Contesting space in urban Malawi: A Lefebvrian analysis

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Cities in Malawi continue to be sites and spaces of resistance, struggle and contest over urban spaces. Since the introduction of colonial modernist planning with its adherence to segregation through functional zoning, homogenisation, and fragmentation of urban areas, squatting and land invasions on urban land have remained one of the widespread struggles for space in urban Malawi. Continued occurrence of squatting, land invasions, and encroachments on urban land reflect the inability of urban planning and its attendant land policies to provide land and housing to the majority of urban dwellers mainly the middle income as well as the marginalised urban poor.

Over the years, government efforts have not decisively addressed the issue of land contestations in urban areas in spite of numerous reports of increasing cases of conflicts and competing claims over urban land in Malawi including land dispossessions, conflicts over land uses in urban and peri-urban areas and most significantly contestations manifested in squatting and land invasions on state land leading to growth of spontaneous settlements. In urban areas, efforts to address these competitions have included relocation; titling programmes, sites-and-services schemes, land reform programmes, and forced evictions, but struggles such as squatting and land invasions persist. In urban Malawi, the question is: why is urban planning, as it is conceived and acted upon (i.e. as mode of thought and spatial practice), a creator and not a mediator of urban land conflicts?

The study aimed to answer this question, by using Lefebvre's conceptual triad of social production of space, to gain an in-depth understanding of how the contradictions between people's perceptions and daily life practices in relation to space, on one hand, and planner's conceptions of space as informed by colonial, post-colonial, and neoliberal perceptions of space, generate perpetual struggle for urban space in Malawi. The study also investigated spatial strategies and tactics which urban residents employ to shape, produce and defend urban spaces from possible repossession by the state. Finally, the study explored lived experiences and the multiple meanings that urban residents attach to spaces they inhabit and these are used to contest imposition of space by state authorities while at the same time to produce their own spaces.

Mixed method approaches were used to gather geodata, quantitative and qualitative data in the two neighbourhoods of Soche West (Blantyre city) and Area 49 (Lilongwe city) where there are on-going tensions over land between state authorities and urban residents. Primary sources of data included household surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, documentary sources, observations, and electronic and print media. In view of the magnitude of the data, three software were used namely, SPSS, ATLAS.ti, and ArcGIS 9.3™ GIS for quantitative, qualitative, and spatial data respectively. Content and discourse analysis were also used to analyse government documents and newspapers.

The research found that although planning thought and practice is dominated by imported modernist conceptions of space, planning authorities in Malawi are unable to impose this space on urban residents. Specifically, the research identified a number of constraints faced by planning authorities ranging from human and technical capacity, corruption, cumbersome and bureaucratic procedures, archaic, rigid and contradictory in laws and policies, complexity of land rights, poor enforcement, political influence and emergence of democracy, incomplete reclassification of rural authority into urban authority and shortage of financing mechanisms. In view of these state incapacities coupled with peoples's perception of the illegitimacy of the state to control urban land, the study found that 'dobadobas' (that is middlemen, conmen and tricksters) have taken over to contest planning practices of the state by employing both violent

and non-violent spatial tactics to appropriate, and defend their claim for urban spaces, thereby generating conflicts between the state and users of space.

Consistent with our argument regarding representations of spaces and representational spaces, the research found that in both Lilongwe and Blantyre cities, the multiple meanings attached to spaces represent divergent but true lived experiences that involve different core values that may or may not be recognised by those residents who do not share them. Finally, planners, therefore, have to reconcile the contradictions between planners' visions and the experiences of those who experience the city in their everyday life. By way of recommendation, planners, therefore, have to reconcile the contradictions between planners' visions and the experiences of those who live in the city.

Planners' emphasis on abstract spaces and their modernist images of order imply that viable alternative place-making processes are not well understood, partially because formal discourse in planning and place-making revolves around largely iterative representations of space and the persuasive capacities of one or another representation.

Rather, this researcher recommends continued use of the conceptual triad to enable researchers to become more fully aware of complexity in the human dimensions of space before planning. In the same way, by focusing on the two neighbourhoods, the researcher recommends that planning requires considerable time and effort and that it should priotise the human or the micro scale. Planning ought to bring on board the multiple meanings of space as discussed in the study as these are the multiple dimensions that planning has to grapple with in its quest to organise and produce urban space. Since space is never empty as it always embodies meaning, it is imperative to understand various meanings that people attach to the spaces they inhabit and their attachment to these spaces. In the study the fact that spaces carry multiple meanings encompassing exchange value, use value, emotional value, historical value, and sacred values among others, has been explored.

Continued advancement of colonial modernist conceptions of orderliness, segregation, functional zoning and commodification which are constructed largely, by dominant economic and political elites, provokes resistance by groups who defend and seek to reconstruct lived space. Also, in view of the incapacity of the state to impose its conceptions of urban space through spatial practice of planning, urban residents continue to devise their own spatial strategies and tactics violent and nonviolent, to shape their own space. In conclusion, the paper stresses that spaces are not exclusively shaped or moulded by planners and planning practices of the state only, but also by spatial practices of everyday life albeit clandestine and unofficial. In this regard, in Malawi, cities including the post-colonial city of Lilongwe should not be understood as being shaped by planners' space only but also the changing experiences of the city and everyday life and ambiguities of the users of urban space. Thus plans and documents as conceived spaces should not be understood as the only mechanism to shape and organise urban space but also the changing experiences of the city and everyday life and ambiguities of the users of urban space.

OPSOMMING

Stede in Malawi is nog steeds plekke en ruimtes waar daar weerstand, worsteling, en konflik i.v.m. grond plaasvind. Sedert die invoer van koloniale, modernistiese beplanning wat assosieer word met segregasie deur middel van funksionele streekindeling, homogenisasie,en fragmentasie van stadsgebied, is plakkery en beslaglê op grond in stede algemeen in die stede van Malawi. Die aanhoudendende voorkoms van plakkery, indringing en oortreding op grond reflekteer die die onvermoë van stedelike beplanning en grond beleid om grond en behuising aan die meerderheid van die stedelike burgers , meestal die middelinkomste klas en die gemarginaliseerde stedelike armes te verskaf.

Die regering het nie oor die jare daarin geslaag om die kwessie van konflik oor grond in stedelike areas suksesvol aan te spreek nie, dit ten spite van die feit dat daar toenemend meer gevalle van konflik en meededingende grondeise bestaan, asook onteiening in stedelike en omstedelike gebiede. Hierdie konflikte manifesteer in plakkery en indringery in staatsgrond wat lei tot die totstandkoming van nie-amptelike nedersettings. In stedelike gebiede het pogings om hierdie kwessies aan te spreek gelei tot onteiening,eiendomsreg-programme, grondhervormings-programme, gedwonge uitsettings, asook gebiede waar daar net grond en dienste verskaf word. Nogtans vind daar plakkery en indringing plaas. Met betrekking tot stedelike Malawi is die vraag: Hoekom is stedelike beplanning soos dit begryp word (d.w.s. as ’n denkwyse en ruimte-praktyk) die skepper en nie die bemiddelaar van konflik oor grond in stede nie?

Daar is gepoog om hierdie vraag te beantwoord deur gebruik te maak van Lefebvre se drie-ledige konsep van die produksie van ruimte, om sodoende ’n in-diepte begrip te verkry van die teenstellings tussen mense se konsepsies en alledaagse praktyke met betrekking tot ruimte, en die beplanners se konsepte van ruimte wat die gevolg is van koloniale, post-koloniale en neoliberale sienings, en hoe dit lei tot ’n aanhoudende konflik oor stedelike grondgebied in Malawi. Strategieë en taktieke wat deur inwoners gebruik word om ruimte te skep en te verdedig teen moontlike onteiening deur die staat, word ondersoek. Laastens word die lewende ondervindings van die stadsbewoners ondersoek, asook die veelvoudige betekenisse wat hulle heg aan die ruimtes wat hulle bewoon. Hoe hulle hierdie betekenisse gebruik om die oorname van hierdie spasies deur die staat, te beveg en terselfdertyd hulle eie ruimtes te skep.

Die gemengde-metode benadering is gebruik om geodata, kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe data in die twee buurtes van Soche West (Blantyre) en Area 49 (Lilongwe) waar daar aanhoudende spanning oor grond tussen die staat en die stadsbewoners is, aan te spreek. Primêre bronne van data sluit huishoudelike opnames, fokus groepbesprekings, sleutel-informant onderhoude, dokumentêre bronne, observasie,en elektroniese en gedrukte media in. Omdat daar so baie data is, is drie sagtewares, naamlik SPSS, ATLAS.ti, and ArcGIS 9.3™ GIS gebruik vir die ontleding van kwantitiewe, kwalitatiewe en ruimtelike data onderskeidelik. Inhouds- en diskoers analise is ook gedoen om die regeringsdokumente en koerantartikels te ontleed.

Daar is gevind dat alhoewel beplanningsdenke en –praktyk oorheers word deur ingevoerde, modernistiese konsepte van ruimtes, kry die owerhede dit nie reg om die bewoners te oorreed om hulle siening van stedelike ruimte te aanvaar nie. Daar is tydens die navorsing bevind dat die owerhede die volgende kwessies moet aanspreek: menslike en tegniese bekwaamdede, korrupsie, lomp burokratiese prosedures, uitgediende en weersprekende wette en beleide, die kompleksiteit van grondregte, swak toepassing van wette, politieke invloed, en die opkoms van die demokrasie, onvoltooide reklassifikasiwe van landelike owerhede, en ’n tekort aan finanseringsmeganismes. Die staat se onbekwaamheid tesame met die mense se persepsie dat

die staat nie volgens wet stedelike grond kan beheer nie, het gelei daartoe dat *Doba Dobas* (d.w.s. die middelman, en die skelms) die beplanning van konflik oorgeneem het en geweldadige en nie-geweldadige taktiek gebruik om grond te bekom en te verdedig, en sodoende konflik tussen die staat en die mense laat toeneem.

Daar kan gesê word dat in beide Lilongwe en Blantyre die veelvoudige betekenisse wat aan ruimte geheg word, die werklike ondervindinge van die mense verteenwoordig. Hierdie ondervindings behels verskillende kernwaardes wat dalk nie deur ander gedeel word nie. Dit bevestig ook Lefebvre se argumente oor die ruimtes. Laastens moet die beplanners die beplanners se toekomsplanne en die alledaagse ondervindings van die burgers, versoen. Daar word dus aanbeveel dat die beplanners die klem op abstrakte ruimtes en die modernistiese beeld van orde moet versoen met die ondervindings van diegene wat in die stad woon.

Die beplanners se klem op abstakte ruimtes en hulle modernistiese beeld van orde impliseer dat lewensvatbare alternatiewe plekmaak prosesse nie goed verstaan word nie, gedeeltelik omdat die formele diskoers in beplanning en plekmaak grootliks draai om herhaaldelike voorstellings van ruimte en die oorrredingskrag van die een of ander voorstelling.

Hierdie navorser stel voor dat Lefebvre se drie konsepte liewer gebruik moet word om dit vir navorsers moontlik te maak om voor beplanners bewus te word van die kompleksiteit van die menslike dimensies van ruimte, Nadat hy gefokus het op die twee stede, besef die navorse dat beplanning baie tyd en moeite behels en dat die menslike of die mikroskaal voorrang moet geniet. Die veelvoudige betekenisse van ruimte, soos bespreek, moet in ag geneem word tydens die organiseer en skep van stedelike ruimte. Aangesien ruimte nooit leeg is nie en altyd betekenis het, is dit belangrik om die verskillende betekenisse wat mense aan die plekke waar hulle bly heg, te verstaan, asook hulle gehegtheid aan hierdie plekke. In hierdie studie word die verskillende betekenisse van ruimte, naamlik ruilwaarde, gebruikwaarde, emosionele waarde, historiese waarde, en gewyde waarde.

Die bevordering van koloniale.modernistiese konsepte van orde, segregasie, funksionele sonering en kommodifikasie,. grootliks deur die dominante ekonomiese en politiese elite, lei tot weerstand deur groepe wat die ruimtes waarin hulle lewe wil verdedig en rekonstrueer. Omdat die staat nie deur middel van die ruimtelike praktyke van beplanning, sy siening van stedelike ruimte aan die bewoners kan oordra nie, hou die stedelike bewoners aan om hulle strategieë en taktieke, geweldadig en nie-geweldadig, te gebruik, om hul eie ruimtes te skep. Ten slotte word daar tot die slotsom gekom dat ruimte nie eksklusief deur beplanners geskep word nie, maar deur die praktyke van die alledaagse lewe, al is dit ongeoorloofd en nie-amptelik. Die stede in Malawi, insluitende die post-koloniale stad, Lilongwe, moet nie beskou word as gevorm alleenlik deur die stadsbeplanners nie, maar ook deur die veranderende ondervindings van die stad en die alledaagse lewe en die dubbelsinnigheid van die gebruikers van stedelike ruimte. Planne en dokumente moet dus nie gesien word as die enigste meganisme wat stedelike ruimte vorm en organiseer nie.

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CONTENTS

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, particularly my mum and dad who toiled and sacrificed the little they had in life to raise a son with love, care, support and moral guidance. All glory be to Jesus Christ, my Lord and personal saviour.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADL	Airport Development Limited
ALC	African Lakes Company depot
BCC	Blantyre City Council
BUSP	Blantyre Urban Structure Plan
CAQDAS	Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CBD	Central Business District
CCDC	Capital City Development Corporation
CDS	City Development Strategy
COC	Certificate of Claim
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DATAR	Delegation for Regional Development and Territorial Planning
EAs	Enumeration Areas
FGDs	Focus group discussions
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HU	Hermeneutic Unit
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
IDS	Lilongwe Integrated Development Strategy
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
ITG	Imperial Tobacco Company
LCC	Lilongwe City Council
LDCs	Less Developed Countries
LESA	Land, Environment and Sustainability in Africa

LGA	Local Government Act in 1998
LMP	Lilongwe Master Plan
MGDS	Malawi Growth Development Strategy
MHC	Malawi Housing Corporation
MRA	Malawi Revenue Authority
NLP	Malawi National Land Policy
NPDP	National Physical Development Plan
NRCP	National Rural Centres Programme
NRDP	National Rural Development Programme
NSO	National Statistics Office
OZS	Outline Zoning Scheme
PDs	Primary Documents
PHAs	Permanent Housing Areas
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
QDA	Qualitative data analysis
RGCP	Rural Growth Centre Programme
SAPs	Structural adjustment programmes
SCDP	Secondary Centres Development Programme
SES	Sequential exploratory strategy
SSA	Subsaharan African countries
T.A.	Traditional Authority
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Act
THAs	Traditional Housing Areas
UDS	Urban Development Strategy

UMCA	Universities Mission to Central Africa
UMP	UN Urban Management Programme
USP	Urban Structure Plan
WWII	Second World War

CHAPTER 1 SETTING THE SCENE: CONTESTATIONS AND PRODUCTION OF URBAN SPACE IN MALAWI

1.1 PRELIMINARY STUDY AND RATIONALE

The aim with this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the causal mechanisms of land contestations in urban areas and the impact of this contestation on transforming urban spaces. The focus will specifically be on understanding how the contradictions between people's daily life practices, their perceptions about space and conceptions of space as portrayed in planning documents or land policies intermingle with politics *vis-à-vis* power, to generate perpetual struggles over urban spaces in urban Malawi.

1.1.2 Contextualising the problem of urban space

In Africa, land in general and urban land in particular, plays a crucial role in socio-economic development. Urban land is an important source of basic shelter, security, wealth as well as power (Peters 2004; Anseeuw & Alden 2010). African countries, Malawi included, are currently experiencing rapid urbanisation as people continue to migrate to urban areas to access these benefits. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (2007), reports that Africa is the world's fastest urbanizing region with 90% of new developments in cities occurring in slums. Consequently, this rapid urbanisation coupled with failure of planning in Africa, contributes to struggles over urban land as people exert pressure on this urban land. The significance of urban land therefore makes it valuable and contentious, thereby causing vested interests to tap into this land. Arguably, these myriad interests over distribution of urban land, access to it as well as ownership have been a source of conflicts and contestations in urban areas (Barry et al. 2007; Clover 2007; IISD 2007).

Bringing the argument home, at the rate of 6.2 % per annum, Malawi has one of the highest urbanisation rates in the world mainly due to high rural-urban migration as well as natural population increase (Mwathunga 2012). This urbanisation contributes to contestation over urban spaces in terms of land access, ownership as well as rights to land among different users of urban spaces, namely the poor and the elite, be it local elites or non-Malawians. Of late, reported incidences of conflicts involve land grabbing where Indians are purchasing land along the Lake Malawi shore for tourism investment. Indeed, reports also reveal that in Lilongwe city, land is being acquired by foreigners (non-Malawians) for commercial use while most indigenous Malawians remain landless (Langa 2010). Other conflicts occur

between informal urban residents and government, and between the political/powerful elite and poor urban residents.

In recognition of these conflicts which mainly revolve around access, ownership and rights to land, over the years, the Malawi Government has adopted policies aimed at addressing the conflicts over unequal access to land. First, in 1967, after attaining independence in 1964, under Dr Banda's one-party rule, land reforms were carried out but these reforms perpetuated the unequal distribution of land by converting customary land into leasehold (Chirwa & Chinsinga 2008). After attaining democracy in May 1994, Malawi embarked on a number of initiatives such as the formulation of the Malawi National Land Policy (NLP) of 2002, and recently the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (2006-2011). In particular, the NLP is envisaged to promote tenure security and equitable access to land (Government of Malawi 2002). It also seeks to address historical injustices of unequal access to land, dispossessions, and landlessness among Malawians by barring foreigners from owning land (Government of Malawi 2002).

Despite the above-mentioned initiatives and interventions, contestation persists in urban areas. The question remains: Why is urban planning and the related land policies unable to resolve this contestation over urban land? Current research shows that both urban planning and the National Land Policy of 2002 only serve to intensify already existing competition over land (Silungwe 2005; Peters & Kambewa 2007). First, the current urban planning system which was imported from the west is arguably deficient and therefore continues to generate conflicts over urban land. Indeed, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1988 is apparently outdated and rigid, and ignores local traditions, customs and practices. It is not responsive to current socio-economic realities on the ground. Second, it is argued that the land policy, with its neoliberal approach to privatising customary land ownership, also seems to perpetuate the colonial legacy as it apparently deprives the poor of their land (Silungwe 2005). Third, politics seem to play a role in driving contestations over urban land. For instance, it is argued that Dr. Banda expropriated people's land to give leases to political elites (Jul-Larsen & Mvula 2009). As Chirwa & Chinsinga (2008) observe, land reforms and policies are not politically neutral in the sense that they are driven, influenced and shaped by political processes resulting from the contestation of diverse interests made up of differing forms and degrees of power, licit or illicit, formal or informal.

1.1.3 Urban planning and contest for urban space

Studies on land contestations in urban areas have received much attention (Haines & Buijs 1985; Maharaj 1996; Donaldson & Marais 2002; Brown 2006). One body of literature that seeks to understand the causal mechanisms of contestations over urban spaces, seems to attribute the escalation of conflicts over urban land to the poor performance of urban planning and its related land laws and policies (Myers 1994; Olima 1998; Jabereen 2006; Magigi & Drescher 2010). These studies point to the fact that urban planning as a system of managing and administering land rights faces many challenges such as inefficient public land allocation procedures, double- and multiple plot allocations, land-grabbing, and speculation as well as corruption.

Studies also show that urban planning, in pursuance of its modernist ideology by among other things, not recognising customary land rights, contributes to contestations between statutory tenure and existing customary rights (Magigi & Drescher 2010). Yet, although these customary land rights are perceived as illegal, they are considered socially legitimate by the majority of urban dwellers. Scott (1998) argues that the failure of urban planning stems primarily from the planners' conception of a city which accords neither with the actual economic and social functions of an urban area nor with the individual needs of its inhabitants, for instance by ignoring everyday multiple and social meanings of urban space. Consequently, the contradictions that exist between planners' conception of place and the way inhabitants conceive and experience it in their daily life practices may likely lead to contestations over urban spaces (Jabereen 2006). Beside perceptions about space, land reform policies in many countries, Malawi included, continue to intensify competition (Brown 2005; Silungwe 2005). Quite often, these policies perceive customary land rights as insecure and impediments to private investment (Myers 1994). Surprisingly, research has paid little attention to exploring how planning, in the process of producing urban space, continues to generate conflicts instead of mediating these contestations over urban space.

1.1.4 Politics and contest for urban space

Besides planning, further studies agree that politics[1] tends to drive the process of land contestations in urban areas (Scott 1998; Donaldson & Marais 2002; Kelly 2003; Brown

[1] Here politics is used broadly to mean relations of power wherever exercised, including taking control over the flows of resources (Healey 2006). Politics focuses on who controls what and how and who gets what. According to Healey (2006): *"...politics is everywhere...it is not just what politicians do."* In Malawi, politics of land focuses on who is involved, their interests, institutional contexts, processes of state formation since colonial days and more importantly who should gain access to land (Chinsinga 2008).

2005; Brown 2006; Barry et al 2007; Chinsinga 2008; Jenkins 2009). On one hand, the role of politics is apparent in sub-Saharan Africa where urban land is considered a key source of power (Kelly 2003). Because of this, urban land has been used to the benefit of elite groups (Jenkins 2009). At the same time, politicians use urban space as a basis for patronage and dominance. Indeed it is not uncommon that politicians, as is the case in Malawi, contribute to intensification of conflicts as they use urban land in order to win political votes (Brown 2006). On the other hand, political elites deliberately use planning as a tool of domination and power (Lefebvre 1991) rendering the whole planning process political. It can be argued that politicians use planning as well as space to advance their political agendas. In the context of Malawi, the interaction between planning and politics as drivers of land contestations has not been comprehensively explored.

The focus of this study is to explore people's perceptions of space and their daily life practices and how the contradiction between these perceptions on one hand, and conceived space as represented in urban plans and policies on the other hand, contribute to contestations over urban space in Malawi. As Perera (2008) argues, many of today's planning-related problems are caused by perceptions. In other words, planning is socially, politically and culturally incompatible with and lacks empathy towards its subjects. In this research, it is argued that advancing conceived space as represented in plans and policies (i.e. abstract space constructed by dominant economic and political elites) provokes resistance by groups who defend and seek to reconstruct lived space, hence urban land contestations.

1.2 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

This research was primarily based on Lefebvre's theory of production of space. Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is a social product. This implies that every society has its own way of producing space. Lefebvre's conceptual triad identifies three elements of space namely, perceived, conceived, and lived spaces

1.2.1 Perceived space and spatial practices

Perceived space and spatial practices refer to the relatively objective and concrete space people encounter in their daily environment (Lefebvre 1991; Purcell 2002). It is important to note that in essence differences in spatial practice/perceived space are linked to differences in conceptions or representations of place (Carp 2008). In this research, I used this element of the triad to explore people's perceptions of space, their socio-cultural and economic realities and the local practices they adopt to appropriate space. This will help in the understanding of how the perceptions contradict conceived space to generate contestations over urban land.

There are contests over conceptions and perceptions of spaces. Perceptions depend on people's interaction with the environment, using the senses of sight, smell, touch, and hearing.

1.2.2 Conceived spaces and representations of space

Conceived spaces and representations of space refer to mental constructions of space, and creative ideas about and representations of space (Lefebvre 1991; Purcell 2002). In Malawi, these include space as represented in master plans, building codes, outline and zoning schemes as well as land ownership rights as provided in the National Land Policy of 2002. I used this concept of space to analyse urban plans and policies as representations of space to understand how space as conceived in plans and policies contradicts urban informal residents' space to drive contestations over urban land. Unlike perceptions, conceptions are influenced by ideas and knowledge (ideology) to serve the interests of capital and power.

1.2.3 Lived space and representational spaces

Lived space and representational spaces refer to the complex combination of perceived and conceived space (Lefebvre 1991; Purcell 2002). Lived spaces represent a person's actual experience of space in everyday life or rather a constituent element of social life (Lefebvre 1991; Purcell 2002). In fact, these are the spaces of the inhabitants and users of towns and cities and are associated with images and symbols that may be coded or uncoded, verbal or non-verbal (Shields 1999).

1.2.4 Right to the city

Those who inhabit the city have the right to the city. In this research, the term is used to imply that residents have rights to participate centrally in the decisions that produce urban space as well as right to appropriate urban space. This concept helped to explore the various strategies that informal residents (that is, those who access land outside the formal mechanism such as city council) employ in exercising their rights of access or ownership or in defending their spaces as well as how politicians manipulate this discourse to entice violence in their quest for votes or patronage.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

One notes that although urban land contestations are on the increase in Malawi, the causes of these contestations have not been comprehensively studied. Of crucial importance is to understand squatter's or informal urban residents' perceptions of urban space and their daily

life practices and how these contradict or interact with urban planning (as it is conceived and acted upon) to generate a perpetual struggle for spaces in urban Malawi.

1.3.1 Problem statement and focus

Over the years, government efforts have not decisively addressed the issue of land contestations in urban areas in spite of numerous reports of increasing cases of conflicts and competing claims over urban land in Malawi. Such cases include land dispossessions by non-Malawians as well as well as local elites, conflicts over land uses in urban and peri-urban areas, conflicts between customary tenure systems, informal land delivery systems and formal land delivery systems and land invasions. These conflicts may be leading to the growth of spontaneous settlements. In urban areas, efforts to address these competitions have included relocation, titling programmes, sites-and-services schemes, land reform programmes, and forced evictions, but struggles such as squatting and land invasions persist. Indeed, land policies from the colonial era (1891 to 1964), through the post-independence (1964 to 1993) to the democratic era (1994 to date) have not addressed these contestations, especially because of their capitalist and market approach as well as their inability to take into account the socio-economic realities and traditions of Malawians mainly squatters or land invaders. Consequently, conflicts over land still exist. In spite of these continued struggles over urban land, in Malawi, research on contestation over urban land has mainly been focused on social conflicts over customary land tenure in rural spaces where agriculture is the main source of livelihood and on the role of land reform policies in accelerating competition over land in rural areas and its impact on the poor (Silungwe 2005). There is a dearth of research that seeks to understand how the relationship between people's perception of space and hence their daily life practices, urban planners' conceptions of space and political factors continue to generate contestations over urban space in Malawi.

1.3.2 Research questions

This research was guided by one main research question:

- How does the interplay between urban planning as both a mode of thought (as it is conceived) and spatial practice (as acted upon in the making of space), and informal urban residents' perceptions about space alongside socio-political forces drive the process of urban land contestations?

- How do contestations over urban space in turn contribute to the transformation of urban spaces in Malawi?

The following secondary research questions complement the above broader research questions:

(i) What is the history of urban space in Malawi and to what extent has colonial modernist planning impacted on the production of urban space in Malawi?

(ii) In what ways do urban plans and land policies as conceived spaces and representations of space contribute to contestations over urban space by being generators instead of mediators of conflicts over urban land?

(iii) What are the informal residents' or squatters perception of urban spaces in terms of land rights, access and ownership and what are the factors which determine people's perceptions of urban space?

(iv) What are spatial practices and tactics employed by the informal urban residents on one hand, and the state on the other hand, to appropriate, claim and defend urban space?

(v) What are the urban residents lived experiences regarding the state's spatial practices of relocation, and eviction among others?

(vi) To what extent does the contradiction between squatters'perceptions of urban space and planners' conceptions of urban space contribute to urban land contestation?

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research was to explore the question of contestation over urban space in Malawi by examining how contradictions over understandings of space alongside socio-political processes contribute to these various forms of struggle for urban space in Malawi.

To achieve this overall goal, the research sought to meet the following research objectives:

(i) To analyse the historical production of urban space in Malawi from the pre-colonial through the colonial to the postcolonial era particularly in order to understand the genesis of urban settlements and pre-colonial understanding of space and how the imposition of colonial modernist planning and post-colonial planning contributed to the changing notions of space.

(ii) To analyse conceived spaces and representations of spaces in urban Malawi with reference to laws and policies, master plans, urban strategies, and lay out plans, in order to understand how the contradictions and constraints of these abstract spaces contribute to contestations over urban space.

(iii) To investigate perceptions and their associated daily life spatial practices and tactics used by urban residents and the state to shape, produce and defend urban spaces

(iv) To explore lived spaces and representational spaces in order to understand how the multiple meanings attached to urban space contradict with dominant conceptions of space, thereby generating struggles over urban space.

(v) On the basis of the literature review and empirical findings, to suggest a theoretical framework for understanding the contestation and production of urban spaces in Malawi's cities.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

For effective execution of the research, the scope of the research was delimited with respect to conceptual scope, temporal scope and spatial scope. On the basis of this delimitation, the degree of both theoretical and empirical data collection was determined on the basis of this delimitation.

1.5.1 Conceptual scope

The study limited itself to the understanding of how space is produced using a conceptual triad by Lefebvre (1991) as the foremost analytical framework. Lefebvre (1991) identified what he called three moments in the production of space namely: conceived space, perceived space and lived space which in spatial terms refers to representations of space (or abstract space), spatial practices and spaces of representations (representational spaces) respectively. These three spaces also formed the basis for data collection, analysis as well as organisation of the research report. In addition to these three key concepts, other related concepts namely, the right to the city and politics of space as used by Lefebvre were also used in this study to enrich our understanding of the residents' spatial strategies and tactics to reproduce and defend urban space. Using Lefebvre's theory, the central thesis of this study is that since space is produced through the interaction between conceived, perceived and lived spaces, then the contractions and mismatches between these moments of space contribute to contestations over space in the world's towns and cities.

1.5.2 Spatial scope

The study was limited to two major cities in Malawi namely: Lilongwe and Blantyre. However, the study was also narrowed down to micro scale at the neighbourhood level in order to understand how these plans and policies are acted out and contested by urban residents. In this case, two neighbourhoods were selected: Soche West in Blantyre city and

Area 49 in Lilongwe city. Area 49 was however, divided further into two areas namely Dubai and Baghdad. These areas were purposively selected because tensions with the state were still ongoing which made it easier to monitor the events as they were unfolding.

1.5.3 Temporal scope

Beside the adoption of Henri Lefebvre's theory as an overarching theoretical and analytical framework, the study was also limited in temporal perspective. In this case, three key historic moments are used in this study namely the precolonial, colonial and the postcolonial eras. Thus the study briefly traces the understanding and genesis of urban space in pre-colonial Malawi, then in the colonial era alongside modernism and finally in the post-colonial era.

1.6 STUDY AREA

The research was undertaken in Malawi. In this section Malawi's geography is described and this is followed by a brief overview of the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe where study sites were selected for the survey.

1.6.1 Geography of Malawi

Malawi is a landlocked country. Located in southeast Africa, it is surrounded by Mozambique, Zambia, and Tanzania. Lake Malawi, formerly Lake Nyasa, occupies most of the country's eastern border. The north-south Rift Valley is flanked by mountain ranges and high plateau areas. Malawi has a total population of 13.1 million according to the 2008 Malawi Population and Housing Census. Although only a minority of Malawi's population live in urban areas, the urban population continues to increase such that by 2008 the proportion of urban population had risen to 15.3%. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) projects that by 2025, almost 30% of Malawi's population will be urbanised and that the figure is expected to rise to about 50% by 2050, making rapid urbanisation one of the most pressing challenges facing Malawi.

Hierarchically, the first tier of urban centres in Malawi comprises the four cities of Lilongwe (the capital city), Blantyre (the commercial city), Mzuzu, and Zomba (the colonial capital). In 2004 about three-quarters of Malawi's urban population were residing in these four cities (Daily Times 2008; Phiri 2004). The second urban tier consists of towns declared as such under the Local Government Act of 1998 (e.g. Mangochi). The third tier consists of towns that display urban characteristics such as the application of plans but have not been declared as such, for instance rural growth centres (Cammack, Kanyongolo and O'Neil, 2009).

The choice of study areas represents the top two categories of cities where contestations are also noticeable and they are subjected to a legal framework for urban planning in Malawi. In this regard, the research was undertaken in two study areas namely Blantyre and Lilongwe cities **(see Figures 1.1 and 1.2)**. In Lilongwe city, Area 49 (Baghdad and Dubai) was chosen. These areas have been characterised by land invasions some of which erupted at the dawn of democracy in 1994 when politicians failed to honour their pledges for free land in the city.

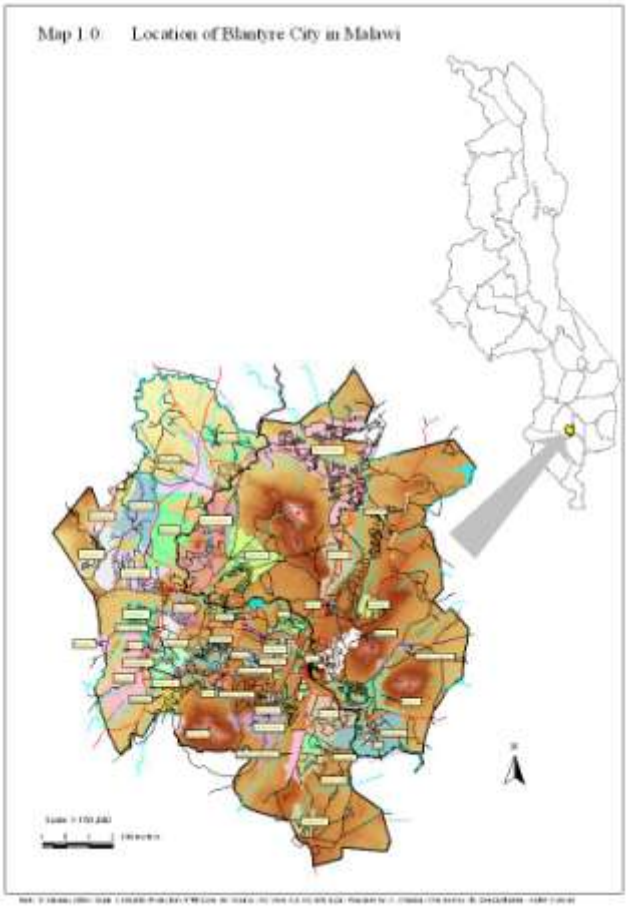


Figure 1.1 Location of Blantyre City

One notes that although urban land contestations are on the increase in Malawi, the causes of these contestations have not been comprehensively studied. Of crucial importance is to understand squatter residents' perceptions of urban space and their daily life practices and how these contradict or interact with urban planning (as it is conceived and acted upon) to generate a perpetual struggle for spaces in urban Malawi.

