human beings.*
> Chinua Achebe (1998:113)

International funding continues to pour in for Malawian orphan-care projects sponsored by a wide assortment of transnational humanitarian organizations. As illustrated earlier, these organizations, while they differ in many ways from one another, are driven by particular characteristics. Many of the discourses, web sites, fundraisers, picture galleries, and orphan tours I examined rely on notions of compassion, suffering, and intimate encounters with the other. The concern is that these particular discourses and associated iconography serve to further embed the myth of a diseased and incapable Africa producing hordes of innocent and needy children.

Discourses can be fictitious; especially evident in the fact that the vast majority of orphans in Africa are not living in isolation and deprivation, but continue to be absorbed into extended family systems that have proven to be resilient (see chapter 1). Yet these discourses inform orphan-care programming and shape the missions, goals, and outcomes of orphan projects. The construction of this orphan demographic is significant, with very real, albeit at times unintended, outcomes that reproduce systems of power in ways that are more intelligible when examining program failures or frustrations as opposed to successes. I now turn to the orphanage, which produces just such unintended outcomes.

CHAPTER 4: COMING OF AGE IN INSTITUTIONS: EXAMINING MALAWI'S ORPHANAGES

Miracles Village is dramatically carved into the Malawian landscape. It is striking to see how this institution physically stands apart from the surrounding community, especially knowing it was created to simulate a Malawian village for the children in residence (see figure 14). The

Figure 14: View of Miracles Village

original structure was not enclosed, but rather supported the free flow of people within and beyond the orphanage. Community members were encouraged to draw water from the well located in the center of the orphanage, and children from the surrounding community played freely within the orphanage, enjoying a variety of institutional resources, including the playground, soccer pitch, and innumerable toys.

Unfortunately, a series of security issues arose, leading to the enclosure of the facility. The physical boundary that was erected around the facility was meant to demarcate and protect children. Erecting a wall fits more with the ethos of this institution than allowing the integration of the local community into the facility, as was originally envisioned. The security issue resulted from situating a resource-rich institution within a region characterized by endemic poverty. A class system has emerged, with orphans being perceived as wealthier than their neighbors in the surrounding community. In this scenario, much like that described by Ferguson (1994:20), "…intentional plans interacted with unacknowledged structures and chance events to produce unintended outcomes which turn out to be intelligible not only as the unforeseen effects of an intended intervention, but also as the unlikely instruments of an unplotted strategy." I recognize

the distinction between the original plan of the orphanage founders, funders, and managers and the unintended outcomes that do have a more relevant intelligibility.

The institution's intention is to protect children, which is premised on the notion that orphaned children in communities face a host of vulnerabilities. Mitigating these vulnerabilities is what justifies the institutionalization of children. In interviews with Miracles staff and American volunteers working at the facility, most respondents felt the orphanage was the best model of orphan care because it could serve the needs of these children and protect them. A clear line—a wall—is drawn between life in villages and life in the institution. One American volunteer explained:

> These kids never have to worry about eating. They're always going to eat fine. They have snacks even. They have breakfast, they have time for porridge between breakfast and lunch, they have lunch, and then they get milk, and they get dinner, and then they give them corn and groundnuts to roast at night. So, they're definitely fed well. Outside of the orphanage they wouldn't get anything like that. Only what they could work to get, only what they can produce, sometimes even only what they could steal.

What the information in this chapter will demonstrate is that just as the institution physically disrupts the landscape, so too does it ideologically disrupt the Malawian cultural context. The enclosure of children extends beyond physically walling them off, to disconnecting them in more discursive ways. Institutionalized children are beginning to conceptualize barriers between themselves, their communities of origin, their kin, and even their culture. Whether overt or unintentional, the outcomes described later in the chapter have a political intelligibility—that of reproducing a "particular constellation of power" that expands capitalist, Christian, and neoliberal logic, as well as expectations of modernity.

In this chapter, I focus on children who have been institutionalized. This is a growing trend in southern Africa, despite the position of various government bodies and children's rights groups that maintain children should remain in communities with extended family members

(GoM 2005; Phiri and Tolfree 2005). The majority of orphanages are initiated, funded, and directed by transnational organizations, which, as I will demonstrate, influences their approach to orphan care (Phiri and Tolfree 2005). This chapter reviews the vulnerabilities faced by children living in poverty who have lost parents. I then examine the diverse and complicated experiences of children living in orphanages, which were constructed as a means to mitigate these vulnerabilities. To understand their lives, I draw on ethnographic data collected at Miracles Village, Rescue Children's Village, and Hope Children's Village. While some children's needs are addressed through these organizations, they face unexpected and potentially adverse outcomes as well. To protect the anonymity and privacy of participants, the names of the respondents have been changed.

The Vulnerable "Orphan"

I previously problematized the ways in which transnational NGOs often deliberately construct images of orphaned children that misconstrue and exaggerate their actual circumstances. Madonna's contention that there are one million abandoned and isolated Malawian orphans living on the streets and being abducted is perhaps the best-known example. That said, many children in southern Africa do face difficult circumstances. Some of these are tied to repercussions from the AIDS pandemic. There is emerging literature focused specifically on orphans that suggests these children face a multitude of vulnerabilities as a result of parental illness and death (Conroy et al. 2006). The vulnerabilities faced by orphans that are most cited in the literature include food insecurity (Barnett and Whiteside 2002), school drop-out (Barnett and Whiteside 2002; Kelly 2005), forced employment in the informal labor market, and a decline in parental guidance and affection (Ghosh and Kalipeni 2003). Ainsworth and Semali (2000) found a correlation in southern Africa between maternal mortality and higher child mortality.

Additionally, it is argued that children from AIDS-affected households tend to show high rates of wasting and stunting (Barnett and Whiteside 2002).

Poor nutrition negatively impacts intellectual growth and functioning, limiting the educational benefits meant to socially and economically improve the lives of young people. In addition, increasing truancy or dropping out of school by children from AIDS-affected households is perceived as particularly detrimental to child wellbeing (Ghosh and Kalipeni 2003; Kelly 2005). Data suggests children affected by HIV/AIDS leave school for a variety of reasons, such as hunger or lack of resources to support their continued education (Kelly 2005; Kendall and O'Gara 2007). Girls, especially, are expected to take on the domestic responsibilities of their deceased mothers, impacting school attendance (Barnett and Whiteside 2002). These same children may enter the labor market to provide for themselves and their ailing parents, drop-out to care for a sick or dying relative, or take on other responsibilities, including caring for younger siblings (Barnett and Whiteside 2002; Kendall and O'Gara 2007).

Research also indicates that children from AIDS-affected households experience social stigma, discrimination, exploitation, physical and sexual abuse, and the loss of property rights (Ghosh and Kalipeni 2003). Some are exposed to HIV through employing risky sexual behavior to secure resources (Conroy et al. 2006; GoM 2005). Bauman and Germann (2005) also point to issues related to psychosocial distress and emotional problems that children confront whose parents are infected with AIDS, are dying, or are deceased as a result of the disease. Specifically, depression/unhappiness, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, phobia about attending school, and disruptive behavioral problems are among the psychosocial disorders these children may experience (Bauman and Germann 2005).

The research implies that children who are orphaned are in some way more vulnerable than children simply living in poverty. However, studies indicate that poverty may play a bigger role than "orphan" status in creating vulnerabilities. The Government of Botswana (2000) stated in a report of the HIV/AIDS Study Group:

> …while there are problems that relate specifically to orphanhood, it is the existence of endemic poverty, particularly in rural areas, that is largely responsible for many of the difficulties faced by orphans as well as other 'needy children.'

Malawi's NPA for OPV recognizes that there are children who face a host of vulnerabilities not necessarily predicated on the loss of a parent. The inclusion of "vulnerable children" allows for a response to account for the needs of all children facing adverse circumstances. The national ECD director in the MoWCD explained:

> …HIV/AIDS is affecting every child. Sometimes when you go to some families, other children are affected much more than the orphans themselves by the problems they are experiencing. Some of them are nursing sick parents, some of the parents are very poor, the parents may not be staying at home, and there are a whole lot of problems. And now if we have issues to say we want to give to the orphans—that approach has created so many problems to the children. So, in our approach most of the time we have encouraged our officers to let us care for the children who are affected by HIV/AIDS and other problems. When you talk of affected children, you are talking of every child, not just orphans. So, while this is what we have been encouraging in the communities…In the beginning people were just taking orphans saying we want to care for you and give them early childhood development services and the like, but we said no. We don't want stigma. The children should be mixed. If they open up a childcare center, it should just be like a community preschool where every child is coming in, but maybe ensure that orphans are taken in. And, as I told you, the way we do social work in Malawi is so much community-based. You find out that before as a government we bring in resources and the communities they bring in resources to the centers. They do that on the understanding that our child is there and those orphans are ours. Now if you separate them (children in a community) you are some sort of telling the community this is not yours, this is the government who want to care for the orphans, and it is us who can much better care for the orphans than you. But, that is not the fact. It is the communities that can do it much better. So, the approach, in the sense of programming, is a very big issue. And that issue needs to be taken seriously by the government and with donors. The problem is with donors, they would say, "we want to care for orphans." Now if you use this general term, they will say "no, where is the orphan?" This is an issue of technocrats—you and me— how can we circumvent the program. Or, the issue of orphans, it should be on the higher agenda, but how do we take in the other children? That's why when you look at our

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policy, which the Government of Malawi developed, it's talking of national policy of orphans and other vulnerable children and these other vulnerable children takes care of all the other vulnerable children.

This quote recognizes the disjuncture between donor desire to serve orphans perceived of as more vulnerable and the government of Malawi's recognition that vulnerability can affect children living in a host of difficult circumstances. The acronym OVC (orphans and other vulnerable children) is used in the majority of government documents in an effort to not only capture the vulnerabilities that many non-orphaned children face, but also avoid stigma, discrimination, and jealousy that can result from a targeted response that sets parameters around aid recipients. In addition, the director places a heavy emphasis on community and the need for communities to take ownership of orphans and their care. Yet, orphanages are being constructed.

The Orphanage as a Solution

The number of orphanages in sub-Saharan Africa has increased exponentially predicated on those vulnerabilities, as well as on the assumption that an orphaned child is abandoned, isolated, or living on the streets (Phiri and Tolfree 2005). While the research presented here has shown that children do face numerous challenges as a result of both poverty and AIDS, it is not always the case that they are alone and without family or kin.

As I have shown in chapter 1 and briefly reviewed here, Malawian children are generally part of broad, extended family networks. There are a variety of kinship arrangements— matrilineality, patrilineality, unions in which individuals marry across matrilineal and patrilineal lines—dictated by customary practices, which ensure that most children who lose parents or whose parents are unable to care for them do not end up having to fend for themselves (Peters, Walker, and Kambewa 2008). In fact, as I noted previously, Peters, Walker, and Kambewa (2008) found no cases in their research in Zomba District, Malawi, where children were

completely isolated or abandoned. While family systems are stressed as a result of HIV and poverty, they are also proving to be adaptive. For example, grandmothers are taking on more guardian responsibilities, and children are going to live with kin for different periods of time (Ali 1998; Ansell and Van Blerk 2004; Phiri and Tolfree 2005). It is because of the resiliency of Malawian kinship systems that the government, under the guidance of UNICEF, has drafted a policy statement that prioritizes maintaining children in their communities and families (Ghosh and Kalipeni 2003). Three of the guiding principles are:

1. The extended family system shall remain the primary support structure for the care, protection, and development of orphans and other vulnerable children.
2. Community participation, empowerment, and ownership shall be emphasized as key elements in mitigating the social impact of HIV/AIDS on orphans.
3. Community-based approaches to care for orphans and other vulnerable children shall be emphasized, and institutional care in the form of orphanages shall remain the last resort.

There is limited empirical research focused on residential care in sub-Saharan Africa, but some scholars have suggested that potential negative impacts children may face include exposure to physical and sexual abuse, violation of children's rights, lack of affection, dependence on the institution, problems with children's temperament, undermining local kinship and family systems, and lack of adequate healthcare and food (Phiri and Tolfree 2005). In addition, the high cost of running an institution as opposed to funding community-based care is a significant consideration in a context of limited resources (Phiri and Tolfree 2005). With these potential negative impacts and a clear government mandate to maintain children within their own families, what makes building and running an orphanage so attractive?

In Phiri and Tolfree's (2005) critique of institutionalized care in sub-Saharan Africa, they suggest that orphanages are constructed for several reasons. First, they contend that residential care has media appeal and, for donors, "it provides a tangible and visible manifestation of their

investment" (2005:12). This perception was supported by an interview with the former director of Rescue Children's Village, who explained, "Donors would rather see a building or structure rather than invest in food programs. Donors want something tangible like a picture of a borehole." Madonna expressed this desire, but was advised by the former director of Rescue against building an orphanage. Instead, she was encouraged to support children in ways that maintained them in their communities. She was insistent on building some type of physical structure. In the end she constructed a community center in Nchisi and is currently building a girl's school outside of the capital city.

Another perceived advantage is the ability to control and monitor how money is spent, how children are treated, and what types of resources are being provided or emphasized. Tracking the way donor money is spent and monitoring how children are treated in communities and families are difficult undertakings (Phiri and Tolfree 2005). This is a legitimate concern. Peters, Walker, and Kambewa (2008) describe coming across "phantom" orphan-care projects. Community members had come together to solicit funds for an orphan feeding program, but those only existed while the donors were present in the communities. My findings in chapter 6 give similar evidence of these practices. Meintjes and Geise (2006) provide an example of how community- and family-funded responses can be detrimental in their research on the "commodification of children in South Africa." They argue that targeting specific children in communities is leading some unscrupulous family members to claim guardianship of children in order to receive a handout of South African Rand every month. In certain situations, these children are mistreated and their aid money used for purposes other than providing for the orphaned children themselves.

Finally, Phiri and Tolfree (2005:12) suggest that, "Residential institutions provide philanthropic organizations with an opportunity to actively exercise surrogate parenting." This allows particular versions of personhood to be emphasized during crucial times in a child's identity formation. Transnational organizations and western donors assume this surrogate parenting can reflect western ideals of family, being, and development through their programs. Chirwa (2002) briefly points out that many of these organizations are religious in nature and either function to evangelize or to limit the enrollment of recipients to those who already have a shared religious identity.

Little research has examined the ways in which institutionalized children negotiate their identities within the facility as well as in the wider society once they graduate. Ferguson's (1999) discussion of men working in the Zambian Copperbelt might provide some frame of reference for understanding the conundrum faced by individuals who are promised modernity and a cosmopolitan life, but then face the reality of economic stagnation, high unemployment, and the lack of social access to these places. In the case of Zambian miners, when the mining industry collapsed many had to abandon the cosmopolitan accoutrements of urban areas and dejectedly return to their villages. Miners had to renegotiate rural social systems they had largely neglected. In the process, they experienced a form of social death. Many faced social isolation upon returning to villages. They were forced onto marginal lands on the outskirts of homesteads or settled far away from their natal villages to avoid tension and the potential for witchcraft. Many marriages dissolved because wives were fearful of witchcraft and potential violence, leading them to flee to their own natal villages. Miners did report fear of being killed by disgruntled relatives, and some inexplicable deaths were attributed to nefarious forces called upon by angry villagers.

A similar situation may be unfolding with children raised in orphanages, which disrupts family and community relationships (Phiri and Tolfree 2005). All the orphans in the orphanages said they would not return to their villages to live once they reached adulthood. When probed, the specific reason given was always fear of witchcraft associated with jealousy. Nearly all respondents feared being killed. As more children graduate from orphanages, consideration needs to be given to how some children's appropriation of a neoliberal logic, which includes a more autonomous sense of self, and the accompanying expectations of modernity shape their interactions and experiences outside of the facility, especially regarding family and community relations.

Results: Employing Mothers

One of the central concerns of removing children from extended family systems is the type of relationship that develops between the children and their new primary caregivers, as well as the conditions within which they are housed. In all three research sites, children resided with a single, adult female who they referred to as their housemother, or simply mother. Interviews were conducted with all of the housemothers at Miracles and Hope, and several critical aspects of their jobs and the relationships they developed with children emerged.

None of the housemothers at Miracles or Hope had training in orphan care, while Rescue housemothers were all trained and government certified. At Miracles, the prerequisites for employment were limited to being single, divorced, or widowed and not having any small children of their own to care for. The requirements were similar at Hope. All housemothers interviewed said they wanted training to improve their experience with orphans. Sophia, a fifty-seven-year-old housemother responsible for eighteen children at Miracles, said:

[ALF] What things can they improve upon? What is missing?

If they can send us to the training about orphan care it can improve our orphanage since we are just working without knowing how to take care of the children.

One reason training may be beneficial is because it can help housemothers learn about disciplining children. Several housemothers and one of the administrators at Miracles suggested that the lack of a biological connection between housemothers and the children in their care could lead to contentious relations. Children misbehave because they do not feel the need to obey or respect paid employees. The Miracles Managing Partner said:

[DB] I know the older children really give [housemothers] a hard time.

[ALF] Boys, girls, or both?

[DB] Boys. The girls have been good to the mothers. Actually, the girls help the mothers a lot but the boys have done a lot of back talk. Nothing ever physical, but definitely will say comments like, 'you're getting paid to be here,' or 'you're not the boss of me, Napoleon [the businessman who owns the property where the orphanage is located] is the one who gives me my food.' Really hurtful things like that. And the boys will not do the things that [the housemothers] tell them to do.

Conversely, paid employees may not extend the same amount of attention and affection toward orphans as they would their own biological children (Phiri and Tolfree 2005). Sophia explained:

[ALF] What is the most frustrating or stressful thing about being a house mom?

I can be frustrated especially when [the children] are supposed to clean in the house and they don't. There are a lot of problems. There are other children who are rude; they didn't want to do the work.

Ana, a forty-nine-year-old housemother at Miracles with seventeen children in her care, answered the same question:

Sometimes children are rude; for example, in the past they were saying, "What kind of mothers are you who don't know how to cook?" but we tried to ignore those kinds of things.

Prior to this research, disciplinary problems between housemothers and older boys at Miracles led to a reconfiguring of the residential arrangement. All of the older boys were moved out of the houses they were originally assigned to and brought together into one house. A Malawian male in his early twenties became the boys' overseer, but he did not reside at the orphanage. This alleviated some of the tensions that had arisen.

Children also mentioned conflict between themselves and their housemothers, which one orphan attributed to low salaries. Sam, a twenty-two-year-old double orphan who graduated from Rescue Village, explained:

> …I think it becomes bad when the administration doesn't treat the [house]mothers well. Sometimes they are not treated fairly, and by the end they become harsh on you. They become harsh on the kids. They are not maybe well paid, something like that. So it becomes a problem for them to handle the children.
>
> [ALF] You are saying that sometimes the housemothers didn't treat you as well as your real family might have?
>
> Sometimes. It was only in some houses where I heard that the mothers could shout at the kids and saying, "I'm just working!" You know, and she was not doing [the job] for [the sake of] being your mother, but as a job. So that was really bad. And when it was bad also they remind you that you are an orphan. I didn't like that word, being labeled.

Housemothers mentioned feeling overworked and undercompensated, partly due to the ratio of housemothers to children. The Malawian government guidelines state that no more than ten children can be under the care of a single housemother. At the time of this research, Miracles averaged fifteen children per housemother, with one housemother being responsible for eighteen children. Almost every housemother at Miracles and Hope, regardless of the number of children in their care, said they needed better salaries, and the majority lodged complaints to the administrators at their respective facilities.

Addressing Stigma

One of the justifications given for targeting children designated as orphans with resources and assistance is an expectation that they will face stigmatization and discrimination (Ghosh and Kalipeni 2003). While several orphans mentioned the negative connotation associated with being called an orphan, there is some question as to whether removing children from communities and placing them in orphanages, or purposefully targeting a small population within a larger population living in poverty, exacerbates this stigma. Sam, the twenty-two-year-old double orphan from Rescue Children's Village, explained that:

> The way that they handle the word 'orphan' here in Malawi, it's really bad. It can make even someone cry.
>
> [ALF] So to call someone an orphan, it's bad?
>
> Yeah! Because the way that the people do it. It's not a normal thing. Maybe they will say, "Don't treat my radio as if it's an orphan!" You see. So, you will find, you ask yourself so, "Is it that disgusting to be an orphan?" Why should somebody say, "You are using my thing (radio, etc.) as if it is an abandoned child or an orphan"? Something like that…When someone is talking like that, you ask yourself, "Maybe I am the one who is in a poor situation on earth." So you try sometimes maybe to hate yourself just because you're an orphan.

In the same interview Sam described differential treatment that results from being designated an orphan and his efforts at trying to conceal where he came from:

> [ALF] Do people treat you differently when they learn you went to Rescue Children's Village?
>
> I should tell you the truth, that up to now, even where I am schooling I haven't told anyone—maybe the administration, maybe. But as much as I usually can, I try to hide it.
>
> [ALF] Why hide it?
>
> Yeah, because, as I told you, it becomes sort of that people try to embarrass you that you are under sponsorship or you are maybe an orphan. They will try to do everything to make fun of you and you will not always be comfortable with the community. A lot of people will just be talking of your thing as if it is something vile.

Tension with the community is evident in these quotes. Orphans may experience low self-esteem, social discrimination, and community hostility. One way of coping is for children designated as orphans to deny their status, even though they have lost one or both parents and are aware that it is for this reason they have been brought into the orphanage. Often, they do not consider themselves orphans because they are not poor and hungry. Instead, because they have access to education, clothing, housing, and food, many believe that despite losing parents they should not be identified as orphans. This issue came up when I was discussing dating with Sam. He explained:

> [ALF] Even though you are wearing nice clothes, and have a very good education—women still treat you differently?
>
> Yeah (giggling). I have suffered some because of that. But, by now, because I have my own papers, I am qualified and I can go out of Rescue. I can work somewhere. I've got something that can do something for me. So, I don't believe that I am an orphan anymore. Because I believe that you can be an orphan only up to the age of six. This is what people don't understand in Malawi, because the orphanage is something to do with being dependent. When you can't have something on your own. Even when you are there in RESCUE, they don't have to treat us as orphans because we have got everything. We have all the basic needs. We have good food, good schools, we have got almost good health facilities. So I don't know why the community just reacts that way. It's just that name [orphan/orphanage], it has got a certain impact on someone's life. It's like some insult. If someone would say, "Ah, you are just an orphan." You see, if someone who is of the same status as me said it, I would be comfortable, but if someone has got parents and says it then it's like they are telling me that I killed my parents, or something like that. It has got a certain impact—as if you wanted your parents to die.

The idea of the orphanage saving a physical life, but leading to social death is evident in these interviews. Sam said that dating was difficult, and he did feel he had to hide his orphan status from potential partners. Marriage in Malawi is highly contingent on kinship ties and social connections, which may make partnering for these children difficult in the future. Regardless of how they self-identify, these children said they felt antagonism from the local community. While

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Sam explained positive aspects about being at Rescue, which included education, food, clothing, and shelter, he also discussed how these resources created community tension:

> Only that maybe the community and others, what they say, sometimes it just makes you uncomfortable. What they say about you, because maybe you are doing well, they say you are selfish. You are too proud. Something like that. But it's not that Rescue kids are too proud of themselves or maybe selfish. It's not like that. Usually, we interact with [the community], we've got a playground for everyone.
>
> [ALF] Why do you think they think that?
>
> I don't know, maybe they are just jealous of what we get because their parents cannot afford the same things. Maybe they've got two of their parents but they cannot afford what we get at Rescue.

In addition to highlighting the stigmatized nature of the orphan identity, my research suggests that specifically targeting orphans may be engendering community and familial hostility towards these children who are becoming privileged compared to their peers. Other research has also suggested this process of designating and targeting orphans can lead to tensions within the community and jealousy over the resources being distributed (Bornstein 2005). The national ECD director in the MoWCD related the following story in an interview:

> [ALF] Do orphans face stigma?
>
> Yes. It is a fact. I have worked in orphan care for over fifteen years now. When we were starting these programs, targeting [orphans] became an issue…Because if I have some assistance and I am taking it directly to an orphan at the community level, that's a problem. Because that orphan is not living alone, but is being looked after by somebody else, a guardian. And that guardian is looking after so many children. I remember when we went to one of the areas in northern Malawi we brought shoes, blankets, uniforms and we gave it to this orphan and there were four or five other children living there. And one of the children came forward and asked the mother, the guardian who was looking after the orphan, "Mother, when are you going to die so that I could get the good things that my friend is getting?" You see? I discovered this is a serious problem. And sometimes we have gone into a community to take a blanket to an orphan, and when we go there next time we find that the orphan is out of the family. Why? Because when you give the blanket to the orphan, the orphan will say, "This is mine." But the guardian will say, "Share with the others." But the orphan will say, "No! It was given to me." It starts conflicts where most of these children are displaced. They don't become part of the family because of the targeting.