In Blantyre the Soche West comprising Chimwankhunda and Soche Hill area were chosen as case study sites to explore how contestation are played out at the microscale. Soche West is

one of the areas which have become a site of struggle over space between town chiefs and local assembly concerning the allocation of land rights. The study areas for land contestations in Malawi are depicted below **(see Table 1.1).**

Table 1.1 Study area populations

City	Population (2008)	Study area (informal neighbourhood)	Study area population	Justification for choice of study area
Lilongwe	669021	Area 49	64650	On-going land invasions and tensions
Blantyre	661444	Soche West (Soche Hill)	14610	Conflict between chiefs, residents and state authorities
Totals	1330465 (10.1% of Malawi's total population)		79260	

Source: National Statistical Office/NSO (2008).

1.6.2 Blantyre city in context

Blantyre City is the first colonial urban centre in Malawi established by the Scottish Missionaries in the 1870s and declared a planning area in 1897 (UN-HABITAT 2011). Although the influence of Blantyre declined when Lilongwe became the capital city in 1975, Blantyre city has retained its role as the hub for communication, commercial activities and cooperation in Malawi and is therefore Malawi's commercial capital.

Blantyre city's population, according to the 2008 population census (NSO 2008) stood at 661,256 people with a growth rate of 2.8%. Over 65% of the population live in informal settlements with poor living conditions (UN-HABITAT 2011). These informal settlements occupy about 23% of the land in Blanytre. Generally, urban poverty is estimated at at 24% and specifically unemployment stands at 8% (UN-HABITAT 2011).

On employment and economy, about 45% of Blantyre's residents are employed in the private sector, 12% are employed in the public sector, and 36% are self-employed and mainly working in the informal sector.

1.6.3 Lilongwe city in context

Lilongwe became the capital of Malawi and the main administrative city of Malawi in 1975 following its relocation from the colonial capital in Zomba. Of late, Lilongwe has witnessed a high urbanisation rate ever since, accelerated by the relocation of all government head offices from Blantyre to Lilongwe from 2005. The city is divided into four sectors (Old Town, Capital Hill, Kanengo, and Lumbadzi). Lilongwe **(Figure 1.2)** is situated at the centre of a large agricultural area and there are many economic activities taking place in the city (LCC 2010).

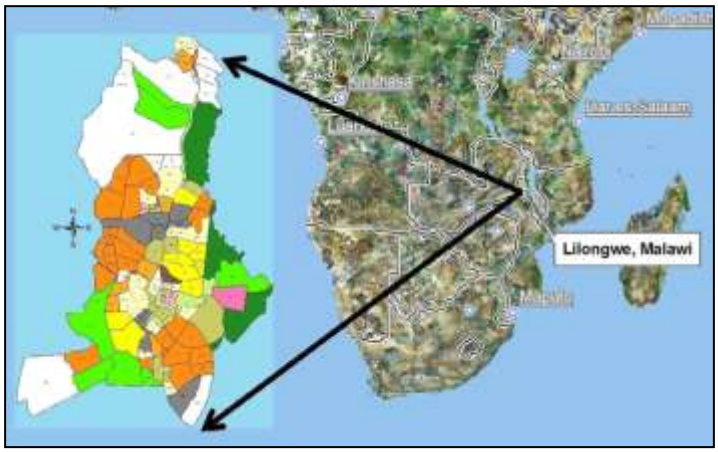


Figure 1.2 Location of Lilongwe city

The population of Lilongwe was according to 2008 population census 669,021, with an annual growth rate of 4.3%. About 76% of this population were living in the informal settlements. The living conditions in the informal settlements are deplorable and the residents have little or no access to social infrastructure and basic urban services (UN-HABITAT 2011). Economically, tobacco processing is Lilongwe's major industry. Like Blantyre, urban poverty stands at about 25% with unemployment at 16% with approximately 76% of the city's population living in informal settlements (NSO 2008). The civil service employs 27 % of the city's work force. The private sector employs 40 % and 24% are self-employed (UN-HABITAT 2011). Rapid social and economic development has led to population growth from 19,425 in 1966 to 669,021 in 2008. An annual growth rate of 4.3% was registered for the inter-censual period between 1998 and 2008 (UN-HABITAT 2011).

1.7 CONNECTION WITH THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME(S) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

At faculty level, the proposed research contributes to the faculty's thematic area on Land, Environment and Sustainability in Africa (LESA) and more specifically on the following subthemes: land tenure, urbanisation, and environmental policy and socio-economic change in urban areas. At departmental level, the research fits well into the following themes: urban restructuring, tourism, and small town and environment.

1.8 CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXISTING BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The research contributes to the existing body of literature not only on the land question but also on the urban land question in African cities using case studies drawn from Blantyre and Lilongwe cities in Malawi. The bulk of studies on the land question tend to pay attention to land problems associated with agricultural ownership and use, while urban land issues are relegated to the peripheral of research on land (Moyo 2008). Yet, urban areas are gradually more a critical site of struggles in terms of a growing demand for land for residential space and working space among other uses. Urban spaces are also central to capital formation both as ground rent and for speculative purposes. Thus this research contributes to the urban dimension of the land question into the debate of the African land problem. The research comes at a time when reports of conflicts over urban land are rampant especially at this time when global neoliberal processes appear to dominate over local processes.

Notwithstanding the fact that prominent planning theorists have underscored the potential of Lefebvre's ideas for planning research and practice (Gunder, 2005; Healey, 2007; Young, 2008), to date, Lefebvre's theoretical framework has been employed only occasionally in planning research (Leary 2009), though a surge of interest occurred in the mid-1990s after the publication of Lefebvre's 'The Production of Space' in English (Allen & Pryke, 1994; Fyfe, 1996) to name but a few. Quite often, the bulk of the empirical research in the planning field tends to counterpose only two elements of Lefebvre's spatial triad namely, representations of space and spaces of representation (Leary 2009) and not spatial practice. This research did not only explore these two elements (representations of space and spaces of representation), but it also went a step further to emphasise on the under researched aspect of spatial practice in order to understand how in view of the state incapacity to dominate space through imposition of abstract space, informal residents as agency, have creatively deployed counter spatial

strategies and tactics to produce their own spaces. Thus, an understanding of the informal residents' involved in the production of space, including the ways and mechanisms of that involvement, was crucial for this research, which takes up Lefebvre's rallying cry not to indulge solely in abstraction but to uncover the hidden workings of spatial production (Lefebvre 1991: 40).

Since I have not come across studies that have employed Lefebvre's spatial triad as analytical framework to understand contestation and production of urban spaces in African cities, the study therefore makes a huge contribution to engage with Lefebvre in African cities where processes of capitalist globalisation and neoliberalism are being played out. Thus the research has attempted to understand and contextualise Lefebvre's spatial triad in an African city. At policy level, the research intends to stimulate policy debate about an important but neglected aspect of land conflicts in Malawi, especially at a time when the poor continue to lose their land through land-grabbing, imported urban planning norms and neoliberal land policies.

Most significantly, the research contributes to Lefebvre's theory of production of space in numerous ways. Regarding the power of knowledge, implicit in Lefebvre's theory, knowledge as power is used for the advancement of conceived space. This research, however, has revealed that both the marginalised and the elite possess knowledge of planning processes such as planning requirements and building guidelines. They use this knowledge to shape their spaces while anticipating for regularisation of the invaded urban land. Lefebvre assumed that user's space is only shaped by users' perceptions and everyday life. However, the study reveals that a combination of their perceptions regarding who owns land plus their knowledge of the right authority over urban land are used to claim, produce and defend their urban spaces. Contrary to Lefebvre's portrayal of the state as powerful authority and main actor in the production of urban space, the study has revealed that there are multiple actors in the production of urban space. These actors have proved to be even more powerful than the state. In other words, presence of multiple actors means that space is not solely moulded by planners only but also by the users of urban space. Regarding conception of urban space, by naming places in Area 49 as Baghdad and Duabai, the research research reveals that conception of urban space is not only determined by planning authorities but also by the users of urban space. On the role of politics, as opposed to Lefebvre's emphasis that politics and power dictates abstract and representations of space, the study has shown that the role of politics in the production of urban space is double edged. On the one hand, politicians incite urban residents to invade urban land and in some cases pledge urban land to gain electoral votes. On the other hand, the same politicians and other affluent groups tend to influence the

planning processes and push for formalisation to legitimise their claims for land. Indeed, the study has demonstrated that even planners who produce produce the abstract space are also involved thorugh corrupt means in the production of 'unplanned spaces'.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF DISSERTATION

Chapter one sets the scene for the entire thesis. In the chapter there is an overview of contestations over urban space in Malawi's cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe. Having contextualised the question of contestation and producing urban space, the chapter narrows down to the problem statement followed by research questions, research objectives, and chapter organisation. In Chapter 2 there is a critical overview of research on contestations over urban spaces with specific reference to tensions that emanate from land invasions and/or squatting by urban residents (both indigenous and/or migrant urban residents) on urban land. The focus of the chapter is on understandings of urban space through a review of dominant discourses namely colonial modernist planning, the postcolonial city, postmodernism and neoliberalism. An in-depth and comprehensive review of the current body of literature with respect to philosophical and theoretical foundations for the study of urban geography is provided in Chapter 3**.** Chapter 4 presents the research roadmap and approach by focusing on the research methodology that was employed to execute the research study. In Chapter 5 there is a discussion of the historical production of urban space in Malawi by tracing the genesis of urban spaces and then changing notions of space from pre-colonial through the colonial to the postcolonial era. In chapter 6 there is an analysis of conceived spaces and representations of spaces in urban Malawi with respect to urban structure plans and the Malawi National Land Policy of 2002. In Chapter 7 perceived spaces and spatial practices are analysed with emphasis on the spatial practices employed by residents to produce and defend urban spaces. In Chapter 8 there is an analysis of the lived spaces and representational spaces and it is argued that urban spaces have multiples meanings and these meanings are in turn used by those who share them to contest and thereby shape and produce urban spaces. Finally, chapter nine contains a summary of the study results. Conclusions, recommendations, and areas for further research are suggested.

CHAPTER 2 CONCEPTIONS AND PRODUCTION OF SPACE: FROM PRECOLONIAL TO POSTCOLONIAL URBAN SPACE

"...there has been relatively little consideration of the social dimensions which influence how space is perceived and used, or the different meanings attributed to space by different groups in society....".(Brown 2001:320)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter contains a critical review based on secondary literature, of conceptions of space on the one hand and planning on the other hand with a view to understanding how the contradictions between peoples' understanding of space and planners' conceptions of space contribute to the growing tension over urban land in Malawi. Consistent with the argument in this research land invasions and squatting as contestation over urban space in Malawi's cities, is a product of the lack of connection between planning's commitment to the advancement of conceived space and their representations of space. The chapter is broadly divided into five sections namely: concept and significance of space, understanding of space in the pre-colonial era, space and planning in the colonial era, space and planning in the postcolonial era and politics of space.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISING URBAN SPACE

In this section, an attempt is made to define the concept of space as well as its significance and meaning.

2.2.1 Space as a concept

There are many types of spaces which include real spaces, architectural spaces, imaginary spaces and symbolic spaces such that the term space resists a single definition in either formulation or words (Kalipeni and Zeleza 1999). Geographers' interest in the distinction between 'place' and 'space' emerged during the 1970s, when a qualitative shift in the field geography paved the road to the development of social and cultural geography (Yakobi 2004). Tuan (1977) locates 'space' as a general term in opposition to 'place' as material. In other words, space is nothing but the relationship between objects (Norberg-Schultz 1979). Similarly, Madanipour (1996) distinguishes absolute space as a container of material objects in opposition to relational space that is defined as perceived and socially produced. Relph (1976) claims that place do not refer to the abstract but an experienced phenomenon. Thus, place is a defined, built or natural space that has meaning (Noberg-Schultz 1979). By

implication, this phenomenological perspective urges planners to produce places not spaces. In other words, spatial practices of planning are viewed as agents in the production of place.

From a structuralist-Marxist perspective, firstly, the capitalist system as a social structure could be a key for understanding the organisation of space (Yakobi 2004). Secondly, spatial practices such as planning were viewed by Marxist critics as tools in the service of capitalism which aims to balance private and collective capital, and thus contains potential for social oppression (Castells 1978). Thus the structural-Marxist thought revealed the interrelationship between society, space, culture and economy (Yakobi 2004). However, the Marxist perspective lacks an understanding of the everyday practices of the users and their struggle to transform capitalist space into place.

By way of rejoinder, the work of Henri Lefebvre represents integrated theories and abstract thought with practices and the tangible daily urban experiences. For Lefebvre (1991), space is a social product. In this regard, space cannot be seen solely as a reflection of either experience or knowledge but rather as the juxtaposition of three interrelated dimensions namely perceived space, conceived space, and lived space.

On the basis of this understanding, scholars of space widely concur that space could represent a complicated set of interlocking physical and social relations, patterns, and processes (Massey 1984; Smith 1984; Harvey 1985; Soja 1989; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1993; Massey 1994). Thus, space representing a social product, (Lefebvre 1991) is created from a mix of legal, political, economic, and social practices and structures. Thus, space does not only possess a material reality as environment, but is also experienced and conceptualised through organisation of social life (Massey 1992). Or as (Krier 1979:15) notes, urban space is broadly used to comprise all types of spaces between buildings in towns and other localities.

Martin, McCann, & Purcell (2003) concur in their observation that analyses of space should recognise the inherent and multiple social meanings of space and the spatiality of all human activity. In this case therefore, Lefebvre's (1991) social production of space provides an imperative lens for understanding the meanings of urban space.

On the basis of this understanding of space, it can be argued that spatial conflicts in general and contestations over urban space in particular, are a manifestation of the existence of diverse perceptions and ideas about urban space. For instance, conflicts between residential land uses and commercially oriented development are essentially conflicts about what urban space is and what it should become (Purcell 1997; Purcell 2001).

In the next section, an analysis of the different meanings and significance of urban space, that is from physical organisation in land use planning and human attachments to specific locations to idealised images, is presented. According to Martin, McCann, & Purcell (2003), this type of spatial analysis is powerful as it highlights the areas of contradictions, tensions and difference in the urban sphere.

2.2.2 Significance and meaning of urban space

On the basis of the foregoing understanding of space, it is now widely acknowledged by scholars of space that space has meaning and that these meanings are diverse and divergent. These meanings and significance range from emotional attachment and historical value (Bourdieu 1962), 'bread' and dignity (Fanon 1963), subsistence, livelihood, and sense of security (Berner 1997; Urmilla 2010), a place to live (Berner 2007), and socio-economuic development (Odgaard 2006).

In emphasizing the centrality of land, Bourdieu (1962:172 quoted in Burawoy & von Holdt 2012:80) says:

> *"The peasant can exist only when rooted to the land, the land where he was born, which he received from his parents and to which he is attached by his habits and his memories. Once he has been uprooted there is a good chance that he will cease to exist as a peasant that the instinctive and irrational passion which binds him to his peasant existence will die within him.*

Clearly, the extract suggests that land in general has multiple meanings and values which extend beyond exchange value. Such meanings include, emotional attachment, as well as histories and memories. Similar observations are also shared by Fanon when he says:

> *"For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity (Fanon, 1963[1961[:44] in Burawoy & von Holdt 2012:80)."*

Indeed, Bob Urmilla's (2010) recent work on land also recognizes that land is a vital resource in the sense that it offers diversified livelihood opportunities and alternatives; sense of security in cases where formal employment opportunities and access to resources are limited; and it continues to have a major historical, cultural, and spiritual significance.

Underscoring the importance of land, Odgaard (2006:5) focusing on Tanzania, states:

> …the vital importance of land issues to social and economic development in Africa is unquestionable. The fact that land is becoming an increasingly scarce resource in many parts of the continent, and also a more and more conflict ridden resource, has implied that issues related to land rights and land conflicts now range high on the policy agendas both in African countries and among international donors (Urmilla 2010: 50).

Specifically, in respect of urban space, Berner (1997:171) citing Evers (1984:481) has this to say:

> A precondition for subsisting in an urban environment is access to the use of urban land to build a house, to put up a hut, or at least to find a temporary space for sleeping, eating and defecating. Property rights regulate this access to urban land and thereby the chance to subsist, or at least to be physically present. From this point of view access to urban land becomes the most basic human need in an urban area.

In Latin America, for instance, competition for space especially for the urban poor is made real in daily life, making the city a contested space as well a contest for the city. In his words, Jorge Hardoy (1992: xv) has it:

> In every city there is a growing competition among low-income groups, who usually make up half or more of the population, for one of the relatively few stable jobs, for space to build a house or shack, for a seat on a bus, for a corner of a sidewalk or in a square to set up a market stall. Every day people must compete for a place in a school or a bed in a hospital or for a container of potable water. The acquisition of land and housing is, perhaps, the most visible form of the contest for space.

Most importantly, urban space is a place to live. It is in pursuit of this perception that these urban dwellers form collective action and improve their bargaining position to resist attempts to destroy the place they call their own (Berner 2007).

For Lefebvre (1991:154): *"…space is never empty: it always embodies meaning".* In this regard, there are various meanings that people attach to spaces they inhabit and their attachment to these spaces, for instance, exchange value, use value, historical value, and emotional attachment, among others. Arguably therefore, the significance and meaning of

urban space is multifaceted. In addition to being a livelihood, urban space carries with it historical and emotional attachment, sense of security, as well as cultural significance. In other words, users of urban space perceive urban space differently. It is therefore, the growing importance of urban space, and triggered by its scarcity, that can lead to contestation as the urban population fight for the acquisition of land. In the next section there is a critical review of the diverse conceptions and perceptions of space in general and urban space in particular from the pre-colonial to the postcolonial era. In turn, this will form the basis for understanding how conceptions and the practices of urban planning in these various periods erased or were in conflict with these spaces, thereby leading to land contestations.

2.3 THE PRE-COLONIAL ERA

Urban areas existed in Sub-Saharan Africa and were relatively widespread before the 15th Century. One historian Coquery-Vidro-Vitch (1991) used the term pre-capitalist period of urban development to refer to pre-colonial Africa and argued that some urban settlements developed, for instance along the western sea board, rounding the Cape up to the eastern sea board. In this process, some earlier indigenous urban settlements were surpassed by new settlements while some were strengthened as trade shifted to agricultural exports from mined and natural products (e.g. ivory) and slaves. Subsequently, these settlements often became colonial urban settlements (Jenkins 2009).

2.3.1 Function and significance

Early urban areas performed both economic (i.e. trade and crafts) as well as political and ceremonial functions. For this reason, most of these urban centres were situated on trade routes and key nodes between ecologically distinct zones, and many developed defence roles over time (Davidson 1957; Anderson and Rathbone 2000). Notwithstanding the fact that in some parts of the sub-continent, pre-colonial urban settlements existed as administrative headquarters of kingdoms and empires, as well as trading centres for both domestic and international trade, some researchers have argued that some settler occupations, for instance in Zimbanwe, had an entirely a rural population (Rakodi 1995) whereas in Kenya a long pre-existing urban tradition existed in the coastal region but was later set aside for exclusive European habitation (Otiso 2005).

Arguably, the unique roots of the African city have implications for land conflicts (Moyo 2008; Mkandawire 1985). Older urban spaces on which cities emerged over a few centuries out of existing rural settlements and small centres (e.g. on the African coast), were owned by local indigenous communities by virtue of long standing customary land tenure rights but

there are evolving freehold and statutory rights and contestation of the land rights between the original indigenous communities through the customary authority system, immigrant populations and the state (Moyo 2008).

2.3.2 Ownership of land

In pre-colonial Africa, there was a clear distinction between right of use and right of ownership. On one hand, ownership rights in land in Africa were inherent in a collectivity whether of an extended family, a lineage, or a community. On the other hand, rights of individuals were restricted largely to usufruct or use of the land. By implication, such a basic distinction between right of use and right of ownership meant that land was not alienable out of the relevant collectivity. Over time, colonial urban land policy changed all that and sought to create through land allocation and urban layouts a market for urban land in which ownership rights in land could be alienated (Mabogunje 1990).

2.3.3 Spatial practices of access in pre-colonial era

Research shows that elite hegemony was the main mechanism of accessing urban land in pre-colonial Africa. Specifically, management of urban land appeared to be based on ethnic and kinship representing elite interest or negotiated settlement with per-colonial elites; and was largely based on recognition of usufruct rights (that is, multiple and overlapping rights) (Hull 1976; O'Connor 1983; Bruschi 2000; Jenkins 2009).

Over time, conflict and conquest replaced the use of negotiated settlement as a means of accessing land. Some of the factors which contributed to the use of conflict as a means of land access included increasing competition between European powers over access to resources and secure transport nodes; and the changing political economy within indigenous peoples as trade stimulated larger and more competitive indigenous state forms (Jenkins 2009). Under these circumstances, colonial powers increasingly seized urban land as early as 7th Century. In this regard, it is only upon colonial invasion, that Europeans imposed new perceptions of land rights. Indeed, these new perceptions were primarily based on exclusive land rights such as freehold and leasehold.

Arguably, urban settlements existed before the European occupation in Africa. These settlements were characterised as urban spaces whose functions included but **were** not limited to economic, social, administrative, religious, or political functions. In terms of governance, access to land was primarily based on elite hegemony. Moreover, negotiated settlements and

invasion constituted some of the mechanisms of accessing urban space. In the next section, the emergence of modern urban planning and how its exportation to Africa impacted on these inhabitants' perceptions of urban space *vis-à-vis* the production of urban space, is discussed. In the next section, I focus on the colonial era as a historical moment to understand its conception of space, the emergence of modernist planning discourse and the origin of modernist planning in this era.

2. THE COLONIAL ERA (1880S TO 1960S)

A review of planning as conceived and practised in the colonial era will be pointless, unless we appreciate the modernist discourse and how this informed the foundation of modern urban planning, which was later exported to colonial Africa using colonialism as a vehicle.

2.4.1 Modernist planning discourse and urban development

According to Giddens (1990:1), modernity refers to modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence. Here modernity is associated with a time period and with an initial geographical location.

Born of the cumulative outcome of four foundational movements in European thought (the Renaissance, The Reformation, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century (Spretnak 1997), modernism is underpinned by a positivist epistemology which privileges scientific technical knowledge and empirical data as the only valid and convincing form of knowledge (MacLaran & McGuirk 2003). In fact, as Howe (1994) points out, modernism is a response to the pre-modern notion of the world controlled by divine and unquestionable order. The techno-scientific reasoning associated with this form of knowledge has produced the view that reality can be controlled, ordered, and perfected once its underlying laws and objective logic can be uncovered. Thus, modernity is based on faith in the ability, through scientific and technical reasoning, to achieve progress and betterment, which is assumed to be universally advantageous. In this regard, this view is possible because modernism assumes humans to operate as individual, self-interested and autonomous beings who are fundamentally similar; encountering and experiencing reality in essentially the same manner, same functional rationality, under a predictable set of social laws (Goodman 2003; MacLaran & McGuirk 2003; Tovey 2001). Finally, modernism is aligned to the development of a capitalist state (Sarup 1993). Arguably, therefore, capitalism and its characteristics constitute the emergent social order of modernity.

On the one hand, the development of modern institutions and their world wide spread have created vastly greater opportunities for human beings to enjoy a secure and rewarding existence than any type of pre-modern system. On the other hand, modernity has created a sombre and darker side which has become very apparent in the present century. For instance, for Max Weber material progress was obtained at the cost of an expansion of bureaucracy that crushed individual creativity and autonomy (Giddens 1990).

Second, modernity has the propensity of disembedding social systems through such mechanisms as trust and faith in abstract capacity such as expert systems by guaranteeing expectations. Indeed, the modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept people away from all traditional types of social order (Giddens 1990).

Clearly, the aim of progress as embedded in the rise of modernism is closely intertwined with the development of capitalism and of the capitalist state (Beauregard 1996). In other words, modernism positions the state as a central rational force in achieving progress and modernist principles, especially its techno-scientific rationality. In this regard, urban planning has been built on the premise that well-ordered and efficient cities can be created through the application of uncovered laws of spatial behaviour and organisation (Johnston et al 1994). All in all, modernity can be seen as a double edged phenomenon.

Sandercock (1998) has identified five pillars of modernity that have been foundational in the development of urban planning practice, namely rationality, comprehensiveness, scientific objectivity, state action as route to progress, and public interest. First, rationality entails that since the administrative systems of planning and its technical tools and instruments have been developed according to scientific rationalism (Healey 1997), it is therefore assumed that social problems or inefficiencies in land use or allocation of resources can be solved by the application of logic. Second, comprehensiveness implies that urban planning has been founded based on the view that cities are integrated systems of economic and social relations amenable to coherent management, and can hence be comprehensively planned – basis for sound planning principles. Third, scientific objectivity means that by virtue of their expert knowledge and scientific approach, planners have claimed a critical distance from political views and values and from the conflicting interests of capital, labour and the state itself (Beauregard 1996). Fourth, modernism views the state as a progressive institution with the ability to organise and implement reform, without vested interest in the economic sphere. In this regard, the state is considered an agency to implement master plans (Sandercock 1998). Finally, modernist planning assumes there is no divergence of social values but rather that

social groups are united by shared interests (Sandercock 1998). In this case, planners are assumed to be capable of identifying those shared interests as the 'public interests' and of operating as apolitical mediators in conflicts of interests in the name of the 'common good'. In this regard, therefore, the function of planning is to create physical environments which embody and accommodate the assumed public interest (MacLaran & McGuirk 2003).

For much of the 20th century and up to the present time, the market, political elites, and growing middle classes supported urban modernism as it delivered profits in land to these groups as well as the quality of life considered desirable(Watson 2009). Consequently, this led to the economic and spatial exclusion of those unable to take advantage of land ownership and development (Watson 2009).

2.4.2 The foundation of modern planning

Urban planning is concerned with the management of urban change (Pacione 2009). In an attempt to define urban planning, Ratcliffe (1974) used the term town planning as the art and science of ordering the use of land and the location of buildings and communication routes so as to secure the maximum practicable degree of economy, convenience and beauty and as an attempt to formulate the principles that should guide us in creating a civilised physical background for human life, and whose main impetus is thus foreseeing and guiding change (Ratcliffe 1974; McLoughlin 1969; Weddle AE 1967). In other words, it is concerned with providing with the right site, at the right time, in the right place, for the right people (Ratcliffe 1974). Fundamentally, the justification for planning is primarily to reconcile the social and economic aims of private and public objectives (Ratcliffe 1974). In this regard, planning is the art of anticipating change, and arbitrating between the economic, social, political, and physical forces that determine the location, form, and effect of urban development (Ratcliffe 1974). From this understanding of planning, there are possibilities for tension between the conception of planning and its practical and technical implementation of the people's wishes to ensure the greatest benefit to all.

Existence of interventions in cities by way of physical design has a long history, arguably dating back to 17th and 18th centuries (Watson 2009). However, it is generally accepted that modern town planning emerged in the industrialising world in the latter part of the 19th century as a direct response to the industrial city and its attendant concerns such as rapid urbanisation, unhealthy and polluted living condition for the poor, vanishing open green space, and as a result, a threat of political disorder (Watson 2009; Ravetz A 1986; Ratcliffe 1974). That is, the need for planning arose as a corrective measure to the inequality,

deprivation, and squalor conditions caused by the interplay of free-market forces and lack of social concern prevalent during the 19th century. In fact, urban planning emerged as a state activity whose rationale is to influence the distribution and operation of investment and consumption processes in cities for the common good.

Concerns over the health of the urban population due to the succession of epidemics which ravaged the densely packed inner sections of the major British cities led to sanitary reform movements in the UK. These movements provided a parallel stimulus to the emergence of modern urban planning. Some notable sanitary provisions and building standards included Shaftesbury, Torrens, Cross and Chadwick legislations and most importantly, the Public Health Act of 1875 which consolidated all of these provisions. Among others the new Act provided for powers of local authority to close down building that were unfit for human habitation (Pacione 2009). In the US, planning has its roots in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century and within local responses to the modern city with respect to its physical degradation, functional chaos, and the miseries suffered by the working class (Scott 1969; Sharpe and Wallock 1987). Like in Britain, it is also well documented that in the US, urban planning emerged out of concern for population congestion and public health, as well as chaotic juxtaposition of land uses (Boyer 1983; Beauregard 1989).

One dynamic in the emergence of modern planning is the contribution of the 19th century of Utopian Socialists[2]. Karl Marx coined the term to describe a group of social thinkers whose attitude was unscientific and idealistic and who hoped to improve working-class conditions by individual benevolence, philanthropy, and enterprise (Ratcliffe 1974). These reformers concentrated on the development of separate new communities outside urban areas, and there emerged a succession of plans based on a variety of political, social, and philosophical ideas.

The foundation of modern town planning, especially in the UK, were also laid in the Public Health and Housing Acts of the 19th century which set out to ameliorate the 'monster clots of humanity'(Ratcliffe 1974:73). First, the power of the local authority to prepare schemes to

[2] These philanthropists included Robert Owen (1771-1858) and his proposed agricultural villages and industrial complex at Lanark with excellent working and living conditions; James Silk Buckingham (1786-1855) and his proposed socially integrated community called Victoria; Sir Titus Salt and his model industrial community, Saltire, for his workers (in 1853); Ebenezer Howard's(1850-1928) self-sufficient Garden City; and Le Corbusier's Radiant City (increasing density, high rise building, improved circulation and increased open space) among others (Ratcliffe 1974; Le Corbusier 1933, 1967; Hall P 1996).

guide and control future development was provided for in the Housing, Town Planning, etc Act of 1909. Second, the requirement for joint planning schemes between local authorities, and the idea of interim development was included in the Housing, Town Planning, etc. Act of 1919. Third, separation of town planning from housing was provided for in the Town Planning Act of 1925. Fourth, the Local Government Act of 1929 introduced councils into the hierarchy of planning authorities. Fifth, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932 provided for country planning as well as seeking minister's consent to prepare schemes while increasing the powers of local authorities. Most importantly, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 provided a landmark in the history of town planning legislation by repealing all other enactments and inaugurating comprehensive planning. At the same time planners were accorded effective powers to control urban development (Jenkins et al. 2007; Ratcliffe 1974).

The specific emergence of urban planning conferred upon planning a modernist ideological inheritance (MacLaran & McGuirk 2003). The ideological foundations of these interests became embedded in the practice of urban planning to promote regularity and order. Knox (1982) identified the five important components of traditional urban planning which form the ideology of planning, namely environmental determinism (upgrading the physical environment improves the physical, moral, and social well being of people, hence prescription of standards to achieve environmental quality), aesthetics concern for the creation of visual order), spatial determinism separating urban functions through zoning), systems approaches planning as a technical process employing scientific techniques), and futuristic idealism (or visions) (MacLaran & McGuirk 2003). Ideology, which represents our preferred and dominant belief or value systems, shapes what we want, what is important, and hence our planning objectives and goals (Foley 1960; Kramer 1975; Fagence 1983; Reade 1987; Gunder & Hillier 2009). Explicitly put, planning is about making choices about how we use land. In other words, planning is the ideology of how we define and use space (Gunder 2010). Thus, it is concerned about governing space (Cowell & Owen 2006).

It can be seen that the filthy conditions in the industrial city led to the construction of the new perception among utopian socialists that to escape these ills of urban life, the designing of new communities offered a solution. On the basis of this perception, utopian socialists created abstract spaces to address these conceived ills of urban space. These representation of spaces included: Robert Owen's (1813) model of industrial complex at New Lanark in Scotland; James Silk Buckingham's (1849) Victoria; and Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities (published in *To-morrow: A peaceful path to real reform(1898)* which was later retitled as Garden Cities of To-morrow (Howard 1985; Howard 1902; Fishman 2003; Parker 2004; Pacione 2009). In

relation to production of space, it can therefore be noted that, informed by positivism and perceptions of modernity, the garden city was produced as spaces of order (Kallus 2001) as opposed to what was perceived as spaces of disorder produced by the industrial revolution. As Kallus (2001) argues, these abstractions ignore the pluralist subjective perception of space and its use, for instance, the city as a place of habitation and with sociocultural specifities of its different users (Kallus 2001). Arguably, this perception ignores the everyday life of the users (Lefebvre 1971; de Certeau 1984).

In 1909, the first town planning control legislation was passed in the UK and was further revised in 1919 and 1932. In 1947 the Town and Country Planning Act which allowed planners effective powers to control urban development, was passed **(**Jenkins et al 2007).

To bring the argument home, modern urban planning in the UK emerged out of the perception that urban areas were evil and inherently unhealthy. This perception influenced the production of urban space as evidenced by the emergence of garden cities in Letchworth and Welwyn in the early twentieth century (Jenkins et al 2007). Other influences of this perception included the construction of improved housing for workers and public provision of housing during this period. Planning mechanisms such as New Towns, neighbourhood units, the Ville Radieuse (Radiant City)- which favoured demolishing existing inner centre fabrics and spatial segregation and inner city development, were all influenced by the planning perceptions (Jenkins et al 2007). Consistent with the argument of this research therefore, clearly, urban planning did not originate from a vacuum nor is it a given**.** Fundamentally, there is evidence of an association between perceptions and conception in the sense the latter formed the basis for the conceptualisation and ideology of planning in the global north.

It must be noted that unlike in the western countries where planning laws were formulated by representatives of a democratic society, in the colonies, planning laws were enforced by the elites and were not the result of a democratic process. Consequently, the manner in which planning was conceived and acted upon led to contest over urban space as it conflicted with the indigenous cultural codes of spatial behaviour and organisation (Jenkins et al 2007). In the next section, I discuss how these perceptions of urban space and urban planning as conceived, were exported to colonial Africa using colonialism as a vehicle in this process.

2.4.3 Colonialism and production of urban space

In many countries, colonisation has led to immigration and population growth, expansion of human settlements and the introduction of Western planning ideas, modernity and new

townscapes, among others (Yuen 2011). Lefebvre (1978:173-174) defines colonisation as a historical era of territorial expansion and most importantly, as the role of the political authority in reproducing relations of production and domination through the territorial organisation of relationships of centre and periphery (that is, the global north and the south).

In the opinion of Lefebvre, the production of abstract space in colonial Africa is internally related to the production of abstract space in the colonial powers. For instance, Algeria was conceived as part and parcel of the colonial motherland in France (Kipfer 2007). Similarly, Fanon observes that colonial space was a conceived product of colonial planners oriented to dominate, homogenise, and exclude the coloniser and colonised (Kipfer 2007). In the same manner, the colonial abstract space integrated the colonised into colonial abstract space through daily spatial practices and affective, bodily spatial experiences (Kipfer 2007). In this case, the production of urban space cannot be fully understood without appreciating the role that colonialism and colonial planning played in the production of urban space and ultimately contestation over urban space.