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Bornstein found similar tensions in Zimbabwe, where she studied World Vision child sponsorship. She recounts the story of a young man who received a significant amount of money from his sponsor to go to secondary school (US $500). When the boy and his stepmother arrived in Harare to pick up the money at the central office, there was tension. His stepmother became upset and incredulous to learn that only the boy was allowed to use the money. She felt it should be distributed among all the children. His siblings were jealous, and it became an individualizing force that caused stress in his life. Bornstein (2001) does note that, while there were negative aspects to this program, the young boy did experience positive outcomes, including accessing a better education and eventually enrolling in the local university. He traded aspects of his local identity for that of a more global, humanitarian sense of belonging.

Reconfiguring Kinship

The data shows that being labeled an orphan can be perceived as having some advantages when resources pour into impoverished communities. At the same time it should be recognized that desiring orphanhood might lead to community and family tensions. Previously strong kinship ties are neglected as many children prefer to identify with the orphanage and the more cosmopolitan way of life it provides. As a result, children in orphanages are becoming increasingly estranged from their villages. Tikondani explained:

[ALF] What are your fears?

Well, my fear is where will I get the stuff [to start his own business]? Where will I get the money if [an international charity assisting children] fails to support me and if they happen to sack me out of this place, where am I going to be staying? How am I going to start [a business and support himself]? Because there is no way they can take me back to my original family [in the village].

[ALF] Why not?

I wish I could take you to my family so that you could see my biological relatives. So that you see what I mean…life is just different. Very different. You would not wish me to

stay there. I tell you honestly. The way you are seeing me, the way you are looking at me here you would not wish me to stay there. If I am staying there it means somebody has just dumped me there because when I am going to see my relatives, my biological relatives, I feel sorry for them…So, even if [Rescue] may say, "Tikondani, we are taking you to your biological family," it means now dumping. Even if I hope to get a job one day, then I am just deceiving myself because there I cannot get a job. Maybe just involving myself in gardening, that kind of stuff. That's all that happens there. See, people fully depend on gardening their farms. And those who have cattle and goats are regarded as rich people [in villages]. My relatives don't even have ANY! So, that is what I am saying. If you happen, if you were to come with me [to my village] I tell you, you would see for yourself and say, "I think Tikondani was right." I don't see myself joining them anymore…So, I can say that I cannot go there to say I am staying with them. Oh, I tell you I don't fit in. I don't! I don't even dream of joining them anymore.

Village life is cast in a negative light by the institutions and their employees. This may partially explain the disconnection children are feeling between themselves, their communities, and extended family members. Tikondani explained how children are encouraged by institutions and their employees to think of life in rural areas as inferior to their experiences at the orphanage:

[Being sent to the village] is more or less like a punishment. I have seen this other [orphan] it's just that he misbehaved. You know. He went out drinking and he was coming [to Rescue] drunk. And then [Rescue employees] met him at the gate and said, "Hey, where are you coming from?" Whilst he was drunk you know. They asked him, where are you coming from? He failed to answer because he was drunk. They said, "Well, get in [your room]. Go and sleep. We'll see you tomorrow morning." And the next morning they go to him and said, "Today, pack, you are going for a holiday." His name was Peter. Peter said, "Ah, are you telling me to go for holiday because you caught me yesterday whilst I was drunk?" They said, "Yes. Go for a holiday." They do this because they know that where we are coming from is not a good place because people have failed to take care of us which is why Rescue went there to pick us up in the first place. They know that when you get [to your rural village] some way, somehow you still suffer.

The message being transmitted to these children is that being in their villages is punishment, and it is a privilege to be in the orphanage. However, children in the orphanages are straddling two worlds without clear access to or membership in either one. Tikondani desires and was in some ways promised a cosmopolitan lifestyle that he does not actually have access to. At the same time, he has extended family members, but he expressed a disdain for and even

rejection of village life. The critical processes of becoming an adult, which includes securing a job, getting married, buying/building a house, and securing land holdings are to a large extent dependent on kinship ties in Malawi. Without these connections it is hard to be or function as a full adult.

Tikondani's dependency on the institution for support may extend long into adulthood, which many institutions may not be prepared to provide. Maundeni (2009) notes that children coming out of Rescue in Botswana remain attached to these facilities longer than the organization had intended. In part, he argues, because these children feel far removed from their extended kin it would take a concerted effort on the part of welfare workers to reunite them. These social workers often do not have the experience, resources, or time to undertake such a reunification. Many children do not want to be reunited with families in rural areas because they have become accustomed to a more structured, materially stable environment that is uncommon in villages. This is similar to Tikondani, who has in some ways exchanged his membership with extended family and local social systems for the orphanage, especially during times of crisis, including famine, disease, and periods of unemployment (Mandala 2005).

This is happening partly because Rescue, where Tikondani resides, is explicit about its attempts at creating a "new" family for orphaned children. Maundeni (2009:97) notes in his description of an Rescue Children's Village in Botswana that the "Rescue concept of family is based on four principles: the mother; brothers and sisters; the house/family home; and the village." This same message was relayed to me by the Rescue Village director in Malawi (personal communication). Implicit in this artificial construction is a weakening of ties to extended, biological family members in villages (Maundeni 2009). Chikondi, a twenty-year-old

double orphan from Rescue, who is now studying sociology and social work at a local university, described the ways in which these kinship ties get reconfigured:

> …for someone who has been taken by an extended family you feel part of a family. You really feel it. But then Rescue, you stay here let's say and you're all people with different backgrounds. Your mother (housemother) will say, "Ok, you guys are relatives," but deep down you know that you are not related, you are just there because of Rescue. So, there is a difference. And the way the community looks at Rescue. They say "Ok, this person is an orphan." But when you are living in an extended family you are taken as part of the family, and only a few people know that this person doesn't really belong to that family. But, you are still staying in that house with that family. It's really different.

> [ALF] Do you think you would have been happier staying in a community with an extended family?

> I think so.

In Botswana, this emergence of fictive kinship ties to the institution is leading to challenges, especially the unintended consequence of children staying in these facilities longer than originally proposed because they have lost ties to villages and prefer the institution (Maundeni 2009). This is also happening in Malawi. Tikondani explained to me that he is going through the deregistration process at Rescue. He is supposed to have a six-month period of financial support, during which time he is expected to find a job and begin living independently from the institution. He expressed fear and anxiety about this process and his job prospects. In our interview in March of 2008 he estimated that since early 2007 he had applied for close to one hundred jobs in human resources and was granted just two interviews.

As a way to address the lack of employment opportunities, Rescue in both Malawi and Botswana (Maundeni 2009) is hiring many of their older orphans into positions within the facility. Tikondani did his "attachments" (internship) for his diploma degree in the Rescue human resources department. His human resources advisor has recommended hiring Tikondani because he is "good at what he does," but he is unable to find employment. Unfortunately,

Rescue does not have the resources to hire Tikondani. As of this interview, Tikondani was still solely dependent on Rescue to meet all of his needs. He refuses to return to his village.

Tikondani and Sam are graduating and facing a strained economic climate. It is difficult to say whether or not the reconfiguring of their kinships ties in rural areas directly impacts their ability to access desired jobs in the urban sector. One cannot just apply and get a job. When seeking employment, Malawians need to know someone, be recommended by someone, be socially located in ways that people understand, such as going to certain schools or being members of churches. If these children in the orphanage come from poor families living in villages, they might not have the proper connections to secure employment in cities. That being said, many families do have kin who live in urban areas and often do assist poor children from rural areas in finding jobs or going to urban schools. The loss of ties can prove detrimental if these young people are unable to stay at Rescue, Miracles, or Hope yet refuse to move back to their rural communities. Sam discussed this issue, as well as how the community might perceive his lack of economic success:

> [ALF] Are Rescue graduates more successful than the majority of young people in Malawi?
>
> I can't say no and I can't say yes. It depends. Sometimes, maybe Rescue usually helps us with looking for a job. They are a well-wishing organization. I think sometimes they can employ [you, personally] because they are wishing you better—maybe that you would succeed. But sometimes it's not like that, and they will just connect you because you are an orphan. Because here in Malawi, I think it's everywhere, the working capacity is more like tribalism, like, if it's not tribalism than it's like regionalism, if it's not regionalism then it's like family. If you are from the same roots—the same background, if your parents were known to someone. If your parents are working for someone in the same company you are working for, then you always get through if you've got good friends there. But with the Rescue kids it's not like that! It's not easy for us to penetrate into organizations because maybe our relatives didn't work there—like on my mother's side. They are not educated. I don't expect them to be known by some of the managers in the company, you see. So it's really hard when it comes to that. When someone looks at your name they'll just throw it away because you are just not in the society. It's only when like Rescue would introduce you to something, but it's also hard because sometimes at the

working place people will treat you differently and say, "Oh, I heard you got this job through connections and not because of qualifications." I want my qualifications to get a job for me not because Rescue is begging a place for me. So, in ten years time I can say that if you can't succeed right now, if you can't get a good job, then life will be miserable because you were raised in a good environment, and by that time you will be in a bad environment in terms of maybe you will not be living in a good house, maybe it will affect you psychologically because people will be laughing at you. The image, which the outside community always has for us, is like maybe we are too proud. They will still say, "Ah, these [orphans] are selfish and now they are living like this." So, they will talk a lot. It will give room for others maybe to laugh at you, something like that. So, I don't want that to happen to me.

This highlights a paradox. Although Rescue tries to take on some of this responsibility for making connections for these children, it is the orphanage that in some ways is rupturing social ties. To be without social and familial connections in Malawi is a form of social death or bare life. This is not a traditional or rural attitude, but rather a modern contemporary one that responds to the uncertainties of life in Malawi today. An individual cannot predict what hardships may befall them, and social ties and relations that provide are the only definite safety net.

The lack of belonging that children feel toward their rural villages may also be related to a loss of culture as children appropriate western ways of being. Chikondi described the potential loss of this identity:

One of the hardest things about living here [Rescue] is the issue that most children do not know their background. They are not knowing their culture, their ethnic group, their families very well. They don't understand life in a typical community or life in a typical village in Malawi because this orphanage, the life it gives is an artificial life.

Chikondi does not maintain strong ties to any relatives and considered Rescue her new family when she moved into the institution in 1994. She has one uncle who has only recently attempted to contact her, but she has avoided communication and visits with him because she perceives his actions as selfish; she reported feeling "used" because he "never set foot here to see me before." She believes he is trying to contact her to ask for money, food, or other resources.

While she knows where she is from, she does not relate to or desire to maintain a connection

with her biological family. Interestingly, Chikondi relates more to her international sponsors than

to her biological family, even though they have never met each other or even spoken on the

phone. She says that they "are quite close" and the nature of their correspondence is as if "I am

part of them." She considers the daughter of her sponsors a sister and had just been granted a

visa to visit them in Denmark.

The former director of Rescue noted that orphans who were not necessarily abandoned or

isolated prior to coming into the institution may end up alone as a result of their time in the

orphanage:

> The Rescue kids are so disconnected and don't know their place. They have lost their
> connection to their villages. Imagine, everyone here has a home in a village, a place in a
> rural area they return to. It is at that place they will be buried. Here, where you are buried
> is a very big deal. Kids from Rescue have no place to be buried because they no longer
> have any ties to their rural communities. They are sent to the Lilongwe Morgue.

This is yet another example of social death. It is important to note that when the former

director of Rescue says children do not "know their place," he is not suggesting they are unaware

of what village they come from or where their extended family members reside. He is alluding to

the fact that, like Chikondi, they do not identify with these areas or recognize them as a place

where they belong. Along these same lines, the national ECD director in the MoWCD stated:

> Children are removed from their traditional culture and traditions, which the community
> values. I am saying that Malawi upholds those community values—the "we" feeling,
> "IFE" you know? That's a community value. The children are removed, and orphanages
> are isolated from the communities. It is just that institution caring for the children. And
> the child is looked upon as a special child. There has been research that has been
> conducted that shows that a child who has grown up in an orphanage, even when he has
> PhD, he has a certain social, emotional problem that manifests most of the times. People
> have got to work in the community. That is why in Malawi we are encouraging
> community-based approaches, but you still see people opening orphanages. So, our
> feeling is yes, the orphanages we can open as a last resort for children who have nowhere
> to go… And orphanages—resources that go to orphanages completely forget about the
> community. Communities are isolated and they are removed from the orphanages and the

orphanages remove them (children) from the communities. So there is that separation between the community and the orphanages and, well, there are so many issues that I would say, well, we don't like them, but what we encourage in Malawi if possible, orphanages should be only temporary for children to live there if they need medical attention, medical or whatsoever, but afterwards they should be reunited with the community.

In this quote, the director is referring to issues of social location and place as they relate to identity. He is recognizing the difference between the Malawian worldview of "we" to that of a more singular identity that results from the removal of children from communities. Whether intentional or not, it can be inferred that this shift away from a "we" mentality is resulting in a more autonomous identity—an identity more befitting a western, capitalist paradigm. This process is part and parcel of the process of modernity and cosmopolitanism that children develop and fits into the neoliberal, global capitalist, consumer logic common among westerners who run these facilities. When I asked Tikondani about jealousy he experienced from the community because he was affiliated with Rescue, his answer reflected an emphasis on the autonomous self, as well as the friction his institutionalization and adoption of a particular way of being has created:

> …we are still actually trying our best even being an orphan. Maybe like myself, where I am I don't count myself an orphan because given the chance, given the opportunity to get a job, given the chance to run a business, I'll be able to support myself. I'll be able to stand on my own. I'll be able to do all things on my own. So, to be called an orphan is history, for me, the way I look at myself. So, whenever people are trying to discriminate and say, "Well, those are orphans," you know I still say, "I'm not an orphan. I'm just like you!" So, those are some of the things, some of the challenges we are actually meeting there [at the external youth Rescue house].

The institutions in this sample recognized the potential loss of connection orphans experienced as a result of being in the orphanages. In an attempt to alleviate this, many orphanages have instituted "holiday" breaks in which children are sent to their home villages for a short period of time (from a few days up to one month). Many of the children said they were

able to "play well with others" in their village, yet most described some form of jealousy. In the

end, not a single child was willing to return permanently to life in the village, and nearly all cited

community jealousy as the reason. Ipiyana, a fourteen-year-old double orphan who was living

with his older brother prior to coming to Miracles, said:

> I prefer staying at Miracles than in our village because the community is jealous. When I go home for holiday [the community and extended family members] always say don't buy new clothes for him because he has already received a lot of things from Miracles. I don't want to live in our village because people in our village are jealous and so they can kill me, they will not be happy to see me working.

In some ways, the orphan identity is becoming privileged because resources are being

funneled to this particular demographic in a resource-poor environment. This has the potential to

lead to the abandonment of children at the doorsteps of orphanages, as parents perceive life

within the institutions as somehow better or more secure than life in the village (Maundeni

2009). The national ECD director in the MoWCD expressed his concern about child

abandonment:

> The orphanages, we accepted them as government as a last resort, because they provide support to children who don't have anywhere, they cannot fit in the community, they cannot fit in anywhere. But what I have noted sometimes, people have taken the easy way. To say, "Anyway, we don't want to care for this child, just send it to an orphanage." And sometimes, sometimes I've come across certain cases where someone has tried to send his own child to an orphanage because they think they will get a better education, or a better life.

Improved material conditions and access to education and playtime are significantly

greater in the orphanages than in the rural villages where most of the children were born. It is not

surprising that all of the children in the sample said they preferred to be in the orphanage than in

the village, indicating the positive environment of the institution. The director of Rescue alluded

to the privileging of children in orphanages, joking that he wanted to claim an orphan identity

today in order to gain access to the material resources available within Rescue. On a more

serious note, he said that they did have cases where children were being abandoned at the doorstep of Rescue. It is unclear why these children are being abandoned, but there is the potential that the individuals giving them up are assuming a better future somewhere other than in their custody and possibly within an institution like Rescue or Miracles.

Orphanages for Personal Gain

Government officials and policy makers were particularly concerned about the potential for abuse and manipulation by orphanage directors. The national ECD director in the MoWCD expressed concern about the potential for child trafficking. He stated:

> But some people are just using [orphans] as a means to get resources for their own families and their own use. Some people have used these to take children outside the families and outside Malawi and these are the things that do not have to be condoned and I look on this as a negative aspect.

There were few reported cases of child trafficking outside Malawi while I was there, although there was some discussion of the practice of moving children for purposes of forced labor within the country. Whether these children serving as laborers are orphans or come from orphanages was never clear. It does raise a disturbing issue that should be investigated further. UNICEF has initiated a children's rights campaign that suggests child trafficking and child abuse are pervasive issues. The STOP CHILD ABUSE CAMPAIGN began in 2007. A UNICEF report states that the purpose is to, "…provide opportunities for open discussions on issues such as child labour, sexual abuse, child trafficking, early marriages and harmful cultural practices that continue to deny children their rights to a healthy childhood" (Kariuki 2007).

The director also mentioned the desire for personal gain that motivates some individuals to establish orphan-care facilities. This is a practice I described in the previous chapter. Miriam Kalua, a policy officer at NAC who manages the Global Fund Money used to fund OVC projects, mentioned this concern, as well as that of adoption:

But the government is also discouraging that system of keeping children in orphanages, that should be the last resort. That's what even the policy says, but what you find is that people are using orphanages as income-generating activities because they want somebody from the US or somebody from wherever to give them money. They go behind the children as if they are supporting them, yet they have their own motives. Others are even using the orphanages as adoption centers. They want to make sure that maybe they have developed relationships with international families so that maybe they should give them something and they adopt the child. And so the government is very much against the issue of establishing orphanages much as they are so it all trickles down the Ministry of Women and Child Development—it has not been strong enough because it is supposed to regulate the establishment of orphanages and it's in such cases where maybe a mommy has lost a baby, or maybe she has died and maybe left a one-year-old baby behind and if there is nobody to check up on that baby that's the one that has to go into an orphanage, but after a certain time then it goes back to the family; but what you find, what is happening is like it's an income-generating activity—people are happy to keep orphans, they don't care about the other effects that the orphanage is bringing to children.

The lack of government capacity is often given as a reason for the increase in residential facilities in Malawi. There is very little regulation, and organizations often work around the state, as demonstrated with Miracles Village. This holds the potential for abusive and fraudulent activities to occur, which makes children vulnerable to adverse outcomes. I heard a story of an orphanage opening and then being shut down because of abuse and lack of resources. The national ECD director in the MoWCD alluded to this potential when he said:

> But you know a child has less protection. You know? Whilst in there. Sometimes the children are abused. They may not get the right food, sometimes they are mistreated, I've heard certain cases where that has happened. Sometimes the orphanage may not have resources to support the children. I know of one orphanage that was closed and the children were destitute. So, we are asking why was this guy opening when he didn't have the resources, you know? We tell the people, orphanages are a last resort.

Addressing Vulnerabilities

I'm very happy because I live in Miracles.
> Mphatso, sixteen-year-old, storyboard drawing

Mphatso is a sixteen-year-old who has resided in Miracles for three years. In the first panel of her storyboard drawing about life in her village, she included a house without electricity

or running water and with a dirt floor (figure 15). The drawing is a self-portrait. She explained

that in that picture she is sad and her clothes are worn out, which is indicated by the dress she is

Figure 15: Mphatso's Storyboard Drawing
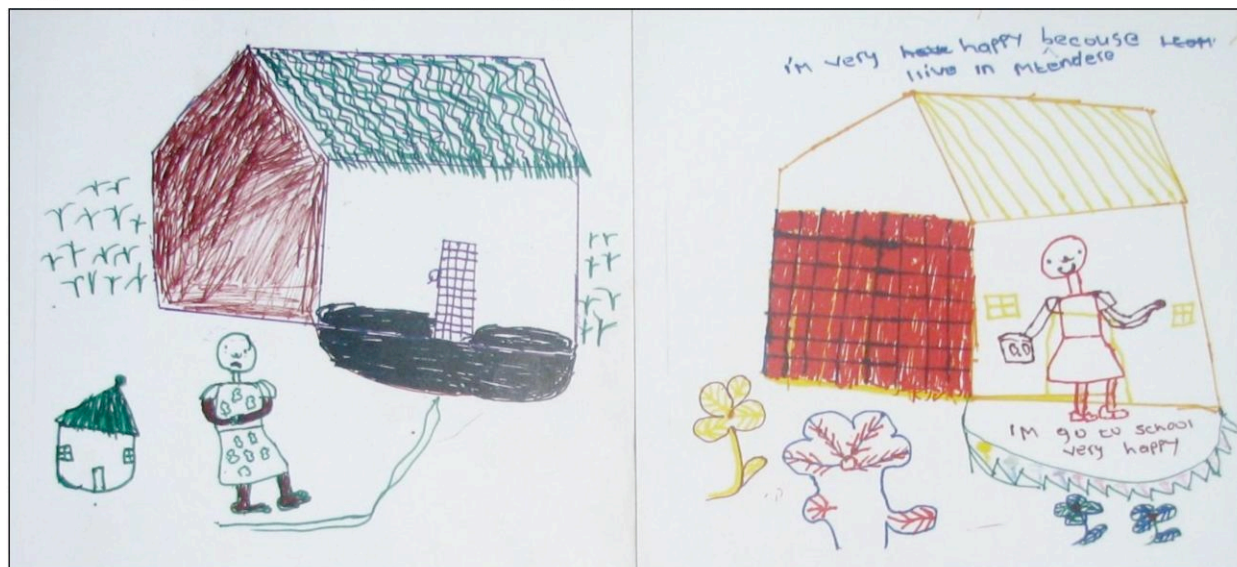
wearing with holes in it. Mphatso said she was abused by her stepmother and forced to work

more than others in the house. She said they also lacked food. The second panel is of Mphatso at

the orphanage. She appears happy and has better clothing. She is smiling and stresses the

importance of school—"I am go[ing] to school, very happy" is written under her picture. She

explained, "Nothing is missing at Miracles." Her house is brightly colored and surrounded by

flowers, which is dramatically different from the drawing of her village. In general, her drawing

is similar to those done by her peers reflecting common situations faced by these children. The

children also stress similar positive aspects of orphanage life.

Like Mphatso, nearly all of the orphans in the sample recognized the value of education

and the way in which the orphanage emphasized schooling. Children in all three orphanages

have access to education from primary school through the end of secondary school. In all

locations those children who score well on the national exams have the opportunity to go to one

of several universities. In contrast, the majority of children in rural areas cannot attend school every day and many prefer not to attend due to the poor quality of schooling (Chimombo 2005).

Similar to Emond's (2009) findings in Cambodia, nearly all orphans in the sample stressed schooling as one of the most important benefits of residing in the orphanage. John, a seventeen-year-old boy at Hope, who lost his father in 2001 but whose mother is still alive, explained how his education had improved since being supported at the orphanage:

> Since I came here nothing is missing here, but when I was at home I was missing food and clothes. Here I go to school everyday, but at home I was going twice or three times per week. Sometimes I was absent because the school was far away from our village and I was supposed to cross the rivers [to get there], so during the rainy seasons the rivers were full so I was failing to cross them. I was just going back home instead of to school.

Another dimension my work shares with Emond's (2009:9) is the notion that children in orphanages are freed from "a disadvantaged and difficult present," and given the opportunity to both imagine and take steps that will build a brighter, more economically viable future. That could be considered a particularly western and naïve way of thinking. These children, it could be argued, are also "freed" of their social and cultural contexts. This may prove to be a high price to pay for western dreams that are difficult if not impossible to fulfill.

As a component of the storyboard drawings, children in the orphanages were instructed to draw how they imagined or hoped their lives would be once they graduated from the facility. These children recognized that they are freed from a disadvantaged and destitute past. Because of residence within orphanages, they are now able to dream about careers, acquiring material possessions, and improving their social status in ways that are out of reach for the majority of Malawi's youth. For children in orphanages, the most common occupation they desired was being a pilot, which may have to do with Miracles' close proximity to the airport. Other commonly cited careers included nurse/doctor, teachers, businessmen, and drivers. Many

drawings depicted material possessions commonly associated with higher social status and usually not common in villages. Children drew homes with electricity, bikes, cars, metal roofs, beds, sofas, and nice clothes. Generally speaking, children in villages who also participated in the storyboard drawing exercises do not conceptualize their future occupations or hopes for material possessions along the same lines as children in orphanages, in large part because of the urgency of dealing with endemic poverty in their present lives.

Tiyamike's story captures the conceptual shift that happens for children who become institutionalized. He moves from coping with and fixating on a difficult and destitute present to that of imagining and pursuing a more hopeful future because of the orphanage. He now lives at the Hope Children's Home. He is a twelve-year-old paternal orphan. When his father died, his uncle (father's younger brother) took over the property. Tiyamike explained, "…my uncle was abusing me. He was beating me almost every day without real reasons. I was not allowed to sleep in my late father's house, and that is when my mother left for her village in Rumphi. It was too hard to stay in my father's house." He explained that his father had sold most of his possessions when he was sick, and there was no inheritance left for him because his uncle took everything. When his father was alive his needs were being met. After the death of his father, he said he suffered from hunger and lack of proper clothing. He also complained of having to work more than the other children in his uncle's house. He missed school regularly in order to feed and water the cattle. That is when he came to Hope. He told me that at Hope "nothing is missing." Today, Tiyamike's basic needs are met, including access to food, clothing, shelter, education, and free time to play basketball and soccer. He says he dreams about a very different future than the one he was confronting before moving into Hope. He told me that he hopes to be a doctor and live in Lilongwe, far away from his aunt and uncle (see figure 16). He wants a house with

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Figure 16: Storyboard Drawing of an Orphan's Imagined Future
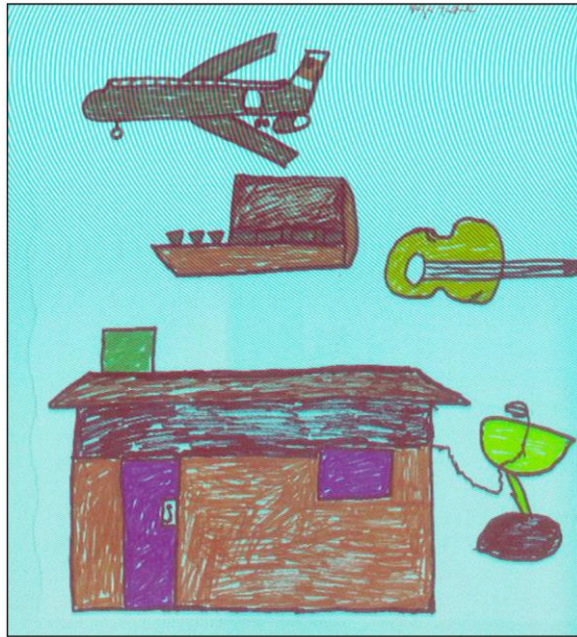
piped-in water, a television, a car, and a bicycle. In his house he wants a nice sofa set and a basketball pitch in the yard to exercise.

Aside from education and imagining a more economically viable future, all of the orphans mentioned the material resources they received at the orphanage as being beneficial and significantly beyond what they had access to prior to coming to the orphanage. All children in the sample complained about shortage of food in their villages. It is not uncommon for villagers to eat only one meal a day during the rainy season (December through May) (Mandala 2005). This is in contrast to the orphanages they were in, which all provide a minimum of three meals per day, often supplemented with nutritional porridge, milk, or snacks. These orphanages would be considered resource rich compared to some others and to what is available in most villages, so the nutritional status of the children is higher than it was in their communities. However, at Miracles, I was told by the American managing partner that at one point the children were being fed one meal per day because the proprietor of the property said, "That is what life is like in their villages." She was distraught about this situation and told me that one of the reasons she came to Malawi was to make sure that the orphanage was being run according to her and her father-in-law's standards.

Children's nutritional experiences will vary depending on each institution's financial security. In a study conducted in Blantyre, Malawi, with three different orphanages, it was concluded that young orphanage children (less than five years of age) are more likely to be

undernourished and more stunted than village children, but older orphanage children who were

institutionalized for at least a year seem to have better nutrition than village orphans (Panpanich

et al. 1999). What I found surprising with this study was that there was no significant difference

in nutritional status between village orphans and non-orphans (Panpanich et al. 1999).

Other benefits to living in the orphanage noted by the children included having more

leisure time and less work, as well as access to better bedding, blankets, shoes, and clothing. Watwesa is a thirteen-year-old orphan who lost her mother and whose father remarried, leading to her move into Hope. She explained in her drawing (figure 17, depicting life at Hope) how the orphanage has improved her circumstances:

Figure 17: Watwesa's Storyboard Drawing of Life at the Orphanage

> I have drawn a ball, a house, boys playing soccer, flowers around our house here, I like playing netball, when we are playing netball boys are also playing football. I have drawn our housemother who is giving us clothes and milk. When I am back from school I do my homework, play with my friends, clean plates, and sometimes wash our clothes and mop in the house. Nothing is missing here. I go to school everyday, I receive clothes, and we eat well. I came here because my mother passed away and she left the baby so I stopped going to school to take care of my young sister. So Sister B [the orphanage director] said we should come here with my sister so that people will assist me looking after her and I should also go to school.

Preventing Abuse

As discussed in both Mphato's and Tiyamike's stories and reiterated in the following

quote, some children face abusive situations after the loss of a parent. Many times it is after the

widower remarries and a stepparent is introduced into the household that abuse against children

occurs, but it is not isolated to these cases. Even biological relatives can abuse children, as a fourteen-year-old female orphan from Hope explained:

> I once stayed with my aunt (my mom's sister) but she was ill treating me, she was always telling me that I should dig my mom's grave so that I should be staying with her not with them. During that time, my father was alive so I came back to my father and he told me that I should not go back again… I will never go there again because [my aunt] was abusing me like beating me without any reason.

None of the orphans mentioned sexual abuse, which may have to do with the sensitive nature of the subject. However, newspaper articles regularly printed stories about stepfathers sexually abusing their stepdaughters, some as young as four years old (Chapulapula 2010; Chenjezi 2010; Singini 2010).

Social Networks: Improved?

Many of these children develop a new social network amongst themselves based on their shared experiences within the orphanage. In Cambodia, it was noted that children would protect each other outside of the orphanage when faced with confrontation by peers (Emond 2009). My data did not reveal such incidents, but one volunteer working at Miracles noted:

> It's another good thing that I have found is that it's VERY family oriented. I was talking about this earlier today. I was watching the kids yesterday when we were passing out new clothes to them. They may not have ever gotten the love that they needed to grow up anywhere else, so when they come here and they love on each other instead, it almost breaks my heart. To watch them love each other so much. To watch the older boys take care of the little boys and run over to them when they're crying and pick them up and make sure that the little ones get to go first in everything and then enjoy playing with each other. It's just wonderful to see that kind of love for each other at the orphanage. I don't know if that's true other places, but I know that it's very strong here. The bonds are very strong between each of the kids. I guess because, like I said, they may not have had real family before.

The respondent's assessment of the tight bond between children is actually a village ethic, and not necessarily something being engendered just in the orphanage. There probably is some projection on the part of the volunteer, who likely thinks about orphans within the spirit of

Oliver Twist, as being isolated, abandoned, and completely disconnected from humanity. What is questionable is how this emerging social network will work to protect and guide these children once they graduate. Future research needs to explore to what extent these fictive kinship ties will provide access to economic, political, social, and cultural capital. At this point it is too soon to tell. Older Rescue orphans state that they perceive their relationships with fellow orphans as familial, but there is not yet evidence of any kind of support being extended between these children.

Conclusion

Being designated an orphan is becoming a valued identity for some, while it is a source of vulnerability and exploitation for others. Some children are removed from abusive situations and afforded a secure place to live and access to essential material resources. Children who would otherwise struggle to complete school may be graduating at the top of their class. Children who would otherwise die of malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, TB, or malaria now have access to healthcare. Children in these orphanages are not cold at night because they have bed sheets and blankets. These children eat daily. All of the children were thankful for the opportunity to be in the orphanages and recognized their perceived privileged position in society that is directly linked to the loss of one or both parents. No child would give up his/her place in the orphanage to return to the village.

Conversely, there are negative repercussions faced by Malawian children who become institutionalized as a result of being labeled an orphan. Being cared for by uneducated and inexperienced housemothers who feel overworked and undercompensated can lead to tensions. It could be argued that one housemother caring for eighteen children may not have the capacity to provide these children with appropriate amounts of affection and the proper psychosocial support

they need, especially considering the circumstances from which these children come. Additionally, children brought into these institutions are often alienated from extended families and places of origin, despite the efforts of the orphanage directors to maintain ties with their communities. Social and cultural ties to place and kin are essential to the Malawian sense of personhood, especially as children transition into adulthood. Marriage, accessing employment, and land rights are just a few of the issues wrapped up in kinship systems. Children who neglect these systems may face a precarious future (Ferguson 1999). Another alarming trend is that, despite being stigmatized, some children desire orphanhood. The orphan identity is becoming privileged at the expense of traditional Malawian kinship systems as more and more resources are focused on this particular demographic.

Finally, preliminary data on children graduating from resource-abundant orphanages suggests that many have adopted western ideals of personhood as well as capitalist expectations of modernity. These include autonomy (especially from familial responsibility), wage labor jobs, and material wealth in the form of electricity, running water, good homes, and proper clothes and shoes. Unfortunately, children in orphanages who have received an education often struggle in Malawi's economic and social environment to find employment. This results in anger and resentment as a result of failed expectations. It is ironic that part of their failure to access these cosmopolitan spaces is a lack of family connections, which many voluntarily or forcibly cut off when moving into the orphanage. As a result, most of these children refuse to return to villages. It is unclear what will happen to them, but what is of concern is their potential to occupy subaltern spaces in urban areas and engage in delinquent behaviors or acquiesce to various forms of exploitation in order to survive (see Lancy 2008 for a discussion on the rise of child soldiers).

The vicissitudes of being designated an orphan in Malawi are just now becoming apparent. This chapter has highlighted the effects of directing projects and resources to a targeted population that exists within a complex milieu, which includes cultural expectations, economic constraints, political limitations, and social norms. I do not wish to romanticize village life or rural areas as homogenous and harmonious places that are more nurturing for children. I have already discussed some of the dissent and jealousy evident at the village level. In chapter 6 I will explore additional challenges village communities are facing as orphan-care projects make their way into these local spaces.

In the next chapter I examine Malawian constructions of and responses to orphans from the perspective of the state. Just as with transnational NGOs, there is a deliberate maneuvering to make children labeled orphans more visible to certain Malawian ministries and government officials, including Malawi's president. However, the intentions of these different stakeholders and the modes of producing orphans are different. The state is attempting to turn what the NGO industry imagines to be an apolitical response to children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS into a state-building exercise. They accomplish this by drawing on UNICEF definitions and depictions of orphans, engaging with children's rights discourses, and promoting a decentralized response that requires a fully functioning local-level government infrastructure. I show how the state's obvious lack of capacity justifies significant expenditure of globally generated orphan-earmarked funds in order to ensure children's rights, as well as monitor and evaluate transnational organizations attempting to serve children.

CHAPTER 5: THE STATE: POLITICIZING ORPHANS

In this chapter and elsewhere, I highlight the friction that arises when a transnational, west-inspired aid category is injected into a complex political, social, and cultural milieu. Tsing called for anthropology to focus more rigorous attention on engaged universals, referencing human rights, and the interconnection between the global and local. The premise of her argument rests in the fact that globalization and the compression of time and space have not led to a homogenized world order. Instead, we bear witness to increasing disjuncture and difference (Appadurai 1990). Global power does not function like a "well-oiled machine" operating smoothly and uninterrupted (Tsing 2005:6). Tsing wrote, "A wheel turns because of its encounter with the surface of the road; spinning in the air it goes nowhere. Rubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is just a stick" (2005:5). It is in the encounter between global flows, which are injected with a significant amount of power and resources, and local political, social, and cultural arrangements that I explore here. Transnational discourses and responses to orphans get reinterpreted at the state, community, family, and even individual levels. Projects imagined in the United States can be unrecognizable on the ground.

In chapter 3 I explored the process through which a western homogenous aid category meant for social intervention is being discursively constructed at the transnational level. In this chapter, I examine Malawian conceptualizations and active constructions of orphans from the perspective of interested state ministries. I also explore the interplay of these ministries with the transnational orphan-care organizations I studied. Transnational organizations do not simply conceptualize and then implement their programs. Their definitions, discourses, projects, and goals get refracted, reflected, and reconfigured at multiple levels, including at the level of the state. The very notion of what constitutes an orphan is subject to debate. I will demonstrate that

there is dissonance between transnational and state ideologies concerning orphans. Yet both purposefully draw on the orphan demographic and actively construct their own definitions and responses for their own purposes.

I focus on those state ministries central to and actively engaging with orphan-earmarked resources, which includes the MoWCD (including the Social Welfare offices), the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS, which is located within the president's cabinet.[20] I examine both the definition of orphans and children's rights as "engaged universals" that are being used and at times modified by the Malawian ministries in an attempt to capture transnational orphan-focused resources for their own capacity building. These disjunctive conceptualizations of orphans and approaches to orphan care lead to unexpected outcomes, which impact children in tangible ways. The following scenario highlights the interplay between the State Welfare Office and transnational NGOs working with orphans.

Rescue and District Social Welfare Connections

Rescue Children's Village began in 1949 and has grown into a global network of orphanages with established orphan-care facilities in 132 countries and territories. Rescue set up its first orphanage in Malawi in 1994 in Lilongwe. Two subsequent facilities have been constructed, and all three house approximately 150 children each. The majority of their funding comes in the form of private donations. Child sponsorship is a central component. It costs approximately US $30 a month to sponsor a child. The following is an excerpt and photo (figure 18) from the Rescue Children's Village Malawi web site:

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[20] These are the primary ministries and government agencies that I had contact with. There are undoubtedly other government entities attempting to access orphan resources, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the Ministry of Development Planning and Cooperation.

Figure 18: Rescue Promotional Photo

Mavis has already finished her first term at the Rescue Nursery School; she is a lively little girl, the sunshine of her family. She loves babies and regularly stops by house No. 4 where recently Mary, a one-month-old girl, has found a new home. Mavis herself was hardly two or three weeks old when she was among the first children who came to Rescue Children's Village Lilongwe in Malawi five years ago.

She shares her sad fate with thousands of children, but at the same time it was a stroke of good fortune that gave her a new home at the Rescue Children's Village. A wicker basket is the only relic recalling her past. A local woman found Mavis hidden behind a pile of firewood, so she put her into a wicker basket and took her to the local hospital. She then came to live at the Rescue Children's Village. Enquiries made by the social authorities about the child's family led to a village near Lilongwe, where it turned out that both parents had died, probably of AIDS.

In the meantime, Mavis is developing in a marvelous way. The little bundle whose provisional home had once been a basket, has turned into a happy five-year-old girl who loves walking around the Village with her friend Thokozani. She knows already a few words in English, and every Saturday, she helps her mother clean and tidy up. There is only one thing she does not like at all: beans.

I used the example of Tikondani in chapter 4 because in many ways it exemplifies the nature of the relationship of the state to NGOs. The person asking for Tikondani to be accepted into Rescue was a government social welfare worker. The Social Welfare Office was unable to provide for the child in the same way Rescue could. The lack of state capacity coupled with the neoliberal policy of decentralization and privatization leads to an explicit reliance on international organizations for providing social services, which is reflected in the national policies that I review in subsequent sections.

In addition, this vignette constructs the image of a Malawian orphan as abandoned and without family as a result of the AIDS pandemic (see chapter 3). When I was given a tour of Rescue during the summer of 2006 the in-country director told me similar stories. Children are left to die in latrines, gutters, or literally on the footsteps of the orphanage. He said that

policemen and social welfare officers bring these children to Rescue in hopes that they can accommodate them. While this may be true in some cases, as I have shown in chapter 4 the majority of children labeled orphans, including those institutionalized, are not abandoned. Most orphaned children in villages actually remained under the care of a biological parent, a grandparent, or other close relative. I learned about the existence and extensive documentation of extended family members through interviews with orphans from Rescue and Miracles, as well as through access to their intake files. The following example—a request submitted by the regional social welfare officer, C. E. Chisala, in 1995 to request a child's admittance into Rescue—is indicative of what I read in Rescue files:

> Tikondani comes from Chawo village, T. A. Kaphuka in Dedza District. His late father was Peter Kawu who passed away in 1993 after a long illness, and was a client for AFROB [which was described to me as an NGO "helping beggars"] since he was disabled. His mother passed away in February 1994 after falling from a mango tree at Chawo Village. Tikondani has 5 sisters and a brother but are not from the same father. His other siblings are with his late mother's brother. Tikondani has a grandfather, a Mr. Precious Sefasi (maternal side), who is now 75 years old and has a leg problem due to a road accident in 1960. He used to work as a roads foreman. He now does some subsistence farming in order to earn a living. Mr. Sefasi's wife passed away in 1998, and he has 4 sons and a daughter all of them married and do not care for their aged father.

> Tikondani's first born step-brother, Steve, is reported to be married with 2 children and stays in Dowa, but does not take care of the other siblings. However, through AFROB'S care and assistance Tikondani has been going to school at Lilongwe Boys Primary School and is now going into Standard 3. He was staying at Mchesi location under AFROB.

> After making a visit to Tikodani's village, I found him to be a suitable client for admission at Rescue, hence my recommendation that Tikondani be admitted at Rescue to make a date when I could take Tikondani and his friend Patrick to the village in readiness for the new school session beginning on 18th September, 1995. The two boys are Catholics.

The social welfare officer who made this request is suggesting that Tikondani, who has family members, be institutionalized because of poverty and not isolation or social exclusion. The focus is less about the loss of a parent and more about the economic circumstances facing

children. Tikondani was admitted to Rescue because he was poor, not because he was abandoned.

My own confusion in understanding how orphans were defined led me to ask how the government, communities, families, and children themselves conceptualize orphans. This issue is explored in this and subsequent chapters because it is the needs and vulnerabilities of the circumscribed orphan population that has mobilized a significant amount of resources and led to the development and implementation of orphan-care projects throughout sub-Saharan Africa. This particular demarcated population has proven to be complex and at times contradictory.

Becoming "Orphans": Constructing a New Demographic

As reviewed in the previous chapters, Ferguson (1994, 2006a) presents the case that the development apparatus constructs or misconstrues Lesotho in a deliberate way that allows for a targeted, technical, and perceived apolitical response. This resonates with my own work, only instead of the deliberate construction of a geo-political space to be targeted with economic development projects mine is the study of bodies and subjectivities and the ways in which they get constituted and then targeted by lay humanitarians, certain state ministries, Malawian communities, and families. However, Ferguson (1994) does not spend a significant amount of time demonstrating the ways in which the state constitutes itself. He simply argues that the state has to appear neutral and governable so as to be malleable to the development apparatus' goals and missions. In contrast, here I examine the ways in which certain ministries are implicated in the process of producing orphans in order to capitalize on the burgeoning global response, and therefore produce itself.

In chapter 3 I explained why and how the transnational, layperson orphan-aid community presents children in a particular way. I will juxtapose their definitions and discourses with those

of the Malawian state, which encompasses the office of the president, the MoWCD (including the Social Welfare Office), the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health. Just as with transnational NGOs, there is a deliberate maneuvering to make children labeled orphans more visible by various state actors. However, the intentions of these different stakeholders and the modes of producing orphans are different. In this chapter I argue that these ministries and governing bodies are attempting, albeit with limited success, to turn what the NGO industry posits to be an apolitical response to children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS into a state-building exercise. They accomplish this by drawing on transnational (including UNICEF) definitions and depictions of orphans, engaging with children's rights discourses, and promoting a decentralized response that requires a fully functioning local-level government infrastructure. I show how these ministries demonstrate an obvious lack of capacity that justifies significant expenditure, which draws on orphan funds.

The State's Position within a Neoliberal Framework

Dr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of Malawi, wrote the foreword to Malawi's NPA for OVC. He begins:

> The children of Malawi are under threat. Today's HIV/AIDS pandemic and severe poverty have put at risk the nation and in particular its children. With the increase in parental deaths due to HIV/AIDS, the number of orphans has risen dramatically, subjecting these children to emotional and physical neglect, such as a lack of love, care and protection. They are all too frequently denied access to essential services including education, health, water and sanitation, nutrition and psychosocial support. Many live with the additional effects of stigmatization, social exclusion, deprivation and discrimination, and are subjected to increased risks of economic and sexual exploitation.

> Now is the time for collaboration, the time for all sectors of society including family, the children themselves, community, government, NGOs, FBOs, CBOs and the international community to work together towards mitigating the daily hardships faced by orphans and other vulnerable children. This National Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (OVC) marks a recognized need for practical steps of cooperation that will ensure the rights of all OVC are fully met within the country…

In this statement, Bingu draws on some of the same discourses used by the transnational aid community meant to elicit a compassionate response. Words such as risk, severe poverty, under threat, neglect, and social exclusion are meant to raise alarm bells and suggest a state of emergency. In addition, he recognizes that social services are unavailable, introduces the idea that rights are being challenged, and indicates that a global response is necessary. The document then provides statistics on orphans.

The more orphans produced, the greater the ability to justify increasing government capacity. This process allows the Malawian state to tap into the proliferation of resources being allocated to AIDS and AIDS-associated effects. One way this is accomplished is by adopting the UN definition of an orphan, despite the fact that this does not necessarily resonate with Malawian conceptualizations. The Government of Malawi—in its original Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children Policy Guidelines (1992), which was updated in their 2005 National OVC Policy—defines an orphan as: A child who has lost one or both parents because of death and is under the age of eighteen.

This definition is based on the UN assumption that children are situated primarily within the biological family and thus made vulnerable with the loss of one of their parents. Under this definition, in 2005 Malawi estimated the number of orphans to be 1,008,000 with a total of 610,000 maternal orphans, 660,000 paternal orphans, and 240,000 double orphans[21] (GoM 2005).

A vulnerable child, according to the NPA for OVC, is:

> A child who has no able parents or guardians, staying alone or with elderly grandparents or lives in a sibling headed household or has no fixed place of abode and lacks access to healthcare, material, psychological care, education and has no shelter.

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[21] The NPA for OVC presents these figures as estimates, which accounts for any discrepancies.

No actual numbers of vulnerable children are reported, but it can be assumed that the majority of Malawi's under-eighteen population (n=7,900,000) would be considered vulnerable because of high poverty levels (74 percent of the population lives on less than US $1.25/day), limited access to education, healthcare, and material support. Conflating orphans and other vulnerable children into the OVC category produces a large number of children in need of assistance. These definitions do not necessarily reflect the experiences of children in Malawi, especially the orphan population, and they assume a particular type of vulnerability premised on the presence/absence or able-bodiedness of a biological parent. The complex web of social relations is erased by these definitions, which can lead to the production of inappropriate responses. Needless to say, the MoWCD and Social Welfare Office's ability to report such numbers lays the foundation for soliciting donor support from a variety of sources.

Another means of tapping into orphan-designated funds is through a deliberate emphasis on children's rights. In 1991, the Malawian government ratified the UNCRC, and in 1992 it published its first orphan-care policy (GoM 2005; UN 2000; UNICEF 2006). This policy was updated in 2005 with the guidance of UNICEF, UNAIDS, USAID, and WFP, and renamed the National Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children. The document reflects the human rights- and children's rights-based discourses espoused by UNICEF and other large donor organizations. The NPA for OVC states explicitly in its introduction:

> The National Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (NPA for OVC) is a historic document, reinforcing the Government of Malawi's continued commitment to mitigate the effects of the country's OVC crisis. The NPA is to serve as a common reference tool for Government and all stakeholders in guiding their efforts towards improving the lives of OVC and *promoting the rights of all children* (emphasis mine).

> The NPA for OVC has been developed in respect of global goals and commitments in line with international and national human rights instruments, policies, and other guiding principles.

[Listed and described are the Millennium Development Goals, the UNGASS Goals further to the United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, the Malawi Constitution, and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child].