On one hand, in the francophone countries the major ideological objectives of urban planners in the colonial era were mainly directed towards formalising land development; creating an idealised spatial order; creating an idealised bourgeoisification in Africa; viewing of euro-centricity (i.e. what is good for Europeans is good for everyone); and capitalism (Njoh 2007). In terms of production of space, therefore, formalization of previously informal processes in the production of urban space was part of a larger scheme to accomplish these objectives. On the other hand, in Anglophone countries British urban planning aimed to attain the ideology of state control (through colonial authorities or governors, local ruling elite, and indigenous elite. Indeed, these exerted their political authority through spatial and physical planning. It also aimed at enhancing the capitalist ideology through accumulation of wealth as evidenced in the role of companies such as British South African Company to exploit colonial territories. Finally, in the enhancement of utopian ideology, colonial Africa provided a laboratory for testing planning theories and concepts (Njoh 2007).

On the basis of this ideology, it is widely accepted that town planning which emerged as a discipline coincidentally with the scramble for territories in Africa, presented European planners with a unique opportunity to test the workability of the newly acquired planning theories and concepts, in other words, modernist planning ideas. In addition it afforded these planners an opportunity to spread European models of spatial design. Alongside this, this was considered as an opportunity as it was not available in Europe, where they were seriously

constrained by limited space (Njoh 2009). For example, in a 1907 issue of the journal, *Garden City*, the following pronouncement was made:

> "We want not only England but all parts of the Empire to be covered with Garden Cities' (King 1990:44).

Five years later in 1912, the Chairman of the London County Council and member of the Planning Committee for New Delhi, asserted that:

> "I hope that in New Delhi we shall be able to show how those ideas which Mr Howard put forward...can be brought in to assist this first Capital created in our time. The fact is that no new city or town should be permissible in these days to which the word 'Garden' cannot be rightly applied" (King 1990:44).

In 1922, a conference of the *International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association* at Olympia was entitled: *'How to get Garden Cities Established throughout the World?'* (Njoh 2009:310). In this regard therefore, colonial Africa with its abundant land provided a laboratory to test the practicability of planning theories developed during the same period in Europe. In 1945, the sphere of influence of the English (Town and Country Planning) 1932 Act as developed in the West Indies extended to the continent of Africa. The 1932 Act has left its mark in all corners of the world (King 1990:44).

Second, colonial planning was a means of physical and land use control. This was possible through the use of zoning as an instrument (Njoh 2009). Indeed, colonial planners used the pretext of protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public to craft spatial policies whose actual interest was to reinforce the power of the colonial state and to facilitate its efforts to achieve social control in the colonies. For instance, under the guise of protecting public health, colonial planners used their institutional authority and technical expertise to craft land use plans designed to facilitate the attainment of the social goal of maintaining racial segregation in the colonies (Njoh 2009). In this case, the master plan as representation of space was the key instrument to guide development in colonial towns and cities.

Over the years, a significant amount of research concurs that planning in the colonial era was conceived as a source of power (Abu-Lughod 1980; Wright 1991; Coquery-Vidrovitch 1993; Home 1997; Yeoh 2003; Njoh 2004; Njoh 2007). In this regard, colonial authorities used physical and spatial policies to consolidate power in Africa. To achieve the afore-mentioned power of planning, there is evidence to suggest that planning employed various forms of power to accomplish the colonial agenda. First, through force, colonial planning encouraged

the use of fences to produce enclosed residential spaces for Europeans on one hand, and barracks and workers' camps, on the other hand for natives. Second, through coercion, planning was used as a form of surveillance. For instance, European residential areas were located in elevated areas simply to put the colonised under the constant gaze of the coloniser. Third, through seduction, planning disapproved and undermined the use of traditional construction practices. Fourth, through manipulation, planning policies confined indigenous people to called native districts. Finally, through segregation, planning produced segregated spaces on the basis of racial and or socioeconomic status (Njoh 2009).

Alongside urban planning, colonial authorities used land to consolidate their grip of the African territory. In the next section, I discuss how land policies as representations of space from the colonial era to the present (order to understand how people's perception of land) fashioned land policies. In the end, the discussion will uncover how these perceptions are perpetuated in the post-colonial governments, thereby generating contests over land as the users seek to challenge these policies through their lived experiences and other spatial practices.

With regard to perception, land, just like planning, in itself has been an important basis of political as well as economic power (Njoh 2009). This perception had implications on land policies which were carried on by colonial and post-colonial governments. In relation to land tenure, towns permitted European settlers to legitimise their land entitlements and to initiate land reform actions that had the ultimate goal of commodifying land throughout the colonies. In fact, they supplanted traditional land tenure and designated the colonial authority as the sole custodian of land throughout the colonial territory. Outside the mentioned towns, the traditional land tenure system remained operational. Second, as part of land reform, European colonial authorities transformed the so-called 'unoccupied and ownerless lands' into property of the colonial state (Njoh 2009:306). Third, they introduced statutory land rights to secure and effectively control the use of this major factor of production. Fourth, formalisation of all transactions in land through the bureaucratic apparatus and the associated payment of fees and other charges guaranteed the colonial state a steady source of revenue that would otherwise not be available at its disposal. Fifth, colonial authorities used outright gifts of land to settlers and they enacted land-related policies that unduly favored the few educated or politically active members of the indigenous population as a means to consolidate colonial power and control. Finally, designating itself the custodian of land, colonial authorities gave each other land free or at token prices. Moreover, under the power of eminent domain, the government

asserted its right to take private property for public purposes, notwithstanding the fact that the displaced indigenous population was never compensated as required under the eminent domain clause Njoh 2009). Consequently, by imposing land tenure arrangements, making local people tenants on the land their ancestral fathers had tilled, creating new land tenure and ownership, these new conceptions resulted in landlessness and marginalisation of some communities (Yuen 2011).

2.4.4 Conception of colonial urban space

Generally, in the colonial period, urban land was used primarily for the benefit of the elite (Jenkins 2009:82), that is, the incoming colonial elite. Hence, control of access to urban land was an important component of colonial development policy (Jenkins 2009:87). Of crucial importance to the governance of urban space, is that research shows that colonial forms of land control were not purely market based. They also relied on state intervention but with subordinated market forms (Jenkins 2009:87). In this case, it can be argued that colonial rulers permitted different forms of land access so as to maintain elite hegemony while at the same time continuing accessing land through negotiated settlements. In other words, urban governance in the colonial period was simply a way of overlaying previously held rights by different incoming elite, with these prior rights being either extinguished, subordinated or submerged.

In his discussion of the roles of cities in the colonial empires**,** Home (1997:2) states:

> They are created through the exercise of dominance by some groups over others, to extract agricultural surplus, provide services, and exercise political control. Transport improvements then allow one society or state to incorporate other territory and peoples overseas. The city thus becomes an instrument of colonisation and racial dominance".

In this sense, colonial cities played both economic and non-economic roles (King 1990; Njoh 2009). First, as economic space, colonial cities were spaces of production which provided a cheap source of raw materials, land and labour. Second, they were strategic spaces to control and channel production that took place in rural spaces (Jenkins et al 2007). Non-economic space included their role as spaces of security. For instance, the railway system in colonial Tanganyika, apart from linking the agriculturally rich areas in the hinterland with the ports of Tanga and Dar es Salaam, was also used to facilitate the rapid movement of troops to defend the country's borders in time of war (Wright G quoted in Njoh 2009). Moreover, colonial cities functioned as capital cities. In this regard, colonial spaces were administrative, political and social spaces, for instance Lagos and Zomba in Nigeria and Malawi respectively. Finally,

the colonial town and city were produced to be centres of political function. It is not surprising therefore that French political leaders of the time, such as Hubert Lyautey, saw architecture and physical planning policies as tools for combating resistance abroad and winning political support at home(Njoh 2009).

On the basis of the above, it can be argued that the colonial city played a number of economic and non-economic roles. However, with regard to perception, colonial planners perceived planning as tool to perpetuate control over the native population. For instance, the design of colonial administrative districts especially their visible manifestation of imperial prestige and imposing structures, was meant to impress upon the natives that colonial authorities controlled an extravagant amount of resources which could be tapped for use in neutralising any challenge to colonial rule (Njoh 2009: 308).

Interest in the study of the colonial city has escalated substantially over the last five decades, not only because of pure scientific interest in the past but also because the colonial city is a phenomenon of our European history. Thus, as an expression of colonial dominance it is also of great significance to the present situation in many developing countries because undeniably, the world of today was moulded by colonialism and particularly cities since they were an effective means by which Western countries tried to achieve their aims (De Bruijne 1985).

Notwithstanding challenges in defining a colonial city, it can be said that a colonial city is a town that was founded or developed under the influence of a western colonial power; having a central function on the colonial administrative or economic system; and finally containing a substantial portion of Western elements (De Bruijne 1985). Essentially, these are settlements which were founded and have functioned in totally different areas, under different circumstances, over a period of at least three centuries.

One of the characteristics of the colonial city was the separation of the European sector of the city and the indigenous areas of the city (King 1976). Spatially, the colonial settlement was characterised by functional specialisation of land use. Consequently, this resulted in the separation of work from place of residence. Temporarily, the division meant division of time in which human and social activities were clearly organised into two distinct categories, namely, work and non-work. This implies that place of residence was separate from place of work. Similarly, place of residence for the working class was separate from place of

recreation. Socially, there was social differentiation in terms of income, occupation, lifestyle, hence the location of residential areas. Thus the process of social differentiation in the colonial city produced an emerging middle and upper middle class elite from whose ranks the residents of the colonial city were drawn (King 1976).

Also, the colonial settlement was built not only according to the criteria of the modern city but also to the requirements of the modern elite. For instance, while the European sector enjoyed best amenities such as water, health, recreation, roads etc., the indigenous city was characterised by gross under provision of the amenities. The police and the soldiers were instituted as go-betweens to enforce control of urban space and oppression (King 1976).

At this stage it is important to recall that urban planning was the major instrument in the production of urban space in the colonial period. In fact, the master plan was the major representation of space. In this regard, zoning which was used in Europe as an instrument of segregating conflicting land uses since the early 1800s was extensively adopted throughout Africa at the turn of the century (Njoh 2009) as was the case in Asia (Yuen 2011)

In line with the colonists' perception of urban space as well as their ideology and objectives of urban planning, colonial planning as conceived space was characterised by the following features: first, the master plan which was used as decisive tool in government efforts to control and regulate growth and development in Europe was taken up throughout Africa; second, plan preparation was done by colonial architects and planners based in the metropolitan countries; third, plan implementation was done by the colonial public works department in the colonies (Njoh 2007); and finally, planning laws adopted in the colonies were a replica of equivalent laws in Europe (Yuen 2011; Njoh 2007; Njoh 2009).

In the opinion of Lefebvre, the superimposition of this abstract space as represented in urban plan produced urban space ambiguous in character. First, this abstract space led to the exclusionary effect of urban planning and land use controls (King 1990; Mabogunje 1990). Second, it resulted in the differential adoption of colonial land and planning laws (McAuslan 2003). Third, it led to the coexistence of a wide variety of land rights (Jenkins 2009). Four, access to urban land was exclusionary and preferential (Jenkins 2009). Five, redistribution as opposed to market policies were the order of the day (Jenkins 2009). Finally, there was direct involvement of the state in housing and land delivery (public housing) (Jenkins 2009).

Literature on colonial planning concurs that colonial planning was widely used to regulate urban space (Mitchell 2003; Myers 2003; Howard 2003). In his book, *Verandahs of Power:*

Colonialism and space in Urban Africa, Garth Myers (2003) argues that colonial authorities imposed physical organisation of space to produce social spaces that were conducive to the smooth operation of the colonial or neo-colonial power.

The desire to portray cities and African civilisation in a positive way was essential in the production of urban space. In pursuance of this perception, post-colonial authorities in Senegal adopted policies such as the expulsion of beggars, prostitutes and vendors from the city. In addition, they implemented forced removals to the country side (Howard 2003).

With regard to urban design, designers followed colonial 'enframing' practices in Lilongwe city though a replica of apartheid-like patterns of segregation (Myers 2003; Howard 2003).

Strategies for the modernisation agenda in the colonial period included employer-provided housing; direct government involvement in the construction of houses for colonial civil service employees (public housing schemes); discouraging migration by Africans to towns (except those with jobs) through 'pass laws' e.g. in South Africa; space as a repository of power achieved through racial segregation policies; and the provision of public infrastructure.

One of the major characteristics of the post-colonial city is the emergence in Africa of what is often termed as the 'informal economies" Informal economies, in this case refers to the prominence of alternative modes of production based on indigenous traditions, practices and notions of place (Ndi 2007).

Consequently, colonial planning suffered from the continued existence of pre-existing land rights based on distributive mechanisms alongside market-based mechanisms; and lessening of controls over urban immigration (Jenkins 2009). In other words, abstract space through its promise of formal land and market mechanism failed miserably to meet the growing demand for urban land especially by the low income groups. Consequently, urban inhabitants re-appropriated their own counter spaces through informal means to access urban land, leading to the urban informality.

In the opinion of Lefebvre, abstract space inherently possesses homogenising and fragmenting tendencies. Additionally, this abstract space is produced by bureaucratically administered commodification, technocratic rationalism, linear time, and phallocentric visuality. For instance, colonial space in neocapitalist France is even more immediately shaped by state violence and a formally racialised commodity form in the colonies (Kipfer 2007:718). In this case, and in line with Lefebvre, colonial space was a conceived product of colonial planners whose major goal was domination, homogenisation and exclusion. In the

same way, colonial abstract space integrated the colonised into colonial abstract space through daily spatial practices and affective, bodily spatial experiences. These spatial practices included racial segregation, spatial segregation, destruction of the family through employer-provided housing for male workers only and the destruction of the peasantry leading to rural urban migration. Consequently, the situation led to contestation of colonial urban space through decolonisation strategies to re-appropriate urban space. To Lefebvre, colonisation is a spatial organisation of spatial relations such as racialism. In this case, decolonisation is a form of re-appropriating and transforming spatial relations in the colonial city amongst others through forming alliances (Kipfer 2007).

Scholarly literature on the rationale for decolonisation is double edged. From the perspective of the colonial powers, decolonisation aimed at reducing the cost of running colonies by handing over power to the indigenous elites. These elites were trained in European contexts. Hence, the adopted existing colonial models of planning in the form of neo-colonial modernisation (Simon 1992; Rakodi 1997). Such models included new towns and capital cities (Mabogunje 1991). In the next section, the notion of the post-colonial city is used to analyse how planning as ideology of power in the colonial city impacted on the production of urban space in the post-colonial city. Having examined the products of the first modernity represented by British colonial modernist planning, the next section examine the impact of these Eurocentric models on the present production of urban space and how these are intersecting with the second way of modernity brought about by globalization will be examined in the next section. .

2.5 POST COLONIAL ERA (FROM 1960S)

In Africa, most countries attained their independence from colonial rule around the 1960s, for example Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, while other late comers include Zimbabwe in the 1980s, and Namibia in the 1990s. Alongside these historical movements, there are numerous planning discourses which influenced the conception of urban space and related practices. In this section, I draw attention to three main planning discourses, namely post-colonial, post-modernism and neoliberalism as discourse which influenced the changing notions of space as conceived and planning as conceived and as a spatial practice.

2.5.1 Post-colonial planning discourse and urban development

Defining the term ‘post-colonial’ remains a contested undertaking. Nonetheless, often times, the term ‘post-colonial’ is used to refer to either the ‘temporal aftermath’ or ‘critical aftermath’ of colonialism (Myers 2011:30). In this regard, according to the temporal and

historical perspective, the postcolonial city is a city living in the period of time after colonialism or those cities in what were previously colonial societies (Myers 2009). This understanding suggests how societies live with the legacies of colonialism. As critical aftermath, the post-colonial city means the cultures, discourses and critiques that lie beyond, but remain closely influenced by colonialism (Blunt and McEwan 2002; McEwan 2009). In addition to the distinctive impact of colonialism on the economy, spatial form and society, the post-colonial as a critique seeks to understand the city and its representations while rejecting privileged representations of cities as post-colonial cities (Myers 2009). Notwithstanding its criticisms of its abstractions, post-colonial as critical aftermath, in essence implies a 'set of theoretical perspectives' aimed at hearing or recovering the experiences of the colonised (Sidaway 2005).

From post-colonial cultural studies, post colonialism means moving beyond colonialism. This entails: first, revalourising indigenous management strategies and embracing the cultural heterogeneity of African cities as a strength (Ndi 2007:23; Demissie 2007); second, coming to grips with diasporic understandings of African cities using tangible representational tools such as cinema, literature and photographs and urban planning through Afrocentric planning as opposed to Eurocentric visions of cities (Samuelson 2007; Ful and Murray 2007; Demissie 2007; Hughes 1994) and retracing colonial legacies (Elleh 2002); third, revitalising planning education (Myers 2011); fourth, academic activism by assisting community groups behind the scenes (Myers 2011); and finally, feeding research outcomes into plans and designs (Myers 2011). Yet in most studies of the post-colonial city, most scholars have paid attention to the perspective of the state and its institutional mechanisms in respect of urban land use planning, land reforms, and the reallocation of land rights (Yeoh 2001; Njoh 1998; Oduwaye 1998; Mukoko 1996; Leaf 1993).

Of more significance, this research combines the above perspectives using the case of Blantyre city as a post-colonial city and Lilongwe as post-colonial capital city in the sense of critical aftermath and cultural approach. As Myers (2011) notes, African new capital cities exemplify the grandest and most tangibly post-colonial geographical theories put into practice. Yet most urban studies or human geography research that identifies itself as colonial studies in Africa, concentrate on excavating histories and legacies of colonialism, partially because they were so extensive(Demissie 2007a; Ndi 2007), hence, contestation of these legacies after independence (Loomba 1998). Thus, in this research I go beyond the recounting of colonial legacies, and approach colonialism with eyes on the material problems that demand urgent and clear solutions which include gross inequalities, social and spatial, which

African cities inherited from European colonialism, problems these cities were created to militate against (Myers 2011; McEwan 2003:341).

Geographically, African countries took different approaches to remake their urban areas to symbolise that they have moved beyond colonialism. In Egypt, post-colonial planning practice embraced the creation of new towns and satellite towns in the desert to de-concentrate urban development away from Cairo and Alexandria (Florin 2005). Lusaka like many African cities, still bears the scars of colonialism nearly half a century after Zambia earned independence from Britain, namely: inequality between juxtaposed neighbourhoods all over the city; an absence of drinking water, the overabundance of surface water, toxic drainage, failing sewerage, sanitation, solid waste management, rates collection, and land control (Cheatle 1986; Collins 1986; Myers 2005; Myers 2011). Other examples include the forced eviction of informal settlement residents from church lands by the order of the Lusaka City Council in December 2002 and a series of demolitions in the late 1970s, the early 1990s, the late 1990s, and again after the 2002 episode(Myers 2011:29). Also, in Lusaka many aspects of colonial relationships for instance, demolition, removal and upgrading processes in the post-colonial era are a replica of colonial tactics (Davies 2005; Myers 2006; Myers 2009). Fundamentally, the 'geographies of exclusion' that colonialism formed have hardly disappeared from the landscape of Lusaka (Sibley 1995; Tait 1997; Rakodi 1986).

Furthermore, research shows that after independence, African countries took different approaches to attack and contest colonial legacies (Loomba 1998; Blunt and Mc Ewan 2002) in an effort to remake their urban spaces as a mark of having moved beyond colonialism (Myers 2011). Outstanding cases of post-colonial African cities include those cities that were created soon after the attainment of independence from their colonial masters, that is, post-independence decisions to relocate their national capitals for instance from Dar es Salam to Dodoma in Tanzania (1970s); from Zomba to Lilongwe in Malawi (in 1975), and from Lagos to Abuja in Nigeria.

In African cities, there have been attempts to eliminate colonial legacies, although results are barely there to see. First, formerly white or elite areas are increasingly full of exclusive and infrastructure rich, gated communities and fortress compounds, and the dirty poor habitats at the other end of the segmented plan of the colonial order are even more overcrowded and destitute. Post-colonial regimes have often improved upon the strategies of colonial administrations, becoming even more exclusivist, authoritarian, and segmented (Bisell 2007).Second, 30 years of SAPs and PRSPs imposed on African cities essentially by the

former colonial powers have meant that high unemployment, escalating poverty, and widening inequality have actually worsened (Demissie 2007a:7). In South Africa, just as apartheid represented an extension of colonialism geographies, the post-apartheid era in many ways parallels the post-colonial era for other cities across the continent. Both apartheid and post-apartheid are inherently geographical (James 2007). For instance, racial segregation of the countries' cities remains stark. Other parallels to the colonial era include: failure of participatory urban development in post-apartheid South Africa's Integrated Development Plan (Harrison 2006) or the state's engagement with social movements (Ballard et al 2006) and empowering and intolerant neighbourhood committees suffocating self-reliance inherent in self-help housing schemes (Cherry 2000), in spite of attempts to democratise grassroots planning (Visser 2001).

Colonial planning has left a legacy that has been perpetuated into the post-independence era Home 1997; Kalipeni and Zeleza 1999). First, the post-independence city continues to fail to manage the tidal wave of urban growth and informal settlements. Second, land policies which sought to exclude or limit the involvement of indigenous communities in urban life, are still helping to create the so-called squatter settlements. Third, there is the expectation of public sector solutions to pressures of urban growth and a lack of financial and technical capacity in local government. Fourth, segregation in various forms such as racial has been replaced by socio-economic segregation. Finally, the occurrence of low density suburbs which are expensive to service, continue to benefit the privileged minority. Indeed, these low density suburbs are also often perceived to be an aspiration for lower income groups (Home 1997: Jenkins 2007).

In his theorisation of the post-colonial city in west Africa, Ndi (2007) argues that the predominance of the informal sector (e.g. crafts trade, street vending, shoe-polishing, smuggling) suggests that Africa is revillagising itself by superimposing its indigenous cultures, institutions, traditions, norms and practices such as traditional medicine, highlife music, public morality, grandmother baby-sitting, home catering services, thrift houses, ritual funerals, palm wine drinking homes and home languages, onto its urbanscapes of sky-rise buildings, hotels, commercial neighbourhoods and tarred roads. In other words, informalisation of urban space is a spatial strategy to contest superimposed abstract space with its homogenising and fragmentation tendencies.

One important view is that the post-colonial city traces continuity rather than disjuncture from its predecessor, the colonial city. In their research on Melanesian cities, Connell & Lea (1994)

observe the continued existence of residential segregation as expatriates continue to barricade themselves behind high walls and fences to distance themselves from the perceived disorder of the squatter settlements. Similarly, in Singapore, Hee & Oii (2003) argue that spaces in both the colonial and the post-colonial city are essentially constructions by the ruling elite and its planning regime. The authors observe that in the colonial city, space was used by government authorities to impose colonial ideals and segregation. In the post-colonial city, space was used to reify the colonial political ideology as concrete at the expense of public need of such spaces. As Lefebvre (1991) argues, 'every society – hence every mode of production with its sub-variants produces its own space'. Thus, the post-colonial government failed to appreciate that space as conceived in the colonial period reflected the political ideology of those in power. Similarly, the colonial approach to planning, with its abstraction, homogenisation, and imposition of spatial practice of control to discipline its subjects left the urban residents disenfranchised. In other words, the abstract practice of representing space by planners and designers did not coincide with the spatial practice of the everyday. Consequently, this led to contestation over urban space in both the colonial and post-colonial city.

Ambiguities that characterised the colonial city were not completely erased by the post-colonial city. They are pre-existing land rights versus individual land rights; coexistence of distributive and market-based mechanisms as land access mechanisms; negative and positive attitudes towards urban development; and the lessening of controls over urban immigration.

Fundamentally, abstract space through its promise of formal land and market mechanism failed to meet the growing demand for urban land especially by the low income groups. Consequently, urban inhabitants re-appropriated their own counter spaces through informal means to access urban land, leading to urban informality.

Finally, although the starting point of any critique of the postcolonial trajectory of African cities remains research on the urban legacies of colonialism (Myers 2011), postcolonial scholars concur that moving beyond colonialism involves revalourising indigenous management strategies and embracing the cultural heterogeneity of African cities as a strength (Ndi 2007:23; Demissie 2007; Myers 2011:46) and moving, that is, coming to grips with a diasporic understanding of African cities (Myers 2011). As findings in Chapter 8 reveal, in Lilongwe city, for instance, urban residents as agency (Power 2004) have deployed diverse spatial strategies to contest the established dominant discourses of modernity through ingenuity to confront the structural and social forces affecting them; thereby post-

colonialising the city from below. Indeed, as King (2009:3) argues, recent accounts of post-colonial, in both senses of the term, show that the space of the colonial city is both ambiguous and contested.

2.5.2 Post-modernism planning discourse and the third world city

In the 1970s and 1980s, modernist planning began to come apart (Dear 1986 in Beauregard 1989). It is argued that the master narrative of modernist planning is incompatible with a spatially problematic and flexible urban form the articulations of which are intrinsically confrontational and the purposes of which are more and more the short-lived ones of consumption. Consequently, the modernist striving for orderliness, functional integration, and social homogeneity (unitary notion of urban development), is unlikely to succeed, as is the desire on the part of the planners to maintain a critical distance and apply a technical rationalism (Beauregard 1989).

With regard to planning**,** the postmodernist cultural critique is a complex one. It comprises a turn to historical allusion and spatial understandings, the abandonment of critical distance for ironic commentary, the embracing of multiple discourses and the rejection of totalising ones, scepticism toward master narrative and general social theories, a disinterest in the performativity of knowledge, the rejection of notions of progress and enlightenment, and a tendency toward political acquiescence (Bernstein 1987; Cooke 1988; Dear 1986; Gregory 1987; Jameson 1984a; Relph 1987; Soja 1989).

Characteristically, postmodernist planning (unlike modernist planning which focuses on centrality of location), emphasises the uniqueness of localities and turn to the past (design and architecture), conceives time and space dialectically, socially, and historically (as opposed to the modernist relativist and physical notions of space and linear sense of times); and integrates such conceptions into a critical social theory (Beauregard 1989). Indeed, unlike post-modernist planning, modernist planning is dominated by procedural and paradigmatic theories meant to be applicable regardless of context, subsequently leaving time and space unattended (Beauregard 1989). It can therefore be argued that the space and time of modernist planning are not the same as those of post-modernist planning **(see Figure 2.1).**

In his first book, *Postmodern Geographies*, Edward Soja's (1989) foremost objective was 'the reassertion of space in critical social theory' by drawing on his interpretation of the writings of urban theorist, Henri Lefebvre. In his articulation of what he termed 'socio-spatial

dialectic' he reorganised urban as a product of society that 'arises from purposeful social practice' (Myers 2011:24).

Edward Soja articulated each of the three dimensions of Lefebvre's spatial triad, 'the spatiality of human life as it is simultaneously perceived, conceived, and lived' in his third book, *Postmetroplis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions (2000).* Using Los Angelos as empirical reference, he characterised the post-modern city in what he termed the 'Six Discourses on the Postmetropolis'. First, postfordist industrial metropolis highlights emerging regionalism at the expense of industrial urbanism. It is characterised by the formation of extended metropolitan regions built around flexible specialisation production systems with the fordist assembly line industrialism. Second, cosmopolis emphasises how globalisation has changed the spatiality of power relations and society in global and world cities like LA. Third, expolis highlights the urbanisation of the suburbia and the growth of Outer Cities or the changed geographical outcomes of the new urbanisation process of a city. (Soja 2000:234-250). Fourth, Fractal city refers to the 'fluid, fragmented, decentred, and rearranged' social mosaic of the city through rising social-spatial polarity, inequality, and ethnic segmentation (Soja 2000:265). Fifth, the carceral archipelago refers to the increasingly fortified character of urban space via 'privatisation, policing, surveillance, governance, and design of the built environment' as in gated communities, homeowner associations etc Soja 2000:299). Finally, Soja discusses 'the restructuring of the urban imaginary' in philosophy, urban studies, film, and computer games (Soja 2000:324).

In third world cities, there are so many aspects of Los Angeles' social geography that could be comparable to that of African cities. For this reason, there is no reason why African studies must categorically reject western urban theory (Myers 2011). Indeed, many authors in the recent wave of African urban studies have put scholars such as Lefebvre, Harvey, de Certeau or Massey to good use (Myers 2011:26). Myers (2011) observes that many African cities have always been cosmopolitan, exopolitan, fractal, or carceral albeit in ways different to what Soja means, for instance, Johannesburg in South Africa (Myers 2011; Murray 2008). In the same way restructuring of the urban imaginary is on-going across but not necessarily owing to post-modern cyber architecture, for instance in Dakar (Myers 2011; Diouf 2008).

Over the last 30 years, contrary to Soja's Six discourse, cities in Africa, for instance, Lusaka have continued to deal with the following themes: its colonial inheritance of poverty, underdevelopment and the deep inequality; the fact that the functions and forms of Lusaka

growth contain a high degree of informality; the fact that the methods, processes and networks for governing Lusaka have seen the dramatic changes in institutional terms like democratisation and neoliberalism; the fact that the city is coping with rising domestic insecurity and a variety of sweeping wounds to its social public; and the fact that Lusaka is globalising at a variety of scales at once (Myers 2011:28).

Table 2. 1 Modernism and postmodernism

Post-modernism	Modernism
It values subjectivity and is based on discourses	Values objectivity, and is based on facts
It centres on uniqueness of locality	It emphasises the centrality of location
Identification and experience of the users matter	All that matters is rationalisation
Contextual and considers time and space dialectically –socially and historically	Procedural and paradigmatic hence ignores context especially socio-political reality in developing countries
Relativism	Absolute notions of space, linear sense of time
Deconstruction (what becomes)	Discover, representation (what is)
Practices, interactions, strategies	Structures, systems
Hybrid	Categories
Heterotopia	Utopia

Source: Own summary (2013)

In African cities, as Simon (1999) argues people have increasingly been bypassing the state and its formal procedures because these do not and cannot cater to their needs and aspirations leading to contestation through defiance. Urban residents especially the marginalised are claiming and reclaiming urban spaces and shaping them in their images. Consequently, conflicts and contradictions and juxtaposition of radically different construction processes, built forms, identities, life styles and cultural expressions, have become a norm rather than an exception in Africa. Further, tensions have led to diversity as opposed to homogeneity although it is by default and grassroots action as opposed to official planning. In fact, diversity, divergence and plurality are the essence of postmodernism

2.5.3 Neoliberal urbanism and the production of urban space

Neoliberalism gained prominence during the late 1970s as a strategic political response to the declining profitability of mass production industries and the crisis of Keynesian welfarism. By 1980s it was established as dominant political and ideological form of capitalist globalisation (Theodore, Peck & Brenner 2011). From the 1990s, the term neoliberalism became a principal rallying point for a wide range of anti-capitalist popular struggles (Brenner & Theodore 2002).

Neoliberal ideology is premised on the belief that open, competitive, and ‘unregulated’ markets liberated from state interference represent the optimal mechanism for socio-economic

development (Brenner & Theodore 2002; Theodore, Peck & Brenner 2011). A range of policies were mobilised to extend the reach of market discipline, competition, and commodification (Theodore, Peck & Brenner 2011). Such neoliberal policies included those policies deployed to justify deregulation of state control over industry, assaults on organised labour, the reduction of corporate taxes, the privatisation of public services and assets, the dismantling of social assistance programmes, the enhancement of international capital mobility, and the intensification of interlocality competition (Theodore, Peck & Brenner 2011).

Harvey (2012) argues that neoliberalism has led to increasing polarisation in the distribution of wealth and power which have been entrenched into the spatial forms of our cities. Consequently, increasingly cities become cities of fortified fragments, of gated communities, and privatised public spaces kept under constant surveillance. Consequently, as Pieterse (2009) argues, relentless pursuit of neoliberal reforms to achieve greater degrees of liberalisation, privatisation and cost recovery invariably go hand in glove with increasingly violent expression and oppression of grassroots groups opposed to these agendas. In relation to contestation, it can be argued that neoliberal polices have led to the predominance of illegal and unplanned settlements (Moyo 2007); peasantisation in response to retrenchment; ruralisation of urban areas as well as urbanisation of rural areas (Moyo 2007; Bryceson et al 2000) as rural and urban workers compete for jobs (as well as agricultural jobs) and residential plots in both urban and rural areas. Under these conditions of retrenchments among others, jobless urban residents have been forced to struggle for urban land (Moyo 2007; Petras 1997).

Earlier, Bourdeau (1998) argued that a spontaneous market order is a strong discourse rather than a reality of neoliberal statecraft (Bourdeau 1998). Polanyi (2004) exposes that a free standing and self-regulating market is a dangerous myth. More than a decade later, Theodore, Peck and Brenner (2011) observe that neoliberalism operates through trial-and-error experimentation and most often under conditions of crisis. Further , the authors agree that neoliberalism is premised on a ‘one-size-fits-all model’ policy implementation which assumes that imposition of market-orientated reforms will produce identical results rather than recognising extraordinary variations that arise as neoliberal reform initiatives are imposed within contextually specific institutional landscapes and policy environments. Notwithstanding the foregoing, neoliberalism remains a useful concept. First, it has attracted substantial theoretical attention in many parts of the world. Secondly, it has deep political

cleavages in cities and urban theory let alone political implications for particular cities including 'lesser known' cities (Robinson & Parnell 2011:523). Indeed, as Theodore, Peck & Brenner (2011) argue, local struggles over affordable housing, living wages, and environmental justice, expose relevant, progressive alternatives to neoliberalism.

2.5.4 Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and the production of urban space

Structural adjustment programmes seek to restructure the organisation of production through deregulation of markets, devaluation of currencies, trade liberalisation, public enterprise privatisation and public expenditure reduction (Zeleza 1999). However, from the 1980s there were significant changes in the way production of spaces were organised and experienced. First, the contraction of public sector employment which has traditionally been the engine of employment in post-colonial Africa pauperises the middle class. Consequently, this led to ruralisation of urban spaces through urban farming. Also, return migration to rural areas became a spatial strategy against the hardships brought about by SAP to the urban poor, the unemployed, and the retired. Moreover, cities became the arena where struggles for democratisation which began sweeping across Africa in the late 1980s, emanated to challenge authoritarian post-colonial government in favour of democratisation. Thus contraction of public and private employment led to informalisation of the economy as well as unregulated provision of land and urban housing.