In recognition of their lack of government infrastructure to directly protect or promote the rights of OVCs, this document paves the way for other organizations to fulfill this role, while simultaneously facilitating government expansion for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Specifically, the NPA for OVC outlines five key issues:

1. Provision of assistance including,
   a. To set standards and guidelines for all the stakeholders designing and implementing care programmes that will create a conducive environment for the care, support, and protection of OVC.
2. Coordination, to "facilitate the coordination, integration and harmonization of activities for care, protection and support of OVC at all levels in order to maximize resources, avoid duplication and guide the various OVC service providers. Structures for improving coordination are already being established."
3. Institutional and Legal Framework, "the Department of Social Welfare…will take a leading role to oversee that 'an institutional and legal framework is being provided within which services for the care and protection of OVC shall be organized and managed.'"
4. Transparency and Accountability – "Transparency and accountability are interdependent, representing two major pillars of good governance. The sharing of information (transparency) amongst all stakeholders fosters greater responsibility (accountability) by the beneficiaries and donors for all resources utilized."
5. Monitoring and Evaluation – "To minimize duplication of effort and ensure the optimal use of resources, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (formerly the Ministry of Gender, Child Welfare, and Community Service) will assume a leading role in monitoring and evaluating the situation of orphans…to continuously monitor and assess the magnitude of the programme of OVC, effectiveness of various care interventions and quality of care in line with the CRC."

I have included these objectives to highlight the way in which the state frames its responsibilities to OVCs, which has the underlying tenor of protecting children's rights and implicitly incorporates a neoliberal logic of decentralization and privatization.

State emphasis is not on what types of social services they will actually provide because of their adoption of neoliberal reforms (see Introduction). The government's withdrawal of public expenditure is a result of the austerity measures it adopted due to its precarious financial

situation, both internal and external, during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Chinsinga 2002). The government was forced to solicit loans from the World Bank and the IMF (Chinsinga 2002). As a result, beginning in 1981, the government implemented SAPs that were contingencies for the loans it received. Central to these policies was a decrease in government public expenditure or "state roll back," especially for social services (Ferguson 2006b). The poor, women and children in particular, have been the hardest hit by these reforms.

As a consequence, the state is expected to create an environment that encourages the private sector, NGOs, and civil society to take up the responsibilities of providing social services, including healthcare and education, for their citizens. Ferguson (2006b:96) argues that in the neoliberal global order the emphasis is on "getting the state out of the way" in an effort to bolster civil society at the grassroots level and encourage "a dynamic non-state sector." This logic dichotomizes the state, imagined to exist primarily at the national level, with that of civil society or the local level (Ferguson 2006b). In this topography, according to Ferguson (2006b:96), the state is viewed as "corrupt, patrimonial, stagnant, out of date, and holding back needed change." I demonstrate later that this perception is held by the organizations I studied. They explicitly avoid the state.

Under the auspices of these neoliberal policies and in line with decentralization and the transfer of social services away from the state, the government focuses on encouraging the development of oversight structures that can monitor, evaluate, coordinate, foster transparency and accountability, develop a legal framework, and design and guide the various orphan-care providers, presumably NGOs. This imagined coordinated and efficient government structure, which is currently not in existence, requires significant investment. Later I demonstrate that at the local district level there appears to be very little funding to carry out these responsibilities.

This is also the way in which the government officials I interviewed interpreted the NPA for

OVC. The national ECD director in the MoWCD explained:

> When you look at the policy, the primary function of the ministry is to put mechanisms in place for proper implementation for orphan-care and childcare programs. And looking at the minimal resources that are available really we have got to look at areas that will really keep the system moving and actually children being cared for. So, one of the areas is coordination and collaboration and putting up structures, strengthening structures that should facilitate the care of the children. And the coordination is very necessary because we have got to identify partnerships and work with those partnerships, putting in place structures that will enable us to interact with the partners that will enable us to support the children. So, the resources that are made available, mostly first of all is to look at our capacity to make sure the system is still running…

The partners referred to in this exerpt include a host of NGOs, from the larger, more established

organizations such as UNICEF and World Vision to the smaller, newer organizations like the

ones I studied.

At the district level, the district social welfare officer (DSWO) explained his role as

training CBOs (which are essentially civil society groups), such as DOS and Hope, to deal with

OVC issues. The DSWO is specifically focused on training CBOs in management, various OVC

activities that they are expected to run, and how to provide psychosocial support, and also to

facilitate trainings on various income-generating activities. In addition, the DSWO is meant to

serve as a mediary between local civil society groups (i.e., CBOs) and potential funding agents.

The DSWO in Dowa District stated, "It is our job to link CBOs with these organizations

(UNICEF, World Vision, NAC, OSA, etc.) to get them funds. We facilitate the linkage." At the

district level, the government is providing minimal if any resources directly to children. Instead,

its responsibilities are geared toward building local capacity of families and communities to

provide for children and connecting local groups to resources. As I demonstrate later, the district-

level capacity to monitor, evaluate, and train local groups is limited, promulgating the active

search for external funds. There is a clear tension between the central government and local districts as they grapple over the orphan-earmarked money that flows into Malawi.

To develop the ministry's capacity, the NPA for OVC lists the following as essential funding sources: NAC (supported by the Global Fund), the UK's Department for International Development, World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, UNICEF, USAID, the United Nations Policy Fund, WFP, the European Union, the Hope for African Children Initiative, Germany's Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the US Centers for Disease Control, and "other international and national NGOs, foundations, and private sector." The government recognizes its only real ability to contribute being that of manpower, stating, "Another potential source of funding is from MASAF [the Malawi Social Action Fund], and the Government Treasury but more in terms of providing human resource capacity." In reality, at the district level there are limited numbers of government workers, especially qualified ones, even though there is a pool of unemployed workers willing to be trained and hired if the resources to do so were made available by these funding agencies.

Another component of this policy that would encourage funding government expansion, especially at the district/local level, is the emphasis on community-based responses. Throughout this document, and in keeping with the data collected from interviews, it was continuously emphasized that the priority and overarching approach to caring for OVCs is maintaining children in their communities. The ministry's position, as stated in the NPA for OVC (GoM 2005:19), is that, "…more must be done to strengthen the traditional social care systems and develop new interventions to accommodate children deprived of parental care in order to avoid institutionalization." Their first guiding principle states: "The extended family system shall

remain the primary support structure for the care, protection, and development of orphans and other vulnerable children" (GoM 2005:26). They draw directly on the UNCRC preamble, paragraph 5, which reads, "…the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibility within the community" (GoM 2005:25).

The state has adopted a discourse of decentralization in keeping with the spirit of SAPs previously implemented. In order to direct OVC activities, the policy identifies a system of resource distribution, and monitoring and evaluation practices situated primarily at the district level. All CBOs should register with and solicit funds through the district assemblies and the DSW offices. All funders—ranging from larger transnational donors such as the Global Fund to small scale organizations like those I studied—are meant to work directly with the state to ensure that the disbursement of resources is done efficiently and effectively. Implementation of this policy requires significan local-level government infrastructure. What did I encounter in my research?

Dowa and Zomba Districts: Government Offices

Interviews with social workers in Zomba District, southern Malawi, revealed that officials in the MoWCD were unable to monitor or regulate NGOs providing care in their area for multiple reasons. Part of the reason for their failure to function efficiently and effectively is their lack of human resources. In most districts there is only one DSWO and an assistant. This makes oversight of NGOs difficult when they are proliferating so rapidly. Moreover, HIV is proving to be another barrier to effective local governance. For example, the DSWO in Zomba was unable to meet with me during my stay because she had to travel to Blantyre, the industrial

capital, for her cousin's funeral. She said she was unsure when she would return, because funerals last several days, and that I should interview her assistant. The DSW office was essentially immobilized in her absence. High mortality and required attendance at funerals of family members, co-workers, and neighbors has been documented (Bollinger and Stover 1999) as interfering with the economy and the functioning of local and national governments in sub-Saharan Africa.

The inefficiency and lack of resources at the Zomba District office, the third-largest district in Malawi, was apparent. While I was waiting for an interview, a woman came to the offices asking for the names and locations of the CBCCs in the area surrounding Zomba (CBCCs are managed by CBOs). CBCCs are childcare facilities established in communities, by community members, which attempt to collectively pool resources and care for the growing number of orphans in their communities. This is one of the most common forms of childcare for orphans in Malawi. The secretary in the district office pointed to a minimum of forty, five-inch thick, three-ring, dust-covered binders that lined the bookshelves and spilled onto tables, saying that these were the only records they have access to and that she could go through them and look for whatever information she wanted. There were no computers, printers, or electronic resources in the offices. When I asked how they monitored NGOs that run orphanages or the CBCCs, I was told they relied on these organizations to send reports, because there was no gas for their vehicles and they were therefore unable to visit the various facilities.

Dowa District social welfare workers were likewise overburdened and lacked the necessary resources to monitor the various organizations attempting to serve OVCs in their area. There are 189 registered CBOs in the district, but just one DSWO and two assistants for a region that is 3,041 square kilometers with an estimated population of 566,678 people. The DSWO had

a motorcycle for transportation, but the two assistants relied on public transportation or bicycles to reach the communities within the district. Fuel costs were high, and many times the DSWO was unable to pay for petrol. For these reasons, the DSW offices rely on CBOs to come to them and register independently. Funds don't reach the districts to allow them to carry out their functions, since they do not have what is required to monitor or coordinate the burgeoning OVC community responses. It is difficult to track where these resources are being captured or if they even exist. It may be that the central government is able to gain control of this funding (in the form of stipends for OVC "trainings" as suggested later in this discussion).

DOS, the organization I was working with in Dowa District, had incentive to register with the DSW office because they wanted to submit a proposal to World Vision, which was handling Global Fund money. Otherwise, the district may never have known about its existence or activities. Mr. Banda, the DSWO in Dowa, expressed approval of DOS but frustration with AIC. AIC was receiving and funding proposals from CBOs such as DOS, but they had no relationship with the government. Banda saw this as problematic because it could lead to CBOs getting double-funded. If the DSW office was made aware of the CBOs that AIC was supporting, they theoretically could monitor the various projects and funds being allocated within the district. They could then prevent unscrupulous activities, which is a common critique of CBOs. As I will discuss in chapter 6, DOS was funded by AIC as well as World Vision, UNICEF, and OSA for similar activities, while other CBOs were struggling to secure funding from a single source. Banda explained:

> [ALF] Do you have problems of double funding?
>
> It happens because of the very same funders who work in their own private ways. Any funding from NGOs should go through the district. AIC has not come to the district to do things in a proper way. We only hear about them because of DOS. DOS just says they come there. Orphan Support Africa was different. They actually came through our office.

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I was directly involved in that process. I don't know why they (AIC) don't want to work with the district social welfare officer. It's strange. It's really strange because our role is to coordinate the CBOs in the district. But, here I am and I don't have any information on AIC and what they are doing. I have told the folks at DOS to tell AIC to come here and formalize their involvement in the district. It's been a year since I made that request and I still have not heard from them.

[ALF] What types of repercussions can AIC face for not following protocol and going through the district?

We as a district, as of now, I can say the only mechanism is to put a stop on their activities and funding. But, we don't really want to do that because I have been told that people are just being helped because of them and so we don't want to stop that. What we want is for AIC to come straight to us, but we have only gone to DOS with this matter asking them to tell AIC to come to us. We don't even have the AIC phone number to call them ourselves.

The other thing is that I am told AIC works in other areas of the country as well and that they are a registered NGO. So I am surprised that they aren't following the procedures because as an NGO they should know they are supposed to work through us. That way we can identify the communities in our district who are really in need and direct AIC how to proceed.

As suggested by this quote and affirmed through interviews and observations, these

smaller-scale, lay humanitarian organizations now involved in orphan care may ignore

government policies, practices, and laws. The lack of resources at the district level prevents

monitoring and evaluation of these organizations. The lack of capacity for monitoring can and

does lead to fraudulent activity. As I demonstrate later, another complicating factor is that AIC

and Southern Allied Missions do not want the government directly involved in their work. They

have been convinced that the government is corrupt and parasitic. Therefore, they purposefully

work around the government. Paradoxically, as the government is demonized in the eyes of these

NGOs, their own work is naturalized as good and honest charity. I demonstrate in chapter 6 that

AIC's work inadvertently opens up the door for corruption and manipulation.

Interviews and participant observation at the MoWCD offices also demonstrate the lack

of capacity. While there are numerous task forces and steering committees that develop policy

guidelines meant to direct the activities of various stakeholders, especially the NGOs providing

services, there is no direct way to monitor NGO activities or hold NGOs accountable for their

actions. One senior official in the MoWCD explained:

> We need a permanent coordinating structure to monitor the efforts of various stakeholders, because there are gaps as organizations do things differently, and there were observations that some children were not benefiting…

> [AF]: If an organization, say an NGO, comes in and decides to run its own program that goes against the policy of the government, is there a mechanism to control or punish them?

> Yes and no. No because the government hasn't delegated this kind of responsibility across the structures. This is because of the centralized nature of our government, so there are many issues that go unattended. This is also because when activities are reported, action by the government is often not forthcoming.

> Yes, because the communities use the traditional leaders to intervene because the children belong to them.

There is currently no mechanism in place to discipline organizations that do not comply

with national policy guidelines, and local traditional leaders are left to deal with problems that

arise independent of the national or district government. Interestingly, when asked about what

services they directly supply to orphans, the senior ministry officer mentioned workshops for

communities to help CBOs solicit money and support from some of the very NGOs they critique

for working around them.

There is now some recognition by the World Bank and economic theorists and policy

makers that the severe cutbacks in government budgets associated with neoliberal reforms have

had a negative impact on those countries targeted with SAPs. Malawian ministries connected

with child-related issues purposefully draw on their obvious incapability to provide services or

even monitor other providers to try and leverage transnational resources. Orphans make this

easier. By producing large numbers of OVCs and then failing state capacity assessments

conducted by potential lenders/donors, such as UNICEF and USAID, it can be argued that

orphan-care resource allocation should be directed toward state-building projects. This is

precisely what has happened. In a draft copy of UNICEF's capacity assessment of Malawi, the

author states (Parry-Williams 2007):

13.6 Service Delivery

The department is overburdened with tasks while at the same time being grossly understaffed and lacking in proven technical skills. The shortage of professional staff needs to be corrected and salaries increased so they receive a living wage. Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) could involve donors, UN bodies, influential Malawi agencies, eg MHRC, International NGOs (INGOs) and others in pressing for those improvements so as to better address the million plus OVCs. If the MoWCD wants to push forward an alternative care strategy based on prevention through family support then it should consider the establishing of a Care & Protection unit at HQ to promote best practice in family support, fostering, adoption and in Children's Homes. For this there would need to be some well qualified staff as resource persons who would also advocate best practice in the use of these interventions. The districts would benefit if there were staff trained in these areas in the districts.

A problem is that family support, fostering, adoption and homes are if well monitored and organised intensive users of staff time. If such a strategy is to work there will need to be greater defining of staff roles in some form of rationalisation at district level. Alternatively the off-loading of some work could be investigated but that too would require monitoring. The constraints on the department's human resources are likely to grow with the scaling up of the cash transfer scheme so some protection of family support and alternative care strategies seems essential.

The Director of DCD suggested that the department draw up a 5 Year Work Plan to establish a C & P Unit at HQ and District C & P specialists with guidelines and set targets.

This lack of state capacity, which is leading to an increased presence of NGOs providing

social services to orphans, coupled with the government's commitment to a rights-based

approach to OVCs, justifies funneling OVC resources toward state-building activities. While the

intention of the organizations I studied was to work around what they perceived to be a corrupt

or defunct state, their very presence inadvertently justifies building up the state. This is best

illustrated with the solicitation and allocation of Global Fund money coming into Malawi. NAC

solicited and in 2006 received US $19 million from the Global Fund.[22] Table 12 is a breakdown of how this money was spent.

All of these objectives are directed at increasing government capacity. In theory, this might lead to a more efficient and effective provision of social services to orphans, but according to my observations there seems to be little capacity growth to date. For example, Bridget Mwali, my research assistant, was one of the social welfare assistants trained through the aforementioned grant. Her training at the Magomero School was funded by NAC, with the expectation that the government of Malawi would then hire her at the district level. She did her attachments—the equivalent of an unpaid internship—in Dowa District, expecting government placement within months of the end of her program. I hired her at the end of January 2008. She accepted my offer of employment, but made it clear that when the government called her with her permanent placement as a district-level social welfare assistant she would have to cease employment on my project. She was not placed at a district site until early December of 2008 Her first paycheck wasn't received until almost a year later in January 2010. It is unclear why her placement took so long. I do not have any direct evidence to draw conclusions, but it is possible that the MoWCD assured the Global Fund grantors that they would budget money to take up Bridget's salaries once she was trained and no such money materialized. It is unclear if the money was siphoned off elsewhere or if it simply did not exist within the ministry's coffers.

The money that is actually being spent on state-building or capacity-building programs may be allocated in ineffective ways. For example, I repeatedly showed up for interviews with a government employee, only to be turned away because he or she had gone to a training funded and managed by an NGO. These trainings could last anywhere from one day to over a week.

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[22] As of late 2009, the Global Fund had disbursed a total of US $233 million to Malawi through the NAC to fight various elements of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Table 12: Breakdown of Expenditures

Objectives	Sample of Activities to Achieve Objectives	Budget (total cost)
Objective 1: Strengthen and develop an enabling policy and legal framework to protect OVCs made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS and poverty	- Review, amend, draft laws for compliance with CRC - Convene planning meeting to review laws - Draft new laws - Disseminate new laws - Orient law enforcement officers - Develop easy-to-read guidelines on key policy and legal documents - Print guidelines - Facilitate the formulation of by-laws and operational guidelines at DA level - Provide material support to thirty child-friendly courtrooms	US $900,000
Objective 2: Strengthen institutional and technical capacity at all levels, with particular attention on district and community capacity and systems frameworks to manage, finance, and coordinate a scaled-up response to OVC	*See below for breakdown of activities and budget*	
I. Coordination	- Provide financial support to OVC Technical and Advisory Support Unit (a national-level coordinating body falling under the director of the social welfare department) - Provide financial support for the functioning of the National OVC steering committee - Provide financial support for the functioning of the Technical Working Group (*stipends?*) - Provide financial support to decentralized structures to host monthly coordination meetings (*stipends?*)	US $224,000
II. Capacity Building	- Provide orientation course for newly recruited social welfare officers and assistants - Train fifty social welfare assistants at the district level - Recruit and train additional four hundred child protection workers at the community level - Provide incentives to community child protection workers - Provide bicycles to child protection workers	US $2,025,000

Table 12 (cont'd)

	- Purchase resource kits for community child protection workers - Train foster parents on childcare and psychosocial support - Train members of the OVC committee at district level - Recruit nine international professionals	
III. Monitoring and Evaluation	- Create and maintain district-level and national OVC databases - Train an M&E Officer in the Technical and Advisor Support Unit - Hire technical advisors - Establish email network among the district social welfare officers - Host OVC database on website - Organize annual OVC stakeholders meetings - Provide fuel for data collection, analysis and report writing - Train OVC officers - Train social welfare officers - Print community registers - Train professionals on data collection, analysis, and report writing	US $9,012,700
Objective 3: Increase access of OVC to primary and secondary education and other services with support from safety nets	- Hire international consultant to do training of trainers - Train the trainers - Train staff on management of Safety New Systems at the district assembly level - Provide financial resources to the district assemblies to implement a safety net for OVC	US $9,191,125
Total: Orphan Care and Support Component		**US $19,104,775**

Among the expatriot development community, I regularly heard complaints about the cost of running workshops or implementing development programs because all state employees expected per diems. The child protection officer for UNICEF bemoaned this process, saying that nobody would attend their trainings if high stipends were not used as an incentive.

Moreover, these payments to current employees did not necessarily contribute to capacity building. Instead, they often served to divert the attention of employees from their governmental responsibilities toward supplemental and highly lucrative income-generating activities not

always relevant to their position. For example, the American managing partner for Miracles needed to train her housemothers for the orphanage to be able to register with the government. In an effort to set up this training, the partner met with the national ECD programme officer who is positioned within the central government. He said he was the person who would train Miracles housemothers for a fee, which turned out to be cost prohibitive. The managing partner expressed frustration to me, suggesting this was a corrupt official attempting to profit from orphaned children. I do not know if this was the case or if the ECD programme officer regularly participates in these types of trainings, but it does seem like training a group of ten housemothers should be done by a lower-level employee.

Bridget, like many other government employees or trainees, spent the time between December of 2008, when my project ended, and early 2010 working on various non-governmental development projects, primarily collecting data. This is a common practice for the majority of local government workers. Salaries are so low that many government employees in nearly all ministries with access to development dollars take state jobs with the intention of positioning themselves to get contracted by larger development organizations to assist in research projects or the facilitation of workshops and seminars. Bridget regularly expressed her desire to be placed in a district that was known for receiving significant resources from larger NGOs (preferably in the central or southern regions). She explained that most government workers relied on international organizations for the majority of their salaries at the expense of fulfilling their actual government responsibilities. She said that NGOs actively sought government workers, because there is a lack of trained, bilingual, and computer literate Malawians available to participate on their projects. While minimal strides are being made in growing the government's district-level capacity, it could be argued that resources are actually

strengthening the donor development apparatus. More significantly, this raises questions as to whether or not the nineteen million Global Fund dollars are serving OVCs.

Thus far I have examined the ways in which various government ministries and workers have deliberately drawn on orphan discourses that make visible and discursively create an aid category for the purpose of attempting to capture some of the influx of orphan-earmarked resources. They attempt to justify expenditures for state building by emphasizing the desire to protect children's rights. In the next section, I examine the emergence of humanitarian organizations that are proliferating to meet the social service needs of people living in places like Malawi that are impacted by SAPs.

Countries like Malawi have been unable to invest in social-service infrastructure. The result is an increase in dependence on outside organizations and countries to provide healthcare, food security, education, and disaster relief. I explore the development of the humanitarian apparatus and its relationship to the state, as well as the place of rights in the organizations that are now caring for children. I explained in the Introduction that the adoption of a neoliberal logic focused on decentralization and privatization has legitimated the presence of NGOs to begin offering services necessary to provide for children's rights. But that does not mean these organizations necessarily engage in a rights-based discourse, nor are they particularly cognizant of what rights children have.

Humanitarianism: Emerging Orphan Responses

At the end of the 19th century, understandings of humanitarian responses were most commonly tied to the rise of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) (Aeberhard 1996). The IFRC embraced the central tenets of impartiality, neutrality, and confidentiality to provide a framework for their responses to human crisis

situations (Allen and Styan 2000; Macrae 2000). Impartiality refers to the "provision of relief on the basis of need and regardless of political affiliation, race, nationality or creed" (Macrae 2000:89). The IFRC was also committed to remaining neutral in political conflicts (Macrae 2000). In fact, it was IFRC policy not to intervene in any way during a humanitarian crisis without the permission and support of both sides engaged in conflict. Confidentiality was important in maintaining this neutral position. It was IFRC policy to not report human rights abuses or the atrocities committed on civilians in the hopes of retaining access and providing care to these vulnerable populations (Allen and Styan 2000).

These policies and practices were predicated on the idea of "respect for sovereignty" (Macrae 2000). At their inception, humanitarian organizations recognized the power and legitimacy of states. They did not want to become enmeshed in internal affairs. In fact, the majority of IFRC resources were distributed through state actors and not independent contractors or international channels operating on the ground (Macrae 2000). Critics have pointed out that in many cases the state itself is guilty of fueling or directly committing human rights abuses. The power of the state to commit these atrocities is evident today in the Sudan, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, and China. However, it was the crisis in Biafra that challenged and changed the nature of humanitarian interventions and called into question the central tenets of impartiality, confidentiality, and neutrality (Allen and Styan 2000).

Bernard Koucher, a volunteer for the Red Cross during the Biafran conflict, was outraged at the human rights atrocities he witnessed that were committed by the Nigerian state against innocent civilians (Allen and Styan 2000). He was even more upset that the humanitarian organizations did not make the genocide known to the global community, viewing this silence as akin to complicity, and even responsibility for the continued massacre (Macrae 2000). Koucher

spoke out and engaged the media to engender international pressure on the Nigerian state. The purposeful use of the media plays a pivotal role today in reporting on humanitarian crisis situations in order to bring awareness, provoke a response from a global audience, apply pressure to nation-states, and also legitimize humanitarian organizations' involvement in relief endeavors (Moeller 1999). The media also may spin situations in ways that do not necessarily reflect what is happening on the ground.