The role of SAP as one of the mechanisms of globalisation on contestations over urban space and result production of urban space cannot be overemphasised. In the African context, it is in the cities where the engagements with SAP can evidently be played out. Structural adjustment measures have had significant impacts on the social and economic structures of cities in LDCs (Loxley 1990; Riddell 1992; Gilbert 1993; Harris & Fabricius 1996; Townroe 1996; UNDP/ILO 1997). In Latin America SAPs led to the slowing of urban growth in the sense that SAPs rebalanced the terms of trade between the rural and urban sectors, in favour of the former (Gilbert 1993). Urban areas therefore became less attractive and potential migrants started choosing to stay in the economically revitalised rural areas.

Studies in Africa point to the fact that SAPs and their neoliberal policies have intensified rural urban migration. Indeed at the rate 3.5 per cent per annum and nearly 40 per cent of the population now urbanised, this makes Africa the most rapidly urbanising continent (Moyo 2007). However, it must be noted that unlike in the industrialised countries, Africa's rapid urbanisation is concomitant with industrialisation and economic growth (Moyo 2007; Jenkins

2007; Townroe 1996). Consequently, urbanisation alongside de-industrialisation under SAPs and neoliberal policies, have led to job retrenchment (Moyo 2007; Townroe 1996). In Tanzania, this has led to peri-urban development as lack of state support has forced old aged people to invest in housing outside the city (Briggs & Mwamfupe 2000). In relation to production of space, it can therefore be argued that neoliberal ideology has also changed the meaning of urban space as people now look up to urban space in the periphery as place of investment for now and the future. In addition, the constriction of the role of the state in the provision of land and housing implies that the retrenched people continue to struggle for cheap access to land for housing. Ultimately, the trend leads to contestation over urban space.

It should be noted that by the mid-1970s and into the 1980s, most neo-colonial and post-colonial major development objectives were failing as the region became more marginalised from macro-economic global development as global capital restructured (Jenkins 2007). Consequently, these global developments encouraged political crises; accentuation of urban in-migration especially due to lack of rural opportunity and general demographic growth; and attempts at land use control and anti-urban bias often became more violent with forced relocation (Jenkins 2009).

It is widely accepted that land reform is necessary, though not the only sufficient condition for national development (Moyo 2007). In recognition of this, from the 1980s onwards, under the influence of international finance and neo-liberal economics, state led interventionist land reform was removed from the developmental agenda. In turn, market-based land policy, with its pursuance of privatisation and commercialisation of land, replaced the existing state interventionist mechanisms on land. In essence, the new policy shift focused on land transfer on the basis of market principles (Moyo and Yeros 2005).

In the late 1980s and 1990s SAPs in most SSA left urban land as one of the few resources which could be controlled by national and local elites (Simon 1992). SAPs in addition to the increasing demand for urban land and the growth of informal market mechanisms, led to land grabbing through a wide range of allocative mechanisms such as traditional, informal, and formal. Jenkin's (2009) study in Mozambique shows that the effects of state retraction due to structural adjustment led to a very limited formal supply of urban land in the 1990s. Consequently, the situation fuelled the growing informal land market and densification of land use. Of interest is the fact that in the same period, both formal and informal markets continue to increasingly push outside the city boundaries where even more limited land use control is possible. Arguably, therefore, lack of land for expansion seems to lead to

confiscation of underutilised land allocations. Ultimately, these complex dynamics led to the political desire to adjust the continuing adopted colonial legal situation to permit formalisation of market values (Jenkins 2009). In the next section, I examine these planning responses to the tidal growth of informalisation.

Political economists in geography argue that the post-1970 round of global neoliberal restructuring has involved specific changes in the way cities are governed (Goodwin and Painter 1996; Jones 1999). In essence, global restructuring has led to declining enfranchisement in cities. For instance, urban policy is being reoriented away from redistribution and toward competition. Consequently, the changes have incited concern that urban inhabitants are becoming increasingly disenfranchised, specifically with respect to the control they exert over the decisions that shape the geography of the city (Brodie 2000).

Furthermore, apart from neo-liberalism, democracy is another element associated with globalisation. Indeed, the relationship between democracy and globalization has been adapted to the urban context by geographers and other social scientists. In this regard, there is a persuasive body of theoretical and empirical work that examines the relationship between political-economic restructuring and urban governance. Firstly, they argue that political-economic restructuring has involved extensive changes in the institutions of urban governance (Brenner, 1999; Jessop, 1997; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999). Secondly, they argue that those governance changes have tended to disenfranchise urban inhabitants in as far as decisions that shape the city are concerned (Peck, 1998; Tickell and Peck, 1996; Ward, 2000). In essence, these changes tend to decrease the control urban residents have over the decisions that shape their city.

It is therefore, in this regard, that I find that there is a regular need for research as well as action that can invent new strategies for resisting neoliberal globalisation and for enfranchising urban inhabitants. Thus besides exploring planners and urban residents' perceptions of space, this research will try to fill this gap by investigating the new and innovative strategies that these residents devise in a desperate effort to exercise their right to the city in Malawi's cities.

Although it has been argued that people in the middle class have benefitted from new commercial and financial opportunities, there is apparently little evidence that the urban poor in most cities have gained a better standard of living. On the surface, although more goods

may be available, there is much evidence that the costs of health services, education, and various daily necessities have risen.

Under SAPs, peasants have become problematic as they are multi-occupational, spanning both urban and rural residences, and flooding labour markets (Bryceson 2000 in Moyo 2007). However, SAPs have been accompanied by intensified migration such that at the rate of 3.5 per cent annually, Africa has now the fastest rate of urbanisation in the world with nearly 40 per cent of the population being urbanised (Moyo 2007). It should be noted here that unlike in the developed countries, the reality of Africa's urbanisation is that it takes place alongside de-industrialisation and retrenchments.

Brown (2005) explored the politics of politics of customary land tenure, land reform, and traditional leaders in Zambia. He found that market-based tenure reforms which promote private investment have been a source of contestation in Zambia. First, local, national, and even international elites have been able to secure private title to 'customary' lands. Second, land conversions have generated intra-community conflict and resistance. Third, commodification of customary land is changing social and political relations between chiefs and villagers, between villagers and one another and between locals and outsiders. Four, there is corruption and manipulation of the country's Ministry of Land by elites and bureaucrats. Five, the state authority is undermined by inadequate capacity to control land. Thus, Brown (2005) in Zambia customary land reforms are generating economic and social exclusion such that the benefits of market-based land reform have accrued to local elites and outside investors, thus bypassing the poor.

In much of the global South, master planning, zoning and visions of urban modernism are still the norm. For example, many African countries still have planning legislation based on British or European planning laws from the 1930s or 1940s, revised only marginally(Watson 2009). Post-colonial governments tended to reinforce and entrench colonial spatial plans and land management tools, sometimes in even more rigid form than colonial governments (Njoh, 2003). Similarly in India, master planning and zoning ordinances introduced under British rule still persist.

2.5.5 Globalisation of the production of urban space

There is a consensus that with the exception of 'developmental states' which have channelled resources into urban industrial growth and into public sector spending on urban projects and programmes band are therefore experiencing less dramatic job and income polarisation (e.g.

in East Asia), globalisation (in terms of international and national policy interventions such as IMF, SAPS and contraction of public sector jobs) has given rise to an exploding informality in cities of the global south (Al-Sayyad & Roy 2003; Roy 2003; Watson 2009). From the 'survivalist' perspective, this informality in terms of income generation, forms of settlements and housing as well as negotiating life in the city are simply survival strategies (Watson 2009). In this regard, urban planning in the global south persists in the context of on-going inequality and poverty and with high levels of informality in survivalist form. Since urban development is often overlooked by the planning system, pro-poor planning has to acknowledge and work to support informal activity in both the economic and residential spheres.

Globalisation is a contradictory process (Berner 1997; Zeleza 1999). In his study of Manila, Berner (1997) tried to demonstrate that globalisation is a contradictory process, in the sense that integration on a global scale is connected to the process of fragmentation and disintegration within world cities. In Manila, for instance, the juxtaposition of global and local, rich and poor, skyscrapers, citadels and squatter shacks is a manifestation of this contradiction. On the one hand, urban land becomes scarce as demand is rapidly increasing. On the other hand, a growing number of people, many of them migrants attracted by the new economic opportunities, cannot pay the market prices for housing (Berner 1997). In Philippines, for example, economic restructuring due to globalisation, has attracted foreign investments in real estate by the Japanese and Taiwanese. The situation has fuelled land speculation, thereby leading to increase in land prices. Ultimately, the consequence has been mass movements and eviction of those who cannot afford land and housing. Eventually these contradictions trigger contestations over urban spaces.

Globalisation results in changes in land ownership patterns. In turn, this trend is likely to weaken autonomy and lead to vulnerable groups being exploited. Globalisation is also linked to the exploitation of local communities and is most discernible in relation to contestations over mining rights and the harvesting of sought after plants for medicinal purposes. Indeed, these contestations are worsened when rights are vested in the hands of multinational companies. In the same way, conflicts can also arise between local communities and governments who collude with these multinational companies.

On top of having impacted on poverty, inequality, and informality, globalisation has also implied shifts from urban government to urban governance along with decentralisation and

democratisation (Watson 2009). It is worth noting that these transformations which are largely driven by multilateral institutions, have led to significant transformation in local government and the administration of urban space. Consequently, these transformations present quite new and strange settings different from those settings within which planning were originally conceived (i.e. as a state activity) (Watson 2009). Arguably, in the North, governance is a response to the growing complexity of governing in a globalising and multiscalar context involving multiple non-state actors. In the global South, however, urban administration remains highly centralised and is state-led. For this reason, pointing to its drawbacks, Swyngedouw (2005) argues that forms of governance beyond the state can lead to erosion of the democratic character of the local sphere by the encroachment of the market forces that set the rules of the game. In addition, limited capacity, resources and data at the local level have further hindered decentralisation (Watson 2009).

Globalisation has also led to imposition of abstract spaces for instance, normative policies. Policy shifts, as imposed by the World Bank and IMF during the 1980s, economic perspective dominated policy prescriptions, with World Bank and IMF sponsored SAPs providing the framework for public sector change across the global South (Watson 2009: 158). The principal ideas were privatisation, deregulation, and decentralisation. By the end of the 1980s, World Bank officials accepted that good governance was the key issue. By 1997, the World Bank emphasised the importance of strong and effective institutions, rather than rolling back the state (Watson 2009: 158).

Shultz (2000 cited in Bob & Moodley 2003:359) argues that one consequence of globalisation is a decrease in international trade restrictions, which is likely to influence the value of and market conditions for land and related resource products. In fact, the commoditisation of nature and the privatisation of land are increasing worldwide. In addition, the trade in natural resources is also likely to increase. Using the case of South Africa, Bob and Moodley (2003:359) indicate that the commoditisation of land in South Africa is often accompanied by a significant gap between local and global valuation of nature which is most discernible where economic differences are acute. Consequently, heightened conflicts over the use, control and ownership of land resources are also likely to occur in these contexts.

On the basis of the above, it can be noted that indeed globalisation intensifies competition over urban land. First, urban land becomes scarce as demand is rapidly increasing. On the other hand, a large percentage of the urban migrants who are attracted by the new economic opportunities brought about by globalisation cannot afford urban land. Under such

circumstances, they have no option other than resorting to their own initiatives to access urban land, which ultimately leads to contestations over urban land with state authorities. In that regard, urban residents employ their everyday strategies which include but are not limited to squatting, as a means of accessing land, organise themselves in groups to achieve bargaining power as they are quite often excluded from urban decision making processes, and lobbying their own stay on the contested land. On the other hand, state authorities have continued to engage in demolitions, self-help housing, evictions, and on site development as spatial strategies to control urban space (Berner 2007).

2.5.6 Democratisation of the production of urban space

Democracy is another element associated with globalisation. Indeed, the relationship between democracy and globalization has been adapted to the urban context by geographers and other social scientists. In this regard, there is a persuasive body of theoretical and empirical work that examines the relationship between political- and economic restructuring and urban governance. Firstly, they argue that political- and economic restructuring has involved extensive changes in the institutions of urban governance (Brenner 1999; Jessop 1997; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999). Secondly, they argue that those governance changes have tended to disenfranchise urban inhabitants in as far as decisions that shape the city are concerned (Peck 1998; Tickell and Peck 1996; Ward 2000). Consequently, these transformations tend to decrease the control urban residents have over the decisions that shape their city.

Consistent with democracy, another body of research seem to concur that politics[3] generally tends to drive the process of land contestations in urban areas (Scott 1998; Donaldson & Marais 2002; Kelly 2003; Brown 2005; Brown 2006; Barry et al 2007; Chinsinga 2008; Jenkins 2009). On one hand, the role of politics is apparent in sub-Saharan Africa where urban land is considered a key source of power (Kelly 2003). Because of this, urban land has been used to the benefit of elite groups (Jenkins 2009). At the same time, politicians use urban space as a basis for patronage and dominance. For instance, in Malawi politicians contribute to intensification of conflicts as they use urban land in order to win political votes (Brown

[3] Here politics is used broadly to mean relations of power wherever exercised, including taking control over the flows of resources (Healey 2006). Politics focuses on who controls what and how and who gets what. According to Healey (2006): *"...politics is everywhere...it is not just what politicians do."* In Malawi, politics of land focuses on who is involved, their interests, institutional contexts, processes of state formation since colonial days and more importantly who should gain access to land (Chinsinga 2008).

2006). On the other hand, political elites deliberately use planning as a tool of domination and power (Lefebvre 1991) rendering the whole planning process political.

Furthermore, the control of land and natural resources and their product markets is a dominant factor in the mainstream process of capital accumulation and social reproduction since these determine the revenues and resource base of most African states. Power structures and politics, thus, are heavily influenced by control of land (Moyo 2007:6-7). Indeed, the state has powers over local authorities that control land. State power and political hegemony over national territory is expressed through powers over the allocation of land and the regulation of land tenures and land use and through state structures responsible for the resolution of disputes that arise from competing claims over land. Land reforms represent changes in the extant land resource allocations, regulatory powers, and institutions of the state, traditional authorities and emerging forms of capital (Moyo 2007). The control of land has increasingly become a key source of mobilising power through electoral politics in which capital and class power direct struggles for democratisation and development. Land reforms can become critical sites for political struggles when class and race power structures are unevenly pitched in relation to the interests of external capital and in the context of unequal land redistributions (Moyo 2007). For instance, the 1992 Kenya elections outcome was grounded in cynical strategies of politicians who manipulated long-standing but latent inter-ethnic disputes over land into violent confrontations (Moyo 2005). Arguably, the nature and form of state control and the ideological grounding of the ruling incumbents can be critical to the form and content of land reforms. Mafeje (2003 cited in Moyo 2007) points out that most rural African societies were structured around lineage-based communal structures of political authority and social organisation. In these structures, access to land was founded on recognised and universal usufruct rights allocated to families of lineage groupings.

On the basis of the above, there is clearly a regular need for research as well as action that can invent new strategies for resisting neoliberal globalisation and for enfranchising urban inhabitants. Thus besides exploring planners and urban residents' perceptions of space, the researcher tries to fill this gap by investigating the new and innovative strategies that these residents devise in a desperate effort to exercise their right to the city in Malawi's cities.

Scholarship and research in geography and other social sciences, has raised concern that global forces including various processes of neoliberal restructuring have affected the political and economic restructuring in cities. Consequently, the tendency negatively affects the enfranchisement of urban residents. In recognition of this, the idea of the 'right to the city' has

been perceived as a way to respond to neoliberal urbanism and better empower urban dwellers (Purcell 2002). Furthermore, in line with democracy, emphasis on good governance in the 1990s as mantra for development in the global South had profound implications for urban planning (Watson 2009). First, planning was attacked and criticised for being a relic of the old welfare state model and an obstacle to economic development and market freedom. Indeed planning is unpopular and marginalised especially with the emergence of new actors in urban development. It is also under pressure to promote urban economic competitiveness at local government while addressing the contradictory processes of globalisation, namely social exclusion, poverty, unemployment, and rapid population growth yet within the context of local government capacity constraints (Beall 2002). In addition, there is a state of confusion on the role of planners as sole agents responsible for managing land and urban development (under Keynesian mandate) to a situation where they are just one of a range of players in the shaping of the city. Again decision-making about urban futures has re-scaled and introduced multilevel and collaborative governance, putting more demands on planners. Finally, traditional urban planning will continue to be ineffective or alternatively will be used in opportunistic ways such as for the eviction of the poor as part of land grabs by those with political and economic power (Watson 2009: 158). This is so especially in the absence of stable, effective and accountable local government and a strong civil society which traditional urban planning is premised upon.

2.6 POLITICS OF SPACE AND SPATIAL PRACTICES

One of the gaps in the use of Lefebvre's production of space is to divorce the spatial triad from Lefebvre's other works on space for instance, the right to the city and politics of space. In my reading of Lefebvre's politics of space, I found it informative to appreciate better Lefebvre's triadic element especially spatial practice. In this section I use the concept of politics of space in order to examine the spatial practices employed by the state in the production of urban space as well as its failures to superimpose urban space. Thereafter, I examine how ordinary people, in recognition of the state's inability to produce urban space devise spatial practices to shape and produce urban spaces.

2.6.1 Politics of space

In his essay on the "politics of space" (*la politique de l'espace),* and other writings in the 1970s, Lefebvre employs the phrase to refer to two propositions. First, the phrase refers to the general proposition that socio-spatial organisation under modern capitalism is intensely, fundamentally contested. Second, Lefebvre uses the notion of "politics of space" (*la politique*

de l'espace), contextually to characterise the nationwide system of spatial management that was developed during the high Fordist period in post war France through the DATAR[4] and other national planning agencies. In this sense the phrase is used to mean spatial policy.

In the first context, space is both a site and a stake of political strategies and struggles. The implication of this is that, for Lefebvre, the socio-spatial relations of contemporary society are produced and transformed through a perpetual, conflict-laden interaction among opposing spatial strategies. On one hand, abstract space and its representations, as imposed by the state and capital, endeavour to pulverise space into a manageable, calculable and abstract grid. On the other hand, diverse social forces simultaneously attempt to create, defend and in some cases extend spaces of social reproduction, everyday life and grassroots control (Brenner & Elden 2009). In the latter, Lefebvre looked at the activities of such public agencies as expressions of increasingly comprehensive national state strategies to manage the post war process of capitalist urbanisation (Brenner & Elden 2009).

Analysis of politics of space underscores the key role of state institutions in on-going struggles over spatial organisation under modern capitalism (Brenner & Alden 2009). Spatial strategies represent powerful instruments of intervention for all social and political forces concerned with mobilising state power as a means to organise social spatial relations (Brenner 2004). Lefebvre was therefore sharply critical of the technocratic and apolitical veneer (coating and surface appearance) associated with such strategies which he viewed as an ideological projection of hegemonic power (Brenner & Alden 2009). Such state strategies of spatial organisation, which include comprehensive land surveying, cartographic projects, demarcated boundaries and spatial practices of centralised and devolved administration, will continue to produce struggles, conflicts and crises as they are inherently political. Eventually, grassroots initiatives toward *autogestion* (e.g. democratisation or self-management), continue to unsettle and disrupt state programmes of regulatory control. In a nutshell, the main thrust of Lefebvre's writings on the politics of space is to suggest that, at all spatial scales, state spaces are neither pre-given nor simply transferred across generations, but are always in the process of being shaped and reshaped through various types of territorial strategies (Brenner & Alden

[4] The DATAR was a French central Government agency for spatial planning and development that **was** created in 1963. It played a key role in developing and implementing various housing, infrastructural and regional development policies throughout the high Fordist period. The acronym stands for Delegation for Regional Development and Territorial Planning ***(Délégation pour l'Aménagement du Territoire et l'Action Regionale). (Brenner & Elden 2009:367).***

2009). Crucial to the analysis of politics of space, is to comprehend why on one hand, the state is unable to impose its conceived space on the users of space, and on the other hand, how spatial practices (perceived spaces) and representational spaces (lived experiences) are used by different groups of people to contest the representations of spaces.

2.6.2 Spatial practices by the state: Neoliberal responses in the production of urban space

In the late 1980s it became evident that neoliberal and other normative urban development policies had failed miserably as they were associated with growing informality among others. To respond to this, the numerous planning strategies were attempted primarily in an effort to address the growing informality brought about by global forces such as those inherited from the colonial and post-colonial city, globalisation and its neoliberal and SAP strategies among others.

On one hand, in this period unofficial laissez faire attitude predominated as characterised by the existence of local level political redistribution of urban land, which was both informal and formal. Consequently, informal (*de facto)* land use was superimposed on the formal (de jure) land use which employs land use plans. Arguably, the laissez approach to urban land represented a calculated re-adjustment of the relationship between the urban land elite who benefited from increased access to urban land, and the growing urban majority whose access to land through informal systems was tolerated and even encouraged by local administrative mechanisms as a means to avoid more open conflict (Jenkins 2009:97).

On the other hand, internationally sponsored state urban land development programmes were doomed to fail in their wider objectives. First, the sites and services schemes failed on account of being appropriated by urban elites. This undermined its rationale of targeting low income populations under conditions of informality. Second, political nepotism undermined its success (Siddiqui & Khan 1994; Keivani and Werna 2000).

Another strategy was formal titling. Formal titling permitted the new land holding elite to consolidate their holdings. Formal titling was adopted as a key legislative change which focus on establishing exclusive access to urban land especially in countries with formally existing land markets (Jenkins 2009:98-99).

However, titling did not go without a share of criticisms. On paper, the approach was conceived by international agencies as the basis for kick starting development capital, through

mortgaging (Jenkins 2009). On this basis, sub Saharan Africa, enthusiastically, endorsed titling for its economic development potential. Contrary to this, the approach tended to dispossess the poorer rural population. In addition, it was bound to fail due to lack of supply of finance and weak financial systems. As such, loans based on mortgaging land, are unlikely especially for the majority who will be perceived as a high risk, high administrative costs and lending portfolio. Next, there is limited funding available in domestics savings to fund long terms loans and hence such loans would have high interests rates making them inaccessible, or unsustainable for the majority of urban residents. Moreover, there is lack of institutional and technical capacity to undertake such programmes. This is crucial in order to replicate internationally funded pilot projects or colonial land survey and registry systems. Finally, there is lack of sound economic base for wider programmes as urban elites resist land taxation and the poor cannot afford to pay. In South Africa, Barry (2006) in his study of the Marconi Beam informal settlement observed that although people were moved into formal houses in Joe Slovo Park between 1997 and 2000, very few of them registered ownership such that by August 2003 only 88 parcels had been registered representing only six more than had been registered in 1998. Arguably, they could not afford to pay land taxes among other reasons. Also, there is inadequate political will to exact taxation on land as well as reinforce repossession on defaulted loans.

Faced with these constraints, any titling programmes are likely to be limited and unsustainable in a wide sense. In essence, titling ends up effectively supporting the on-going process of consolidating urban land holdings. For instance, the real interests of the governing elites are to control the nature of access to land and the secondary interest is to provide land and housing for the emerging middle class. As Jenkins (2009) argues, just like the sites and services schemes, the current programmes of urban land titling are likely to have a limited impact because they are being undertaken for realpolitik objectives which are different from those officially espoused.

Next, privatisation of land, though highly contested by strong peasant lobbies, was also being adopted in countries especially those with post-colonial state allocation systems and no formal land markets. It is worth noting that calls for privatisation had the same general intention of creating and consolidating the existing land owning elite (Jenkins 2009).

Since 1987 Ghana's housing policy has sought to withdraw all housing subventions and subsidies to housing organisation, and move away from the production of and distribution of houses through public housing agencies. The change in policy led to increases in housing cost

since the private sector had to take over. On the other hand, it led to dollarisation of the Ghana economy such that large scale developments were mostly owned by Ghanaians abroad who could afford to pay in dollars (Konadu-Agyemang 2001).

Moreover, public housing was another approach used to address the growing demand for housing during this period especially for the middle income groups (Keivani and Werna 2000). It is interesting to note here that while the urban elites were busy consolidating the land rights through titling and privatisation among others, the emerging middle class represented a growing force during this period in both market systems and state allocating systems. These middle class people were largely excluded from the past large scale land allocation and that they wanted cheaper access to urban land. Their only options were to accept limited access to state-provided housing although these schemes were generally targeted at officially at low income groups. In some cases they invested in the formal sites and services schemes as the formal housing markets did not offer them affordable options (Jenkins 2009). These groups have usually not benefited from the land grabbing process and thus face more expensive access to urban land through the growing legal and other restrictions to formal supply and the significant reduction in formal state land development (Jenkins 2009).

Finally, in relation to titling, the late 1980s and 1990s also saw the growth of formalisation of land rights as an approach to address the growing demand for land and housing due to rapid urbanisation growth (Durand-Lasserve & Selod 2009). Arguably, both the political and economic elite have been the ones pushing for selective formalisation. In essence this is also regarded as part of capitalist market system. Over time, this formalisation slowly expanded to include the middle class and the largely uncontrolled demands of the urban majority who will continue to access land informally outside the regulated market system (Jenkins 2007). Under these circumstance contestations over urban space are bound to continue between different classes of people as well as with the state as each group of people access land by either informal or formal means with the hope of formalising it in due course.

In line with this, growing demand and restrictions on supply have led to informal access to urban land that is becoming easily commoditised. However, the widening of formal urban land development is unlikely due to the proportionally increasing poor majority in urban areas coupled with the marginal position of the macro-region in economic terms. It can therefore, be argued that informal access to urban land is likely to remain the predominant form of urban land access for the foreseeable future. Stated differently, land invasions and squatting as

contestations are bound to persist as a mechanism for land access as appropriation and production of urban space. Yet, in Malawi, it remains an area that has not been widely researched.

2.6.3 Spatial practices by the state: Spatial planning

In the global North, planning practice and theory has shifted significantly, in terms of forms of spatial planning; decision making; linking planning and environment; and new directions in land management.

2.6.3.1 Rational comprehensive model

With regard to spatial forms, planning has evolved from the rational model, through incrementalism to new urbanism. Since the 1960s planning approaches have been based on the rational model or what is otherwise termed as the comprehensive model or the physical master plan). Characteristically, the rational approach is based wholly on process, with little regard either to political conflict or to the specific character of the terrain on which it was working – it draws from the Enlightenment discourse. It ignores the nature of the agents who carried out planning and is indifferent to the object of their efforts, that is, the built environment; incorporates faith in the scientific method that swept through the social sciences during the cold war period; it is used for forecasting impacts and programme evaluation; it is outcome-orientated physical planning and continues to exist through urban renewal, low density development, and spatial and functional segregation.

However, the rational model has been criticised on the basis of negative distributional consequences. Such consequences include the displacement of low income urban inhabitants, racial; ethnic and gender segregation; lack of concern regarding affordable housing; and the imposition of a top-down approach by experts.

2.8.3.2 Incremental model

In his article ‘The Science of Muddling Through’, Lindblom (1959) argues that the comprehensive model required a level of data and analytical complexity that was simply beyond the grasp and ability of planners. He further argues that planners should abandon the comprehensive model and explicitly define their efforts as incrementalism, relying on successive limited comparisons to achieve realistic short term goals, hence the incremental approach (Lindblom 1959; Campbell & Fainstein 2003).

One main criticism was that it was too timid and conservative, both reinforcing the status quo and thereby neglecting the need for transformative social change. Moreover, it assumed that short term stimulus and response can replace the need for vision and theory (i.e. inductive thinking) (Campbell & Fainstein 2003:170). Nevertheless, the incrementalist approach remains a powerful counter argument to comprehensive planning, and that planning is increasingly oriented to pragmatic analysis and marginal analysis of economic policy (Campbell & Fainstein 2003:170).

2.6.3.3 New urbanism and the compact city

New urbanism was a backlash to the market-driven development that destroys the spatial basis for community. In this regard, new urbanism refers to a design-oriented or master plan approach to planned urban development. It has received considerable attention in the US, and to a lesser extent in Great Britain. The orientation resembles that of the early planning theorists (e.g. Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes etc) in their aim to use spatial relations to create a close knit social community that allows diverse elements to interact (Fainstein 2000). The new urbanists call for an urban design that includes a variety of building types, mixed uses, intermingling of housing for different income groups, and a strong privileging of the 'public realm'. In addition, the basic unit of planning is the neighbourhood, which is limited in physical size, has a well-defined edge, and has a focused centre with daily needs of life accessible within a five-minute walk (Kunstler 1996 in Fainstein 2000). New urbanism stresses the substance of plans rather than the method of achieving them, for instance, the creation of suburbia in USA.

However, the new urbanism has been criticised especially because of its promotion of environmental determinism (spatial determinism) which essentially calls for a different form of suburbia rather than overcoming metropolitan social segregation (Fainstein 2000). Secondly, its approach to social injustice is less convincing. For instance, Harvey (1997) feared that the new urbanism would commit the same errors as modernism especially by assuming that changing people's environment will somehow take care of the social inequalities that warped their lives. In addition, Harvey (1997) worried that urbanists' emphasis on community disregards the darker side of communitarianism. Nevertheless, with regard to planning theory, new urbanism's assurance of a better quality of life has inspired a social movement (Fainstein 2000).

Thus, in response to the notion of sustainable development, the compact city approach (Jenks & Burgess 2000) was introduced in the 1970s with the focus on medium to high built densities, efficient public transport, mixed use of developments; and densification among others. The new urbanism approach and its corollaries such as smart growth and urban villages share many principles with the compact city (Watson 2009).

2.6.4 Spatial practices: Decision-making

In recent years, planning theory has shifted away from a 'knowing' towards a 'deliberative' tradition (Amin 2011:633). On one hand, the 'knowing' tradition which typifies modernist planning, undertakes to perceive the city from a privileged vantage point, know urban life, intervene through central authority, and roll out a plan of the good life (Amin 2011). As discussed earlier, its perseverance is manifested in strategic urban plans, large architectural impositions, design-led slum urban regeneration, massive infrastructural projects and sweeping slum clearance. In addition, it does not lack powerful protagonists mainly political, professional and corporate bodies. In essence, it aims to re-engineer the urban fabric to achieve the goals of modernity. In this section however, I discuss advocacy planning, equity planning, the communicative planning and the just city.

2.6.4.1 Advocacy planning

In his classic article, 'Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning', Davidoff (1965), argues that unitary planning perpetuates a monopoly over planning power and discourages participation Campbell & Fainstein 2003:170). He maintains that a single planning agency cannot pretend to represent the interests of a divergent and conflicted society (Davidoff, 1965). He contends that traditional planning creates barriers to effective pluralism in two ways: firstly, planning commissions are undemocratic; and secondly, traditional planning narrowly addresses issues of physical planning(as it separates the physical from the social and thereby neglects social conflict and inequality in the city. In this regard, advocacy planning entails a shift from land use to socio-economic planning and more importantly to advocacy planning where the role of a planner shifts from that of the objective technocrat of the conservative 1950s to that of the social advocate of the contentious 1960s.

2.6.4.2 Equity planning

Equity planning sought to promote the larger public interest and directly addressing urban inequalities. Just like advocacy planning, it sees the root of urban development in socio-economic disparity in the nature of urban development. Krumholz (1999) therefore argues that planners have an explicit responsibility to help the disadvantaged. Rather than being

combative, equity planning asserts a greater faith in finding a common ground of public interest and working with the system of public sector planning (Krumholz 1999; Campbell & Fainstein 2003:171). In essence, Krumholz (1999) argues for progressive local economic development whereby cities should emphasize public investment and address distributive issues, and that planners should have concern for the low and moderate income people of their cities (Krumholz 1999:234).

2.6.4.3 Communicative action

This theory draws on two philosophical approaches, namely John Dewey's and Richard Rorty's pragmatism (emphasis on realism and empiricism and planning's best practices) and Jurgen Habermas'**s** communicative rationality (from Hegelian idealism and Marxist critical analysis). As a counter attack to the imposition of top-down planning by experts, the approach emphasises how people construct planning problems and priorities through discussion, debate, and what Healey calls 'inclusionary argumentation" (Healey 1996).

In this regard, the function of planners is to listen to people's stories and forge consensus, to be an experiential learner (as opposed to providing technocratic leadership), and to provide information to participants. The planner is seen as negotiator and mediator (Fainstein S in Campbell & Fainstein 2003:175-176). Essentially, the old style of planning based on instrumental rationality, material allocation, and a single omniscient perspective is out of date. Hence, planners' challenge is to articulate common understanding of social problems in a world of multiple, divergent cultures, and communicative action so as to make planning more relevant (Campbell & Fainstein 2003; Healey 1996).

To begin with it cannot be denied that planning has the power to produce urban space. In this process, it follows, arguably though, that planning has the power to reshape, foster, and create conflicts among different populations groups in urban spaces (Sandercock 2003; Jabareen 2006). In that regard, communication's role in planning theory and practice seems to offer hope as it offers an opportunity for planners to learn about the users of urban spaces in terms of the perceptions regarding urban space. Similarly, collaborative planning through meetings enables planners to understand through the ordinary people, the possible consequences of their plans (Healey 2003). However, it must be noted that contesting space is a struggle between the elite hegemony and users of urban spaces who suffer from these tactics. It is in this regard that, Pierre Bourdieu seems to be convinced that attempts at reconciliation and all

forms of concession are merely tactics of the dominant to hold on to their power (Bourdieu, 1962[1961]:153 in Burawoy & von Holdt 2012). In line with Henri Lefebvre's production of urban space, the contradiction between planners' conception of urban space (conceived space) and the way ordinary people live and perceive their spaces(lived and conceived spaces) has to be minimised. Otherwise, as seen earlier, any planning interventions that are imposed on the ordinary citizens are bound to meet with resistance as they lack cultural competence, social legitimacy and political viability. Planning frameworks should recognize the complexity of the spatial urban system. At the same time, the planners should take into account and adapt their plans to the requirements of particular groups of residents, in different urban locales (Kallus 2001).

However, critiques of the communicative action argue that there is emphasis of speech as objective of planning and that it takes a moralistic tone, forgetting the economic and social forces that produce endemic social conflict and domination by the powerful (Fainstein 2000). Secondly, the spotlight is on the planner as subject and not on the planning. Thirdly, the theorists ignore that even processes also produce unjust results. Fourth, they do not consider the possibility that paternalism and bureaucratic modes of decision-making may produce desirable outcomes. Moreover, ideas, mobilisations, and social movements can also change public policy, not mere speeches or negotiation (Fainstein 2000). In practice, there is gap between rhetoric and action and participatory process is lengthy and equity and diversity are unlikely in a relatively small community or municipality (Fainstein 2000). Finally, communicative theorists do not emphasise the importance of resources for genuine influence (e.g. money, expertise, media coverage, effective organisation) (Fainstein 2000).

Scholars of the deliberative tradition recognise the mutability and multiplicity of the city. This implies that it works through micro-practices, multiple voices, conflicting demands, and contradictory developments. It views knowledge as situated, problems as complex, outcomes as temporary, interventions as catalysts rather than solutions, planning as the art of intermediation working pragmatically through opposing interests and concerns, making things visible, and intervening in relational dynamics of communal local advantage (Amin 2011). Over the last 20 years, an influential body of planning theorists such as John Freidmann, John Forester, Leonie Sandercock, Patsy healey, Andreas Faludi, Bent Flyvberg, Judy Innes, and Jean Hillier mounted compelling critiques on the knowing tradition, revealed the complexity of the contemporary city, elucidated an epistemology of relational and situated knowledge, and articulated principles and practices of deliberative/pragmatic planning (Amin 2011). In

essence, the deliberative tradition calls upon planners to act as intermediaries who can harness local knowledge, broker agreements, and speak for the disempowered, seek pragmatic solutions, and redefine strategic planning with democratic consultation at the heart of decision making processes (Amin 2011). Authors such as Amin (2011) say that that the desire of the deliberative tradition is humanist as it aims to rehumanise the city by returning authority and control to the citizens and residents of a city. Also, it seeks to ensure that decision-makers are not allowed to fall into rule-based, depersonalised, or centralised governance of urban life, for instance, land allocation.

2.6.4.4 The just city

The Just City represents a reaction to social and spatial inequalities engendered by capitalism. In his Marxian critique of utopianism, as presented in *'Socialism: Utopian and Scientific'*, Engels ([1982] 1935:54) asserts:

> The final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange.

In their (Marx and Engels's) view, utopian thinkers such as Robert Owen were unsuccessful because they developed a social ideal that did not coincide with a material reality still dominated by capitalists (Fainstein 2000). In this regard, smashing the structure of class domination could create the conditions for achieving a just society. In this case, once the working class seized power, it inevitably would create a just society.

The Just City puts the planner as an advocate of a programme not a particular group as in Davidoff's advocacy planning (Fainstein 2000). Just City theorists fall into two categories: radical democrats - and political economists.

From the foregoing discussion, it can be observed that all three theories (communicative, new urbanism and the just city) doubt the applicability of the scientific method to urban questions. Also, it can be argued that all three the theories are post positivist. For instance, in her examination of the three approaches to planning theory, Fainstein (2000) observed that, first, the communicative model emphasises the planner's role in mediating among "stakeholders," second, the new urbanism (neo-traditionalism) paints a physical picture of a desirably planned city, and thirdly, the just city (as derived from political economy) presents a model of spatial relations based on equity. She argues that the differences among the types reflect an enduring tension between a focus on the planning process and an emphasis on desirable outcomes.

In response to cries for participatory decision-making, in some parts of the global South, planning innovations have occurred. Integrated development planning (IDP) was introduced to make local government developmental and to better link functional departments such as planning through strategic action plans. IDPs as medium term plans and City Development Strategies (City Alliance) as long term plans are examples of this approach (Parnell & Pieterse 2002). In terms of conceptualisation, the IDP arguably has good intentions with regard to service delivery and participation. However, its complexity and sophistication coupled with lack of political support and capacity have potential to undermine its success (Watson 2009). Participatory budgeting which first occurred in Brazil has also been tried to allow citizens to individually participate and vote over the municipal budget (Cabannes 2004; Herzberg & Rocke 2008). Initiated in 1986, the UN Urban Management Programme (UMP) also attempted in countries such as Tanzania to shift the concept of planning and development to the entire local government instead of one department thereby increasing participation. Moreover, since the 1990s, a number of Southern African countries have also adopted strategic planning, requiring municipalities to draw up their own strategic plans based on strategic participatory method. However, lack of political will, participation, technical capacity and institutionalisation of plan management seem to affect the success of this strategic planning (Steinberg 2005). Finally, regulatory aspects of planning which favour the allocation of legal rights of development based on liberal legalism and commodification of urban land, at the expense of its social function have contributed to exclusion (Watson 2009).

Since, modern planning can be characterised by three different approaches, namely the deferential technicist approach; the social reform approach; and finally the social justice approach (Marcuse 2011), tensions over urban space could result from the interplay between what is wanted, and by whom, and what is possible; and between what is just and what is realistic. This creates a constant tension in city development.

Arguing against communicative approaches, Lefebvre (1991) argues that the rationality of the state, of its techniques, plans and programmes, provokes opposition. For this reason, it is only through participatory democracy that the users of urban space can overcome imposed space. For Lefebvre's (1996), the highest form of participatory democracy to overcome all divisions of labour is the *oeuvre*. It is characterised by the following: all citizens participate; it is a collective project; and it allows the invention of new modes of living and inhabiting (Nagle 2009). State-led approaches to urban problems based on planning of growth and control of

development, cannot deliver the *oeuvre* (Nagle 2009:328). In the next section, I examine strategies and tactics employed by citizens themselves to context impositions of abstract spaces thereby producing their own spaces.

2.6.5 Spatial practices by residents

The question is: In view of the state's incapacity to impose its abstract space, how do urban residents produce their own spaces? In the first place, imposition of representations of spaces continues to be unsuccessful because the state lacks capacity to impose its space on the residents. In view of the state incapacity to regulate urban space, urban residents as users of space have continued to devise spatial practices in an effort to defend their claim for urban space. In Lusaka, the failure of state projects to sustain the intended enframing process gave rise to urban spaces that were largely reframed by ordinary urban Africans, though within the constraints of oppressive government systems (Myers in Howard 2003:208). For instance, in the 1930s, people planted illegal squatter compounds, which the British tolerated because they needed labour. These so-called informal settlements were characterised by clusters of neighbourliness and associational life (Myers 2003; Howard 2003). Similarly, in Lilongwe, residents continue in their own ways as users of space to produce urban space or the city despite its sterile design and the controls exerted by national and city authorities. For instance, low income people have claimed space by either building with permanent or semi-permanent materials, or alternatively, by abandoning planned areas for distant peri-urban settlements where they have negotiated with local chiefs and land owners for sites on which to build (Myers 2003; Howard 2003).

Next, in the light of the lack of capacity to regulate control over urban space, research shows that in many cities, social and cultural authorities have managed to seek control over their own neighbourhoods. Often, these authorities use their status, client networks as well as institutions (Howard 2003; Barnes 1986; Harrell-Bond et al 1976). In certain circumstances, these leaders have attempted to regulate city dwellers and urban spaces. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find even the formal institutions forced to work with and through local leaders. Consequently, local leaders, for instance local chiefs, have taken advantage of their role to claim control over urban space. The situation may further weaken the capacity of state regulation over urban space, leading to further contestation over urban space.

Furthermore, urban residents have used conflict and negotiation as a spatial strategy to appropriate urban space. Yeoh (1996) studied contestation over urban space in the colonial

Singapore. She observed that the built spaces of the colonial city were not simply shaped by dominant forces of powerful groups. Rather, the dominant forces were continuously transformed by processes of conflict and negotiation involving the strategies and counter strategies of the colonial institutions of authority and the different colonised groups within society. In this case, arguably though, the urban space did not only reflect, in the words of Henri Lefebvre, 'the representations of space' of the powerful such as urban planners, architects, scientists and technocrats but also urban space constituted the 'lived space of everyday life' which could act as representational spaces or counter spaces. These counter spaces embodied complex symbolisms that were linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life (Yeoh 1996:313). In other words, contestation between dominant colonial spaces as well as counter lived spaces contributed to the production of urban spaces.

Moreover, in his study of everyday resistance to eviction in Bangkok, James Ockey (1997) observed that the state imposed fines on slum dwellers or land invaders for rebuilding their homes. In addition, the state refused to grant the slum dwellers house numbers so that they could not be connected to public utilities such as water and electricity.

Also, in South Africa, Simone in Howard (2003:210) observes that foreigners combined business acumen with social power to take control of urban space, in this case, the inner city of Johannesburg. Indeed, the change in the racial politics from the 1980's resulted in many white residents and businesses leaving the core of the city, while poor and immigrant Africans moved in. The new immigrants dominated urban spaces and eventually established rules of belonging. They also contested those territories that belonged to no one. In that way, the inner city became restructured spatially with limited engagement by formal authorities. Similarly, Murray in Howard (2003) concludes that immigrant attacks by indeginous residents in Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Pretoria, is a manifestation of how crowds of people have taken over an urban space, thus preventing authorities from protecting migrants and applying the law (Howard 2003). On the basis of the foregoing account, arguably, the state seems to lack sufficient capacity and ability to regulate urban space, forcing urban residents to use their space-shaping capacities to produce urban spaces by creating networks, alliances and associations. Emphasizing the role of coalitions as a spatial practice in the production of urban space, Lefebvre (1991:391) said:

"Spatial practice is neither determined by an existing system, be it urban or ecological, nor adapted to a system, be it economic or political. On the contrary, thanks to the potential

energies of a variety of groups capable of diverting homogenized space to their own purposes, a theatricalised or dramatized space is liable to arise".

Additionally, urban dwellers have and continue to define cities (urban spaces) through their talk and symbolic behaviour (Howard 2003). Thus to influence action and behaviour, urban residents have used a variety of means such as petitions, demonstrations, and newspapers. It should be noted here that the use of newspapers as a vehicle for challenging government policy or debating market morality dates back to the colonial period in the nineteenth century (for instance in West and South Africa). Research shows that beside addressing issues that matter to urban residents of all ranks including the educated elite (Sheldon in Howard 2003), newspapers are also not simply words on paper but also carriers of images (Kynoch in Howard 2003). Other means available to urban residents include electric- and electronic media such as television, cell phones etc.

In Philippines, Berner (2007) in a study of globalisation and struggle for urban land in the city of Manila found that large numbers of urban migrants who are attracted by the new economic opportunities brought about by globalisation cannot afford urban land. In that regard, urban residents employ their everyday strategies which include but are not limited to squatting, as a means of accessing land, organise themselves in groups to achieve bargaining power as they are quite often excluded from urban decision-making processes, and lobbying their own stay on the contested land. On the other hand, state authorities have continued to engage in demolitions, self-help housing, evictions, and on site development as spatial strategies to control urban space (Berner 2007).

Moreover, the users of urban space use low risk strategies to resist the unjust demands of those in power, depending on the political structure, whether authoritarian or democratic. In his careful analysis of the resistance to eviction in Bangkok slum communities, Ockey (1997) used James Scott's concept of the "weapons of the weak" to explore the spatial practices that users of urban space employ to defend their spaces. Some of the strategies included personal ties with those in politics or power, negotiations with those in authority, petitions to government, demonstrations and protests, and press coverage.

Scott (1985:xvi), in his *Weapons of the Weak* emphasises that:

"In place of land invasion, they prefer piecemeal squatting; in place of mutiny, they prefer desertion; in place attacks on public or private grain stores, they prefer pilfering. When such

stratagems are abandoned in favour of more quixotic action, it is usually a sign of great desperation".

In other words, users of urban space, primarily the poor, may not seek to challenge the state and its actions such as 'slum clearance' but rather they find their way through spatial strategies such as practising apathy, reluctant compliance, and in some instances by simply improving their livelihood within the context through the use of ordinary acts.

One of the spatial strategies of the state authorities has been to show its power and influence by naming urban behaviours in order to regulate them better (Howard 2003). In this case, the use of terminology of dichotomous pairs such as legal versus illegal, proper versus immoral, backward versus progressive, dangerous versus secure, and filthy versus beautiful, is a tactic to assert order over urban space. In addition, urban officials also use words like 'squatters' in order to contrast them with owners of property. Other terms include ignorant, prostitutes, indigents, beggars, delinquents, and criminals (Howard 2003:214). Arguably, urban authorities have labelled people in order to discredit them, manage them or in some cases weaken their hold of urban space.

In reaction to these terms, Howard (2003) gives an account of how those urban residents who have been negatively labelled or treated as objects of control, have contested with assertions their own qualities and rights as a strategy to define their urban space. For instance, in the case of Freetown, traders and processors with low income asserted their rights by claiming first occupancy, pointing out where they had invested in improvements, and then arguing for freedom of movement. In this way, by erecting buildings and defending them, they forced officials to reconsider policy regarding public (urban) space (Howard 2003).

On the basis of the above, it can be argued that urban planning as it is conceived, has failed in the production of urban space. In recognition of this failure by the state to produce urban spaces, the ordinary people have potential to be taken over by engaging in creative spatial practices to produce urban spaces of their desires. Perera (2009) in her study of Colombo observes that in between and besides official plan-making, ordinary people tend to produce a larger number and variety of spaces than the authorities and professionals. Using Lefebvre's production of space, ordinary people have the ability to produce lived spaces out of abstract spaces through adaptation to and the expansion of spaces for their daily activities and cultural practices. With regard to colonial space, it can be observed that while we blame colonialism, through everyday processes of indigenisation, feminisation, familiarisation, negotiation,

naturalisation, and ruralisation, the ordinary people have been able to challenge colonial spaces (Perera 2009).

Earlier in the chapter it was noted that Lefebvre argued that spaces have multiple and multilayered meanings. Academic research, though scanty, has also revealed that users of urban space especially inhabitants can use meanings to defend and thereby produce spaces of their desire. In his study of the process of claiming and making space among the British Bangladesh community in East London, Alexander (2011) through narratives of the past, found that emotional attachment to and investment in place, personal, community and spatial history coupled with embodied social practices such as demonstrations, play a role in the production and contestation of urban space. Indeed, as argued by de Certeau (1984115), 'Every story is a travel story - a spatial practice'. For Lefebvre, social spaces are sites in which dominant and demotic meanings of community, ethnicity, history and culture are played out, struggled over and resisted (Lefebvre 1991)

2.7 URBAN PLANNING AND CONTESTATIONS OVER URBAN SPACE

In the early 20th century, master planning and zoning, as tools to promote urban modernist ideals, were enthusiastically adopted by middle and commercial classes who were able to use them as a way of maintaining property prices and preventing the invasion of less desirable lower-income residents, ethnic minorities and traders (Watson 2009).

2.7.1 The role of planning

Lefebvre argues that planning is inherently ideological in its discourses and practices, so that the visions and ideals shaping the fantasies of the future city are often reflective of the hegemonic desires of conflicting but dominant, privileged minorities (Flyvbjerg 1998a, 1998b; Yiftachel 1998; Yiftachel 2002; Gunder and Muoat 2002; Gunder 2003a, 2003b). The minorities in this case comprise those with not only access to economic, but also social and cultural capital (Jessop 2000). They also include networks of business, intellectual and cultural elites and government functionaries including policy planners. These jointly seek and shape a common vision as to what the general interest could be (Jessop 2000).

One critical question remains: How does contemporary urban planning trigger and fail to resolve these contestations over urban space. Arguably, urban planning as it is conceived and practised has contributed to urban land contestations. Jabareen (2006) argues that planning has the power of creating and triggering conflicts in cities. First, by excluding minorities from the decision-making process, it fails to recognise the right to the city of urban

inhabitants. Secondly, the state is incapacitated to regulate urban space as was the case in the colonial era. Third, the hegemony of global forces and neo-liberal agendas over the locale with their attendant policies undermine the primacy of the local circumstances to inform urban planning. Four, local politics trigger conflicts in the sense that politicians in their efforts to amass votes during elections use space to advance their agendas.

In terms of production of urban space, Jabareen (2006) seems to engage with Lefebvre especially in the sense that he takes cognisance of the fact that contestations over urban space seem to emanate from the contradictions between planners' conception of the place and the way inhabitants conceive and experience it in their daily life practices. It can therefore be argued further that the limited engagement of *citidens* (Lefebvre 1991) in decision making as observed earlier on, limits their capacity to produce their spaces following their heart's desire (Harvey 2003; Marcuse 2009). In the end, this leads to inefficient urban management and the general functioning of the urban life and arena. Ultimately, the situation can degenerate into contestations as the urban system detaches itself from the socio-cultural realities on the ground. Notwithstanding the foregoing, there has not been thorough research to unearth these daily life practices and lived experiences and examine how their mismatch with conceived spaces can trigger land contestations.

2.7.2 Case studies: Contesting conceived spaces

In comparative perspective, four case studies have been selected as they clearly demonstrate explicit cases of contesting modernity as presented in master plans. Although the cases do not necessarily represent geographical contexts, the tensions that emanated from the imposition of modernity are applicable to the Malawian context and cities in Africa. For instance, the case of Ankara represents how plans for a capital city can be contested, as is currently the case in Lilongwe in Malawi.

First, in his study of contesting spatial modernity in Late Socialist China, Zhang (2006) analysed how a new master plan for restructuring the city led to massive destruction of the century old inner city neighbourhoods and the displacement of tens of thousands of families in the post Mao urban redevelopment. Though Li Zhang did not refer directly to Henri Lefebvre's production of space, the case of Kunming's master plan in China is illustrative of how the contradictions between representations of space, spatial practices and representational spaces bring about contestation over urban space.

On one hand, as a representation of space, the main objective of the Kunming Master Plan is in pursuance of modernising the city and pro-growth. To this end, the plan provides a compelling example of the way the grand narrative of development and historical progress shape contemporary urban restructuring. The plan as conceived represents the city as provincial capital, heritage city, an international hub and a city that will be an advanced international metropolis by 2020. Various special practices were followed to achieve this modernising and pro-growth agenda. Given the scarcity of urban land, the state engaged in a number of spatial practices namely demolition of adjacent neighbourhoods especially in the late 1990s forcing thousands out of the city; privatisation of urban space with the elite taking over urban space in the core; and surveillance tactics through police patrols to crack down on illegal occupations such as vendors in order to enhance spatial order. On the other hand, urban restructuring attracted confrontations with evicted home owners who struggle to defend their property and place in the city. In this regard, urban residents faced with the destruction of their lived spaces engaged in various spatial practices namely: production of informal markets in residential areas; emergence of civic activism among displaced residents to defend their rights to property; refusal to leave their homes even when homes have been demolished; bargaining for fair compensation; networks with priests to bargain with the government; and filing lawsuits especially in Beijing (Zhang 2006). It can therefore be concluded that the master plan although conceived as an instrument for modernity, provokes contestation. In this case study, spatial restructuring in the post Mao governmentality could be described as a process that simultaneously generated displacement, disorientation, and social conflict.

Second, using the city of Nazareth, Jabareen (2006) studied the contribution of planning to conflicts in cities. Focusing on the Plaza Plan as a conceived space, Jabareen argues that planning has the power of creating and triggering risks (contestations) in cities. First, abstract spaces rarely take into account the right to the city of urban inhabitants. Second, urban plans and policies as conceived spaces are shaped by hegemonic forces of the state over the city. Third, the hegemony of global forces and neo-liberal agendas over the locale shapes the production of spaces. Four, quite often deficient local politics mean that politicians in an effort to win the votes of electorates can influence plans as well as trigger contestations. Most importantly, and in line with Lefebvre (1991), contradictions between planners' conceptions of the place and the way inhabitants conceive and experience it in their daily life practices can lead to contestation over urban space.

The third example is that of Ankara in Turkey, where the plan was to make Ankara the new capital. The Ankara Master plan sought to reflect the country's transition from Ottoman

Empire into a nation-state, hence guiding principles of modernity, secularism and homogeneity were followed. Kezer (1998) demonstrates how structural changes within the state and its institutions triggered unprecedented contestations over space by opening it to new uses and users while displacing the old. To make a city that embodies visions of modernity, the new leaders commissioned Herman Jansen, a professor of urban design at the University of Berlin, to plan Ankara. The plan included such elements as uniform residential streets, large scale lined avenues, parks, museums, sports complexes, and a concert hall, which were new to Turkey. In pursuance of modern planning, Jansen included functional specialisation and spatial separation of land uses in his plan. To make room for new development, demolitions were effected including the destruction and relocation of religious and sacred spaces such as citadels and cemeteries. State spatial practices included the use of police to demolish the 'unsightly' structures. In the face of these constraints, people worked out their own strategies to claim a place of their own spaces. Such spatial strategies included their insistence to continue building houses. In this way, the residents took the risk to build houses as they bet on legal delays and the impossibility of implementing the plan uniformly across the city; shrewdly built their homes on national days when the limited police would be busy elsewhere; and appealed to politics by turning their voices into votes, thereby forcing authorities to recognise them. Consequently, they produced urban spaces with a dual character (that is, rich and poor; sacred and profane) as well as shadow spaces where the master plan was heavily contested.

Finally, from Britain, the case of post war Coventry illustrates how modernist-inspired planning principles in the post war period (1940s and 1950s) could be contested - illustrating that popular consensus in favour of comprehensive development planning that characterised the post war planning was more illusory that real. In their article, "Contesting the modernity city: reconstruction and everyday life in post-war Coventry", Hubbard et al (2010) examine the reconstruction of Coventry's city centre in the 1940s and 1950s premised on the modernist planning of speed, efficiency and order. In the pre-war period, Coventry, as conceived space, was a strategic centre of engineering and manufacturing and a historic space with important medieval architecture (characterised by chaotically placed narrow roads; irrational mixture of land uses; large slum areas, etc.) inherited from the Middle Ages. . By the late 1950s, the city had transformed into a 'great national showpiece' (Hubbard et al 2010). Inspired by Le Corbusier's plans, the city's architect, Donald Gibson, imposed a spatial and moral order (representation of space) on the city emphasising spaciousness, speed (through radial and ring roads), cleanliness, and disregard of property ownership (Hubbard et al 2010) .

Notwithstanding the planner's desire for a modern, beautiful and efficient city, ordinary citizens perceived the new city as less efficient and slower than the pre-war city, triggering contestations over urban space in Coventry. The case of Coventry exposes the contradictions and conflicts between the planners' vision of the future city and the appropriation and use of the urban landscape by the city's inhabitants. In fact, Henri Lefebvre (1991) in his 'Production of Urban Space' said that those who design space have a particular way of seeing 'from on high and afar' and that representations of space tend to create an abstract capitalist spatiality. In conclusion, as the case demonstrates, the process of modernisation provokes constant contradictions between representation and experience. In other words, it illustrates that contestation over urban space can be interpreted as contestation in the production of space which emanates from the mismatch between planners' conceived spaces and the lived experience of the users of urban space. Hence, by exploring these contradictions, it is possible to develop fuller, richer and more contextual planning histories.

In summary, the case studies reveal that contestations over urban space are basically a result of contradictions between abstract space and lived spaces of the users of space. First, it can be noted from the case of Coventry that even in Britain where modern planning emerged, cities should not be solely moulded by planners and plans only, but also by spatial practices. In this regard, plans and documents should not be understood as the only mechanisms to shape and organise urban space, but also the changing experiences of the city and everyday life and ambiguities. It can also be seen from the discussions that everyday life is a site of revolution, resistance and everyday transformation. Planners therefore have to reconcile the contradictions between planners' visions and the experiences of those who live in the city.

On the basis of literature, clearly, urban planning as it is conceived and practised as the main mechanism of producing urban space, is to blame for the escalating levels of contestations in both towns and cities. From the colonial, post-colonial to the neoliberal era planning has emphasised the production of abstract spaces as its end product. The imposition of this conceived space and its ideology of modernity, homogeneity, fragmentation and segregation among others contradicts the space and the meanings of space as lived by the users of urban space. The situation tends to generate or escalate contestations over urban space leading to the appropriation and production of urban spaces described as informal spaces. Having discussed the multilayered meanings and significance of urban space and the role of urban planning alongside forces of colonialism, post-colonialism, globalisation and neoliberalism have played in the production and contestations over urban space, resulting in informal urban

spaces, how can urban planning effectively address these challenges? In the next section, therefore, the discussion is an attempt to review planning as governance and examine the extent to which Henri Lefebvre's right to the city can offer some insight into the production of urban space thereby minimising contestations over urban space.

2.8 CONCLUSION

The literature review has captured a wide range of issues from which a number of conclusions can be drawn in order to understand the roots of the contestations over urban spaces in cities. Our current conceptions of urban land use control are largely based on the legal and institutional forms imported during the colonial period and maintained afterwards**.** These conceptions as revealed in the chapter are imbued with the traditions of capitalist modernity which have never been fully absorbed in the global South even in the colonial or early neo-colonial periods. Yet these imported conceptions have been used to suppress notions and understanding of urban space as evidenced in the pre-colonial era. In the chapter it is demonstrated that planning policies as conceived constituted part of a meticulous and complex agenda by colonialists to assert their perceived social, cultural and technological superiority over Africans. Indeed, the planner was not only free, but also urged, to use expertise – a critical source of power – to assist colonial governments in their bid to attain important overt and covert goals. Accordingly, urban and regional development policies were enacted and executed to facilitate accomplishment praiseworthy goals such as ensuring sound architectural standards and enhancing the functioning of the built environment. At the same time, plans were also crafted to enable colonial powers to accomplish less popular or contemptuous goals, such as maintaining racial residential segregation, controlling the movement and other activities of members of the indigenous population and bolstering the economic power of the colonial government. It has been articulated in the chapter that state authority and urban regulation, from colonial to post-colonial era, have continued to assert their legal right and superior claim to regulate and impose order on urban spaces and residents. The various ways through which these state authorities exercised control over urban spaces included: their use of the law, police, and prisons to control and punish non-cooperating urban residents; their capacity to determine people's movements and access to streets and other amenities; their determination of the location and even the dimensions of private and public buildings; and finally, their ability to reward those who cooperate with them.

With regard to spatial practices, how urban dwellers draw on local and distant resources to structure their lives amidst seeming disorganisation, make things work in an environment of

economic and political stress, and assert their views among competing ideologies and beliefs, were discussed As has been noted from the colonial era to the present, European colonial authorities exercised substantial power to affect the lives of city dwellers**,** and that ideas and behaviours of urban dwellers were not only derived or determined by the outside as reflected by the limits of state control on one hand and the limits of control and the efficacy of urban dwellers' actions and ideas on the other hand. Contestations over urban space and their resultant informal urban spaces emanate from the superimposition of abstract space and its representations of space on the lived and spatial practices of everyday life. In part the inability of the state to impose its representations of space is primarily due to state authority's incapacity to deliver plans for urban development and service provision. For Lefebvre, it is a manifestation of the failure by the formal authority to impose its spatial practices of modernisation, homogenisation, centrality, and segregation on the lived and perceived spaces. In this research, the shifting conception of the state from distributive to market-based mechanisms with the emergence of neo-liberal policies and their attendant structural adjustment policies have amplified the scope for urban residents who are disenfranchised by the formal state mechanism to produce their own spaces otherwise deemed informal by state authorities. However, the formal authorities often frustrate the grassroots initiatives by clinging to existing representations of space, especially legal frameworks, which are sometimes outdated or at least inappropriate, to assert their authority over the production of urban space according to users' hearts' desire. Yet as shown in the chapter the so-called informal mechanisms are spatial practices by the users of urban space, and though considered illegal, they are legitimate to urban residents. This raises the question of legitimacy of urban development approaches which impose their representations of space without a more sound analysis of the actual institutions which act in controlling access to, as well as use and transfer of urban land. Consequently, contradiction is unavoidable between abstract space of the planners and architects and the lived spaces of the inhabitants of urban space. From this contradiction between spaces as conceived, lived, and perceived, stems contestation and struggle over urban space especially between the formal and the so-called informal mechanisms. In some cases, accommodating answers are found; in others, confrontation results.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli (1984:91), the founder of modern political and administrative thought, blatantly states:

"a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done learns the way to self-destruction".

In other words, planning as an instrument in the production of urban space instead of focusing on what is actually done, focuses on what should be done or the *realpolitick.*

To date no research has been done to help us understand struggles for space and spatial practices employed to produce and contest urban spaces in Malawi using Lefebvre's framework. The next chapter articulates Lefebvre's theory of the production of urban space.

CHAPTER 3 LEFEBVRE'S THEORY: THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE

"Modernist planners became thieves of memory. Faustian in their eagerness to erase all traces of the past in the interest of forward momentum, of growth in the name of progress, their 'drive-by' windscreen surveys of neighbourhoods that they had already decided... to condemn to the bulldozer, have been, in their own way, as deadly as the most recent drive-by gang shootings in Los Angeles.

Modernist planners, embracing the ideology of development as progress, have killed whole communities, by evicting them, demolishing their houses, and dispersing them to edge suburbs or leaving them homeless. They have destroyed communities and destroyed individual lives by not understanding the loss and grieving that go along with losing one's home and neighbourhood and friends and memories. Since nobody knows how to put a dollar value on memory, or on a sense of connection and belonging, it always gets out of the model." (Sandercock 1998 cited in Campbell & Fainstein 2003:402).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim in this chapter is to provide an in-depth and comprehensive review of the current body of literature on contestations over urban space. The chapter commences with an overview of philosophical thinking in urban geography with a view to improving the understanding of the philosophies which form the basis for various understandings of urban space starting from positivism through political economy to trans-nationalism. The discussion then, narrows down to the Lefebvre's theory of production of space which looks at space as a social product. In this regard, Lefebvre argues that every society has its own space. Through the triadic framework, it will be observed that contradictions and mismatches between conceived, perceived and lived spaces could be a source of contestations over urban space in the world's towns and cities. Some of the contestations over urban space especially those that have directly employed Lefebvre's theory of production of space are highlighted in order to improve the understanding of the contest over urban spaces in the world's cities.

An overview of epistemological foundations of urban geography as an established branch of geography that continues to be attractive to researchers and students that seek to understand the city is presented. The discussion of these diverse philosophies underlines the fact that urban geography is a dynamic sub discipline that comprises past ideas and approaches, current concepts and issues that are continuously being worked out.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL THINKING IN URBAN GEOGRAPHY

Pacione (2009:24) observes that 'the breadth of perspective strengthens urban geography's position as an integrating focus for research on the city'. In this regard, urban geographers have approached the study of the city from a number of philosophical perspectives. It should

however be noted that although the significance of each philosophy for practice has changed over time, none has been abandoned completely. In this regard, research informed by all perspectives continues to be executed under the broad umbrella of urban geography. To begin with, environmentalism as an epistemology in the discipline emerged during the first half of the twentieth century. Of central concern in geography was the relationship between human and physical environments (Pattison, 1990). Spate (1960) in search of the roots of this tradition states:

> ”On Airs, Waters and Places” by Hippocrates, a Greek physician of the fifth century B.C., represents one of the first written contributions to the human-environment interaction tradition.

In practice, notions of environmental determinism, urban morphological analysis, central place theory, and urban ecology are attributed to this paradigm. Next the need to shift from environment and human behaviour to a more scientific geographic investigation led to the introduction of positivism as a new philosophical thinking.

3.21 Positivism

The term positivism was coined in the 1830s by French sociologist Auguste Comte to distinguish science from theology and philosophy (Barnard, 2009). However, positivism which mushroomed in urban geography in the 1950s is characterised by its adherence to the scientific method of investigation based on hypothesis testing, statistical inference and theory construction. The perception of urban geography as a science of spatial relationships led to a number of methodological developments in geographical studies namely the use of concepts like distance decay in Christaller’s work; the emphasis on natural laws in the study of internal structure of cities by the Chicago school; the use of multivariate statistical analysis in residential differentiation within the city in the 1970s; and the use of neoclassical economics as central to models of urban structure (e.g. economical rationality of human behaviour) (Johnston 1996; Unwin 1992; Hagget, Cliff & Frey, 1977; Chisholm, 1968). For example, Davies’ model of the South African city as apartheid city represents a spatial theoretical mould of the positivist tradition (Davies 1981). However, its emphasis on spatial form combined with the neglect of underlying causal processes (i.e. prevailing social processes); its mechanistic view of human kind; and its inability to offer insights into the meaning of urban spaces to their urban inhabitants led to the emergence of behaviourism in urban geography.

3.2.2 Behaviouralism

Behaviourism promised to overcome the inadequacies of spatial analysis by highlighting the role of cognitive processes and decision-making in mediating the urban environment and people's spatial behaviour. By focusing on the daily activities and perceptions of urban residents, behaviourism was considered a better approach to explore sense of place and urban residents' perceptions regarding ownership of land, legitimate authority etc., and these were subjected to statistical analyses. In practice, this led urban geographers to employ cognitive mapping techniques in their studies of migration, consumer behaviour, residential mobility, and residential preferences and images of the city. In essence, behaviouralism could be understood as positivism with a human face (Barnard 2009). Although behaviourism introduced greater realism in urban studies it retained positivist methodology in its study of human behaviour through its law like generalisations. Consequently, behaviouralism attracted same criticisms that were levelled at positivism, particularly, its failure to recognise and account for the 'untidiness', ambiguity, and dynamism of everyday life (Pacione 2009:27).

3.2.3 Humanism

Humanism views the individual as a purposive agent of change in the city rather than a passive respondent to external stimuli. The approach does acknowledge that people do not act free of constraints. Humanists, Tuan (1976) and Relph (1977), concur that the humanist does not deny scientific perspectives on man but rather he builds on them. However, of central importance are human awareness, agency, consciousness and creativity. The approach thus, seeks to understand human social behaviour by employing methodologies that explore people's subjective experience of the world. In practice, it is based on the principle of logical inference based on unique case studies using methods such as ethnography and the analysis of literary texts to demonstrate the social construction of urban space. This represents a complete departure from the positivist principles of statistical inference based on representative random samples of the population. However, by the great emphasis on the power of the individual to determine his/her own behaviour in the city whilst paying little attention to the constraints on human-decision making is a distortion of reality.

3.2.4 Structuralism

Structuralism is a generic term which refers to a set of principles and procedures designed to expose the underlying causes of revealed patterns of human behaviour (Pacione 2009). Practically, the implication is that explanations for observed phenomena cannot be found

through empirical study of the phenomena alone but must be sought by examining the prevailing social, political and economic structure. Primarily based on the work of Marx, the Marxian or political economy approach argues that every society is built upon a mode of production (Harvey 1973), that is, a set of institutional practices by which the society organises its productive activities, provides for its internal material needs, and reproduces the – structure (Pacione 2009). Paraphrasing Marxism, a structuralist Harvey (1973:130), points out that, positivism "simply seeks to understand the world whereas Marxism seeks to change it." In urban geography, cities are viewed as an integral part of the capitalist mode of production as they provide an environment favourable to the fundamental capitalist goal of accumulation (i.e. the process by which the value of capital is increased through the continual use of profits from earlier investments). Using the Marxist lens therefore, processes such as urban redevelopment, gentrification, and suburbanisation, are a manifestation of the changing urban land market but stemming primarily from capital accumulation.