By 1971, Koucher founded Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF, or Doctors Without Borders), an organization that was not framed by the principles of neutrality and confidentiality, but rather embraced a universal morality or an ethics of humanity. The need to recognize, publicize, and address human rights abuses was at the crux of MSF's emergence. At this time, numerous private voluntary organizations (PVOs) sprang up, and a much more extensive humanitarian complex materialized. Nguyen asserts that MSF and the Biafran conflict marked the "birth of modern medical humanitarians" and Africa has become the "global hub" of these efforts (2009:199). The right to interfere emerged, and state sovereignty could legitimately be challenged, opening the door to new transnational regimes of governance (Pandolfi 2003). Humanitarianism, as epitomized by MSF, is characterized by the acceptance and incorporation of human rights (Fox 2001; Manzo 2008; Pandolfi 2003; Slim 2000), purposefully engaging in peace building (Fox 2001), and "ending the distinction between development and humanitarian aid" (Fox 2001:276).

In sum, scholars suggest that humanitarianism has evolved from a focus on relief of suffering to a longer-term endeavor that is increasingly framed by human rights ideals, is politically engaged, and incorporates development into overall project design and objectives (Fox 2001). Questions have been raised regarding the inclusion of human rights, political

agendas, and development into humanitarian activities, particularly whether or not this is an appropriate shift in direction. These are ongoing debates and areas of study. Today the focus of researchers is primarily on well-established, larger organizations extending humanitarian assistance, such as MSF, the Red Cross, and UNICEF. This focus overlooks the smaller-scale PVOs (which include lay humanitarian groups), which are increasingly involved in humanitarian action/aid, as I have described in Malawi. In the next section I show that the lay humanitarian organizations I studied are unaware of rights discourses and amendments. At times, they even infringe on the rights of the children in their care.

Orphan-Care NGOs: What about Rights?

The scholarly community has engaged with and published extensively on children's rights ideologies and the need for the global humanitarian community to address situations whereby children's rights are being abused, especially in the areas of child labor, trafficking/slavery, or land inheritance, or when situated within violent geopolitical struggles. Additionally, the United Nations and the majority of states have created and ratified children's rights amendments that are meant to guide any organization or entity working with children. Large transnational humanitarian NGOs, such as Save the Children and UNICEF, have incorporated some components of children's rights into their projects (Manzo 2008). There are fifty-four articles laid out in the UNCRC. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child reiterates similar—at times identical—components in their forty-eight-article document. The ten guiding principles that I briefly summarize, found in both the UNCRC and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, include:

(1) Right to non-discrimination.
(2) Best interests of the child will be first and foremost. The child has a right to survival/life and development in a healthy and normal manner.
(3) Right to a name and nationality.

(4) Freedom of expression, association, conscience, religion. The right to leisure, cultural activities, health and health services, adequate housing, and social security.

(5) Special protection is to be extended to the disabled.

(6) Children are to be protected against labor and exploitation, abuse, torture, and all forms of cruelty.

(7) Parental care and the protection of the family are prioritized. Only under exceptional circumstances is a child to be separated from his/her mother.

(8) Free education.

(9) The child will be the first to be given protection and relief.

(10) "The child shall be protected from racial, religious and other forms of discrimination. He/she shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance and friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood" (as quoted in Achilihu 2010:23).

According to Achilihu (2010:32), "The CRC recognizes four categories of substantive rights: survival, development, protection, and participation rights of children." Some of these rights, whether explicit or not, are being provided by the organizations I studied. Other rights are being infringed upon. I found few references to rights-based agendas in the organizations I studied, despite literature that points to an emergence of human rights-based humanitarianism (Fox 2001; Slim 2000). This may be due to the proliferation within these organizations of lay people who are often motivated by immediate emotional responses and the sense of urgency such emotions may invoke. When the founder of one organization was asked about the roles of children's rights in Malawi and in his organization he said:

> Rights are a huge topic and it is a little bit blurry. I am blurry on it…to talk about rights you have to think about enforcement. I don't see that happening, but I'm quick to say I am not an expert. Orphans need them, but I don't see public philosophical thinking on that and at present I don't see the political will to respond to these social issues.

An influential donor to the same organization said:

> [Rights] have become a big issue in the United States and there are whole organizations … and they lobby in Congress and you know all kinds of things, that's *not* the issue over here at all, in my opinion…I mean there are so many issues ahead of that one here, you know, surviving and eating halfway well. Having somebody look after you if you are kid, and if it's an auntie or grandmother or whatnot is so much more important than any children's rights concept, but you know we're in a different spot completely in the United States. I think it's somewhat beyond [the organization's] role (emphasis mine).

When asked which rights of the child were protected in her orphanage, the manger of one of the orphanages was puzzled, as she did not know what children's rights were. One of the reasons rights are avoided in humanitarian and development circles is because of the lack of infrastructure, either perceived or real, of states, especially in southern Africa, to uphold them. As the former director Rescue Children's Village said:

> There are so many things you have to do for a child before you can even get to rights. There are the basics—food, water, and shelter. There are so many children in the villages just running around and needing things. Basic things have to happen. For that reason, people don't think in terms of human rights or child's rights because so many other things have to happen. In order to enforce human rights amendments you have to have a legal framework. There isn't one here. Those with money can bypass it and the poor cannot access it. Here, stealing a goat gets more severe punishment than raping a girl child. It is just impossible to think that way [about rights].

What is evident in the quote is that the former director is unaware of what rights actually are. Food, water, and shelter are explicit rights laid out in the UNCRC. It was not uncommon to find lay humanitarians and volunteer tourists uneducated about these doctrines, therefore assuming they either were not responsible for or actually providing rights to children. Many believed rights were the sole responsibility of the state. This potentially creates tension, as the organizations I studied avoided the state in many ways, which may account for their lack of understanding about children's rights.

The founder of AIC, Steve Cross, explained why they avoid becoming too closely affiliated with the government and its children's rights-based philosophy:

> If one starts from the initial premise that we are doing worthwhile work in this country and you can say "It's better to do business than to leave" then you can't convey the appearance that you're leaping into bed with politicians…So, we don't have ties to politicians so we can stay here long term. Maybe we should have a relationship with the government, but we want to survive…

Two of the NGOs I studied have registered with the state, as required by law, while the third was out of compliance with state health and other standards and without state sanction for a number of years before beginning the registration process in 2008. Even though one of the organizations I studied is registered with the state, they regularly work around local governing bodies. While some claims about limited state capacity or the potential for corruption at the state or judicial level may be true, the constant maneuvering by NGOs around government does not encourage the development of a more cohesive, transparent, and established governing system.

Because the NGOs I studied do not frame their work within a children's rights-based matrix, they are thus able to conceptualize and implement projects that are technical and viewed as immediate fixes to circumscribed problems. Lay humanitarians may become fixated on a particular problem that they identify or define (Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009). The problem is imagined to be the fault of the local communities within which they are manifest, and the macro-level or structural factors that help shape the local context are ignored, dismissed, or never considered (Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009). As I have shown, orphans are imagined to be a problem produced by Malawians; they are the result of the misdeeds of their parents. In this scenario, the west provides the solution, replicating unequal and paternalistic power dimensions reminiscent of the colonial era. Lay humanitarians create and implement a solution to the problem, premised on ideas of modernity, which is often disconnected from local customs, ideas, and desires, as well as being ineffective in producing any real change. Rights get ignored or infringed upon when easing suffering is the singular priority.

Framing the situation within a children's rights-based rubric might alleviate some of the problematic outcomes discussed throughout this dissertation. A rights-based approach, if "rooted and legitimized within the local cultures of African societies" (An-Na'im 2002:8) can ensure

self-determination, as Malawians would be afforded the freedom to define their own priorities instead of working with the priorities and objectives of the lay humanitarians and their donors. Additionally, a rights-based approach can lead to the extension of the protection of human welfare and dignity (An-Na'im 2002:8) beyond the minimalist easing of suffering. Structural barriers to ensuring human rights and dignity can be brought to light and better addressed.

Finally, and of significance to my discussion in chapter 3 on images and discourses around children, several larger child-centered NGOs have become signatories to codes of ethical conduct regulating the use of images to generate funding and support (Manzo 2008). Save the Children, Oxfam, and the British NGO, Make Poverty History, have adopted polices framed by children's rights conventions meant to protect the dignity of children as it relates to their images and the discourses produced about them. These guidelines prohibit the use of images that depict children's suffering in ways that portray them as "pathetic," passive and "helpless victims" (Manzo 2008:638). The policies were put into place in an effort to combat the perpetuation of the paternalistic logic that "reproduces colonial visions of a superior north and an inferior south" (Manzo 2008:636). The organizations I studied were not aware these codes existed. In fact, as I have shown, most of them purposefully draw on images of dying or sick children to foster a humanitarian response as well as reinforce their own legitimacy (see Manzo 2008 for a discussion on how these images become logos for NGOs).

Incorporating these rights-based codes of conduct could have positive consequences for the organizations producing them and the children being targeted with both resources and a camera lens. They hold the potential to end some of the paternalistic notions that in many ways frame humanitarian responses. In addition, they may open a space for a more sophisticated

discussion that highlights those factors—global, local, and everywhere in between—that actually shape the HIV pandemic, endemic poverty, and human rights abuses.

Here I have presented some potentially positive impacts a rights-based framework could bring to orphan-focused humanitarian responses in Malawi. I should point out that, while the philosophical thinking might be there, putting these ideas into practice is proving difficult. For example, even the larger signatories to the codes of conduct structuring the use of images actually continue to rely on the very images they purport infringe on children's rights to dignity. Moreover, as the proliferation of lay humanitarians continues, we are likely to see a continued trend of seeking out or defining simplistic problems that can easily be targeted with west-inspired technical fixes. Proponents of a human rights-based approach to development and humanitarianism need to imagine a way to capture the minds of compassionate donors—much like images of suffering children do—in order to create a paradigm shift that moves beyond theoretical discussions.

Conclusion

I have argued here that the Malawian state is purposefully making visible orphans and other vulnerable children. They suggest that in the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic children's rights are being impacted, which justifies the attempts by certain government ministries to expand the state apparatus to protect children. In this way, the orphan-care craze meant to support vulnerable, innocent, and apolitical beings becomes political. Similar to Ferguson's (1994) findings in Lesotho, the government of Malawi is capturing a significant amount of orphan-earmarked resources in an effort to benefit its own evolution and not necessarily that of

orphans.[23] As noted in chapter 3, the de-professionalized humanitarians I studied did not engage in a rights discourse and often perceived their work as apolitical. However, the very fact of their presence is used to justify the expansion of the government dealing with child welfare, and it is thus implicated directly in this larger political project. However, I have tried to demonstrate here, especially in the case of Bridget, that even though resources are being spent on state capacity building and infrastructure development, presumably at the district level, there does not seem to be any significant or visible signs of improved state infrastructure at this time. Whatever resources are getting diverted to government bodies associated with orphan care seem to be getting captured at the central government level. Districts and the orphans they are meant to serve do not seem to be benefiting from these expenditures that are predicated on the presence and needs of orphans.

Meanwhile, the state continues to rely on outside humanitarians and a variety of orphan-care stakeholders to meet the needs of OVCs. Interviews—at the MoWCD, the Ministry of HIV/AIDS and Nutrition, and DSW offices in Zomba, Dowa, and Karonga—all reveal that national and local governments are struggling to monitor orphan-care activities, and transnational NGOs are able to exercise their own will in local communities. Appadurai (1990) argues that the rise of globalization and global cultural flows is leading to new complex and disjunctive models and forms of governance and that NGOs are playing an increasing role in directing economies, social services, and activism in this new globalized world. Specifically, he speaks of the need to

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[23] For the most part, it seems that these resources are getting trapped at the national level, as evidenced by the lack of any real growth in local districts. However, Bridget and her fellow trainees did eventually get hired, which essentially doubled the district-level social welfare personnel across the board. It is too early to tell what type of impact this will have in the lives of orphaned children.

"recognize that nongovernmental actors are here to stay and somehow need to be made part of the new models of *global governance* and *local democracy*" (emphasis mine).

This is not unique to Malawi; in many poor countries it is the inability of the state to provide for its citizens that justifies the intrusion of outside, transnational, and humanitarian regimes of power. I suggest that while there are now new spaces—especially due to increased technologies and border flows—as Appadurai argues, the same power structure that determines the haves from the have-nots is being reproduced. Planners, including larger NGOs like UNICEF and Save the Children, as well as lay humanitarian groups, such as AIC and Miracles, may not intend for these global capitalist systems to be reinforced, but in actuality they are deliberately importing a neoliberal ideology that does little to impact poverty, bolster children's rights, or improve the capacity of the state. In fact, money spent on state infrastructure may be strengthening the development apparatus itself. This is exemplified by the production of new government employees who are actively seeking outside development work at the expense of their government responsibilities, because it is more lucrative or because they simply cannot earn a living wage in their capacity as lower-level government officials.[24]

Moreover, poverty is not being significantly reduced, and I will show how children, especially those raised in institutions, are ascribing to western, capitalist expectations of modernity and cosmopolitanism that are somewhat antithetical to the more dominant Malawian ethos and unrealistic in Malawi's current economic climate (chapter 4). In many ways, this reaffirmation of the dominant, inequitable power structure is an unplanned outcome. As Ferguson (1994:20) writes, "…intentional plans are always important, but never in quite the way the planners imagined."

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[24] This refers to people like Bridget, who get trained for government service yet are never hired, or who are partially hired (underpaid) and then have to look for supplemental incomes.

The state and transnational organizations are not the only ones purposefully producing orphans. Malawian families have a stake in being able to claim orphans due to the proliferation of resources targeting this demographic. Children are also deliberately drawing on the orphan status to gain access to these incoming resources. In the next chapter I focus on the situation of orphan-care projects as they materialize in Malawian rural communities. There are unanticipated outcomes associated with the construction and adoption of a universal, normalizing, homogenous aid category, such as that created by UNICEF and adopted within Malawi's NPA for OVC. Returning to Tsing (2005), it is within the "sticky materiality" between these definitions and local realities that I bore witness to disjuncture as the universal and the local get played out in the lives of children in Malawi. As the state promotes the injection of orphan-focused resources into villages, they also recognize emerging problems, including discrimination, fraudulent activity, the misuse of funds, and the privileging of the orphan identity. The director of early childhood education in the MoWCD touched on all three of these issues explaining:

> Yes. It is bad to call someone *ana amasiye*. The issue is that orphans belong to the community and the household. Traditionally, [orphans] have been supported by relatives, and most children never even knew if they were orphaned because they were shuffled around and raised by various relatives. So, there was nothing negative since their status wasn't emphasized, it wasn't even known. But, things are changing now because of the socioeconomic situation.

> Also, people are producing orphans in order to get resources. It has become a source of income for some families. They take in a few children and all of a sudden they have an orphanage. This is what is creating discrimination.

> Also, orphans become happy to be orphans. They receive so many resources that children are happy to be identified as OVC. In Malawi, there are some children who have both parents and are significantly poorer than orphans. We have to try and find a balance. That is why we tell people who want to support orphans that "no," they should support children.

In the following chapter I examine outcomes associated with the mobility, or lack thereof, of transnational and state-inspired orphan discourses and the associated capital as they

make their way into Malawian communities and families. I argue that the ideal "African village," as mythologized by westerners as a harmonious geo-spatial unit working for the good of the whole, is actually proving to be a place of increasing stratification, fragmentation, anxiety, and spiritual insecurity.

CHAPTER 6: "MONEY HAS JUST COME, FALLEN FROM THE HEAVENS":
COMMUNITY-BASED ORPHAN CARE AND SPIRITUAL INSECURITY

Despite depictions of orphans as socially isolated, the majority of Malawi's orphans are under the care and guidance of either a single parent or other extended family member in rural villages (Peters, Walker, and Kambewa 2008). Few children actually fall through these social safety nets and end up in the streets or orphanages. For this reason, some organizations, such as AIC, funnel the majority of their resources toward community-based projects. However, many of these projects fail to deliver substantive resources to children (Peters, Walker, and Kambewa 2008). I argue here that the idea of "community" as understood by western donors and project designers may not reflect the ways in which Malawians conceptualize and negotiate their social relations and places in villages. Instead of a harmonious and homogenous spatial unit working for the good of the whole, Malawian villages reflect heterogeneity and stratification. Modernity, AIDS, colonialism, capitalism, globalization, and development are implicated in the process of creating stratification and inequality within villages. Growing disparities may lead to community discontent. Witchcraft, an idiom gauging social stability (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999), is taking on new and more pervasive forms, indicating stress and anxiety within Malawian communities.

In this chapter I focus on the work of AIC, which targets children in their communities. I have already examined the disjuncture between lay humanitarian orphan discourses and Malawian perspectives (chapters 1 and 3). Equally relevant is the imagined idea these organizations have of community being a tightly woven, socially cohesive geo-spatial unit and thus an appropriate focus for their projects. Later I explore concepts of community as they relate to development. I also demonstrate through ethnographic examples of AIC's work that communities are proving to be deeply stratified places of unequal development, where certain

individuals are achieving new levels of advancement and autonomy. Orphans' bodies have become a site of contestation, as certain community members benefit from registering orphans and reporting their numbers to funders without necessarily meeting the needs of these children. This handling of orphans is leading to jealousy, anxiety, and spiritual insecurity, which is not what AIC intended. In fact, AIC's goal is to build upon community structures and encourage cooperation and cohesion, not create friction and social differentiation. In this chapter I also discuss witchcraft and the emerging trend of involving children in these occult activities. I argue that the nature of witchcraft accusation signals community distress and anxiety tied to growing inequalities. A focus on orphans at the community level, which includes the injection of significant amounts of resources that are not equally distributed, is leading to increasing spiritual insecurity.

AIC and DOS: General Characteristics

AIC has always focused its work at the community level, adopting a holistic approach to addressing issues associated with HIV/AIDS (see chapter 2). The focus on orphans is only one part of their overall program, which includes providing nursing scholarships, funding mobile clinics, training home-based care volunteers to visit HIV-positive patients, and supporting voluntary testing and counseling services. AIC is especially vocal about promoting and funding income-generating activities for women. Orphans are one piece of the larger program.

The majority of AIC resources are distributed to CBOs scattered throughout the country. These organizations can submit proposals for any of the listed activities. It is common for CBOs in Malawi to receive their funding by submitted proposals to a variety of transnational and parastatal organizations, such as UNICEF, NAC, and World Vision. The goal is to foster civic engagement and local empowerment by having communities devise their own solutions to the

problems they are facing. They propose their solutions through typed, often electronically submitted, grant applications. In theory, this encourages community ownership and solidarity as individuals come together to tackle issues such as poverty, orphans, and HIV/AIDS.

DOS is the AIC site I worked in because it was one of the AIC-supported CBOs focused primarily on orphans. It is located in Dowa District (central region) approximately sixty kilometers from Lilongwe. The catchment area includes several adjacent villages within the TA Mesu, but the majority of resource distribution is focused on families and children in close proximity to Chinsisi Village. I focused on three villages within TA Mseu, including Chinsisi Village, Mtsika Village, and Mwenda Village.

DOS has a small board, which includes both men and women from the community, most of whom are related. The chairperson is a young man in his mid-twenties named Noah Banda. The secretary, also a young man in his twenties, is named Levinson Mwalimu. These two officers were the most active members of the committee and the ones who began DOS and submitted all of the organization's orphan proposals. They submitted their first proposal to AIC in 2006 and began receiving funding later that year. They have subsequently submitted and received funding from a variety of other organizations.

Today, DOS receives orphan funds to carry out a variety of projects, including paying school fees for orphans, transporting children who are HIV positive to the pediatric AIDS program in Lilongwe, and providing food and other incidentals to both orphans and children who come from poor families. DOS has also received agricultural inputs meant to support a communal garden. The harvest is supposed to be used to support poor children and orphans in the community. The organization also received a pig, which is meant to be raised and sold as an income-generating activity for women. The profits, it is assumed, will be used to support orphans

and poor children. They also have an ambulance bicycle that is supposed to transport sick villagers to the local health clinic, although I never saw it used.

AIC's emphasis on supporting children in communities, promoting civic engagement, and fostering indigenously generated solutions to the problems created by HIV/AIDS makes them a more culturally sensitive organization. This is especially evident when comparing their work to that of Miracles and Southern Allied Missions. On the other hand, I will demonstrate how they also fall victim to unanticipated outcomes associated with a naivety about what constitutes a community and the complicated relations that play out within their targeted villages.

What Is "Community"?

Guijt and Shah (1998) analyze the notion of community as it relates to and has emerged as a preferable approach among development workers focused on participation, community action, and empowerment, with a special emphasis on gender relations. The ways in which they problematize certain aspects of how community is often oversimplified and idealized resonates with my own work on orphan-care projects focused at the community level. Specifically, they question the assumptions that communities are small, isolated spatial units with a homogenous social structure and shared norms and values (Cornwall 1998; Guijt and Shah 1998). It is common for westerners to imagine communities in southern Africa as those places that contain, in a fairly isolated and demarcated manner, a certain "tribe" or population that is homogenous and harmonious—maintaining an automatic solidarity of sorts. Volunteer tourists and development workers believed that everyone is looking out for everyone else—"Malawians helping Malawians."

Lay humanitarians and development workers are envisioning communities in a way that misconstrues Malawian social organization. While a "village" denotes territoriality, within a

village there is often a multiplicity of communities. For example, Cornwall (1998) notes that community programs focused on gender empowerment often essentialize the categories of women and men. In reality, she argues, within the category of gender itself there are a host of differences and power differentials tied to religion, ethnicity, class, race, age, and so forth. As I demonstrate subsequently, there are important power differentials in Malawian villages, which lead to an unequal distribution of orphan funds. Even in their relative poverty, the better-off in these communities are benefiting and the poor, many of whom have orphans, go hungry.

The conflation of community and village is also problematic. These terms are often used interchangeably in development/humanitarian discourse, including in AIC's. Bhattacharyya (2004) noted that a community should transcend place and space to be understood as a signifier of social cohesion or shared interests and circumstances. Modernity (and/or capitalism), she argues, has created a shift from place-centered communities to the recognition of less intrinsic constellations premised on solidarity. Malawians, as demonstrated in the Introduction, have not been tied to circumscribed spatial areas for some time. Today, 85 percent of the population live in rural areas and are dependent on small-scale farming. At the same time, there is regular migration by young people to other rural and urban areas.

For this reason, community-based projects centered on circumscribed villages may be focused on the wrong unit for intervention—the communities they target are assumed to be contained within territorially discrete spaces. The premise is that solving village problems associated with HIV/AIDS can restore social relations or cohesion, support local institutions, engage and reinvigorate civil society, and foster a more viable and productive landscape. This view does not account for the ways in which Malawian villages, communities, and solidarities were shifting and changing long before HIV/AIDS. An imagined, harmonious, rural village and

related subsequent livelihoods that are place-centered may not be working because the village as a community as we know it may be an antiquated concept. As discussed in the Introduction, colonization, migration, globalization, capitalism, neoliberalism, poverty, and AIDS are just a few of the processes that impact and shape the ways in which individuals situate themselves and create meaningful relationships with others. There has been a long history of labor migration tying Malawi into broader economic networks (Crush 2000; Phiri 1983).

Malawian social systems are resilient, but they are also strained. This can and does lead to reconfigurations. The state of flux and community apprehension felt by people is realized in increasing accounts of witchcraft. Malawians have continually had to adjust to anxiety and stress associated with clashing ontologies and unpredictable social, economic, and health transformations. Occult beliefs are one means of making sense of these situations. The emerging trend of children as perpetrators of witchcraft is becoming visible through local newspaper stories, radio pronouncements, and community gossip. This may signal increasing community tension and anxiety.