3.2.5 Political economy

The political economy approach penetrated urban geography in the early 1970s in reaction to persisting social problems of urban areas especially as brought to light by civil rights movements in the USA. To unearth observed social problems, Marxist urban geographers argue that inherent in capitalist society is conflict between socio-economic groups over the distribution of resources. In this case power is a key resource of which most is held by the elite who are able to manipulate the majority. Moreover, since spatial analysis describes patterns but falls short of revealing underlying causes, any policies based on this analysis are essentially in support of the status quo and unable to lead to progressive change (Pacione 2009). In urban studies for instance, the approach interprets urban residential segregation primarily as being the result of decisions by those in power in the property market, such as estate agents (Palm 1976) and local authority housing managers (Gray 1976). Notwithstanding such criticisms as the dominance of social structure over human agency; and the emphasis on class divisions at the expense of gender, ethnicity and sexuality, the political economy approach continues to provide real insight into the economic and political forces underlying urban change, although the interplay between them continues to influence urban style and restructuring (Pacione 1997).

3.2.6 Managerialism

Reservations about the analytical value of class in modern societies led some scholars to adopt Weber's concept of social closure, thus abandoning Marx's class based analysis. Social

closure is a process by which social groups seek to maximise their benefits by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of 'eligibles'. This is called managerialism as it focuses on the power of urban managers (e.g. professionals and bureaucrats) to influence the social spatial structure of cities through their control of, for instance, access to public housing (Pahl, 1970). Notwithstanding its focus on intermediate level decision-makers, managerialism introduces a humanistic perspective that can help to expose the operation and rationalities of the distributive process in cities (Pacione, 2009).

3.2.7 Postmodernism

In the late 1980s and 1990s, a new paradigm, post-modernism, started to exert influence on urban geography. The approach explores the place of different social groups in the residential mosaic of the city by focusing on the particular life styles and residential experiences of various populations such as ethnic minorities, affluent groups, gays, the elderly, the disabled, and the poor (Watson 1988; Davis 1990; Wotherson 1991; Warnes 1994; Peach 1996; Imrie 1996).

3.2.8 Transnationalism

Transnational urbanism as an epistemology refers to contemporary forms of urbanism resulting from the forces of globalisation. In this approach, focus is on transnational flows of migration and cultural practices that link residents in sending and receiving localities in a form of transnational social formation (Pacione, 2009). Today it is not uncommon to see the emergence of political activities of transnational networks of urban pressure groups such as Slum Dwellers International which represent a network concerned with mutual learning through shared experiences that has federations in several countries.

3.2.9 Postcolonialism

Post-colonialism as a philosophical thinking is concerned with critical engagement with the after effects of colonialism in order to expose the ethnocentrisms of the dominant culture (Robinson 2006; Pacione 2009). In the context of urban areas, post-colonial theory, contributes to the understanding of cities in both colonising and colonised states. In addition, the post-colonial perspective helps to draw attention to the construction and reconstruction of cities in former colonies in practices ranging from heritage conservation in Singapore to the creation of a new capital city in this case, Lilongwe in Malawi (Pacione 2009). Indeed, these practices represent a conscious break with the colonial past.

Since the thrust of this research is on the production of urban space, the paradigms discussed above represent a distinct perception of urban space and how these myriad perceptions contribute to our understanding of the production of urban space. Indeed, Fainstein (2005) observes that the administrators and planners' cities (that is, perceptions) are strongly influenced by urban conceptions. For instance, the notion of what a 'good' or 'just' city can influence how they perceive the city.

3.3 RELEVANCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL THINKING

Models as in the positivist philosophy are building blocks of urban conceptions (Perera, 2008). In this research, a comprehensive grasp of epistemological thinking was therefore essential if I was to appreciate conceptions and representations of space since they are grounded on these philosophies. For instance, Ernest Burgess's concentric model is a representation of the abstract microscopic view of urban succession (Perera 2008). The political economy paradigm perceives the city as a society made up of social classes which are in conflict all the time making the city the locus of this struggle or contestation. Similarly, land use zones that planners use are representations of the city build through abstract categories of land use zoning. Moreover, post-colonialism as well as trans-nationalism as perceptions will also help us to perceive or construct the city as a product of colonial perception of urban space. In essence therefore, although this research studies land contestation through the lens of Henri Lefebvre's production of space, the various perceptions drawn from these philosophies will also shed light on contradictions over space and how these trigger conflict over land in urban Malawi.

3.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: HENRI LEFEBVRE'S THEORY OF PRODUCTION OF SPACE

The research is situated within the broader paradigm of critical theory and in particular critical urban theory. In an effort to understand 'critical urban theory' Peter Marcuse provides a comprehensive dissection of the term in his study paper: *From critical urban theory to the right to the city* (Marcuse, 2009). First, 'critical' means an evaluative attitude towards reality. It entails a questioning rather than an acceptance of the world as it is. Furthermore, it means taking apart and examining and attempting to understand the world. Being critical leads the researcher to a position not necessarily only critical in the sense of negative criticism, but also critically exposing the positive and the possibilities of change, implying positions on what is wrong and needing change, but also on what is desirable and needing to be built on and fostered. Second, the term 'urban' is used to describe societies as found in cities today. In other words, it is the intersection of everyday life with the socially created system world about

us. Third, theory may refer to an attempt to understand, to explain and to illuminate the meaning and possibilities of the world in which practice takes place. This is the conscious and articulated aspect of practice, and of action. In the critical sense, this is developed through action, and in turn informs understanding and undergirds of practice. Put together, Marcuse (2009) defines critical urban theory as the analysis that flows from the experience of practice in developing the potentials of existing urban society. Critical theory is therefore intended to illuminate and inform the future course of such practice the ultimate purpose of which is to implement the demand for a right to the city.

Over all, the purpose with this research is to understand contestations over urban space. Generally, the researcher intended to explore people's perceptions of space and their daily life practices and how the contradiction between these perceptions on one hand, and conceived space as represented in urban plans and policies on the other hand, contribute to contestations over urban space in Malawi. To this end, this research was primarily based on Lefebvre's theory of production of space. Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is a product; hence social space is a social product. This implies that every society has its own way of producing space. Lefebvre's conceptual triad identifies three elements of space, namely perceived, conceived, and lived spaces. These elements will be the basis of my analysis.

3.4.1 Description of the theory

Henri Lefebvre, a French sociologist-philosopher, has had significant impacts on how academics theorise space, especially since his book *The Production of Space* was translated into English in 1991 (Hubbard et al., 2002). It is not surprising therefore, that prominent theorists of space seem to agree that the book is probably the most important book ever written about human spatiality and spatial imagination (Merrifield 2000; Soja 1996).

In the *'Production of Space'*, Henri Lefebvre developed a 'unitary theory of space' that sought to describe the relationship between physical space (nature), mental space (formal abstractions about space), and social space (the space of human action and conflict and "sensory phenomena") (Merrifield 2000, cited in Kubbard etc. 2002).

Lefebvre suggests that these different types of space are of the same substance and same force with each space being socially produced. In an attempt to decode the production of space, he emphasises the linking of the three elements that make up space, namely spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation (or representational space). These spaces, in turn, equate to the routine spatial behaviours that can be perceived in the world, the

conceptions of space which order our notion of what is possible, and the spaces that are produced by the body in every day practice. It should be noted here that the relations between these are complex, so that the representations of space are held in tension with spaces of representation, producing spatial practice. Moreover, it is apparent that spatial practice provides the basis for both representations of space and spatial representations (Kubbard et al., 2002).

Informed by Marx's periodisation of capitalism, Henri Lefebvre went further to transform Marx's work into a history of space. He accordingly showed how different relations between those elements produced different forms of space, from the historical space of classical times to the abstract and contradictory spaces of late capitalism (Hubbard et al., 2002).

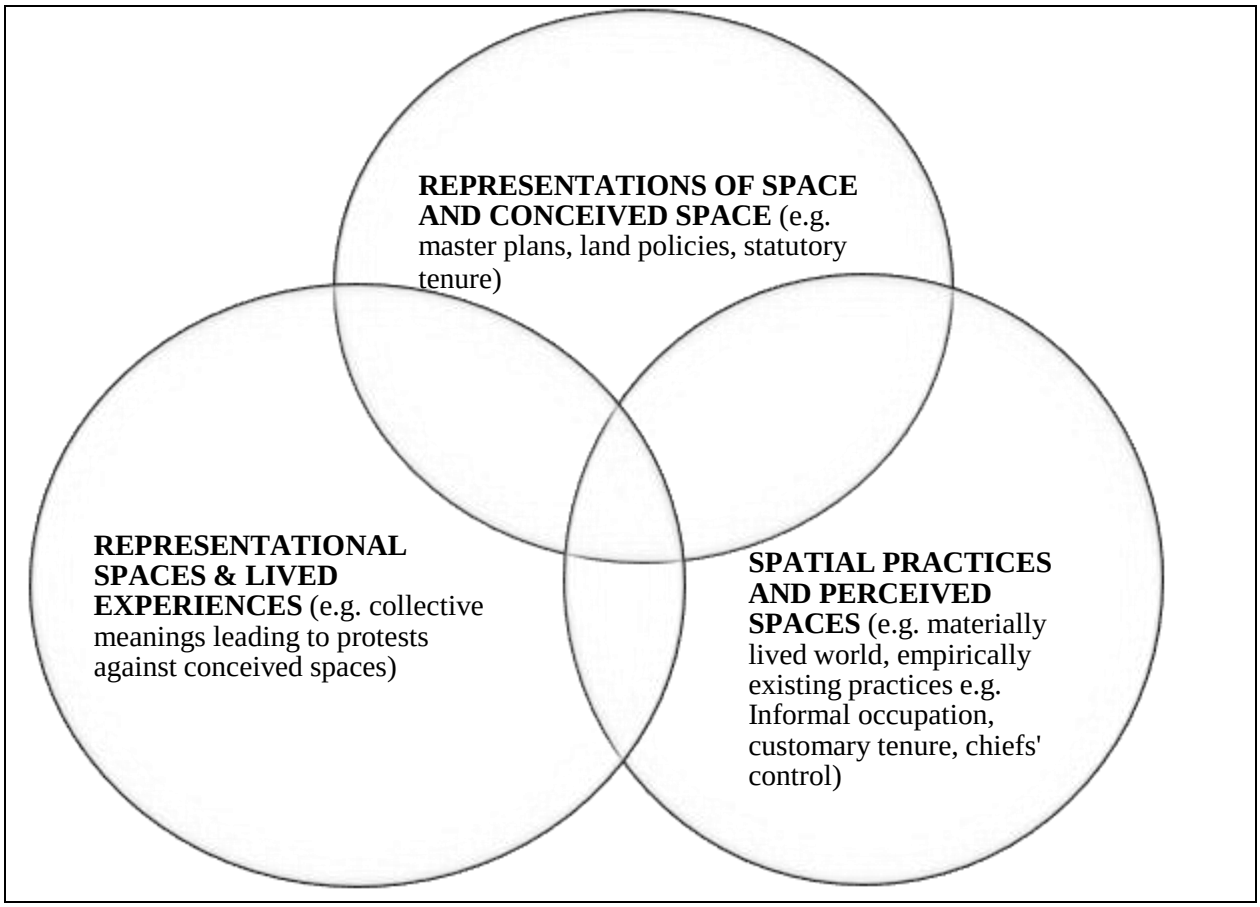
Lefebvre's work implies that the main struggle in society is not class struggle, but spatial conflict. It should also be noted that Lefebvre had faith in the ability of urban residents to, through bodily practice, create revolutionary forms of space (that is, differential space). Notwithstanding the fact that this kind of thinking is at odds with much post-structuralist thinking, Lefebvre's work has been widely cited and celebrated by geographers, who emphasise that it represents a thoroughly geographical analysis of social life (Soja 1996 in Hubbard et al. 2002).

In line with Lefebvre, we are confronted by an indefinite multitude of space each one piled upon, or perhaps contained within, the next. These spaces include: geographical, economic, demographic, sociological, ecological, political, commercial, national, global and continental. However, he laments that the 'ideologically dominant tendency' is to divide space up into parts and parcels in accordance 'the social division of labour'. To Lefebvre this tendency obscures a perceptive understanding of the processes involved in the production of spaces and the embedded social relationships. As a result, there is a general inability to appreciate a spatial unity that 'transpires between levels... the forces of production, and their component elements such as labour, nature, technology, and knowledge; structures such as property relations; superstructures such as institutions and the state itself'. This inability to appreciate the unity of space explains why we tend to fail to notice the contradictory and the opposing social relationships that are latent in spaces. To Lefebvre, this inability to appreciate the unity of space is maintained by the hegemony of the ruling class through different means, such as knowledge. Hence he distinguishes between two types of knowledge, namely knowledge that serves power *(savoir)* and knowledge that refuse to acknowledge power (*connaissance*) (Gottdiener 1993). The latter is a critical and subversive form of knowledge that allows us to

develop a more critical understanding of space, especially space produced to serve power in a more evolving mode of production (Ng et al. 2010).

3.4.2 The spatial triad

In this theory tries the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis are brought together within a single theory. Lefebvre (1991) does this through the construction of a rather complex heuristic tool, a spatial triad, for understanding the production of space. The three trialectically related concepts in the production of space are spatial practice (perceived space) conceived space (representation of space) and lived space (spaces of representation) (Ng et al. 2010). Lefebvre (1991) details how the production of space, in other words, the process of specialization is premised on three, complementary levels. **Figure 3.1** depicts how the three spaces interact with each other.



Source: Adapted from Lefebvre (1991:38-39)

Figure 3.1 Lefebvre's spatial triad

3.4.2.1 Spatial practice/Perceived spaces

Lefebvre first identified a set of spatial practices, that is, concrete processes, flows and movements that can be perceived in the realm of the everyday and manifest as movements, migrations, routines and other journeys through and in space that influence the where of human endeavours (Hubbard et al. 2002). The perceived spaces refer to relatively objective, concrete spaces that people encounter in their daily environment (Lefebvre 1991; Purcell 2002). It is important to note that in essence differences in spatial practice/perceived space are linked to differences in conceptions or representations of the place (Carp 2008). In relation to urban space, Hubbard (2002) observes that it is these spatial practices that serve to (re)produce the city, making and unmaking it as a functioning urban system (Hubbard et al. 2002). Spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space (Lefebvre 1991). Lefebvre likened spatial practice to perceived spaces i.e. it is revealed through the deciphering and decoding of that space. They give structure to everyday practices within the wider social economic context (Lefebvre 1991).

In this research, I will use this element of the triad to explore people's perceptions of space, their socio-cultural and economic realities and the local practices they adopt to appropriate space. This will in the understanding how the perceptions contradict conceived space to generate contestations over urban land.

3.4.2.2 Representations of space/Conceived spaces

Lefebvre identified a set of representations of space to refer to mental constructions of space, creative ideas about and representations of space (Lefebvre 1991; Purcell 2002). These representations include images, books, and films among others. Representations of space serve to represent and make sense of space. These conceptions of space have their own power to reproduce space. Moreover, as Soja & Hooper (1993) observe, conceived space is embedded with politics and ideology making it the space in which power is contextualised. In which case, experts work ideologically to legitimise or contest particular spatial practices. Urban representations such as maps are thus recognised as social productions commonly produced by professionals such as engineers, architects, and planners. Planners and other experts identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived (Carp 2008). What they all have in common is the fact that they all purport to offer an objective view of how the city works (Hubbard et. al. 2002).This is tied to the relations of production and the order which they impose. These orders include the order of the market and the state. Briefly, conceived space is the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic sub-dividers and

social engineers, all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived making conceived space the dominant space in any society.

When characterising abstract spaces, it can be said that abstract space is the space of generalised exchange relations of mass production and consumption. It is the space of bureaucratic power, the space of modernity or essentially the space of capitalism. As the space of wealth and power, abstract space leads to violence which in turn:

"subordinates and totalises the various aspects of social practice – legislation, culture, knowledge, education – within a determined space; namely the space of the ruling class's hegemony over its people"(Lefebvre 1991).

Abstract space is dominated by representations of space. These representations of space "amount to abstraction wielding awesome reductionist powers vis-à-vis lived experience." In other words, abstract measurements and quantification tend to replace the qualitatively experienced social aspects of life. For instance, economic rationalisation, social scientific management of space, urban planning, and bureaucratically controlled mass production are increasingly being used to determine the experience of citizens in capitalist societies.

Moreover, although one of the aims of abstract space is to flatten difference and homogenise social life, like other spatial forms, it harbours within it contradictions that have potential to lead to a new spatial form, that of differential space. Paradoxically, the differential space is the very same space that abstract space intends to homogenise, thanks to the lived experience of citizens, the spaces of everyday life which make possible humanised social relations. In Chapter 6 of this report, these contradictions are fletched out while in Chapters 7 and 8 the spatial practices of everyday life and lived experiences which transform these spaces into humanised spaces, are investigated.

In summary, conceived spaces as abstract spaces are characterised as bureaucratic, modernist, capitalist, violent, subordinating and totalising, reductionist (as in plans), use economic rationalisation at the expense of social rationalisation, and survive on scientific management of space and urban planning to impose their capitalist space. However, although their goal is homogenise social life, in reality due to their incapacities they end up producing differential space.

In Malawi, this includes space as represented in master plans, building codes, outline and zoning schemes as well as land ownership rights as provided in the National Land Policy of 2002. I will use this element of space to analyse urban plans and policies as representations of

space to understand how space as conceived in plans and policies differs from people's space and drives contestations over urban land.

3.4.2.3 Spaces of representations/Lived spaces

Lefebvre identified the existence of spaces of representation. In contrast to perceived or represented space, this is the space that is lived in and felt by people as they weave their way through everyday life. Lived spaces refer to the complex combination of perceived and conceived space (Lefebvre 1991; Purcell 2002). Lefebvre saw that these spaces too were imbued (i.e. inspired or saturated) with ideological and political content, claiming that it is in such places that the dehumanising tendencies wrought or shaped by capitalist processes could be overcome. In other words, he was proclaiming the power of people to produce their own space and create new forms of urban life (Kubbard et al. 2002). The lived space represents a person's actual experience of space in everyday life. Briefly, all three make up space as such an analytical priority cannot automatically be given to one over any of the others (Kubbard et al 2002). Contrary to the dominant space is the lived space. This is the space of the everyday. The lived space represents a person's actual experience of space in everyday life. Indeed, it is the dominated and hence passively experienced space which the imagination of its habitants and users seek to appropriate and change. It is worth noting that lived space is not just a 'passive' stage and 'innocent context' (Jones 1994) in which social life unfolds, rather it represents a constituent element of social life (Lefebvre 1991; Purcell 2002) or the 'great variable container for a critical interpretation of social life' (Soja 1989).

3.4.2.4 Argumentation

Ideally, spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualised. In other words spatial codes that planners use to generate conceived spaces should be distilled from life stories and messages of people's lived experiences. However, in reality, the speculative primacy of the conceived space over the lived space causes spatial practice to disappear along with life. In this way it does little justice to the unconscious level of lived experiences. In this way what is lived and perceived is of secondary importance compared to what is conceived. Lefebvre continues to argue that constraints and violence are encountered at every turn in the dominated space as the result of the employment of knowledge that serves the dictates of power, the invention of a concept that rules our society (Merrifield 2000).

In order to explain how this happen, Lefebvre argues that since the second half of the 20th century, the state has been planning and organising society 'rationally'. This has been done with the help of knowledge and technology, besides flattening the social and cultural spheres,

and enforcing a logic that puts an end to conflicts and contradictions (Lefebvre 1991:23). Apparently, the goal of this rational planning is to endow the entirety of space exchange values (Lefebvre 1999:23).

To Lefebvre, the expert architects and planners who produce the conceived space are combining ideology and technical knowledge within a socio-spatial practice to serve power in a particular mode of production (Lefebvre 1991:45). Indeed, apparently the so-called objective and neutral plans (i.e. conceived spaces) serve as a tool of thought and action, as well as a means of production, control, domination, and power (Lefebvre 1991:26). Consequently, the lived spaces, spaces where concrete daily activity takes place, are boxed in, and disrupted, forgotten, if not fragmented and destroyed (Ng et al. 2010:414).

In his warning, Lefebvre contends that when institutional or academic knowledge sets itself above lived experience, catastrophe is in the offing (Lefebvre 1999:413; Ng et al. 2010:414). In view of this, he asked challenging questions: first, 'whence does the representation of space derive'? Second, whose interests are served when it (that is, the plan) becomes operational'? (Lefebvre 1991: 44). On the basis of these questions, Lefebvre then urges the reconstruction of spatial codes (Lefebvre 1991: 64). In other words, in addition to the need for the recovery of connaissance there is also a need to ensure that the real task for experts is to uncover and stimulate demand. Thus, according to him, experts have to execute this task even at the risk of their wavering in the face of imposition of oppressive and repressive commands (Lefebvre 1991: 64).

Still on conceived spaces, Lefebvre points out that this dominated space is space with use values. Indeed, there are other forces on the boil, because the rationality of the state and its plans provoke opposition (Purcell 2002; Lefebvre 1999:23). It should be noted however that although this opposition might be defeated, it lives on, fighting back from time to time to reassert and transform itself through struggle (Lefebvre 1991:23). Purcell (2002) maintains that if the inhabitants who should have the natural right to appropriation take up the challenge and demand a central role in decision-making in the production of space, they may directly challenge the political economic relationships that are central to the valorisation of urban space.

In the end, Lefebvre poses a number of questions: first, if the production of space is such a matter of life and death, then why do people allow themselves to be manipulated in ways so damaging to their spaces and their daily life without embarking on massive revolts? Second, why is protest left to the enlightened, and hence elite, groups, who are in any case, largely

exempt from these manipulations? (Lefebvre 1991:51,413). Lefebvre (1991:365) believes "the silence of the users is indeed a problem and it is the entire problem. As Ng et al (2010:414-415) summarily put it "slogans to change life style and to change society are meaningless if there is no production of an appropriated space... [and that] what we need is the appropriation and the political use of space that counteract existing property and production relations that shatter conceptions of space...in dreams, in imaginings, in utopias or in science fiction. The idea is to place appropriation over domination, demand over command, and use over exchange".

All in all it is Lefebvre's ability to link representation and imagination with the physical spaces of cities and to emphasize the dialectical relationship between identities and urban space that makes his work so attractive to many contemporary urban researchers. His work provides a conceptual framework through which the spatial practices of everyday life, including violence and protest, can be understood as central to the production and maintenance of physical spaces (McCann 1999).

3.5 THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

In his recent writings on Lefebvre's classic essay, *The Right to the City*, David Harvey (2003:939) contends that "the right to the city is not merely a right of access to what already exists, but a right to change it after our heart's desire". It should be noted here that these two sets of rights namely, the right of access and the right to change the city, are socially and politically structured, situated in particular legal institutions, political actions and culturally mediated contexts (Weinstein & Ren 2009).

Henri Lefebvre popularised the slogan, "the right to the city" in 1968, but he was more provocative than careful in its usage. On the one hand, Henri Lefebvre states:

'… the right to the city is like a cry and a demand. This right slowly meanders through the surprising detours of nostalgia and tourism, the return to the heart of the traditional city, and the call of existent or recently developed centralities' (Lefebvre 1968:158).

On the other hand, he considers the concept to mean:

'the right to information, the rights to use of multiple services, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in urban areas; it would also cover the right to the use of the centre'(Lefebvre 1991: 34).

In line with Lefebvre, therefore, those who inhabit the city have the right to the city. In terms of urban space the implication here is that urban citizens have rights to participate centrally in the decisions that produce urban space, as well as the right to appropriate urban space.

On the basis of the above, it can be seen that the meaning of right to the city is a contested concept among scholars of space. In an effort to unpack such a contested concept, one scholar, Peter Marcuse used critical urban theory to define 'right to the city'. In this regard, he noted that it is imperative to ask the following critical questions: First, whose right to the city is involved? Second, who are the potential actors? Third, who are the agents of change? Finally, what moves them either to propose or to oppose basic change (Marcuse 2009:189)?

On whose right is our concern, he observes that the demand and cry are respectively of those who are excluded and alienated. He continued that the demand is for the material necessities of life while the aspiration is for a broader right to what is necessary beyond the material to lead a satisfying life (Marcuse 2009). In his cultural analysis, Marcuse (2009) identifies the following groups of people. First are those the directly oppressed, say on the lines of race, gender, economic status etc; second, are those alienated on economic class, the youth, and the intelligentsia especially in resistance to the dominant system as preventing adequate satisfaction of their human needs; third, the insecure, such as the working class, the squatters etc.; fourth, the hapless lackeys of power, which include some of the gentry and some of the intelligentsia; and finally, it involves the underwriters and beneficiaries of the established cultural and ideological hegemonic attitudes and beliefs. It can therefore be seen that the demand for the Right to the City comes from the directly oppressed and that the aspiration comes from the alienated (Marcuse 2009). Notwithstanding this, it is crucial to understand that it is not everyone's right to the city that is of concern but that there is a conflict among rights that need to be faced and resolved, rather than wished away. Indeed, some already have the right to the city, for instance, real property owners, political elites, and people with financial power among others.

As regards what city, Lefebvre ably clarified this. First, it is not the right to the existing city that is demanded, but the right to a future city. Second, it is indeed not necessarily a city in the conventional sense of the word, but rather a place in an urban society in which the hierarchical distinction between the city and the country has disappeared. As Lefebvre (1967: 158) puts it:

'The right to the city cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities.' ...in fact not a city at all, but a whole society. The 'urban' is only a synecdoche and a metaphor'.

'[The right to the city] can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life.'

Thus for the purpose of this research, the city might be understood in terms of the urban or society in general. Such a city would incorporate principles of justice, equity, democracy, the full development of human potentials or capabilities, to all and from all, according to their needs, their abilities, sustainability and diversity (Harvey 2003; Marcuse 2009).

The right to the city, for Lefebvre, has a positive and negative aspect. First, it is the right of every social group to be involved in all levels of decision-making which shape the control and organization of social space. Second, it is the right not to be excluded from the spaces of the city centre and segregated in residential neighbourhoods. Third, the right to the city is logically extended by the right to difference. In other words, it encompasses the right to be free from externally imposed, pre-established classifications of identity. In this case, Lefebvre's concern for rights resonates with recent work on identity politics, public space, and the public sphere. In this work, spatial practices are central to the assertion of different views and political projects. Mitchell (1995), for instance, argues that public spaces gain political importance when they are *taken* by marginalised groups and restructured as "spaces *for* representation." In this conceptualisation, public spaces are material places; sites from which political activity flows. In the homogenised, exclusionary public spaces of contemporary U.S. cities, marginalised groups often feel that they must employ violent tactics in order to secure the spaces from which they can represent themselves (Mitchell, 1995; Smith 1992 cited in McCann 1999).

The right to the city was used in this research to explore the various strategies that residents employ in exercising their rights or in defending their spaces as well as how politicians manipulate this discourse to entice violence in their quest for votes or patronage. So, the triad points out that as planners advance conceived space (or abstract space constructed by dominant economic and political elites) they provoke resistance by groups who defend and seek to reconstruct lived space (Stillerman 2006). Having analysed these aspects of the theory, the researcher then examined how politics interacts with planning as well as the above spaces to generate further conflicts over urban land.

Public space is increasingly commodified. In spite of this, it is always in the process of being shaped, reshaped and even being challenged by the spatial practices of various groups and individuals. These actions undermine the homogeneity of contemporary cities. The continually changing nature of (urban) public space and the rights people have to act in certain ways have increasingly been seen to produce various levels of resistance such as street riots (Cresswell 1996). It should also be noted that the resistance to dominant public space is constrained by numerous factors such as laws, in this case urban planning laws, land policies etc. For this reason, resistance often works outside the law and uses violence in order literally to *take* space. Mitchell (1995) shows that this spatial politics allows marginalised groups to create "spaces of representation" through which they can represent themselves to the wider public and insert themselves in the discourses of the bourgeois public sphere (cited in McCann 1999).

Thus the right to the city if understood within the lens of critical urban theory entails exposing and evaluating both the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system, in this case, the urban planning system, and the ultimate nature of its crises especially as they emanate from the contradictions between abstract and everyday life. In turn this has potential to inform practice as to what its strategic potential actually is, as well as analysing the strategies that that practice might adopt. In the end, the ultimate purpose of critical urban theory is to implement the demand for a Right to the City (Marcuse (2009). The conclusion suggests that exposing, proposing, and politicising the key issues can move us closer in implementing this right.

In as far as the right to the city is concerned, Lefebvre (1991:95) advocates the importance of breaking silence and making claims to a right to the city and urging experts to 'uncover and stimulate demand' in socio-spatial practice as an important safeguard against the imposition of conceived spaces by the state over lived experiences of the users. In this regard, Lefebvre's aspiration is to work out counter proposals, to discuss them with authorities, and to force those authorities to take them into account.

3.6 HENRI LEFEBVRE'S THEORY IN CONTEXT

Lefebvre's constant attention to the everyday practices of life makes his work applicable to discussions of urban public spaces - the spaces of cities, such as streets, parking lots, shopping malls, and parks, in which large numbers of day-to-day activities are performed. Indeed in

recent years, this increased attention to public space, has led critical geographers to resolve "to raise questions about both the politics in and the politics of public space," by examining "how boundaries between what is public and what is private, what is material and what is metaphorical, are constructed, contested, and continually reconstructed" (Mitchell 1995; Goss 1993 cited in McCann 1999).

In the first place, it has to be acknowledged that there has been a significant effort in recent geographical and related literature to work through Lefebvre's notions of space, especially his conceptual triad of conceived, perceived, and lived spaces (Allen and Pryke 1994; Liggett 1995). Opportunities to expand on his spatial theory through examples can provide insight into a number of social (spatial) practices. For instance, the representations of the spaces of Glasgow found in the city's strategic plans have been contrasted with those found in the city's rich literary tradition to show how Lefebvre's conceptual triad facilitates understanding of the modern urban landscape (Fyfe 1996 cited in McCann 1999).

In his article, *'The Latin American City as Contested Space: a Manifesto',* Jones (1994) draws on the work of Lefebvre to understand the spaces of representation or lived spaces. Lefebvre's work calls for a less rigid conceptualisation of space as a geometrical concept in which 'things happen', to a more socially informed concept in which social relations are reproduced (gender, 'race'), invented (myths, stereotypes), identity constructed ('who you are depends on where you are'), and power exercised or opposed. The first position is the 'the spaces of representation', that is, the lived world. This space is closest to a perception of space as passive, the innocent context in which actions take place. Here, command of space is regarded as the 'great variable container for a critical interpretation of social life' (Soja 1989: 1). The contestation for space, however, is more profound. As implied earlier, the key notion in Lefebvre's work is that the traditionally conceived dialectic of society and space needs to be reconceptualised as a constantly negotiated relationship between different types of space that is conceptualised, perceived and the lived spaces.

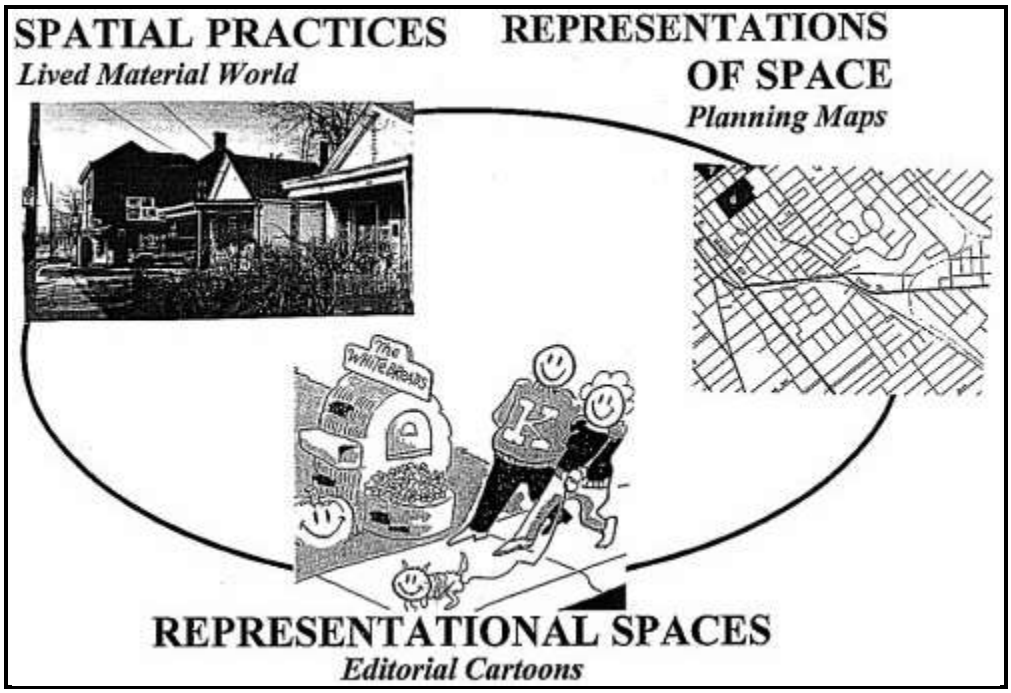
To emphasise the power of lived spaces or spaces of representations, and how conceived spaces reduce human conditions to issues of scale, organisation and temporal change, Blondet (1990:27 as cited in Jones 1994:2-3) provides an example of how residents felt about the establishment of a settlement in Lima as extracted from Blondet (1990:27):

"The river flowed right by here. The stream ran behind and the water here stank. ... We were here, you see, when I saw one of those corpses. People died like dogs, lots of them. The water arrived, it came in here bringing mud and rocks from the river banks. It came in here. It was full of water here, and the river was full. And the people... so many people died. And a woman said that the water carried a woman right back here in the yard. She was put in a pit and she rotted here. She's been there ever since and people live there now, right on top".

Using this context, it can be seen that quite often conceived spaces might tend to undermine harsh human conditions that residents are subjected to in their quest to impose notions of space on urban residents. Ultimately, efforts aimed at establishing planned settlements are bound to meet with resistance from the original inhabitants who claim a right to the spaces in question, and this leads to contestations.

On the representations of space, Jones (1994) contends that urban planning in Latin America should never be regarded as a set of normative proposals devoid or divorced from the ideological vision of the city held at that moment in time. He gives examples of mass relocations of 35,000 low income families in Santiago by the Pinochet regime which according to him is in a sense an ideological claim to the city (Scarpaci et al 1988, cited in Jones 1994:6). Giving an example from Brazil, Rowe & Schelling (1991 cited in Jones 1994:6), observes that demolition of old colonial houses and replacing narrow streets by avenues imported from Europe was an attempt by the elite to instil a sense of modernity and progress. Thus the real planning agenda may have less to do with physical improvements or organisation and more with the production of a designated meaning for the built environment (Cohen 1985).

In an earlier study of contesting urban spaces, McCann (1999) used Lefebvre's theory to argue that the urban spaces of U.S. cities and Lexington in particular are thoroughly racialised. **Figure 3.2** shows how contradictions between the three spaces might lead to contest in urban spaces.



Source: McCann (1999:163-184)

Figure 3.2 Contradictions among spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces

From **Figure 2.2** it can be observed that the spatial practices of everyday life in Lexington's public housing or in any other part of the city shape planning decisions. It should also be noted, however, that in turn these spatial practices are also ordered by the representations constructed by planners and other experts. Indeed, planning maps order the spaces of the city by keeping land uses and also people in their place through their connection to the forces of the state and their ability to produce and secure abstract space through the marginalisation of difference. In the case of Lexington in US, representational spaces such as the work of artists like Pett are a third and equally important moment in the process. For instance, Pett's cartoons in the days after the demonstration drew on spatial practices (that is, walking the dog) and representational spaces (that is, the census tract map) to highlight firstly, the racialised geography of the city, and secondly, to show White suburbanites and how they may be perceived by others who live in Lexington (McCann 1999).

In order to understand the symbolic and emotional importance of space and how inhabitants claim and contest meanings, the case of Bengali Brick Lane in East London is a notable work to consider. Drawing on a series of interviews conducted with Bangladeshi community representatives in the summer and autumn of 2008, Alexander (2011) explored the complex and often contested meanings of Brick Lane as 'the heartland of the Bangladeshi community' from within the local Bangladeshi community itself. In his paper, "Making Bengali Brick

Lane: claiming and contesting space in East London", he argues that Brick Lane can be read as a site in which dominant and demotic meanings of community, ethnicity, history and culture are played out, struggled over and resisted (Lefebvre 1991). By exploring the representation, production and contestation of 'social space' through every day practices, the paper engages with and contests the representation of minority ethnic 'communities' in the context of contemporary multicultural London and examines the process of 'claiming' and 'making' space in East London. The focus on Brick Lane provides an empirically rich, geographically and historically located lens through which to explore the complex role of ethnicity as a marker of social space and of spatial practices of resistance and identity. By exploring Bengali Brick Lane through its narratives of past, present and future, these stories attest to the symbolic and emotional importance of such spaces, and to their complex imaginings.

The account of Brick Lane, as space, as community, as icon, *as story*, explored above gestures towards five important, and interlinked, dimensions: first, the strong *emotiona*l attachment to, and investment in place, and the integral role of the affective in the formation of individual and collective identities; second, the ways in which this emotional attachment is forged over time as well as in space, recognizing the role of (hi)stories – personal, community and/or place – in the making and claiming of space and belonging; third, embodied practices, which acknowledge both the specific experiences and actions of gendered and ethnic bodies and/in the physical creation and defence of place (for example, through anti-racist mobilisation or violence); fourth, the ways in which the material structure of the space itself is moulded through and reflects these embodied struggles – street signs, mosques, restaurants, memorials; and fifth, the way in which making space is a form of engagement with broader social processes and societal structures, rather than withdrawal from them – a way of looking outwards as well as inwards. The case of Brick Lane, in this case, supports Staeheli & Thompson (1997) who in their discussion of conflict over public space, argue that struggles over public space represent a territorial form of struggles over the various meanings of citizenship and membership in a polity.

The present paper has aimed to explore the multiple ways in which Brick Lane is made and narrated through a historically located set of 'spatial practices' and 'spatial stories'. In particular it has focused on the process of making, shaping and claiming space by local Bengalis, whose voices and experiences are too often erased, assumed or ventriloquized by others.

Furthermore, illustrative of the contradiction between conceived and perceived space, Hubbard & Faire (2003), in their article *"Contesting the modern city: reconstruction and everyday life in post-war Coventry"* drew on oral history from the local residents (that is, 'view from below') into dialogue with planners' 'view from above' to elucidate citizens' experiences of the redevelopment of Coventry. Primarily, the aim of the planned redevelopment for Coventry was to address post war problems of traffic congestion, urban blight, slums and overcrowding, the city was faced with. The city's architect, Donald Gibson, was tasked with drawing the planned redevelopment schemes. His plan, *Coventry of Tomorrow,* draws inspiration from Le Corbusier's controversial (1992*) City of Tomorrow* and its clean-sweep approach (Hubbard & Faire 2003). On one hand, the resultant modern city was conceived as modern and beautiful. On the other hand, the same city was also perceived as idealistic, with emphasis on spaciousness, speed and cleanliness. The contradiction between conceived space and perceived space in this regard, led to numerous struggles over urban space. Stated differently, contestation over the modern city of Coventry is a clear illustration of how the planners' conceptions of the future of Coventry differed from the appropriation and use of urban space by those who lived and worked in the city. From this study, Hubbard & Faire (2003) concluded that cities are not solely moulded by planners and plans, and being simultaneously shaped by spatial practices, but by realms of everyday life. It is also clear from the research by Hubbard & Faire (2003) that plans do not always determine how the city is used, but that new lived spaces often emerge **(**with new lived spaces often emerge) as people adapt the city to their own needs. Indeed, as Lefebvre argues, everyday life is a site of revolution, resistance, and ceaseless transformation (Hubbard & Faire 2003).

In an attempt to explain how the contradictions between spatial practice, conceived space and lived space can lead to contestation over urban space, I find recent research by Ng et al (2010) very informative. Ng et al (2010) employed Lefebvre's spatial dialectics to examine how reclamation as a spatial practice conceived space and lived space and how this led to contestation over space in what is termed 'Piers saga' in Hong Kong in China. The study sought to understand the rise of the on-going battle of space due to relocation, against the evolving spatial practices, and conceived, and lived spaces in the Central Business District in Hong Kong. The research found that pre-Second World War (WWII) Victoria City exhibited different spatial practices from those of the post WWII Victoria City. On the one hand, in the pre WWII city, piers were conceived by spatial practices of a colonial and racially segregated trading enclave. First, the expatriate aristocrats and commercial elites were confined in the

heart of the City whereas the Chinese of various trades were confined to the western part of the City. Second, Queen's Pier was first created as a royal and ceremonial pier for the landing of the governors of Hong Kong and other prominent officials and guests of the colony. Third, the open space of Statute Square, adjacent to the pier, was not really open for public enjoyment and as a public space it was not accessible to the Chinese community. Indeed, by basing the open space on racially biased spatial practices, the character of the open space denied people especially the average Chinese, the right to use them and imbue them with meaning. In other words, it denied them opportunities to appropriate them and turn them into lived spaces.

On the other hand, in the post WWII Victoria City, the government initiated a new wave of reclamation as a spatial practice in the 1950s and 1960s in order to meet the needs of an industrialising economy. Unlike the colonial and racially segregated public spaces before, this time around inclusive public spaces were conceived in the commercial heart of the city. Ng et al. (2010) point out that like the pre WWII plans, the 1955 reclamation plan led to the removal and relocation of Star Ferry and Queen's Piers. However, unlike the previous plans, the new reclamations plan or conceived space, proposed more land for community facilities than private buildings, relocated the piers to a more accessible location, and the Queen's Pier was no longer ceremonial as it had become a public pier (space) in 1954. Ng et al (2010) argues that making these various spaces public and more importantly inclusive made it possible for the public to appropriate them as lived spaces. To quote Ng et al (2010:422):

...for the first time in the planning history of city of Victory, the Government's conceived space (plan) had provided the average citizens a right to the city , an opportunity to 'sit and watch, wait and talk' in the economic and political heart of the once racially segregated city, especially in the once Edwardian quarter of Statue Square...The conceived space near Queen's Pier and Star Ferry (post-WWII) not only symbolised the opportunity for new generations of Hong Kongers to live and appropriate space to imbue it with meaning; this public space actually gave them a right to the commercial and political heart of the city core, a right that was denied in the Victorian Hong Kong.

It may not be surprising therefore that when the Government planned to remove this very first lived space in the political and economic heart of the city to conceive further reclamation for the restructuring economy, the general public contested this conceived space as the more enlightened citizens were determined to defend it (Ng et al 2010). In other words, Ng et al.

(2010) clearly that contradictions between people**'s** lived spaces and representations of spaces as conceived in plans, led to conflict over space as people tried to defend their lived spaces.

On the basis of current literature, it is clear that scholarly research on contestation over urban space, to a larger extent, focuses on the access and use of urban space as a public space. However, in most cities in the developing world as will be shown in the subsequent sections, much of the contestation over urban space is to gain access to the use as well as ownership of urban space, in this case, land. Indeed, as Jones (1994:2) clearly observes, "the acquisition of land (and housing), is perhaps, the most visible form of the contest for space.

In the case of land invasion in Queretaro, Mexico, similar narratives about lived experiences and subsequent spatial practices of the original settlers of the land invasion, mainly old ladies, emerge. Indeed, a group of old ladies described how the first few weeks of the invasion were spent standing up to the soldiers sent to evict them by day and fending off coyotes with frying pans by night (Ward et al. 1994). One can ask whether the settlement improved over time and establish the dynamic by which it did so? This is not to imply that the contest for the acquisition of space, as an expression of the right to the city, requires violence.

With regard to spatial strategies, in one study, Staeheli & Thompson (1997) used newspaper articles, interviews and participant observation to understand the different views of public space held by different agents, namely: the business community (i.e. providers and guardians of public space); the police (i.e. .those who guarantee access to public space for all citizens); the neighbourhood (i.e. those who claim to be adversely affected by the use of space on the Hill), and young adults who also lay claim to the right to use the Hill as public space. They also sought to understand the different spatial strategies that residents in USA employed in response to the private control that other groups attempted to establish on formerly public spaces. To answer the question: how do residents assert their rights to access or live in a particular public space?, the researchers found out that, firstly, people can assert their own spatial control by challenging the privatisation of space through strategies such as loitering, trespassing, physical presence etc. This underlines the fact that making customary land private can trigger resistance of this sort. Secondly, countercultural youths' participation in spatial conflicts can be through the use of graffiti to mark space on the Hill; scrawling their own tags; drawing pictures on the walls of buildings and alleyways; spraying paint and using magic markers to claim territory; and using graffiti to send explicit messages against the redevelopment of the Hill. People believe that the graffiti is a way of changing the spaces they

use on the daily basis. It can therefore be argued that in the event of spatial conflicts there are spatial strategies that different parties to conflicts devise in an effort to defend their territory.

Furthermore, research on the contesting of urban spaces shows those negotiations over the built environment as well as other daily practices of everyday life can be spatial strategies to claim or defend urban space. In her study of the contesting of space in Singapore, Yeoh (1996) observed that within the construction of space, the built spaces of the colonial city were constituted as sites of control and resistance drawn up by dominant groups to secure control, while on the other hand, to subordinate groups to resist exclusionary tactics and to advance their own claims. In this case, among the spatial strategies were negotiations over the built environment which was channelled through community leaders. In turn, these leaders were able to represent in verbal or written form an alternative discourse on the use and management of the urban space. Other spatial practices included petitions, letters to the press, articles in journals, and representations on various committees set up by the colonial government.

Daily practices of everyday life included violent conflicts, daily practices of signification (naming of urban places), occupation and use of urban space, and noncompliance to municipal prescribed forms of ideal built form, standards, and sanitary environments (Yeoh 1996). Together, these daily practices of everyday life helped to challenge the hegemony of the authorities.

In my earlier discussion, it was made clear that the right to the city is like a cry as well as demand (Lefebvre 1967). For purposes of clarity, David Harvey (2003) puts it: “the right to the city is not merely a right of access to what already exists, but a right to change it after our heart’s desire”. In the context of contestations over urban space, it is therefore crucial to understand how the right to the city as conceived by Lefebvre is perceived and practised by those oppressed by the imposition of conceived spaces. In essence, research in urban geography should understand how users of urban spaces employ the right to the city as a solution to their problems in accessing or appropriating urban space.

When examining the case of Piers’s saga in Hong Kong, it can be seen that the contest over urban space in the Piers’ saga above emphasises the ‘right to the city’ as an alternative way to claim back urban space. Going back to Lefebvre, in fact he advocates the importance of breaking silence and making claims to a right to the city and urging experts to ‘uncover and stimulate demand’ in socio-spatial practice as an important safeguard against the imposition

of conceived spaces by the state over lived experiences of the users (Lefebvre 1991:95). In this regard, Lefebvre's aspiration is to work out counter proposals, discussing them with authorities, and forcing those authorities to take them into account. Indeed, Ng et al. (2010), in their study of struggle for space in Hong Kong observed that top down style of urban planning vis-à-vis a lack of public engagement was a bone of contention between Government and the progressive civil society which questioned the conventional wisdom of reclamation and subsequent demolition and relocation as a spatial practice. In reaction, coalitions were launched to stage protests to urge the public to fight for the preservation of the pier but on a people-oriented basis as it contained historical meaning that formed part of their collective memory. Thus, Henri Lefebvre calls for less rigid conceptualisation of space as a geometric concept in which things, to a more socially informed concept. In this concept, social relations are reproduced (e.g. gender, race) and invented (e.g. myths), identity is constructed (i.e. who you are depends on where you are), and power is exercised or exposed (Jones 1994).

3.6 TOWARDS A CRITIQUE OF THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF SPACE

Lefebvre's production of space has been subjected to critique from a cross section of scholars. One such critic of Lefebvre's social production of space is Unwin (2000) who observes that arguments in the social production of space are very complex. In this case, the elusive, contradictory and uncertainty of Lefebvre's arguments has led to his advocates focusing on the triad while ignoring all his other works. In terms of context, by focusing on capitalism and modernity, the theory is according to Unwin (2000) eurocentric and urban biased. Moreover, the theory demonstrates Lefebvre's deep commitment to Marxism by emphasising production of space. Also, by concentrating on the process of production of space, he fails to address the complex everyday lived processes which help shape human experiences. Furthermore, he did not sufficiently indicate how his notion of the production of space will lead to the transformation of society (Unwin 2000).

In spite of these criticisms, the works of prominent geographers such David Harvey and Edward Soja demonstrate their commitment to and appreciation of Lefebvre's theory especially with reference to spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation (Harvey 1990). Since the 1990s, there have been many scholarly works on Lefebvre all focusing on problems of representation to such an extent that, although other aspects of the triad are pointed out, they are relegated to the periphery of analysis. For instance, Jones (1994) drew on the work of Lefebvre to explore lived spaces of demolition of colonial housing in Latin America. In the US, McCann (1999) used Lefebvre's theory to

argue that the urban spaces of U.S. cities and Lexington in particular are thoroughly racialised. In Africa, Niemann (2003) has extended the theory to explore the lived experiences of labour migration in Southern Africa. In Asia, Ng et al (2010) employed Lefebvre's spatial dialectics to examine how reclamation as a spatial practice conceived space and lived space and led to contestation over space in what is termed the 'Piers saga' in Hong Kong in China. In the UK, Alexander (2011) explored the symbolic and emotional meanings of space with reference to East London.

Overall, there is a smaller section of literature that specifically uses the conceptual triad as an analytical tool (Carp 2008). With regard to African cities, just like Jones's (1994:2) observation of Latin American cities, where acquisition of land is probably the most visible form of the contest for space, there is hardly any research that has employed Lefebvre's theory to understand land invasions and squatting as mechanisms for appropriating urban spaces.

In view of the aforementioned gaps, this research seeks to bring Lefebvre's theory from the Eurocentric focus to the global south where global processes of colonialism, modernism, post colonialism, and neoliberalism are played out and challenged. Also, the research seeks to use the entire conceptual triad as an analytic tool to understand contestations over urban space, thus essentially moving a step further from the piecemeal approach to Lefebvre's theory. One of the implications of a holistic approach to Lefebvre's theory relates to choice of methodology. In this case, the research went further to use mixed methods to analyse the various aspects of the triad and also to analyse relationships between perception, knowledge and spatial practices. For instance, apart from Staeheli & Thompson (1997), there is scanty research that has used mass media to understand how space is produced and contested. In the next chapter the methodology is described in detail. Finally, extending Lefebvre's arguments, the research explores the role the spatial strategies and tactics were employed by both the state and urban residents to produce and defend urban space, and the resultant spaces produced at the interface of lived, perceived and conceived space are further analysed.

3.7 CONCLUSION

To bring the argument home, contests over urban space have dominated geographical research for a long time, albeit with too much emphasis on failures of state institutions to cope with the demand for rising urbanism, starting from the colonial to the post-colonial city. By beginning with a philosophical thinking within urban geography, this chapter sought to examine the fact that urban spaces are a product of myriad of perceptions and that these perceptions are

apparently dynamic. Most significantly, these perceptions vary in time, space as well as scale. It is for this reason that Lefebvre's theory of social production of urban space tries to bring all these spaces, namely conceived, perceived and lived spaces, together. It must be noted here that there is tendency in geographical research to limit the production of space to the three triadic elements at the expense of understanding some of the forces behind these various spaces. It is in this context that global forces and how they impact on these three spaces will be examined in this research, among other ways, by tying together the various paradigms from modernism to trans-nationalism as depicted in representations of spaces (e.g. land use models), colonial urban planning as well as globalisation. The discussion will ably enrich Lefebvre's theory of production of urban space. There has also been an attempt to examine how imposition of conceived spaces has generated tensions over urban space and how users of urban space in turn through their lived experiences as well as spatial practices, have attempted to devise spatial strategies to claim back urban space. It is clear from this review that little has been done to understand the various perceptions of urban space and how these contradictions trigger conflict over urban land. It is also interesting to note that while research seems to suggest that the abstract spaces represent the dominant ideological discourse over urban space, not much research has been done in order to understand the fact that the very same external forces can also work to influence the right to space. In this regard, the forces of colonialism and globalisation and their attendant democracy (and local politics), neoliberal policies (and structural adjustment policies), will be examined to find out how they impact on people's perceptions of urban space as well as their strategies to defend urban space.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH ROADMAP AND MODUS OPERANDI

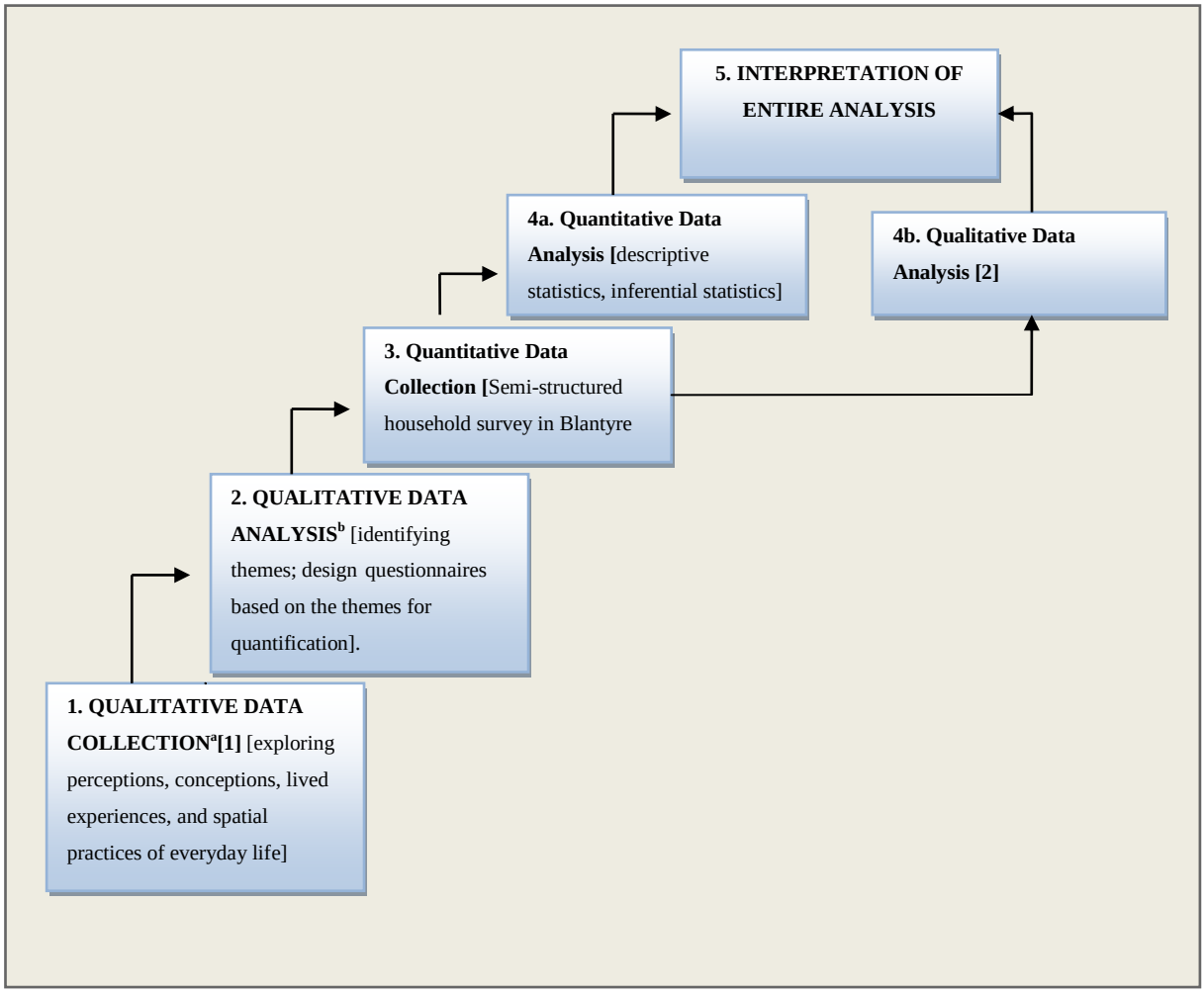
4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research methodology that is employed to execute the research study, is described. The chapter is broadly split into eight sections, namely research design, research paradigms, sample designs, sample sizes, data collection methods, data analysis, validity and reliability, and finally ethical considerations.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed methods research as a class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study. Since this study focuses on three aspects of urban space namely representations of space, spatial practices and representational spaces, a mixed method design employing survey design and case study design was considered appropriate for the study. In this chapter, the word mixing is used to mean that qualitative (case study) and quantitative (survey) data were actually merged.

Creswell (2009) identifies connectedness, integratedness (merging) and embeddedness (supporting) as three ways of mixing research methods. Since this research primarily focuses on exploring perceptions about urban space along with spatial practices of everyday life, the connected mixed methods research design was used. Connectedness in mixed methods research means mixing the quantitative and qualitative research in such a way that data analysis of the first phase of research and the data collection of the second phase of research are connected (Creswell 2009). In terms of timing, the research was sequential and it commenced with qualitative research. This was done in order to explore the topic with participants on site. In essence, the research adopts the mixed methods research design with more weighting on qualitative research. Also, the use of primarily an inductive approach to generate themes justifies the choice of qualitative research to weigh heavily in this regard (Creswell 2009). In line with **Figure 4.1**, data collection commences with case study to collect qualitative data followed by household surveys to collect quantitative data.



Source: Adapted from Creswell et al (2003).

Figure 4.1 Mixed methods approach using sequential exploratory approach

Note:

[ab]Since the research combines both qualitative and quantitative data, the capitalisation and size of the box are used to indicate weight or priority on qualitative approach over quantitative approach.

Although the second phase (survey) was meant to generate quantitative data, qualitative data was also collected using the same questionnaire and field observation. In other words, the process of collecting qualitative data was undertaken throughout the research process. This is contrary to triangulation design where in one phase both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed in parallel (Bergman 2008). The sequential exploratory strategy (SES) involves a first phase of qualitative data collection and analysis followed by a second phase of quantitative data collection and analysis that builds on the results of the first qualitative phase

(Creswell 2009:211). The strategy, as opposed to embedded or integrated mixed methods, is regarded as a 'connected' mixed method because data are mixed (through being connected) as there is a connection between the qualitative data analysis and the quantitative data collection (Creswell 2009). In this research, qualitative data collection in the first phase which was conducted in 2011, involved gathering print and electronic newspapers and historical data at the national archives in Malawi; focus group discussions with traditional leaders, and interviews with government officials mainly urban planners, policy makers, and district commissioners. From this phase of analysis, themes were identified and instruments were developed for the quantitative data collection phase. This phase (which was executed in 2012), involved collection of socio-economic data, migration and settlement data as well as the quantification of spatial practices used to acquire and defend urban land. I used SES because I wanted to use quantitative data and results to assist in the interpretation of qualitative findings; to determine the distribution of a phenomenon within a chosen population (Morse 1991); to develop an instrument because of the inadequacy of existing instruments (Creswell 2009); and to explore a phenomenon, in this case struggles over urban land. Most importantly, the process of collecting qualitative data continued in parallel with quantitative data. In conclusion, the use of mixed research in the study was generally to allow the researcher to collect multiple data using different strategies, approaches and methods ((Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004).

4.2.1 Survey research design

Grounded on positivism and behaviouralism meta theory, surveys are usually quantitative in nature and aim to provide a broader overview of a representative sample of a larger population (Mouton 2001). The survey, which was done in the second phase, was meant to collect data on perceptions and spatial practices used to claim and defend urban space, which could be generalised to the larger population.

4.2.1 Case study research design

Grounded on phenomenology or humanistic-interpretive tradition (Mouton 2001), I used case studies to gather qualitative data. The case studies of two selected neighbourhoods, Soche West in Blantyre city and Area 49 in Lilongwe city, are aimed at providing an in-depth description of a small number of cases (Mouton 2001). The decision to use a case study approach is a strategic decision that relates to the scale and scope of an investigation, and it does not, at least in principle, dictate which method or methods must be used. Indeed, the

strength of the case method is that it allows the use of a variety of methods depending on the circumstances and the specific needs of the situation (Denscombe 2010:54).

The focus of the research is to explore people's perceptions about space, their daily life practices and how these interact with planning and politics to generate land contestations in Malawi's urban areas. In this regard, an exploratory case study design is appropriate for this research. Babbie (2007) defines a case study as the in-depth examination of a single instance of some social phenomenon, such as a village, a family, or a juvenile gang. In this research the case study design is appropriate because the research is not only descriptive or exploratory, but also the in-depth nature of the study yields explanatory insights into nature and the underlying causal mechanisms for the pervasive contests over urban spaces. For the researcher to mix research effectively, the need to understand the major characteristics of traditional quantitative and qualitative data cannot be overemphasised. In the next section, I discuss the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms.

4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

A paradigm can be understood as an accepted model or pattern (Kuhn 1962) and as an organising structure, a deeper philosophical position relating to the nature of social phenomena and social structures (Feilzer 2010). Combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single method is widely accepted (Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil 2002). I discuss the two paradigms below.

4.3.1 Quantitative research paradigm

In order to explore peoples' spatial practices in the production of urban space, the researcher gathered quantitative data. The major characteristics of traditional quantitative research are a focus on deduction, confirmation, theory or hypothesis testing, explanation, prediction, standardised data collection and statistical analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). Epistemologically, the quantitative paradigm is based on positivism. Positivism in turn considers science as the true source of knowledge with emphasis on empirical research (Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil 2002). The investigator is considered as an independent entity capable of studying a phenomenon without influencing it or getting influenced by the phenomena (Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil 2002).

However, quantitative data, whether in their primary or secondary genres, are neither necessary nor always appropriate in generating valid and reflexive explanations of social

actors in new economic geographies (Yeung 2003; Lawson 1995; Yeung 1997; McDowell 1992). In the next section, therefore, I will describe the qualitative research paradigm which also forms the larger component of the research, mainly analysis of representations of spaces such as urban plans and policies (as discussed in Chapter 6) and representational spaces (as discussed in Chapter 8).

4.3.2 Qualitative research paradigm

To understand the history of the production of urban space in Malawi (Chapter 5), representations of space (Chapter 6) and representational spaces (Chapter 8), the qualitative paradigm informed this study. In contrast to quantitative research, in qualitative research the emphasis is on induction, discovery, exploration, theory or hypothesis generation, and the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and qualitative analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). The qualitative paradigm forms a major aspect of this study.

Epistemologically, the qualitative paradigm is based on interpretivism (Altheide & Johnson 1994; Kuzel and Like 1991; Secker et al 1995) and constructivism (Guba abd Lincoln 1994). In line with postmodernism and multiple meanings of urban space the paradigm enhances our understanding that there are multiple realities and multiple truths based on one's construction of reality (Guba abd Lincoln 1994).

The appropriateness of qualitative research is based on the need to study human action in its natural setting and through the eyes of the actors themselves (Babbie & Mouton 2009). It should be noted that to enhance the validity and reliability in this research, the research also generates quantitative data which means that triangulation will be employed. This approach accords with Babbie & Mouton's (2009) observation that triangulation can be done even according to paradigms, methodologies, methods, researchers, etc. In this regard the approach is justified because issues of land contestation involve different social actors, processes, thick descriptions[5] and an understanding of actions and events within their natural setting or specific context. Qualitative research is thus appropriate in this study.

The merits of qualitative research in general, and qualitative case studies in particular, have been argued many times (Silverman, 2005; Yin, 2002). However, issues of the validity and

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[5] Geertz (1973) quoted in Babbie & Mouton (2009) uses the phrase 'thick description' to mean the use of multiple perspectives on multiple systems using multiple methods and sources of evidence. This comes from the ethnographic tradition.

reliability of data need to be treated sensitively in the context of the truth claims made for the research (Leary 2009). However, an understanding of the people involved in the production of space, including the ways and mechanisms of that involvement, is crucial for my research, which takes up Lefebvre's rallying cry not to indulge solely in abstraction but to uncover the hidden workings of spatial production (Lefebvre 1991: 40).

4.4 SAMPLING DESIGNS

A sample is a set of elements selected in some way from a population (Schofield 2006). The researcher used both probability and non-probability sampling designs and techniques to select participants. In the next sections, a discussion of sampling frames, sampling methods and sample sizes is presented.

4.4.1 Sampling frame

Ordinarily, population is, according to Rogerson (2001), a collection of all elements or individuals that are our object of interest. A sampling frame describes the list of all elements in the population (Rogerson 2001). A sampling frame may consist of spatial elements such as census tracts in a city and enumeration areas in a ward, among others. Despite the fact that it is difficult and almost impossible for researchers to compile accurate lists of the target population (Mouton 1996), Frankel (2010) insists that good sampling frames are crucial to good sampling (Frankel 2010). In this regard a deliberate effort was made to compile a relatively comprehensive list of people who acquired land from the local traditional chiefs. In this case I use statistics from the National Statistics Office (NSO) based on the last census of 2008. The reports from NSO showed spatial delineation of Soche Ward and Area 49 Ward in Blantyre and Lilongwe respectively. Also included are subdivisions or Enumeration Areas (EAs) in each ward including their total population and total number of households per EA.

4.4.2 Sampling methods

One of the factors which influence the quality of data collected from the field is the type of sampling methods used to select units for a study (Sheskin 1985). In this study both probability and non-probability sampling methods are used to select a representative sample as well as gather data. Stated differently, combining two major methods helped to facilitate the achievement of quality and representative results from the population (Frankel 2010) of informal residents in the two neighbourhoods of Soche West and Area 49.

4.4.2.1 Probability sampling methods

The cluster sampling method was employed to identify informal residents in both Soche West and Area 49 in Blantyre and Lilongwe cities respectively. To arrive at the clusters, Area 49 was divided into two major clusters namely Bagdad and Dubai. This was advantageous because the sampling frame from Nation Statistics Office was defective and outdated such that it could not capture all the elements of interest. Other considerations were inaccuracies in the sampling frame, to reduce the cost of conducting the survey in terms of distance as well as time (Schofield 2006).

4.4.2.1 Non-probability sampling methods

There are multiple ways researchers can follow to access their potential research participants (Liamputtong 2011). First, purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the focus groups. This means that these participants were the ones that the researcher believed would provide the best information. Purposive sampling methods, according to focus group researchers, add power to focus group research because they select information-rich cases which can generate the desired data (Patton 2002; Borkan et al 1995:978).

Second, in view of the sensitive nature of the subject as the residents have been engaged in perpetual battles with government, snowball sampling was also used to identify squatters and land invaders especially in Lilongwe city. Snowballing, as evidenced by research, is common among researchers researching on vulnerable and marginalised participants (Bernard 2006; Liamputtong 2007; Madriz 1998). Indeed, Liamputtong (2011:45) concurs with Kitzinger (2005) and Charmaz(2006) in their view that focus group researchers should adopt the theoretical sampling technique. The technique requires the researcher to continue to collect data until each theme or category developed from the data has reached saturation.

Third, personal touch and networks were used as a means to recruit potential participants who were difficult to access and who did not trust the researchers who were strangers to them. Madriz (2003) used this personalistic approach in her research with low socio-economic Latina and African American women on fear of crime. In my research, the personal networks as well as identifying myself as a university lecturer in urban land issues was extremely useful given the reluctance of many people, especially on the emotive topic of land.

Fourth, opportunity sampling or haphazard sampling (Schofield 2006) was used to select community leaders who were available to play gate-keeping roles in focus group research (Willis et al 2009:133). In both Blantyre and Lilongwe cities, the traditional leaders helped me to organise meetings so that the nature of the research and its potential value could be explained to the group. In the case of Lilongwe, opportunistic sampling strategy was also used to take advantage of opportunities and advantages as they unfolded themselves. Opportunistic sampling (Patton 2002) also termed emergent sampling (Liamputtong 2009) or spontaneous recruitment (Peek & Fothergill 2009) entails unplanned recruitment for instance decisions were made on the post to research participants for interviews especially squatters.

4.5 SAMPLE SIZES

An important issue in any survey design is the determination of sample size (Sheskin 1985). In this study, factors such as cost, time, geography, level of accuracy, and subgroup analysis plays a role in the determination of sample size.

4.5.1 Sample size of households in contested neighbourhoods

In the household survey a total sample of 261 informal residents participated in the survey. In Lilongwe, Area 49 ward consists of 19 Enumeration Areas (EAs). However, struggles for land have been witnessed in Enumeration Areas (EAs) from 08-14 (popularly known as Dubai) and EAs 16, 17, and 18 (popularly known as Bagdad). On the one hand, Bagdad which lies to the South of Dubai is a relatively upper middle class residential areas, albeit a product of land invasion and squatting. On the other hand, Dubai, which is a relatively low income residential area, was a product of land invasion at the dawn of multiparty democracy in the 1990s and it is popularly known as a multiparty area. In Blantyre's Soche West ward, land invasion is predominantly occurring in Enumeration Area (EA) 20 from which I selected informal residents.

4.5.2 Sample size of key informants

A total of 19 key informants were selected through purposive sampling. Having worked in the land management sector before, I used my personal networks and experience to identify these experts in planning and land management in Malawi. I also used the Malawi Urban Forum which was organized in 2011 where I presented my work to gather views from different

stakeholders including district commissioners who represent overall authority in the administration of land at rural authority level.