Witchcraft: Historic and Contemporary Manifestations

The southern African worldview considers the spiritual and physical realms to be deeply interconnected. They work within and for each other to structure people's daily lives. Witchcraft is not an extraordinary belief or simply a metaphor, but is rather an existential reality at work to structure everyday, lived experiences (Ellis and ter Harr 1998; Moore and Sanders 2001; van Dijk 2001; West 2008). The occult, not unlike politics, provides a way to order and distribute the power inherent in society (Ellis and ter Haar 1998:195). Evans-Pritchard's (1937) classic work among the Azande shows that witchcraft is logical and follows structured rules (Moore and Sanders 2001). It is an epistemological system aimed at understanding, explaining, and bringing

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coherence to an unpredictable and volatile world. The Azande know granaries often collapse because of termites. However, if someone was standing under the granary and subsequently killed, then it was the work of the occult, as the Azande believe that there must be a logical explanation for that person to have been standing under the granary at that particular time.

Witchcraft does continue to function as a system of social control. Anthropologists note that malevolent occult forces become most visible during periods of intense social change and instability (Ashforth 2005; Auslander 1993; Moore and Sanders 2001). For Moore and Sanders (2001:20), witchcraft and the occult are a "social diagnostics," "a set of discourses on morality, sociality, and humanity: on human frailty." When social and other systems in southern Africa become imbalanced, the occult becomes more observable.

In addition, the domain of the occult is a "moral geography" focused on mapping production, redistribution, and consumption patterns within society (Auslander 1993; Moore and Sanders 2001:15). Witchcraft provides a moral framework that prevents the immoral accumulation of resources and power (Ashforth 2005; Moore and Sanders 2001). Those who amass wealth without adequately redistributing it within their social networks are often accused of having manipulated evil powers for economic gain (Auslander 1993). Additionally, those who are the most socially and materially vulnerable may be blamed for the misfortunes that befall the community (Auslander 1993). In the recent past, it was childless women, widows, the diseased, and social outcasts who were targeted with witchcraft accusations (Ashforth 2005; Auslander 1993). These individuals are on the fringes of social networks and therefore often overlooked by redistribution mechanisms (Auslander 1993).

In southern Africa, witchcraft accusations have tended to track disproportionately along generational lines (Auslander 1993). Examples from Zambia (Auslander 1993), South Africa

(Ashforth 2005), and Malawi (van Dijk 2001) suggest that young people, especially young men, are bringing the majority of these accusations against the older population. Elders, according to young men, are no longer productive, and they are often accused of being jealous of young people's vitality and good looks. Jealousy leads to witchcraft. Moreover, the older one gets the more knowledge he or she accumulates, which includes knowledge of the occult. Here is where I noted a change in emerging trends that now implicate children and young men (see West 2008 for examples from Mozambique).

Witchcraft Today: Responses to Failed Modernity?

> *...contemporary witchcraft, occult practices, magics, and enchantments are neither a return to "traditional" practices nor a sign of backwardness or lack of progress; they are instead thoroughly modern manifestations of uncertainties, moral disquiet and unequal rewards and aspirations in the contemporary moment.*
> Comaroff and Comaroff 1999 quoted in Moore and Sanders 2001:3)

Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) argued that spiritual insecurity is an explicit reaction against the failed promises of modernity and capitalism, including wealth accumulation. Witchcraft flourishes in places of unequal development. It is a social commentary about malcontents aimed at the increasing inequalities, poverty, and violence evident in southern Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999). For the Comaroffs (1999), an increase in occult activities represents a "moral panic." This panic reflects the uneasy friction that arises between feelings of hope and hopelessness, as the majority of poor Africans bear witness to, yet are excluded from material accumulation and global markets. Witchcraft provides a moral idiom to address African discontent with failed promises of modernity and a means to deal with its defectiveness, as pockets of affluence emerge amidst masses of poverty (Ashforth 2005).

Englund (1996) argued that it is not a reaction to modernity, but functions within and is molded by modernity. For example, in Dedza, Malawi, witchcraft is analyzed as a moral

discourse focused on sociality meant to ensure redistribution, reciprocity, and strong social ties (Englund 1996). According to Englund (1996), modernity, especially the domain of capitalism, is not the focus of witchcraft narratives. Capitalism itself is not a bad, evil, or threatening system. The target of nefarious activities is capital accumulation and increasing inequalities amongst people without proper redistribution. It is morally acceptable to engage in markets and make money, but hoarding resources and not supporting extended kin networks is unacceptable (Englund 1996).

One component that is new to occult beliefs and evident in Malawian newspapers and gossip is the disconcerting increase of children in occult accusations and activities. The use of children in occult activities is regularly featured in Malawian newspapers. In May of this year, the Nyasa Times ran a newspaper article titled, "Malawi Police Ask for Assistance on Witchcraft." The following is an excerpt from the article by Ruby Suzgika:

> During recent weeks, Malawi media has been awash with news of witchcraft just like those of defilement. The pinnacle of the reports has been a sharp increase in the number of young kids being taught the wicked rite and in some extreme cases some of these kids have died…
>
> However, the law enforcers and the courts have faced a lot of challenges when dealing with cases of sorcerers. They have been incapacitated to successfully execute their duties due to prohibiting and obsolete laws.
>
> This has forced the police to join the Malawian child rights groups to demand an immediate recognition of witchcraft existence by revising the current Witchcraft Act and put it in line with present practices.
>
> In February, Malawi child rights groups issued a communiqué demanding government's immediate action by way of recognizing witchcraft so as to salvage the country's child victims.

The connection between witchcraft and AIDS is evident and certain to remain relevant in the coming years. Rising HIV/AIDS deaths are inverting the demographic profile, which may be complicating witchcraft accusations, especially those targeting children. Additionally, it has been

suggested that the failure of modern biomedicine to treat HIV/AIDS reifies belief in the occult (Lwanda 2003). Many Africans fluctuate between traditional and biomedical healers looking for answers. Some hospitals send AIDS patients to traditional healers if they feel they cannot help the patient (Yamba 1997). The occult is a system meant to explain and order the lives of people. Therefore, it is not surprising that the specter of AIDS is invigorating traditional and occult practices and beliefs. HIV/AIDS is a mysterious disease with a somewhat unpredictable etiology. It fits in occult and traditional healers' experiences with disease, health, and wellness. These explanations still leave unanswered the question: Why children?

In southern Africa, those who are supposed to be the most productive (between the ages of twenty-four and fifty) have ended up succumbing to AIDS faster than any other segment of the population. The result has been a proliferation of orphaned children (Guest 2001). The vast majority of these children are being taken in by extended family systems (Chirwa 2002). However, as more and more children are being orphaned, these social safety nets are being stretched thin, leading to an increased demand for the redistribution of resources (Chirwa 2002). It is with varying degrees of resentment that family members agree to support these orphans (Verhoef and Morelli 2007). Peters, Kambewa, and Walker (2008) found, in their Zomba District sites, families who begrudgingly took in orphans because "nobody else would."

The rise in the visibility of needy vulnerable (poor) children, not just orphans, coupled with the persistence of modernity ideology focused on capital accumulation and individual sovereignty, may increase the spiritual insecurity of children and their guardians.[25] As extended families take in more children, their social marginalization is likely to increase. During my

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[25] It may not be the case that there are increasing numbers of vulnerable and needy children. Instead, a deliberate emphasis by transnational donors, children's rights groups, and organizations, such as UNICEF, World Vision, and Save the Children, on the needs of poor and vulnerable children may be making them more vulnerable.

research, I interviewed a grandmother who was responsible for twenty-four orphans. Her husband worked in the Ministry of Transportation. Although they were middle-class, their financial obligations—including feeding, educating, and clothing these children—prevented them from accumulating any financial security. This caused resentment. The woman mentioned the fact that these young people, once they graduated and had their own careers, maintained only minimal ties with her. While there were no witchcraft accusations around this woman or her family, the impact of the crisis and the increased pressure on social networks is obvious.

It is possible that the increase in international adoptions, especially the sensational coverage afforded to Madonna, may also be implicated in occult accusations focused on children. The threat, now, is that children have become commodities and integrated into global capitalist markets. There is a consumptive element to these adoptions, as children's bodies are bought, sold, or bargained for. Children, flying about at night and being transported to far-off places such as the UK and South Africa under the influences of witchcraft, might be a moral idiom articulating frustration, anxiety, and anger at the social cleavages that are dislocating these children from their families.

There are also reports of children's body parts becoming commodities on the black market. Madonna's film, "I Am Because We Are," tells the horrific story of Luka. Luka, a young boy approximately ten years old, was given money by a neighbor to go to the local market and buy paraffin. If he ran this errand he could keep the change. On his way to the market he was dragged into a maize field and castrated. Some local children found him and reported the event. He was rushed to the local clinic where he received an operation. In the video, we are assured that this is only happening in "pockets of Malawi." Nonetheless, it is happening. I read similar reports in the newspapers. It was not only children who were attacked. Reporters speculate that

people who want to get rich use these genitals in occult activities. They are essentially "selling

their souls to the devil," as Father Boucher at Mua Mission explained. The commodification of

body parts, the increasing social stratification associated with capitalism, and the growing orphan

population—including the demands of caring for them—are interwoven. Children in my research

sites reported they feared witchcraft in villages; it was a primary reason they wanted to live in

urban areas. The sense of security children believed was afforded to them by living behind gated

walls in urban areas as opposed to living "in community" in villages is noteworthy.

In addition to trading in body parts, reports of child defiling peppered Malawian

newspapers and radio broadcasts. There were two prominent reasons given. The first was the

belief by some people that if they had sex with a virgin they would be cured of AIDS. Men

would then have sex with young girls, some less than a year old, to ensure the girl was a virgin.

The other reason was in line with beliefs associated with the trade in body parts. Accused

violators reported that that they had gone to witches and were given "medicines" to take. In order

to activate these medicines they had to sleep with a young child. This would then make them

rich. I asked the national ECD director in the MoWCD if he felt the trade in body parts and child

defiling were new trends. He thought that on some level there may be an increase in these occult

activities, but also believed it was a combination of increased access to communication, such as

radio, TV, and newspaper, coupled with more visible children's rights campaigns that was

leading to an increase in accusations and reporting.

This discussion is meant to illustrate the complexity of Malawian village life. It is within

this context that AIC's interventions get implemented, with mixed results. I now examine the

ethos of AIC and provide ethnographic examples of their planned and unplanned outcomes. I

include descriptions of witchcraft and jealousy to demonstrate the tenor of suspiciousness woven

into Mvera's social fabric. It is through this trope that an understanding of the changing nature of

sociality in Mvera can be understood.

It Takes a Village?

Taken from the AIC web site:

Our approach to halting the spread of HIV revolves around *empowering local communities*. Local people create the best solutions to local problems, and Malawians design, implement, monitor and evaluate to administer our programs on the ground….

With seed money from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, AIC created its signature HIV intervention—AIC Villages, which uses a ***grass-roots, community-based approach to preventing and treating HIV/AIDS in Malawi's rural*** *villages* (emphasis mine).

One of AIC's attractions for outside donors is its holistic approach and emphasis on

understanding and working through local systems and institutions. Theoretically, AIC embodies

what I hypothesize to be the most effective and appropriate approach to development and

humanitarianism. Their mission statement and project descriptions capture what is now a trend in

development, which is a design characterized as sustainable, empowering, locally imagined and

implemented, and geared toward capacity building (Guijt and Shah 1998). All of these phrases

are evident in AIC discourse. Its program materials read:

At the grass roots level, AIC's programs are implemented by local village women. Village women have a unique perspective on village life—they know how many orphans a family is caring for, whose husband died of HIV, and which girls may be at-risk for the virus and this intimate knowledge is invaluable to us because we are in the business of saving lives. When local people work in partnership with our Malawi Staff to implement critical programs, it improves our efficiency, reduces costs and helps eliminate a community's dependence on aid from international organizations and NGOs. Our work focuses on teaching local people new skills, building local capacity and ensuring positive and sustainable outcomes that will benefit future generations.

AIC's emphasis on women is an important part of its discourse and project design.[26] AIC

board members and staffers recognize that in many ways women in Malawi are disempowered,

especially in a context characterized by endemic poverty. For this reason, they purposefully hire

Malawian women to oversee their projects. The central region director, Sister Brenda, is a

middle-aged Malawian woman with a degree in nursing. Mada Banda, a thirty-something

Malawian woman and former government community development officer, is one of their

central area staffers responsible for running trainings for community organizations, as well as

monitoring and evaluating AIC-funded projects. The southern region's program director is also a

Malawian woman.[27] Later in this section, I present ethnographic data that suggests that

empowering women is not always achieved by AIC projects and that there may be some

gendered animosity, although it does not present itself in predictable ways.

Another central characteristic of AIC is the focus on locally generated ideas for dealing

with the HIV/AIDS situation, which includes orphan care. This idea fits with newer development

and humanitarian trajectories that stress a more culturally relative approach to interventions. The

founder of AIC, Steve Cross, explained the emphasis on local civic engagement and also

reiterated the gendered component that characterizes their projects:

> AIC started with a Gates Foundation grant in 2003 and we spent three years in a cluster
> of just 25 villages to get our intervention perfected. We used a Malawian design team
> with experts as well as village-level people to put together the best program. I fully
> recognized that us coming from the US really had no idea what to do so we hired Jones
> Laviwa (local Malawian) as part of our Malawian strategy team….What makes AIC

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[26] Cornwall (1998) argues that "women" or a focus on "gender" does little to capture the
heterogeneity and unequal power relations present in villages and within these broadly defined
categories. Focusing on women, as a category, does not capture differences in wealth, religion,
ethnicity, status, etc.

[27] AIC has a total of thirty-five Malawian staff. I was told that they attempt to keep their
operating expenses at a minimum so that the majority of donations go directly toward funding
projects.

special is the fact that we are making changes right there in the villages. Also, for us, women and girls are the key. It is fair to say that we have not forgotten women and girls.

Cross makes an overt attempt to understand the Malawian context. He continually expresses his reliance on local Malawian staffers to guide AIC. I will show that, while he does attempt to create a feedback loop that provides a platform for Malawians to express their needs by allowing them to submit their own locally generated proposals, there are some restrictions. Donor preferences find their way in and shape the kinds of proposals that get funded.

From the onset, AIC has sought to focus its programs at the community level and build upon already existing structures. When the organization was initially focused solely on HIV/AIDS prevention it worked through local religious institutions. Cross was told that rural populations were suffering from the impact of AIDS because they were isolated and unable to access information, counseling and testing, and ARVs. Therefore, AIC began its work by channeling resources through churches and mosques in these more rural areas. Its projects have since expanded. Cross explained that AIC recognized the need to approach HIV/AIDS from a more holistic perspective. For this reason, it now includes income-generating activities for women and orphan support services. Sister Brenda, the central region director of AIC, explained:

> The main goal of AIC is to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS. So, we line our funding activities with any project that is trying to mitigate that impact of HIV/AIDS in the society. And we also like to see the institutions, which we are helping, to be on their own, to be empowered, sustainability.

AIC garners donor support by emphasizing the sustainable, grassroots approach to mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS and bolstering the economies and health of villages. Donors can imagine supporting a long-term, sustainable program. A volunteer tourist in Malawi explained her perception of the positive aspects of AIC stressing this idea of local empowerment:

> [AIC] is able to give funding to projects that are really going to be self-sustaining and not just giving out money to random people. They are definitely helping in a way that's more

[pause] I keep using the word self-sustaining. I can't think of another word for it. And I think definitely the income-generating activities, the farming, Malawian people helping other Malawian people. I think it's what's effective about AIC.

The notion of "Malawian people helping other Malawian people" is the foundation of AIC's community development approach. In some cases this approach has been effective. I will show that HIV-positive children are receiving ARVs and children's school fees are getting paid. But more often than not AIC workers have found themselves pursuing committees they have supported in an effort to hold them accountable. AIC staffers have expressed frustration that a significant percentage of the local committees they have funded have been found "eating the money," which is a Malawian phrase denoting the squandering of resources in a deceitful way, often using them for personal gain, as I will also demonstrate. Peters, Kambewa, and Walker (2008) found the same scenario in their Zomba District village sites. People were raising money for orphans, but those children being counted and documented received minimal, if any, actual support. An imagined and romanticized idea of community that has been critiqued in development literature is further contested by scenarios of manipulation and deceit involving children (Bhattacharyya 2004; Guijt and Shah 1998).

AIC, working at the local level, recognizes some of the complexities inherent in communities and the ways in which HIV/AIDS has challenged community cohesion. In their view, HIV/AIDS is wreaking havoc, women are paying the price in inequitable ways, and the solution is to foster solidarity by empowering women, assisting orphans, and building capacity at the village level. The spatial unit becomes the site of intervention, with the goal being to foster cohesion within it. Drawing rural Malawians, especially women, into regional and global markets to access cash, empowering women to care for their sick and dying family members and neighbors, distributing ARVs, and educating orphans is the current approach to their humanitarian efforts.

Is it working? Can AIC's development paradigm bolster communities and/or villages? My ethnographic data on the activities related to OVC suggests that the explicit attempt at fostering community cohesion creates greater friction. The focus on community development as a means of mitigating HIV/AIDS, addressing women's disempowerment, and caring for children is having mixed results. AIC does not overly romanticize the complexity of African villages, as many community development programs planners are often guilty of doing (Guijt and Shah 1998). It is better than many organizations at being cognizant of local particularities and systems of power. What it struggles with is designing a program that recognizes and addresses inequalities and suffering while simultaneously strengthening communities and accounting for the changing nature of society.

AIC spends its funds on projects meant to save lives, empower individuals, and strengthen communities and social systems. However, I demonstrate that the community-based orphan-care program I studied was creating community dissent and friction. Funds are reaching individuals with entrepreneurial spirits who are driven by a desire to tap into global capitalist systems and access the accoutrements of modernity. AIC's money in this case is not feeding the number of orphans they anticipated nor is it building local institutions. In actuality, it supports the spread of capitalism, modernity, increasing social stratification, spiritual insecurity, and the emerging emphasis on autonomy and self-actualization. AIDS may be impacting the Malawian social fabric in profound ways, but change was underway long before the pandemic took hold. Examining the impact of HIV/AIDS funds that get injected into these villages provides insights into these social and cultural reconfigurations. In subsequent sections I describe both anticipated and unanticipated outcomes of AIC's OVC program in Dowa district.

On one of my first visits to Chinsisi village, I was given a tour by two of DOS's committee members, Noah and Levinson. They were enthusiastic about showing me their successes. I was taken to see the pig that was donated and used as an income-generating activity for orphans. I was shown the communal garden where maize for feeding the orphans was planted. I was offered a ride on the ambulance bicycle used to transport sick patients to the local rural clinic. In addition, Noah and Levinson regularly introduced me to children who were receiving school fees from DOS. Their work seemed impressive and extensive.

I was also surprised at the way they openly introduced HIV-positive villagers. I met Washington Nyirenda as we walked between Chinsisi and the Military Support Battalion located nearby. He was wearing a brilliant white shirt and crisp blue jeans. He was approximately forty years old, 5'10'' with a robust build, weighing around 190 pounds. He had a cheerful demeanor and glowing white teeth that showed regularly as he smiled and joked with Noah. He spoke some broken English. He shook my hand vigorously and said with pride, "I am HIV positive, but look! Look at what I can do because I am strong." He pointed to a freshly dug pit latrine beside his house. I was a little surprised at being given a tour of a latrine area, but his sense of accomplishment was evident. I think at some point he even flexed his biceps in the fashion of competitive body builders posing for judges. He called over his daughter who was wearing a sweet-looking pink frilly dress. She didn't appear to be any older than five or six. She was shy. He told me that her mother had died of AIDS and that she, too, was HIV positive. He was grateful to DOS for helping her get tested and subsequently enrolled in the Baylor pediatric AIDS clinic program in Lilongwe so she could access ARVs.

Steve Cross, AIC's founder, stressed that part of AIC's program goals is to stop the spread of AIDS, which includes addressing issues of stigma and discrimination, especially in rural areas. He said that AIC's emphasis on training community health workers to assist in palliative care for AIDS patients is meant to bring people out of their homes to die surrounded with love and support—not cast aside or shunned behind closed doors. Their HIV/AIDS education and youth outreach programs were also meant to address stigma. In Mvera, HIV did not seem particularly stigmatized. People were aware of who was positive. Msautsa, an HIV-positive eleven-year-old girl, did not report any feelings of isolation or stigma associated with her status. She said, "When I am playing I don't see any difference between my friends and me." I regularly witnessed her running and playing with other children from the community.

It is hard to assess whether or not the openness surrounding HIV/AIDS discussions and the acceptance of HIV positive villagers as part of the regular social fabric of life is a direct result of AIC's efforts, but I would speculate that Noah and Levinson would say that is the case. Peters, Walker, and Kambewa (2008) report that stigma in Zomba District has never been a significant issue, even prior to the AIDS pandemic. They draw on the example of a young girl with a visible growth on her face, who reports feeling well-acclimated to her community. Similarly, they found that the majority of orphans did not face stigma. The few cases that suggested some mistreatment often involved relationships within homes and between stepparents and children. The same can be said for my field site. AIC may be doing its part, or it may be that stigma and discrimination in rural areas are not as significant an issue as is often portrayed.

Washington's daughter is one of over twenty children in Mvera who has tested positive for HIV. AIC funds DOS to provide regular, free transportation to the Baylor clinic in Lilongwe for these children to access ARV drugs and receive regular check-ups by physicians. This is no

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small feat. Noah and Levinson have to track all HIV-positive children and their scheduled appointments to ensure they make it to the clinic on time. They visit the children regularly to check in on their health. If a child seems to be deteriorating they take him/her to the clinic on the next available truck.

DOS does not provide ARVs directly to adults because there is an ARV distribution program run out of the military support battalion for those living with the disease in the area. Twice a week a military lorry carries patients to the district (*boma*) hospital. Children can be enrolled in this program, but the Baylor pediatric program is considered more specialized and thus more effective. AIC has, in the past, provided ARVs for those who were unable to access the drugs from government clinics. Keeping people alive, both children and their parents, is a noteworthy success for AIC and the first step in fighting AIDS.

Resource Distribution

Nearly all respondents in my study said that things were better for children today because of organizations, such as DOS, that are reportedly distributing school uniforms, blankets, and soap for washing uniforms (see figures 19 and 20). Many organizations are also paying school

Figure 19: Blanket Distribution, Dowa District

fees for orphans to attend secondary schools. DOS was paying school fees for over twenty orphans. I went with Noah and Levinson to the local secondary school that most of the supported orphans attended to pick up their progress reports. AIC requires school documentation of the sponsored children in an effort to track their progress. Not a single one was passing his/her classes. In my interviews it

was evident that this was a common trend throughout the country. Why are so many children, especially those supported by donor funds in similar situations, failing? None of those I questioned, including people in the MoWCD, the Red Cross, AIC, and UNICEF, could provide an answer.

Kendall (2007) examined the impact of the free primary education policy in Malawi on educational outcomes for children. She found that teachers felt overwhelmed by the large numbers of enrolled students. Standard 7 and Standard 8 students she interviewed said they did not believe that getting an education or attending school regularly was particularly beneficial in terms of improving their livelihoods. For this reason, many dropped out or only attended school sporadically so they could be freed to pursue economic activities. She also noted that caring for sick and dying relatives regularly inhibited the success of students. Kendall's sample was not restricted to children having their school fees paid and school uniforms provided by NGOs; therefore, any connections between orphan status, sponsorship, and school success would have to be made with some hesitation. Ultimately, the effectiveness of this AIC program is questionable with so many children failing.

These community-supported organizations were also funded to provide meals for all children deemed vulnerable. In Dowa District, DOS was supported to feed children five times a week during the rainy season (December–May). This did not occur with any regularity, and community members

Figure 20: Food Distribution, Dowa District

expressed frustration over this lack of consistency. DOS members told other villagers that the

pots and utensils needed to prepare nsima (a maize-based porridge eaten at every meal) had gone

missing. This reason was unsatisfactory to the majority of community members. I did witness

food distribution once, which took place on the same occasion as a blanket and school uniform

distribution overseen by AIC staffers and an influential donor (see figure 19).

Tifinesi, the mother of a child who receives support from DOS because her husband and

his father are board members, saw DOS in a positive light even if the organization was heavily

critiqued by others. Tifinesi explained:

> In the past there were no organizations helping orphans, but now there is DOS in this
> village. Most of the children are being helped by the organization. They receive soap,
> clothes, as well as school fees. DOS is doing their best helping the orphans. In the past,
> orphans were more vulnerable because there were not any organizations like there are
> nowadays.

My findings differ from the findings reported by Peters, Walker, and Kambewa (2008) in

Zomba District. They suggest that very little, if any, resources were actually making it to

orphans. While it is true that DOS orphans were not receiving the resources AIC might expect,

some children received benefits like soap, blankets, and school fees. One of my research

participants, Alinafe, who is the mother of a child who is not an orphan, discussed this

phenomenon and her mixed feelings about DOS:

> We are happy that the organization is helping our orphans in this village including doing
> activities like playing with children so that the children can forget that they are orphans.
> Also, they receive soap, blankets, sometimes food and school fees if the child is in
> secondary school. I am happy with everything they provide to orphans. It is just that
> people are jealous and they gossip a lot in a way that makes the committee look bad. To
> me, [the committee/DOS] is trying, but they cannot provide everything to everyone.

Alinafe highlights one aspect that was discussed only in passing by a few of the

villagers—alleviating psychosocial distress. For her, DOS is good because it addresses some of

the sadness children may experience as a result of their orphanhood. On one occasion, after

UNICEF trained Noah and Levinson, they organized a sports day for children to play netball and

soccer. Everyone was invited. All the children seemed to enjoy the activities. DOS can and on occasion does facilitate community activities that bring together all children, thus fostering a sense of connection.

Building Cohesion through Inclusivity?

It was common to find DOS committee members who were not personally taking care of orphans or who were not widowed heavily involved with DOS. Overall, activities tended toward an inclusive approach to providing for children, not only orphans. I should note here that Noah and Levinson, the two most active DOS members and officers, were both young adults (approximately thirty years of age) with wives and young children. Neither directly cared for orphans, but they were the most capable members in the community able to write grant proposals and submit them for funding. They also became more capable as a result of the training sessions they attended.

This inclusivity became evident when Bridget and I asked Noah for a list of the enrolled orphans they were serving. Upon receipt of the orphan list, Bridget and I picked a random sample and then ventured off to begin our data collection. We started our first storyboard drawing with a child on the list and quickly realized the child was living with both her mother and father. We ended the discussion and went onto the next name on the list; again we found that the child was living with both parents. We went to the third child and found the same thing. Puzzled, we asked Noah and Levinson about the orphan list. They explained that all of these children were vulnerable and therefore just as needy as those children who had lost a parent. It became clear that nearly everyone in the community who had a child was included on the list. What differed was the amount of resources that they regularly received. This can be interpreted as a sign that the Malawian sense of community and cohesiveness within the village remains

strong, as they are looking out for all of the children. Another interpretation for this behavior is that the fear of witchcraft is so pervasive that DOS organizers include children from all families, albeit some more peripherally than others, to protect themselves against nefarious activities.

A moral obligation to address social injustice by protecting orphans, promoting women's empowerment, and fostering capacity building at the community level drives the majority of those involved in AIC. At the local level people are motivated more by the need for resources and security. In some circumstances this leads to suspicious and fraudulent activities. AIC dollars do not only feed hungry children. Research participants expressed mixed emotions about DOS, as demonstrated in Alinafe's quote. In the next section I show that villagers recognized that DOS committee members were bringing in support that was much appreciated, but they felt not all of it was reaching the children who needed it the most.

Unplanned Outcomes: Misuse of Funds and Community Dissent

In these Dowa sites, the misuse of funds was commonly discussed within the community. Noah and Levinson, the chairperson and secretary of DOS, were significantly wealthier than other community members. It was suspected that they had siphoned off money meant to feed children, provide clothing, and buy fertilizer for communal gardens. The grandmother of Msautsa, the HIV-positive girl living in Chinsisi who was mentioned earlier, complained about the misuse of funds:

> The DOS committee members are trying to assist orphans, but the problem is that if they receive money to help orphans then the committee takes a lot the money for their own benefit. For example, they said they grow maize for orphans, but when the donors came to supervise the garden the committee showed them a garden that belonged to someone else just to please the donor.

I was unable to verify if this was the same scenario that unfolded around my tour of the orphan garden. Noah did tell me that the maize yield of the garden for orphans was too small and

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they would need to write grants for supplemental foodstuffs. This suggests a lack of access to fertilizer for DOS projects, even though Noah clearly had purchased fertilizer for his own fields. Noah may very well have used DOS money to fertilize his own fields instead of the communal garden set aside for DOS's feeding program.

CBO leaders were the only members of the village who had multiple cell phones, TVs, new clothes and shoes, and a maize harvest significantly greater than their neighbors. I returned to Mvera in late November for a visit before I left Malawi. Noah had moved into a house made of bricks, as opposed to the mud-walled home he had previously occupied. He was the only one in the village with this type of improved home. The villagers complained that the leaders of the organization were "eating the money" but that they felt helpless to change anything. Many believed that, if they complained, even the minimal assistance they received would be taken away. Dissension, fragmentation, and anger were present, if somewhat suppressed.

Meanwhile, children identified as orphans reported that they were not being fed regularly and did not always receive soap or clothes. When asked about how the local CBO could be improved, one of the community members said:

The organization has problems. To me, I think it is better to choose another committee.

[ALF] Do you have a person from this village on the committee?

Yes, there is one person, but they don't involve him in many things, especially about money activities like buying things, because they are afraid that he will be telling people what they are doing. Sometimes I think when the donors send things they should also send them with a person to witness if the children have received the things. For example, children are supposed to go to the community-based organization (CBO) every week to eat, but they have gone two months without eating. They just go and play. When we asked the CBO they said they have a "problem" that they are needing to discuss.

It seemed the further, geo-spatially, aid recipients were from the central village (Chinsisi), the less likely they were to receive regular resources from the organization.

It is difficult to discern if all the accusations made about committee members are justified. Clearly, Noah and Levinson both possess an entrepreneurial spirit. Is their perceived economic success a result of their ingenuity in other areas or is it the misuse of orphan funds? Either way, there is a sense of jealousy and suspicion within the community, which leads to feelings of animosity.

Another community member whose son receives school fees complained about the fact that the board was made up primarily of members of the same family, which led to accusations of fraud and dishonesty. This respondent said:

> There are rumors all over the village DOS used to receive secondhand clothes. The DOS members said that the clothes were too small so they sold them and kept the money for themselves. The community is complaining about DOS, especially the executive board, and saying that it needs to be changed because the board is eating the money themselves and even the chief is aware of it. The difficulty is that all of the board members come from the same family.

Noah, in particular, has included his relatives in all DOS activities, an action which many community members reported finding problematic. The CBO's committee is comprised of Noah's close family members, and the children who are targeted with resources are also relatives—many of them have working parents at the local military support battalion, suggesting they may not be as needy as some of the other children in the village. Previously I discussed the inclusivity of DOS programs, but this may not stem from meeting the needs of all children, but rather justifying the inclusion of a particular population that is related to those individuals in positions of power. The children of DOS committee members who are not orphans get labeled vulnerable and are enrolled in the OVC program to receive school fees and so minimal food and resource handouts are justified.

The idea of cohesiveness at the village and extended-family levels may be shifting, which the previous quote suggests, but this does not mean that extended family systems are failing. The

lack of orphans in the abandoned and isolated sense is an indication that this is the case. Other

literature also highlights the strength of familial ties (Chirwa 2002; Mandala 2005; Peters,

Walker, and Kambewa 2008). It is possible, though, that these systems are being reconfigured in

more exclusive ways. Charity, thirty four years old, who is a widow and the mother of one of my

child participants complained about the exclusivity associated with DOS:

> Sometimes I think that the organization should call a meeting with all the guardians to
> listen to our views so we could be helping one another. But the problem with the
> committee is that they don't involve guardians in their discussions. The committee is just
> receiving things and giving them to a small number of orphans and the rest are those who
> have both parents and are related to committee members. And yet, [the committee] says
> they don't receive a lot of things. In this village, nobody received a blanket, but in Mtsika
> village most of the children received blankets because there was a person from there on
> the committee. The volunteers give things to those people who are related to them, and
> not necessarily to orphans. There are other children who have received three blankets at
> different times, but to us they have not given any blankets.

Mandala's (2005) work on the end of communal eating in the Tchiri Valley may help

inform the tensions these participants are discussing and lends credence to the notion of an

inward turning of social and familial arrangements. This, if it is occurring, is due in part to AIC

and other such organizations' work in communities. Mandala (2005) draws on the example of

communal eating, or *chidyero*, which was previously undertaken in times of both famine and

abundance for purposes of sharing and solidarity building, as a means of strengthening

community cohesion and ensuring the viability of community members. Over time (1860–2004)

this tradition has ended, as people are now eating with their nuclear families behind closed doors.

This was also the case in Dowa. There was little or no communal eating, and the sharing of food

was never observable. In the Tchiri Valley, communal eating may have ended because of

scarcity and food insecurity, an emphasis on the market for accessing food, and suspicion about

what was being hoarded and what was being generously provided. Mandala (2005) does say that

food is still shared, but it tends to be guarded more fiercely within the bloodline and redistributed

in private to certain relatives. In Dowa, the reported jealousy and suspicion was always targeted at Noah's family, which was accused of hoarding resources and distributing them amongst themselves.

Professionalization of the Rural Poor and Reifying Gender Inequalities

Theoretically, women and children are a targeted demographic in AIC program design. In reality, the structure of AIC leads to increased internal stratification that tends to follow gendered lines. For example, as previously described, the project proposals have to be typed in English and e-mailed to the AIC office in Lilongwe. They can then be vetted and passed on to the US committee that makes final decisions about which proposals to fund. More often than not support staff is going to be Malawian men, especially young men, who are able to negotiate this process. Men are typing proposals, submitting them via the Internet, and handling the funds when they are awarded grants. In addition, every penny spent has to be accounted for in a grant. Women are trained how to balance budgets, but in my research sites it was always men who took over this responsibility. Another trend worth noting is the presence of men on all orphan-care committees or directing orphan-care projects. This was evident in my sites in Dowa and Karonga, but also in other areas, such as Dzama (central region) and Kanengo (near Lilongwe). This is noteworthy because men have very little to do with rearing children on a daily basis.

Men take up these positions to acquire not only material resources, but also skills they believe will be marketable outside the village. Gender inequalities are reproduced as men take control of CBOs, resources, and eventually access to professional development opportunities. Peters, Kambewa, and Walker (2007) report a similar phenomenon, referring to the process as the "professionalization of the rural poor." This includes the process whereby orphan-support projects' resources are being diverted by a handful of community members who use the money

to gain skills, such as computer training, grant writing, and English language lessons, which have utility well beyond support for orphaned children.

At my site, the idea of professionalization funded via AIC was beginning to take root, and it was Noah and Levinson that were benefiting. This became evident when Noah asked me to get quotes for training from three different computer schools in the capital city. AIC approved his proposal to learn computer skills premised on the belief that computer competency would permit him to write grants to other foundations or agencies for DOS orphan projects. In reality, both Noah and Levinson are hoping to gain access to wage labor jobs that provide more security than farming.

The orphan-care industry that is supported by transnational donor resources is complicit in this process. UNICEF paid a stipend (which is common practice in Malawi to encourage community participation and attendance) to one of the committee members to attend a workshop. He received US $120 for a ten-day training program on orphans. The children in the community received a soccer ball. These payouts are significant in a country were the GDP per capita PPP is US $855. Noah and Levinson attended a five-day training program with the Malawi Center for Human Rights and Rehabilitation. They received US $175 for the training and certification on women and children's rights. The community has not yet received any benefit. Several of the committee members have been double-funded and trained twice on raising pigs as a community income-generating activity to support orphans. For each training program they were given stipends. After coming back from a shopping spree in the city, Noah exclaimed that he was hoping to go to another training soon so that he could get money to buy fertilizer for his garden.

One other practice that is regularly reported is the issue of double funding, whereby a single grant gets funded by different organizations and the awardees pocket the extra money. In

chapter 5, I discussed the lack of government capacity to monitor the now ubiquitous CBOs

serving orphans in Malawi. As a result, many of these organizations are getting the same grants

supported by different funders. I became aware of this problem when Julie, one of the Malawian

women working for AIC and previously a community development worker for the government,

asked me to take her to visit an AIC project in Kanengo. I agreed. During the car ride she told me

that the AIC office was suspicious of the CBO. The founder, Elias, was heard on the radio

describing his orphan-care center. He attributed his success to the support he received from

UNICEF. There was no mention of AIC. AIC staffers believed Elias was "eating the money."

Figure 21: Double-Funded Orphan Organization

One young female staffer said he would come to the office to pick up his funds, and he tried to hide the fact that he had bought a vehicle by parking it around the back of the office building. When asked about his income, he was always elusive. When we arrived at the CBO, there were no children being fed (see figure 21).

The same female AIC staffer asked the neighbors how often the CBO was open and caring for

children. She seemed displeased with the answer. In our interview, we discussed her experiences

working for the government in Ntcheu. She described this issue of corruption:

> [ALF] Of the CBOs you were working with in Ntcheu, how many do you think were really working well?
>
> It should be one out of ten.
>
> [ALF] Do you think if you go back a year from now that one will still be doing well?
>
> I hope so. It depends with the management. The committee, how it [the committee] is running.
>
> [ALF] What do you think makes this one stand out as successful?

It's leadership. The difference is leadership. Someone who is mature is able to run a CBO. Somebody who is not mature is just after the money. Looking for the monies. Because you know, it's like money has just come, fallen from heaven all these monies! So, it's like, people think they are in control. Like what Elias is doing. All these monies, UNICEF is doing this. NAC is doing this. AIC is doing this. ALL! So, people say to themselves, I think we have got a lot of money, what if I ate part of it? It's like, you know, selfishness and greed. Yeah, there is a lot of selfishness and greed with these coordinators. It's greed.

He is on crucial point, because that guy is eating, no doubt about it! He is squandering the money. You can easily tell by the way he looks, by the way he responds when you visit him. It's like he's busy [referring to the fact that he would never schedule an appointment to meet with her and show her his receipts], he doesn't want to explain exactly what he's doing out there. It's very common here.

The same critiques could be made of DOS. At the time of this research it was being

funding by AIC, UNICEF, World Vision (Global Fund money administered by NAC), and OSA.

It was difficult to discern if the funding DOS received was going to the activities it proposed to

undertake or if it was receiving money from various sources to support the same projects and

pocketing the remainder. Funders are aware of this situation and spend resources and time

attempting to monitor their programs and prevent this fraudulent activity from taking place.

In Dowa, I witnessed an example of this fraudulent activity. OSA held a meeting with the

DOS committee to oversee the income-generating activity they were supporting. OSA had given

DOS money to buy a pig, which was meant to be reared then sold to buy maize meal for orphans.

We sat for about an hour and discussed the situation of children, and DOS was lectured on issues

of accountability. As a group we then went to see the pig. OSA representatives seemed satisfied.

A few months later, after I had completed data collection, I returned to Mvera with a volunteer

tourist group. We had a brief meeting, and then we were escorted to see the same pig. This

animal was presented as one of the AIC-funded initiatives.

In Dowa, DOS reflects the complex and heterogeneous nature of the village, as multiple

interests, internal differences, and various players emerge around the influx of orphan-earmarked

resources. Certain individuals are capable of exercising power through decision-making

processes that do not represent the needs and desires of those being targeted with aid. In this

process, fostering the collective or improving social cohesion to care for neighbors is not always

being realized.

Reaching Children

Thus far I have focused on DOS and the ways in which it manages AIC funds. What

about the children it serves? All of the children receiving school fees were grateful to DOS and

AIC. While there were complaints by community members about not receiving enough

resources, many were grateful for receiving food, blankets, soap, or other resources when they

were made available. They genuinely felt appreciative for whatever support they received. The

few cases where there was abuse of children, it tended to be children complaining about the

situation within the home. Some reported that stepparents favored their own biological children

and withheld food, clothes, or other resources from them. A couple of children said they felt they

were asked to work more than the non-orphaned children. These complaints were rare. None of

the children expressed feelings of discrimination by other villagers.

One possibility for the low rate of reported discrimination in the community is that many

children did not experience life that much differently than their peers. Most families reported

similar levels of food insecurity (aside from DOS committee members, although some did report

scarcity), school attendance and enrollment, and access to soap, books, and shoes. Moreover, it

may be the failure to get resources to this population that is protecting them from issues of

jealousy and community dissent. One AIC staffer, describing a successful program in a different

district, believes that providing for children can lead to community anger, resentment, and even

death:

The government is pouring out money, the NGOs are pouring out the monies, but communities do not seem to be satisfied. They just want to keep receiving and receiving. When I was in Ntcheu there was a program funded by George Bush, the Ambassador's Girl's Program. It was only sponsoring girls at schools who were doing well and were also orphans. Every term we were giving them a blanket, two pairs of school shoes, socks, notebooks, and even a mosquito net. But the community just started killing those children. I'm telling you. They were like, "Why are they receiving all those things?" You see a child is an orphan. She's got nobody to look after her, and now the US says, "Ok, I'll pay fees for this girl. I'll buy clothes for this girl. I'll buy all the basic needs for this girl." But the community now responds, "Why? Why her?" Those kids were being chosen on merit, but the community says, "Why her?" You go there to say, "Ok, I will go to monitor the kid," and you find the girl is dead.

[ALF] Because the community wanted the resources?

They wanted the resources saying, "Why that girl and not mine?" And yet they are saying, "Why that girl, and not mine?" But she (the mother) is alive. The father is alive. The girl is on the safe side. Instead, we want to help this orphan who is working hard at school, but you find in two, three days the girl is dead. So, the community seems not to appreciate what the government is doing. That is why the problem arises at the community. You see they (community) will start telling the media, "You see? The government is not helping us! They have failed to do this, they have failed to do that." But you look at it. What have they (the community) done? They have no sense of ownership. They want people to come and just help. Now for them to utilize the resources they fail to do that. I would say now that the government is trying, but the community now has a problem. To some extent, it has a problem.

[ALF] If orphans are targets of donor resources, does that change the way the community sees the children?

Yeah. They see them differently and in a bad way. That's why they end up killing them. In a bad way! They are being selfish, they are being greedy! Why that child [the orphan]? It's jealousy.

[ALF] It seems counterintuitive that someone would be jealous of an orphan.

You know it happens. Because you know in today's life orphans are being favored. You know like I will take you to Miracles. You will see how they are enjoying. They've got bicycles. They eat well. They sleep good. Now somebody who has got a father and mother just within that community, how do they expect to look at those orphans? It will be jealousy. Why that child? Why that child? How about mine? For him, to explain to him that, "No! You are alive and your child at least is under your care. But this one doesn't have any care!" They say, "NO! This is just too much [what is being provided to the orphan]."

[ALF] Is it bad to target orphans with resources?

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It's not bad.

[ALF] Seems like a fine line?

If you give them too much they kill them and if you don't give them enough they [the community] is just complaining saying, "The government is not doing anything for us. The NGOs are not assisting us." If they get no assistance the community cannot take care of them, they cannot. They cannot afford it. They are afraid of having the responsibility of being the guardians. Now if a stranger comes and says, "Ok, I'll be a mother. I'll take care of these people." They (the community) says, "Why? Do you even know who you are helping?" They will ask all sorts of questions. Or they will say, "These children, their parents are witches, they have killed the whole village."

I did not experience this phenomena of children targeted with resources being murdered. However, I did hear, repeatedly, that orphaned children are not worth investment. Jealousy was a common theme, although not geared toward children who remain in villages to the same extent as those in institutions. It is removing children from villages and sending them to resource-abundant institutions that seem to fuel the most community dissatisfaction and friction (see chapter 4).

Directing aid to a particular population can also lead to the emergence of a desire to be labeled marginal or vulnerable so as to capture resources. In Malawi, some orphans are considered privileged, leading other children to want to belong to this particular population. Lois Silo, program director for Madonna's project, Raising Malawi, explains how this process is occurring:

Here you hear so much on the radio about *ana amasiye* (orphan). All the time, *ana amasiye*, orphan this, orphan that. And it's hard. In our programs I know OVCs (orphans and vulnerable children) have to be identified, labeled as such, but once you do that, if we are labeling children like that and then giving them a lot of things, the children start to say, "But mom, when are YOU going to die so I can get better shoes and food and clothes? I am losing out because you and dad are alive. And so, when are you going to die so I can get better shoes and food like my friend? When are you going to die?"

These quotes highlight the tensions that exist and are fostered by programs directed at children, especially the ones that are considered successful by donors and actually do materially

support children. In Dowa, children were only minimally served, thus limiting or eliminating the potential for cases of jealousy. Strangely enough, if DOS was spending its grant money on orphans the way AIC imagines, it might result in a more precarious spiritual and physical situation for the children being targeted.

Missing the Point?

Peters, Kambewa, and Walker (2007) argue that the current focus on orphans is myopic and creates an individualizing force aimed at the wrong target. Instead, families should be supported. It is this unit, they suggest, that needs support. In addition, there are innumerable children who are not labeled orphan but are equally or more vulnerable to exploitation, malnutrition, sexual abuse, and discrimination. In two of my field sites, the majority of guardians and children recognized that those labeled orphans and those who were not suffered the same lack of resources. Respondents blamed unemployment, divorce and remarriage, and beer drinking for causing non-orphaned children to face high levels of vulnerability, especially to poverty, hunger, and abuse.

Participants in all of the research sites also stressed that it was the pervasive cycle of poverty—not necessarily orphans—that was problematic. Most guardians said factors such as unemployment, environmental degradation (as a result of degrading soils and cutting down trees), shifts to crops that were sold rather than consumed locally, limitations of fertilizer subsidies, school fees, and the price of food made caring for all children difficult. User fees at healthcare facilities, rising inflation, and increasing fuel prices making transport of goods to markets exceedingly expensive also affected households' abilities to provide for children. In such a context, a narrow focus on orphans may not address the circumstances that promote poverty.

Focusing on community development did very little to meet the needs of orphaned children. The same was reported in Zomba District (Peters, Kambewa, and Walker 2007). Is it possible that AIC may be taking as its premise the wrong unit of intervention? Communities can exist beyond physical spaces, and an intervention that imagines a different type of community might be more appropriate. Salvaging a romanticized ideal of cohesion and solidarity is having mixed outcomes. There is much to be learned from the failures, frustrations, and resistances witnessed in Dowa. HIV/AIDS is undoubtedly impacting Malawian social systems in profound ways, but the shifting nature of Malawian ideas of community and sociality has roots that go deeper than the pandemic. While there is evidence that speaks to the resilience of these systems (Peters, Walker, and Kambewa 2008), there is also research pointing to an evolution into new forms (Mandala 2005). My research suggests that these systems are changing in unpredictable ways, causing imbalance, distress, and anxiety. Aside from exploring the outcomes of orphan programs as a means for understanding Malawian social systems, the proliferation of witchcraft accusations involving children, the defiling of children, and the trade in body parts provide yet another layer of insights. Something is amiss, and it is significant.

Witchcraft and "Community" in Dowa District

One of my research participants, a thirteen-year-old boy named Ypiana, was always off playing soccer or working the fields when I would go with Bridget to interview him. His mother, probably tired of always entertaining us, eventually told us she would send Ypiana to my house when he got home. Later that same day he arrived at my house. We conducted the storyboard drawing, interviewed him, and then he was on his way. Only a few minutes had passed when Jimmy, the young man who owns the house, called Bridget over to discuss what seemed to be a serious matter. I was not privy to their conversation. Later that night, Bridget told me that Ypiana

is a known witch, and Jimmy forbade us to invite him over again. He was accused of flying an airplane (winnowing basket) to far-off places in the middle of the night. Apparently, one night he had a passenger who was an older neighbor woman from Chinsisi. He spun the plane around too fast. This older grandmother fell out and died. It was believed a non-family member trained him (someone living in the military support barracks). Ypiana is one of my non-orphan participants (control group). He came from one of the more food-secure families in the area, and his father was an assistant to the TA. He was seen as more privileged in the community. This is just one of numerous stories concerning witchcraft that I was told while in Chinsisi. I decided to explore the issue more directly.

I proceeded to ask all of my research participants about witchcraft. I, like West (2008), was looking for trends concerning the accused and accusers. Was it older women? Orphans? Wealthy or poor individuals? Similar to West (2008), it was difficult to identify any concrete patterns, which is a pattern in and of itself. Children, both orphans and non-orphans, had been accused and done the accusing. Older women continued to be implicated, but so did middle-aged and younger men and women. There seemed to be a lot of accusations swirling around the military support battalion. I asked if it was officers and higher-ranking individuals or poorer residents in the battalion—it was both.

Aside from the widening scope and scale of witchcraft accusations, there were two patterns that emerged. The first was the increasing use of children, and the second was the process of training witches. In the past, it was believed that witchcraft was restricted within certain families. Today, the majority of accused child witches say non-family members train them. I asked what accounted for this trend, and I was told that children are gullible and witches

see them as easy prey to teach about their activities and to get them to "work for them" during the night.

Witchcraft, it would appear, is becoming more pervasive. Nowadays, anyone can be accused. Nobody is safe. This creates immense suspicion in the village. There is a legitimate reason to create boundaries between families in villages. There is even a reason to create boundaries within families. I was told of another witchcraft case in Chinsisi involving a child and his mother. A witch, again at the military support barracks, instructed a child to kill his mother, who was pregnant. Apparently, the witch wanted the unborn child, and was willing to kill the pregnant woman to get the baby. At first, the child refused, saying that he could not kill his mother just to get the unborn child. The boy eventually took a knife from the witch and operated on his sleeping mother, resulting in a miscarriage. The boy revealed a month later that he was responsible for the miscarriage. He explained that he was instructed to do so by those teaching him witchcraft in the barracks. Military personnel have been fired as a result of these accusations.

Witchcraft was not my central research question, but an issue that repeatedly emerged. I am hesitant to make any definitive statements about some of the new trends associated with the occult practices described by my participants. But as Evans-Pritchard (1937:513) once said, "New situations demand new magic…" There is "new magic" occurring in Mvera, which suggests a new situation and one that I believe extends beyond the issue of HIV. What does seem evident is an increasing suspiciousness that results in villagers drawing new and possibly tighter boundaries. The Malawian community is reacting to political, economic, religious, health, and social upheavals as evidenced by these trends. In many ways, orphan projects are both indicators of and implicated in new forms of sociality and the associated disquiet that result.

Conclusion

The goals to feed the poor, provide ARVs to HIV-positive children, empower women, and make a difference one person at a time are not as easy to achieve as they may appear to AIC's founder and donors. Resources and associated ideologies are being injected into a complicated terrain that does not easily open itself up to direct interventions. AIC's ideology and material responses are refracted at multiple levels as they make their way into the Malawian milieu.

I am left with more questions than answers. Is the rise in witchcraft, especially aimed a children, to be interpreted as a reaction against the failed promises of modernity? Or is it a way to gain access to modernity's promises? Is it meant to reinforce social obligations? Does it signal a moral crisis associated with AIDS and the rising orphan population? Or is it about a turning inward and renegotiation of social ties? This chapter, much like these questions, has attempted to highlight the complex intersections of modernity, belief in the occult, community development, and orphanhood. These forces shape a complex physical and ideological landscape that structures and orders people's lives. A thick ethnographic description affords anthropologists the ability to understand the ways in which Malawians negotiate, conceptualize, and experience this terrain, one that I am still in the process of negotiating.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Orphans have become the latest trend to capture transnational attention, in part due to celebrities such as Madonna and Angelina Jolie, who have visibly taken up their cause. This has led to the mobilization of a variety of organizations and interested parties attempting to meet the needs of children. Traditionally, larger-scale humanitarian, human rights, and development organizations—including UNICEF, Save the Children, and World Vision—as well as local government agencies, have focused on serving children and ensuring their welfare. It is within the current preoccupation with orphans that an emerging population of compassionate people, or lay humanitarians, wanting to make a difference in these children's lives is becoming increasingly engaged in orphan issues, despite having limited or no training in development, humanitarianism, or childcare.

This dissertation has explored the programs of lay humanitarians associated with two different orphan-care organizations in Malawi, including an analysis of their discourses, practices, and program outcomes. AIC and Southern Allied Missions, the central orphan-care organizations I studied, were initiated, funded, and designed by caring individuals with limited or no experience in Malawi prior to their program development. While they may share roots in their compassionate desire to help others, they also demonstrate the complexity and heterogeneity of these lay humanitarian responses. AIC, with its holistic approach, attempts to account for local perspectives and cultural arrangements by supporting children in communities. In contrast, Southern Allied Missions with its lack of focus on the local context, has sought to extract children from their villages, placing them behind west-constructed walls, separated both physically and ontologically from the Malawian social context.

I have demonstrated that central to the production and perpetuation of orphan projects by these compassionate westerners is a particular type of imagined orphanhood captured in their orphan narratives and iconography. Malawian orphanhood is conceptualized as a state of social isolation and complete destitution, which spurs individuals and donors to action. Program organizers, volunteers, and donors regularly refer to Oliver Twist-like orphans in their descriptions of Malawi's orphans. Orphan narratives characterize children as abandoned, suffering, exploited, and living in the streets with no family to care for them. They are constructed as a homogenous aid category, generating a compassionate response from donors and humanitarians.

Lay humanitarians also situate the production of an imagined orphanhood within a broader discourse of what an idealized western childhood ought to be, which is characterized as a sacred space for children to be nurtured and invested in with an eye toward their future economic productivity. This is juxtaposed against many Third World childhoods, especially those of orphans, which are deemed deviant (Stephens 1995), thus opening a place for westerners to export their ideal childhoods through orphan-care projects that seek to develop a particular type of subjectivity. This is encapsulated in the ethos of Southern Allied Missions, which extracts children from the Malawian context and attempts to raise children in such a way that fits the western idealized paradigm.

I argue that western imaginations of orphans are problematic for several reasons. Central to my argument is that they fail to capture the actual circumstances of these children's lives and thus do not always resonate with local desires and cultural understandings. In Malawi, children exist within broad extended family systems that have deep historical roots. Traditionally among the Ngoni, children were believed to belong to the village and were socialized into extensive

family systems. Rituals and rites of passage involved heavy investment from different community and family members, which created bonds that oriented children to a world beyond the conjugal family. The Chewa show commonalities in their emphasis on the broader social network. Uncles and aunts are regularly referred to as mothers and fathers. Cousins are considered siblings. These arrangements expand the social orientation of children, creating a wider sense of family and the associated feelings of attachment to those beyond the biological family unit. There is only one account of children truly being abandoned, which was during an extreme event, the famine of 1949. Even amidst the HIV/AIDS pandemic, desertion of children has not been common.

Today, despite pressures of poverty and HIV/AIDS, children are being retained within extended family systems. They regularly migrate between different households for a variety of reasons, including accessing better education, providing assistance to families with sick relatives, acting as surrogate children to families that are childless, and assisting in domestic and family labor needs. They also rely on material and psychosocial support from various kinship ties. The western idea that children are maintained and primarily dependent upon the nuclear family is inconsistent with local practices. A socially abandoned child is an anomaly. In fact, I found few children who would fit the description of an Oliver Twist-like orphan in my research sites. Even street children had identifiable and active family members.

I have argued that there is an obvious dissonance between the lay humanitarian orphan narratives and the Malawian reality. In addition, I have demonstrated that these discourses, while produced by vastly different lay humanitarian organizations, maintain certain characteristics that are problematic, including: (1) the moral imperative to bring relief to the suffering; (2) the creation of apolitical and acultural subjects as targets of intervention; and (3) an inherent

paternalism that reinforces current power constellations and continues to disempower those already living on the margins.

Lay humanitarian responses rely on and are ultimately supported by compassion. One's suffering must be palpable enough for an international response to spur action. Action requires compassionate funders and volunteers. I argue that compassion is most effective in intimate interactions between those who suffer and those who do not (Arendt 1990). This is well-illustrated by the lay humanitarian donor materials, web sites, and videos, which contain pictures of individual children and stories of their suffering. Children talk about hunger, illness, exposure to the suffering of dying parents, abuse, sadness, and lack—lack of education, healthcare, and love. These appeals are constructed to draw potential contributors into face-to-face virtual encounters with children.

I have shown that, in addition to exposure to the circulating orphan narratives in the media and through donor campaigns, some Americans come face-to-face with the suffering of children in extremely impoverished circumstances. Both AIC and Southern Allied Missions bring volunteer tourists to Malawi to visit and volunteer with orphan-care projects. These voluntourists act as liaisons between Malawian children and transnational capital. They are encouraged to "hold the babies" and take many pictures. These images are powerful fundraising tools in their home communities in the United States and are sometimes included in web site picture galleries and used at fundraising events. The purpose of this documentation of suffering is to raise support by creating relationships based on empathy; the structural dimensions that lead to such suffering are largely overlooked by this compassionate gaze. As discussed later, this emphasis on compassion and morality may result in discrimination and stigmatization against those targeted by humanitarian efforts.

In these orphan narratives, children become depoliticizing agents who are a site of benevolent humanitarianism whereby capital can be redistributed and western consciousness about structural violence, global inequalities, and health inhumanity eased. The morality of humanitarianism, based as it is on a politics of compassion, gives rise to images of circumscribed lives focused on suffering and potential alleviation via western assistance. As I noted, bare life is a life abstracted from the political and social circumstances that distinguish humanity from other types of life (Ticktin 2006:34–35). Orphan narratives and the iconography that lay humanitarians produce illustrate the idea by presenting orphaned children as existing in a social and political vacuum.

Finally, I show that there is an inherent paternalism in the discourse of wanting to save somebody, which is evident in many lay humanitarian narratives. As Abu-Lughod (2002:788–789) notes in her critique of US involvement with Afghani women:

> We need to be vigilant about the rhetoric of saving people because of what it implies about our attitudes…when you save someone, you imply that you are saving her from something. You are also saving her to something. What violences are entailed in this transformation; what presumptions are being made about the superiority of that to which you are saving her? Projects of saving other women depend on and reinforce a sense of superiority by Westerners, a form of arrogance that deserves to be challenged.

I have drawn on Madonna's work because it is salient to this discussion. Her videos and the controversy revolving around the adoption of her son, David Banda, idealize the west as being the key to a better life. The picture of Malawi that she paints is one of suffering, rampant disease, and absolute despair. Malawi is placed on the lowest end of the outdated trajectory that assumes a progression from an uncivilized and backward Africa needing western intervention to achieve a civilized, developed, west-inspired state of being. This sense of saving assumes the west is the best. Many orphan-centered interventions predicated on this assumption are designed and implemented with the goal of shaping children in ways that mimic an idealized western type

of subjectivity neglecting the social and cultural milieu within which these children are situated and often leading to unanticipated and detrimental outcomes for children.

These west-generated discourses, however naively interpreted and constructed, are powerful. They garner a response, raise significant amounts of money, and impact the types of projects that get designed and implemented. Drawing on Tsing (2005), I have argued that these imagined identities, the resources they generate, and the projects that they inspire get refracted and reconfigured as they make their way into the Malawian context. Various actors, including certain Malawian ministries, community leaders, families, and the children themselves, have emerged around orphan definitions and projects in an effort to capture this influx of resources. They all have different agendas.

Despite the ways in which lay humanitarians buy into and generate a narrative that is depoliticizing, I have shown that the bodies of orphans are proving to be political. The emergence of significant transnational funds coming into Malawi to serve orphans has caught the attention of poorly funded and underdeveloped state ministries that are responsible for caring for children. These ministries include, but are not limited to, the DoWCD, the Department of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS. These state ministries and governing bodies are attempting, albeit with limited success, to turn what lay humanitarians believe is an apolitical response to children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS into a state-building exercise. I have argued that they accomplish this by drawing on transnational (including UNICEF) definitions and depictions of suffering orphans, engaging with children's rights discourses, and promoting a decentralized response that requires a fully functioning local-level government infrastructure.

The more orphans produced, the greater the ability to justify increasing government capacity. This is accomplished by adopting the UN definition of an orphan, despite the fact that this does not necessarily resonate with Malawian conceptualizations. The Government of Malawi in their 2005 National OVC Policy, defines an orphan as a child who has lost one or both parents because of death and is under the age of eighteen. This emphasizes the biological conjugal family as central to the lives of Malawian children, which does not resonate with local experiences. What this definition does accomplish is "spinning the epidemic" to produce a staggering statistic, which is widely disseminated. Malawi, now, has over one million orphans. This number substantiates the need for government expansion.

I show how these ministries demonstrate an obvious lack of capacity in an effort to justify significant expenditure, which draws on orphan funds. The MoWCD staff complained about their inability to monitor the growing numbers of transnational orphan projects, which can leave children open to exploitation and abuse. I demonstrate how the barely visible state was evident in my own work at Miracles, a large, highly visible orphanage near the capital city. Miracles was operating without the approval of the DSW office. They were taking in children without proper documentation and placing them in overcrowded houses. They were also accused of infringing on children's rights to religious freedom by mandating children attend a specific local church.

These ministries are careful to maintain the neoliberal ideologies of decentralization and privatization. They ask for funds to bolster capacity building, especially at the local or district levels,[28] for the explicit purpose of monitoring and evaluating the transnational (often private)

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[28] I note in chapter 5 that, while certain ministries are able to capture some resources, they are not actually filtering down to the local level. Districts remain underfunded and understaffed

organizations that they have invited in to meet the needs of children. They do not ask for resources that will be directly spent on orphan-care programs. It is neoliberal logic, the signing of children's rights amendments, and a limited state capacity that justifies the presence of transnational orphan-care organizations, as well as the funneling of orphan-earmarked resources to state-building exercises.

I include in this section a discussion of children's rights. I show how, despite official endorsement of a human rights-based approach in government documents concerning vulnerable children, these principles are difficult to put into practice with the state's limited resources. Meanwhile, neither of the transnational humanitarian organizations I studied engaged in rights-based discourses. They were driven by an ethical code and form of governance involving benevolence and charity, not rights. The result is the potential infringement upon children's rights, such as the earlier example concerning the right to religious expression.

Southern Allied Missions and the orphanage, Miracles, that they founded and funded demonstrate two processes I have been discussing. The first is the ability of organizations to bypass the state because of its lack of capacity, and the second is the disjuncture between western constructions of orphans and on-the-ground realities children face. I demonstrated how this leads to friction and unanticipated outcomes associated with projects that lack an understanding of the Malawian social, political, and economic contexts. There have been few successes, which I document.

Being designated an orphan has become a valued identity for some and a source of vulnerability and exploitation for others. Some children are removed from abusive situations and afforded a secure place to live and access to essential material resources. Children who would

despite programs meant to bolster their capacity to monitor community-based orphan organizations.

otherwise be forced out of school may be graduating at the top of their class. Children who would otherwise die of malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, TB, or malaria now have access to healthcare. Children in these orphanages are not cold at night because they have bedsheets and blankets. These children eat daily. All of the children were thankful for the opportunity to be in the orphanages and recognized their perceived privileged position in society that is directly linked to the loss of one or both parents. No child would trade his/her place in the orphanage to return to the village.

These are some achieved goals, but I have argued that it is in the unanticipated and failed outcomes or Foucault's (1979) "instrument effects" that provide insights about Malawian culture, poverty, and childhoods, which I have sought to tease out. Malawian children who become institutionalized face negative repercussions as a result of being labeled an orphan. Being cared for by uneducated and inexperienced housemothers who feel overworked and undercompensated can lead to tensions. It could be argued that one housemother caring for eighteen children may not have the capacity to provide these children with appropriate amounts of affection and the proper psychosocial support they need, especially considering the circumstances from which these children come. Additionally, children brought into these institutions, despite the best efforts of the orphanage directors to maintain ties with communities, all experienced a disconnect from extended families that is causing rifts in the Malawian social fabric. One alarming trend is that, despite being stigmatized by communities, some children now desire orphanhood. The orphan identity is becoming privileged at the expense of traditional Malawian kinship systems as more and more resources are directed to this particular aid category.

Preliminary data on graduating orphans highlights this problem. Children coming out of resource-abundant orphanages have in many ways adopted western ideals of personhood, as well as capitalist expectations of modernity, including such things as autonomy (especially from familial responsibility), wage labor jobs, and material wealth in the form of electricity, running water, good homes, and proper clothes and shoes. Unfortunately, children in orphanages who have received an education often struggle in Malawi's economic environment to find employment, leading to anger and resentment as a result of failed expectations. It is ironic that part of their failure to access these cosmopolitan spaces is a lack of family connections, which many voluntarily or forcibly cut off when moving into the orphanage. As a result, most of these children refuse to return to villages. It is unclear what will happen to them, but what is of concern is their potential to occupy subaltern spaces in urban areas and engage in delinquent behaviors or acquiesce to various forms of exploitation in order to survive (Lancy 2008).

Southern Allied Missions and Miracles represent one end of the lay humanitarian spectrum. On the other end is AIC, which does attempt to engage directly with local perspectives and needs. AIC supports Malawian-led projects focused on HIV/AIDS, ranging from orphan-care and nutrition projects to subsidizing nursing scholarships and paying school fees. Their model intervention is focused on empowering local communities. I demonstrate that AIC's idea of community is proving to be problematic, as these programs meant to foster cohesion and serve children actually create friction because orphan resources and their distribution are implicated in the process of social differentiation. I posit that the anxiety associated with increasing inequality has ties to witchcraft accusations focused on children.

Nonetheless, AIC registers successes in its community interventions. Specifically, it is able to ensure HIV-positive children have access to ARVs at the pediatric AIDS clinic. In

addition, some children are getting fed, although sparingly. More than twenty orphans in Dowa district continue with their schooling because AIC pays their fees. Finally, discrimination against AIDS patients does seem to be limited, which is an explicit AIC goal. I was regularly told who was HIV-positive, and these individuals seemed to blend well with their neighbors and families. These successes are noteworthy.

I have shown that AIC's unanticipated outcomes are rooted in the way it misconstrues social organization within communities, assuming an egalitarian, undifferentiated social structure. In reality, there is increasing social stratification, and orphan funds are directly implicated in the process of differentiation, as some individuals are better strategically positioned to benefit from the inflow of resources than are others. For example, in Chinsisi in Dowa, the individuals who had organized and directed DOS were proving to be significantly wealthier than their neighbors, having cell phones, bikes, TVs, and more substantial maize harvests. In addition, orphan-earmarked resources went to supporting their own professional development activities, including computer trainings. AIC's money is not feeding as many orphans as anticipated, nor is it building cohesion within local institutions. In this way, orphan projects are responsible for increasing community discontent and fragmentation.

Community anxiety and disquiet are associated with unpredictable social, economic, and health transformations, as well as increasing social stratification. Occult beliefs and witchcraft accusations create an avenue for Malawians to make sense of these situations and function as a system of social control. While in the field I noted new dimensions associated with occult activities. Children are said to be increasingly trained as witches, and non-family members are training them. In the past, witchcraft was purportedly taught by relatives to their kin. These developments increase suspicion between neighbors, and even within households, as one's own

child can be suspected of having malicious intentions. There is some preliminary research

emerging around this new trend of child involvement, but it is an area that merits additional

research.

Contributions to the Field and Future Questions

This dissertation is meant to contribute to the emerging literature and research associated

with the anthropology of childhood. This emerging sub-field within anthropology seeks to

promote scholarship focused principally on questions of childhood and child wellbeing from a

child-focused perspective. My work contributes to this sub-field because of its emphasis on

children and the various actors who are involved in structuring their lives. I consider the children

in my sample to be active cultural agents able to discuss past experiences, their present

situations, and their future goals. I do not consider children to be *tabla rasas* in process, but

rather research participants that are valued for the ways in which they impact and shape culture.

My children are approached as participants that are critical to and powerful in cultural

production. I have attempted to capture their own words and provide a place for them to express

how they feel about orphanhood, western involvement in Malawi, family ties, educational goals,

and occupational dreams, among other things.

What is apparent in my work with these children is the friction that arises between west-

inspired, orphan-centered projects and Malawian ideologies and expectations. Children express

conflicting feelings about being labeled orphans. Institutionalized children appreciate the

resources, including education, food security, clothing, and housing, that are at their disposal.

They also express anxiety about the future and their fear of having to return to village life. Many

children labled orphans face some form of anxiety in their relationships with community

members and extended family members, which takes the form of jealousy and discriminiation.

They also express concern about their futures, especially those who are close to graduating from orphanages. None of the orphans are willing to return to villages, but finding jobs in urban areas is proving difficult. This anthropological knowledge is able to inform organizations and individuals who want to address contemporary problems faced by children in Malawi.

The friction evident in my research sites leads to questions for future research: What are the long-term impacts of being labled an orphan? How sustainable are these programs? What happens to children who graduate from institutions? Where do children end up once they graduate? How do they interpret their positionality? Does gender impact long-term orphan outcomes?

This dissertation also contributes to the broader field of anthropology. Culture is powerful, relevant, and yet regularly misunderstood or ignored, as highlighted in this work. Increasing interconnection across time and space brings individuals from different cultural contexts into direct and intimate contact with each other. The outcomes of these relationships that span across cultures are varied. In my work, there are both positive and negative impacts on Malawians as western donors and aid givers move into Malawi to provide care and resources to children. There seems to be a correlation between positive project outcomes and respect for and knowledge of Malawian needs, desires, and cultural mores. Anthropology, as a field focused on understanding culture and cultural change, is able to inform these emerging interconnections.

My work specifically contributes to the literature on development and humanitarianism. I focus on a new demographic within the development/humanitarianism matrix: the lay humanitarian. As globalization contributes to an increasing flow of capital, goods, people, and ideas, it has also contributed to the emergence of compassionate individuals wanting to make a difference in places and spaces that were once inaccessible. These individuals, with limited

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training, have the power to create discourses on "others," as well as establish, fund, and coordinate projects in cultural places far removed from their own. As I have shown, these projects result in unanticipated and at times detrimental outcomes for the people and children they are meant to serve.

This demographic moves anthropologists and social scientists into research beyond explorations of conventional development and humanitarian work (Bornstein 2005; Henquinet 2007). Is it possible that this population holds the key to a more productive type of development or global engagement that the established development industry has yet to achieve? Some questions for future research will contribute to those interested in nontraditional development and humanitarian work. These questions can also contribute to those who desire to work with orphans in Malawi. What happens to volunteer tourists in the long run? How does their experience impact their life choices, career paths, and so forth? How can volunteer tourists and lay humanitarians be better educated on issues of orphans, AIDS, development, and childcare? How has their involvement impacted issues of adoption? What role can and should human rights play in these programs?

What do Malawians see as most problematic in their daily lives? What solutions do Malawians have to these issues? How can communication between Malawians and westerners be improved? How do Malawians interpret western depictions of Malawian poverty, AIDS, orphans? How would Malawians construct their own story for global circulation?

Volunteer Tourists and Applying Anthropology

> *God has chosen you for this trip. It is up to you what you make of it. It will likely be one of the most amazing experiences of your life. My challenge to you is that you make it the same for someone you meet. By how you act, by how you reach out, by how you teach, by how you hold, by how you hug, by the hands you hold, by the questions of concern you ask, by showing interest in another, by how you interact with a Malawian, you can make an eternal difference in their life.*

Taken from Church of Christ Volunteer Tourism Handbook

This quote comes from the handbook that volunteer tourists visiting Miracles during the summer of 2008 were given. The sentiment that this will be "one of the most amazing experiences of your life" is worth exploring. People do report that these experiences change them in profound ways. Again, it was my own volunteer tourist trip to the Dominican Republic that led me to this research. For this reason, I want to recognize the potential that lies within these adventures. As one mentor challenged me, "I would prefer [volunteer tourists] learn in dealing with orphans, with sick people, with AIDS, than not. How else can it be done without simplification, without mistakes? Isn't it about the framing of their experiences?"

In the end, I have demonstrated that what makes the lay humanitarian worker and the organizations they develop unique is their lack of sophisticated knowledge about theories of development, humanitarianism, and childcare, which can lead to unanticipated and at times adverse outcomes. However, I believe that this should not dismiss the potential these individuals hold, especially in light of the fact that traditional, larger-scale development and humanitarian interventions have not proven particularly effective in addressing issues of poverty. Maybe it is this group of newcomers that can radically change the current development/humanitarian matrix. Maybe, because of their small-scale nature and their reliance on building more intimate relationships with local people, they hold the key to potential success. Volunteer tourism does not have to be a voyeuristic journey replete with missteps and fumblings. It can create engaged, active, and educated individuals willing to do the work to create partnerships that are productive and emancipatory. Anthropologists can begin a dialogue that encourages compassionate individuals to ask better questions and imagine more appropriate responses. To start, we need to

recapture the voices of children, parents, and communitites in ways that offer alternative

paradigms, shifting the desire to do good into actually achieving that goal.

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