Table 4.1 Profile of key informants

Respondent	**Profile**
Principal Planning Officer	**Officer's institution**
A	Physical Planning Department, Lilongwe City
B	Physical Planning Department, Blantyre City
C	Physical Planning Department, Lilongwe City
D	Malawi Housing Corporation
E	Department of Lands, Lilongwe City
E	Department of Lands, Lilongwe City
Directors and Managers	
F	Blantyre City Council
G	Lilongwe City council
H	Lilongwe District Council
I	Blantyre District Council
District Commissioners	
K	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
L	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
M	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
Researchers	
N	Centre for Social Research, Zomba
O	University of Malawi, Zomba
Traditional leaders	
P	Group village head (Blantyre)
Q	Headman (Lilongwe)
R	Town chief (Lilongwe)
S	Town chief (Lilongwe)

4.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Since the research makes use of both primary and secondary data, five methods were used to collect the qualitative data. Choosing the right kind of data required is perhaps the most crucial moment in any methodological framework (Yeung 2003). The research uses both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources are in this case, more immediate,

whereas in secondary sources, usually several primary sources have been summarised, condensed, elaborated or worked by others (Flicke 2011).

In addition to published information on contestations over urban space in books and journals, the research also utilised grey literature, that is literature, often of a scientific or technical nature, that is not available through the usual bibliographic sources such as databases and indexes (Flicke 2011:34). In this research these included technical reports, working papers, government documents, and conference proceedings. This type of literature gave the researcher more immediate access to on-going research and debates as well as institutional ways of documenting and treating social problems.

4.6.1 Archival data

Archival data mainly constituted old newspapers from the National Archives of Malawi in Zomba over a period of 18 years (i.e. from 1993 to 2011). Archival research can provide inside accounts (Bryman, 1989) and a glimpse behind the scenes for the revelation of backstage conflicts, contradictions and ambiguities" (Gidley, 2004). All in all, these substantial accumulations of documentary and archival data sources have the capacity to map temporal shifts in representations of space. In this research the archival material revealed official representations of space in the late 1960s with respect to the original master plan for the city of Lilongwe.

4.6.2 Print and electronic media

On the importance of mass media in planning research, Flyvbjerg (2012) points out that mass media as "fourth power" of government, enables concerned citizens and organisations to bring their issues to the attention of media in order to be heard and to effect change. Periodicals namely newspapers and magazines were also a major source of data in this research. According to Rozakis (2004:129), newspapers and magazines as a source of data provide immediate news, photographs and opinions through editorials and letters to the editor. In this research since the struggles were on-going, newspapers both print and electronic, provided current events regarding struggles over land in the study areas. In addition newspapers as representations of space also helped the researcher to examine conceptions and people's perceptions regarding land in urban areas. Anonymous comments on electronic news also provided views about people on issues of land and their perceptions of the state regarding land tensions in Malawi.

4.6.3 Government documents

In additional to primary data, documents provided another foremost source of data for this research. Government publications and official statistics, records of meetings, letters and memorandums as well as website pages and the internet were used. Government publications and official statistics were used because they are relatively credible and authoritative, objective and factual. Letters and memorandums were used to capture correspondence between different stakeholders. Urban Structure Plans (USP) were sourced from the two city authorities, that is, Blantyre Urban Structure Plan (BUSP) of 1999 which is the current strategic plan for guiding development (including the land use plan for the entire city) of the city since 1980 and the Lilongwe Master Plan of 1969 and other subsequent plans. Perimeter surveys and lay out plans were obtained from the MHC to ascertain the boundary of land under the jurisdiction of the MHC and to understand planned lay out for the land under contestation in Soche area.

Platt (1981) and Scott (1990) argue that documents need to be evaluated in relation to four basic criteria, namely authenticity, representativeness, meaning, and credibility. In this regard, the researcher made sure that articles, journals and books were checked against these for elements. For this reason, two credible newspapers namely Daily *Times* and *Nation Newspapers* were used in this study. Authoritative documents namely master plans, policy documents, and were also collected from responsible authorities. The usefulness of this information need not be overemphasised. It will enhance my understanding of the theoretical and conceptual basis of land conflicts. Information from the national archives was also used to document the history and occupation of the study sites to understand how this might have impacted current land use systems and ownership in the cities and towns in question.

4.6.4 Questionnaire surveys

Denscombe (2010) notes that it is appropriate to use questionnaires especially when there is a large number of respondents in many locations; when seeking straightforward information; when there is need to get standardised data; and when the respondents are able to read and understand the questions. In essence, questionnaires are economical, relatively easy to arrange, supply standardised and pre-coded responses and enhance data accuracy (Denscombe 2010:165-169).

In this study questionnaires were used to collect both factual information (such as age, socio-economic status, sex) as well as opinions (for instance, attitudes, perceptions, views,

preferences, etc). Questionnaires comprised both open and closed questions. On one hand, open questions are those questions that leave the respondent to decide on the wording of the answer, the length of the answer, and the kind of matters to be raised in the answer (Denscombe 2010:165). This was necessary in order to capture the full richness and complexity of the views of the respondents and allow respondents to express themselves in their own words. On the other hand, closed questions are those questions that structure the answers by allowing only answers which fit into categories that have been established in advance by the researcher (Denscombe 2010:166). In this case, respondents were instructed to answer from a given list of options or alternatives. This was necessary to collect quantitative data (nominal, ordinal, and interval) which was then subjected to statistical analysis.

4.6.5 Personal interviews

According to Denscombe (2010:174), in-depth interviews collect data based on opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences; sensitive issues; and finally privileged information. Structured interviews involve tight control over the format of the questions and answers with the respondent invited to offer limited options for responses. Some of the advantages of interviews include: depth of information, insights based on the wisdom of the informants, flexibility and validity in the sense that data can be checked for accuracy and relevance as they are collected (Denscombe 2010:192). In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. However, the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order of the questions while at the same time allowing the interviewees to speak their minds. This was necessary in order to discover complex things about complex issues. On the other hand, in unstructured interviews, the researcher put emphasis on the interviewee's thoughts with minimal intrusion to allow for discovery rather than checking as is the case with semi structured interviews (Denscombe 2010). Qualitative in-depth interviews were also conducted with selected urban residents in their homes. The idea was to allow subjects to speak for themselves about their experiences individually (Babbie & Mouton 2009).

4.6.6 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

To explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about space, focus groups were organised in the two cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe. These focus groups which lasted for 2 hours each were useful for gauging the extent to which there are shared views among a group of indigenous urban residents as well as migrant urban residents in the two neighbourhoods of Soche West in Blantyre City and Area 49 in Lilongwe city.

A focus group is an informal discussion among a group of selected individuals about a particular topic (Wilkinson 2004). Focus group methodology can sometimes be referred to as focus group interview, a group interview, or a group depth interviews (Liamputton 2011); or collective conversations (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2008). Generally, these discussions are arranged to examine a specific set of topics (Kitzinger 2005). The primary aim of FGDs is to describe and understand meanings and interpretations of a select group of people to gain an understanding of a specific issue from the perspective of participants in the group (Liamputtong 2009). FGDs were organised with urban communities involved in land contestations in the two urban centres of Lilongwe and Blantyre.

Consistent with Liamputtong (2011), this study involved focus group interview groups of eight people who come from similar social and cultural backgrounds who have or who have had similar experiences and concerns. Focus group interviews allow group dynamics and help the researcher to capture shared lived experiences and assess elements that the other methods are not able to reach; uncover aspects that remain hidden in the more conventional in-depth interviewing method; and give s voice to the research participant not the researcher (Liamputtong 2011). In essence, as observed by Ivanoff & Hultberg (2006:126), the group interviews provided me with a great opportunity to appreciate the way people see their own reality regarding urban space and hence 'to get closer to the data'. Also, focus groups allowed participants space in which they get together and create meaning among themselves, rather than individually. In addition, these groups offered opportunities for interaction on the topic of research, namely, land contestation (Babbie & Mouton 2009). It was important for the researcher to understand people's perceptions and shared feelings as well as meanings about space.

Group discussions are an inviting method for researchers who are working from power sensitive theoretical perspectives such as postmodernism in that the methodology reduces the imbalance in power relationships between the researcher and participants that grant the research the authoritative voice. In this study, thus, focus groups enabled the generation of data from multiple voices (Maldriz 2003). Furthermore, the third of Lefebvre's triad as described in the previous chapter, sought to understand people's lived experiences regarding

urban space in terms of occupation, relocation, and demolitions, amongst others. In this case, focus groups provided rich and detailed information about feelings, thoughts, understandings, perceptions, and impressions of people in their own words (Stewart et al 2009). In addition, focus groups allowed the researcher to examine further how such understandings differ among social groups which differ with regard to ethnicity, gender and social class as well as among planners, indigenous residents and in-migrants among others (Conradson (2005). In this regard, the focus group discussions were considered appropriate based on the theoretical framework employed for this study (Morgan 1996; Liamputtong 2009; Willis et al 2009).

To enhance effectiveness of the discussions, great care was taken to control flow of discussion as well as ensuring uniformity in the recruitment of group members. Many researchers concur that composition of the group plays a major role in the interaction process (Liamuttong 2011; Ivanoff & Hultberg 2006; Morgan 1997). In this regard, to enhance, interaction, more fluid discussion, openness and sincerity of the discussion, focus groups were selected on the basis of their homogeneity in terms of sharing social and cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences. Indeed, as Conradson (2005:133) argues, 'the sharing of ideas and experiences is at the heart of focus groups and this requires a climate of mutual respect'. Also, group size is crucial for the success of the focus group method (Liamuttong 2011). Notwithstanding variations regarding the ideal group size for focus group, (Peek & Fothergrill 2009; Kitzinger 2005; Dawson et al 1993), in this study the major consideration was practicality in terms of manageability, resource availability, and enhancing the level of involvement. In this regard, in line with Conradson's (2005) recommendation of between four and ten participants, each focus group was composed of ten participants.

4.6.7 Key informants

Very useful information was also gathered from key informants knowledgeable on various aspects of space. First, to understand laws, policies, and urban plans including challenges encountered by the state in the production and imposition of spaces, experts such as planners provided very useful information **(Table 4.1).** Also, interviews with local chiefs for example traditional chiefs in Blantyre's Soche West/Misesa enlightened the researchers with respect to how indigenous urban residents perceive and produce urban land. These traditional leaders also provided historical accounts of their settlement including the history of Blantyre city. This information provided insights into peoples, attachment to urban land and how they use this attachment to contest state practices such as relocations and demolitions. In Lilongwe,

self-appointed chiefs or town chiefs in Area 49 (Dubai) also provided relevant input into this study.

4.6.8 Observations and photographic surveys

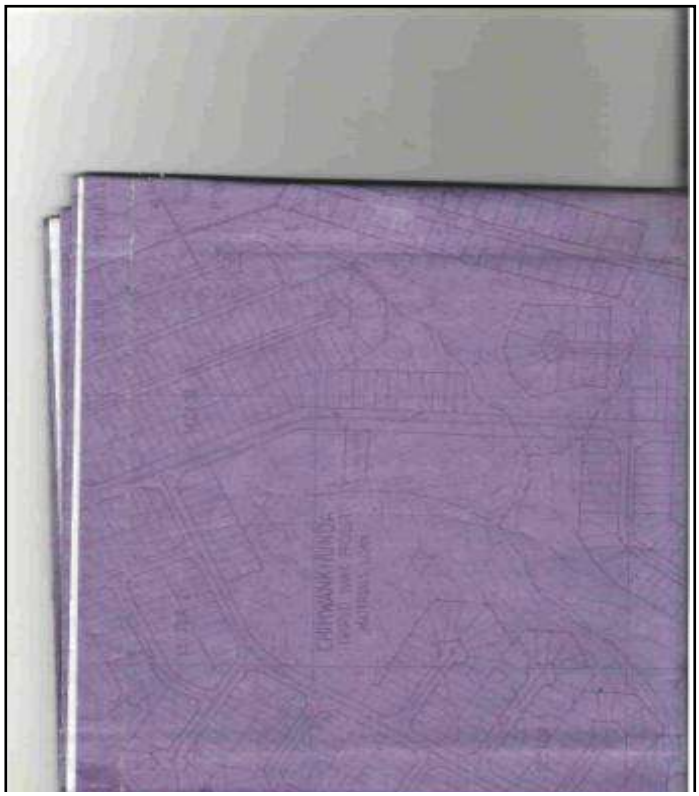
Denscombe (2010) observes that human memory is prone to partial recall, bias and error. In view of this limitation, the researcher used other methods of recording the data namely: written field notes, audio recordings and video recordings. In this regard, I also used straight observations to gain an understanding of people's everyday practices such as how they manage land. In research observation is used to watch participants in order to collect data about their behaviour as well as collecting empirical data via any or all of the five senses (Plowright 2011). In this research, I had some interaction with research participants hence my role was according to Plowright (2011) that of an observer as participant, as opposed to full observer, participant as observer, and full participant.

4.6.9 Geodata

Geodata were also obtained from Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC) in the form of lay out plans for Area 49/1 in Lilongwe and Soche West (Chimwankhunda lay out plan) in Blantyre city. **Figure 4.2** and **Figure 4.3** show the plot lay out for the contested land in Area 49 (Lilongwe city) and Chimwankhunda plan (Blantyre city) respectively. Both are scanned layout plans. Google images were also obtained from Google earth to appreciate spatial practices as well as the mapping spread of contested area **(Figure 4.4)**.

Source: MHC (2012)

Figure 4.2 Area 49 layout plan



Source: MHC (2010

Figure 4.3 Chimwankhunda layout plan

Figure 4.4 Squatted land in Area 49

Cadastral maps were obtained from the Surveys Department in Blantyre with the aim of understanding ownership of land for in Blantyre's Soche West and Lilongwe's Area 49 where struggles over land are being fought. To identify owners of contested land in Soche West in Blantyre City, firstly, cadastral maps were obtained from the Department of Surveys in Blantyre. Next, perimeter surveys and lay out plans for the area were obtained from MHC head office in Blantyre. Perimeter surveys depict exact boundaries of the MHC land in Soche West and their expected lay out plans for the area. The layout plan is called the Chimwankhunda lay out plan. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) tools were then used to analyse this information, that is the planned land uses as depicted in the BUSP and MHC lay out plans versus existing land uses in the area. Having examined land use map**s** as depicted above, perimeter surveys and lay out plans from MHC were used to analyse their plans for the Soche area.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Dey (1993) describes data analysis as a process of resolving data into its constituent components, to reveal its characteristic elements and structure. Since the research employed **a** mixed methods approach, data analysis, just like data collection, involved two major phases, namely qualitative data analysis and later quantitative data analysis. In this section, procedures, methods and techniques that were used in the analysis of research data are described, beginning with qualitative data and followed by quantitative data analysis.

4.7.1 Unit of analysis

Conflict was the unit of analysis. Cases were drawn from institutions involved in land administration and management, namely the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Local Government, Malawi Housing Corporation, NGOs (UNHABITAT), local communities, traditional chiefs in urban areas, as well as political leaders.

4.7.2 Levels of analysis

Multiple levels of analysis were employed in this study. Analysis of the urban structure plans was done at the level of a city before narrowing down to the neighbourhood scale. Principally, as noted in Chapter 7, the research narrowed down to the residential locations and households where questionnaires were administered.

4.7.3 Levels of measurement

In view of the exploratory nature of the study, nominal data constituted the dominant level of measurement. Here respondents were asked to select answers from a category or list (Sheskin 1985). Frequency- and cross tabulation tables were used to analyses this data. The existence of relationships between two or more nominal variables were tested via chi-square test, for instance, the relationship between perception of tenure security and means of accessing urban land, or the relationship between marital status and feelings of security/insecurity over urban land. Such nominal data included city, neighbourhood, gender, marital status and ethnic group among others. Other levels of measurement such as interval or ration scale were also used.

4.7.4 Qualitative data analysis

Since the study sought to explore people's perceptions as well as their lived experiences about space, multiple qualitative techniques were used to analyse the multiple sets of qualitative data. First, the bulk of data collected from print and electronic mass media, focus group discussions, interviews and focus group discussions was analysed using a Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) called Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti is a powerful workbench for qualitative data analysis, especially for large sections of texts, visual and audio data (Smit 2002). Like any CAQDAS, I used Atlas.ti for the following reasons. First, the software allows rigorous analysis of data. Second, it can manage and organise large quantities of data. Third, it is easy to code data and retrieve coded texts for making comparisons (Kitchin & Tate 2000; Van Hoven & Poelman 2003). Four, it enjoys the benefit of speed when handling large volumes of data, freeing the researcher to explore numerous analytical

questions and increasing the capacity to analyse samples that are representative because they can be large. Five, Atlas.ti improves rigour, including the production of counts of phenomena and searching for deviant cases. In this regard, I was able to demonstrate that the conclusions I derived from the various phenomena were based on rigorous analysis as the software examines the corpus of data. Six, it facilitates the development of consistent coding themes (Silverman 2010:253-256). Specifically, Atlas.ti offered flexibility and economy in handling large documents and I was able to manoeuvre between different primary documents such as focus groups, key informants and newspapers.

Procedurally, the first step was data preparation. This step involved transcribing audio recorded data from interviews and focus groups and storing it in rich text in order to avoid conversion (rich text is the standard format used by Atlas.ti hence no conversion). This stage also involved listening and editing the transcriptions. Also, newspapers were scanned to convert them into electronic version so that they could be loaded into Atlas.ti. Then the various primary documents were named depending on the source of information. The data was now ready for exporting into Atlas.ti.

The other major step involved creating a project where the data (e.g. codes, quotations, memos, primary documents) was enclosed. In Atlas.ti this project is called Hermeneutic Unit ((HU). Next, the documents, text, graphic, transcribed audio recordings were added to the project (HU). These documents are called Primary Documents (PDs) in Atlas.ti. Then, I started reading and selecting text passages in the Primary Document to select areas of interest. At this stage, I started assigning codes (key words), quotations (verbatim segments in the text), and memos (comments) which contained my thinking about the data. Some of the codes included spatial practices of defence, spatial practices to claim, causal mechanisms and meanings of space. After assigning codes, quotations and memos, comparisons among data segments were done based on the codes I had assigned to the texts. Then, I organised the PDs, codes, and memos used into families (or categories). For purposes of my research the following families were created: meanings of spaces, conceived spaces, lived spaces, perceived spaces, colonialism, globalisation and neoliberalism. Thereafter, I starting querying the data based on my research questions using the query tool in Atlas.ti. Finally, I compiled a written report based on the (memos you have written throughout the various phases of memorandums I had written throughout the various phases of the project, and generated an output bundle. **Figures 4.5 to 4.7** display three types of primary documents that were

exported into Atlas.ti for analysis, namely key informant interviews, focus group discussion, and newspaper clips.

Figure 4.5 is an Atlas.ti window showing a primary document from one key informant. The highlighted phrase represents a quotation whereas the small box to the left is a code manager showing all the codes on abstract space.

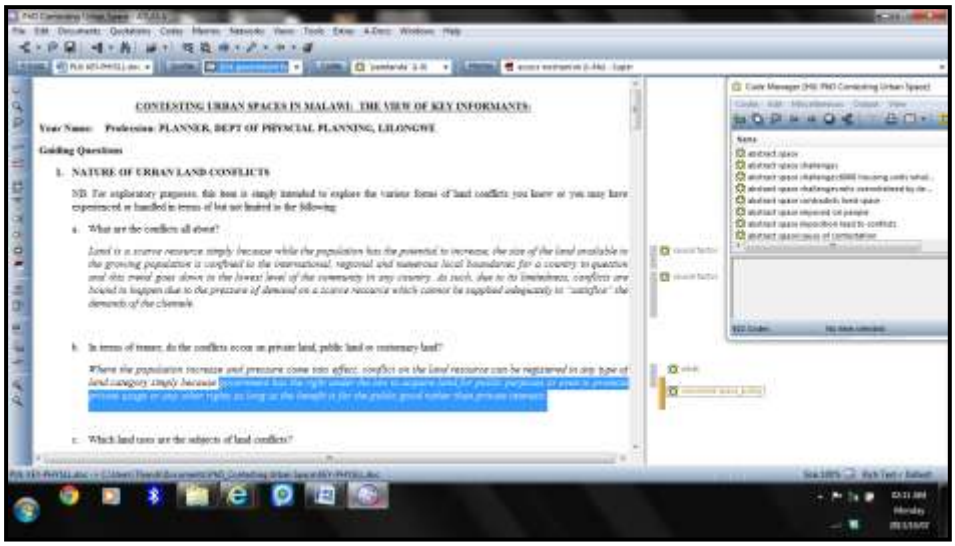


Figure 4.5 Example of atlas.ti coded primary document from key informant

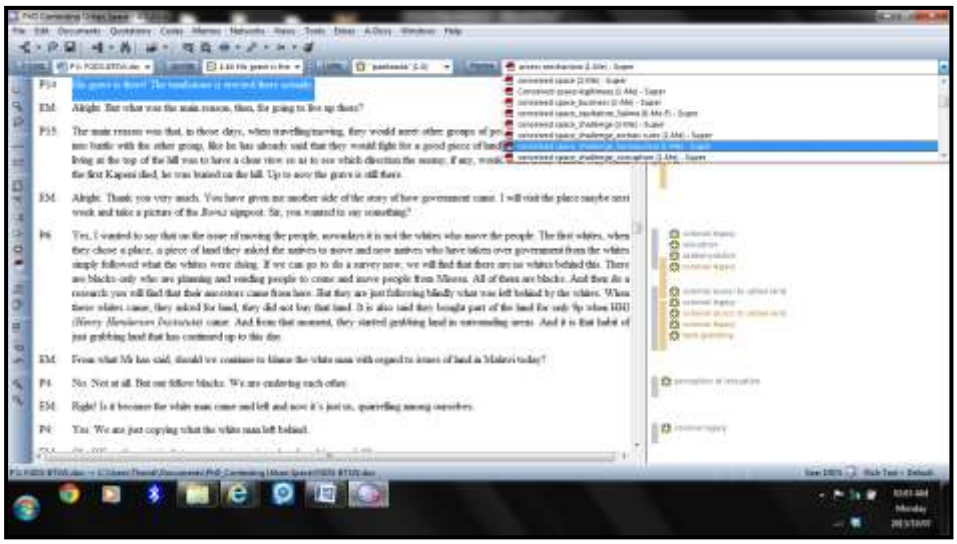


Figure 4.6 Example of atlas.ti coded focus group discussion

Figure 4.7 Example of atlas.ti coded newspaper script

Complementary to Atlas.ti, the content analysis method was used analyse representations of space especially urban structure plans and policies as representations of space.

4.7.5 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire survey of 261 households was analysed using SPSS software package to generate descriptive statistics as well as tabular and graphical presentations of results.

To understand the spatial practices that urban residents employ to produce and contest urban spaces, the researcher used household questionnaire surveys to collect quantitative data in both Blantyre and Lilongwe cities. The data comprised demographic, socio-economic profile and migration data of urban residents in the invaded and contested neighbourhoods of Soche West and Area 49, in the two cities respectively. Information was also collected regarding, significance of urban land, extent of tenure security, occurrence of conflicts, mechanisms of accessing urban land, and strategies and/or tactics of defending urban land by the residents

In analysing the quantitative data, I found Scheskin's (1985:97-101) six steps in analysing survey data quite useful. First, I checked the validity of the data by running frequencies in SPSS to check errors due to key punching. Other mistakes were also rectified by cross checking with the questionnaires. Second, I checked interviewer bias. Third, basic demographics were produced and compared with figures for the area based on the NSO report

of 2008. Fourth, effects of non-response rate were scrutinised to minimise non-response bias. Fifth, decisions regarding non –response items were, amongst others treating them as missing values. Finally, statistical programmes were run. Since most of the data was nominal scale, simple statistical procedures were used, namely descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, bar graphs, histograms, pie charts, pyramids; cross tabulations; and multiple response analysis. To analyse the association between variables, chi-square analysis was used especially because the data was independent sample and largely non-parametric with no assumptions of normality.

4.7.6 Spatial data analysis

Arc View GIS was the third software package that was used (others being Atals.ti for qualitative data and SPSS for quantitative data) to map the spatial distribution and extent of squatting or land invasion. Recent developments in land use patterns such as encroachments and squatting require understanding of the complex interactions between spatial and non-spatial factors behind these developments in order to understand land delivery mechanisms. One way to understand these complex interactions is to use Geographical Information Systems (GIS), which provide a range of tools and techniques useful in handling spatial and non-spatial information. GIS allow for improved visualisation and various techniques for manipulating spatial information through querying, mathematical computations and map overlays that can greatly enhance the understanding of the spatial dimension of the settlement patterns and mapping of the areas under conflicts (Bonham-Carter, 1994; de By, 2000). Taking advantage of these characteristics available in GIS, the researcher used a combination of various field-based and GIS techniques to map the existing cadastral boundaries and (mapping of) to map planned and unplanned settlement areas within the block of land belonging to MHC which is part of the Soche West ward of Blantyre City Assembly. A number of procedures were followed to analyse this information.

In an attempt to map land uses, all the maps that were obtained from the MHC were scanned and imported into ArcGIS 9.3^{TM} GIS. The maps were georeferenced to UTM Zone 36S. The quality of georeferencing was generally satisfactory as observed by the perfect overlay with other independent map layers, which were used for comparisons e.g. existing road or river networks. On-screen digitising of the plan was made to have a digital version of the MHC plot and lay out plan for the area (see **Figure 4.8**) depicting the MHC total land area in Blantyre city.

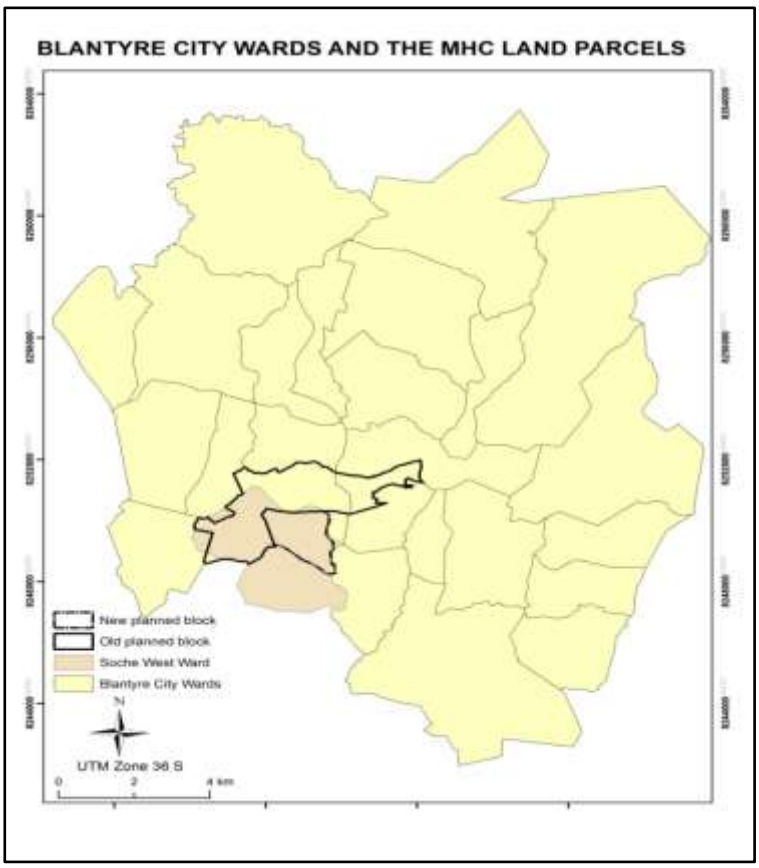


Figure 4.8 MHC land in Blantyre City

After the on-screen digitising, the MHC area and planned lay out as shown above, the next step involved the identification of unplanned settlements which is a manifestation of how local inhabitants contested the plan in question. GoogleEarth® images downloaded from the internet were used for mapping the current land uses in BCA. Apart from their correctness (i.e. 2009), GoogleEarth® images for the city are of high spatial and spectral resolution and enabled observation of some of the finer details of the area. The images were downloaded, imported into ArcGIS 9.3™and georeferenced to UTM Zone 36S projection system.

The process of identifying contested areas (i.e. encroached and squatter areas), image interpretation criteria were developed based on knowledge of the local environment and image interpretation criteria from Drury (1993) and Lillesand and Kiefer (2000). In this regard, a combination of some or all of the following criteria was used: availability of a well-laid out road network in a settlement area; patterns, shapes and orientation of buildings in a given area (i.e. degree of randomness of orientation e.g. random orientation for unplanned settlements); distribution of building sizes within a given cluster of settlements (e.g. an assortment of sizes in one small area was used as an indicator for unplanned settlement, equal sizes of buildings within one area as an indicator for a planned settlement); building design

and material type (e.g. metal, grass-thatched or tiled roofs); association e.g. presence of certain services and amenities in certain areas as indicative of planning/lack of planning; and finally, land use type (e.g. agriculture versus forest or built-up versus non-built up).

Using the Google Earth images, broad land use categories for the MHC land parcel and definition of planned/unplanned areas based on the criteria listed above, it was possible to compare the plan as conceived by MHC planners and how local inhabitants contested the plan by erecting the structures without regard to owners of the land i.e. the MHC. Finally, in terms of data analysis, an overlay technique using the MHC plan map layer on the Google image was used to compare the current land use map and the map layers from land parcels and the unplanned settlement areas. Using this approach, it has been possible to compare the original MHC plan and the current land use patterns in the area, the extent and magnitude of squatting and potential land use conflicts, and a classification scheme for the land use conflicts and status of the area, has been proposed.

4.8 RESEARCH VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

4.8.1 Validity

To enhance the validity of the interview data, the data was corroborated with other sources of information, using triangulation. For instance, documents and observations provided back up for the content of the interview as well as checking interview content against other interviews for consistency. Beside triangulation, the researcher also checked the accuracy and plausibility of the data by interviewing those respondents who were deemed authoritative to contribute to the topic under investigation. Finally, the researcher looked for themes emerging from a number of interviews. Since the intention was to explore people's perceptions regarding urban space, analysis of survey data predominantly involved descriptive analysis. Some of the techniques that I used included tabulations, relationships and the use of statistical graphs (bar charts, pie charts) for more visual representation.

Validity is used to describe the worth or 'truth value' of a research project (Andres 2012; Silverman 2010). From a survey research perspective, information collected through one or more survey modes is valid or trustworthy to the extent that **it** produces information that answers the research questions posed by the researcher; it accurately describes the sample or population at hand; and it can be extended to individuals beyond the participants of the study(Andres 2012).

According to Andres (2012), external validity is the extent to which the findings of a study of a sample of individuals can be generalised beyond the study sample to its inferential population. With regard to ecological validity, Andres (2012) describes it as generalisability for the real world. Andres (2012) argues that to be realistic generalisability should be limited to certain contexts, cultures, portions of the population, and temporal periods. In this research therefore, the researcher delimits generalizability of the findings to those who resemble the survey respondents. To control for events external to the survey research study, data was collected in a very short period of time, between 6 pm and 8 pm in the evening on week days and between 8:00 am and 17:00 during weekends.

On one the one hand, Silverman (2010) concludes that researchers cannot claim that their research is valid when only a few exemplary instances are reported; the criteria or grounds for including certain instances and not others are not provided; and the original form of the material is not provided. On the other hand, reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Silverman 2010: 290). In this regard, it is incumbent on the scientific investigator to document his or her procedure and to demonstrate that categories have been used consistently.

4.8.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be replicated (Andres 2012). Scheskin (1985:95) defines a pilot survey as a "walkthrough" of the entire survey procedure under real-world conditions, using a much smaller sample than will be employed for the "main survey"- preferably from 30 – 50 respondents. Scheskin (1985) points out that the pilot survey serves a threefold function, namely: first, to test the sampling procedures, questionnaire design and survey logistics; second, to compare two or more procedures or questions which have both advantages and disadvantages; and third, to ascertain the duration needed to complete the questionnaire and to obtain an indicative idea of the response rate. In this research, two pilot surveys were undertaken first for the qualitative data collection and the last one for the quantitative data collection exercise. First, in 2010, interviews were conducted with 18 residents in Blantyre city's Soche West in 2010. The purpose was to explore informal residents' perceptions and experiences regarding access to urban land. Second, I also held a meeting with planning officials at the Department of Lands and Physical Planning in Lilongwe in 2010. In both cases, the views from both residents and officials helped me in the design and restructuring of my instruments in readiness for qualitative data

collection. Prior to the second phase which involved quantitative data collection, I also conducted a one-day pilot survey in 2012. On the basis of this survey, modifications were also made to the instruments. The pilot survey revealed that respondents were not comfortable when asked to respond to the question: Do you consider the state as the legitimate authority over urban land? One of the respondents retorted:

"No, I can't answer that question. This is now politics. Do you want to arrest us?"

To enhance response rate and thus effectively minimise non response bias, in the final questionnaire, the question item was modified to read: In your view, who do you consider to be the legitimate authority over urban land?

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues arise from our interaction with other people, other beings and the environment (Mouton 2001). Broadly, ethics concerns the morality of human conduct (Edwards R & Mauthner M 2012 2012:2). In social research, the authors refer to ethics as the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process. Miller & Bell (2012) in their examination of ethical issues that arise in the course of accessing potential participants, argue that voluntary consent and not coercion should be on-going and renegotiated between researchers and researched. Miller et al (2012) emphasises that adherence to ethics should be constant throughout the research process.

Researchers have to consider the moral accuracy of their research activities in relation to their participants (Boeije 2010). Boeije(2010) also observes that a basic concept in qualitative research is trust as it enhances openness and pleasurable atmosphere while generating data, and thereby making participants give more information than planned. Common ethical principles that guide research include: voluntary informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity (Boeije 2010: 43-46). Respecting and protecting participants in survey research is without doubt an ethical imperative for survey researchers (Citro 2010). Such respect and protection is of value not only intrinsically, but also from a practical perspective. In other words, high quality survey results depend on eliciting the fullest possible cooperation with the survey population, which in turn depends on trust in the researcher (Citro 2010:78).

Like in any qualitative research, ethical issues were considered as paramount (Liamputtong 2011) in this study. Researchers need to ensure that their research participants will not be harmed and exploited. Vardigan & Granda (2010) define informed consent as the communication process allowing individuals to make informed choices about participation in a research study. To this end, human subjects in the research project participated willingly without any form of coercion; individuals were adequately informed about the research; questionnaires contained an informed consent statement about confidentiality of information collected from participants; privacy of subjects was protected and adhered to throughout the research process from data collection through analysis to publication of results. Participants were compensated and given incentives. Krueger & Casey (2009) argue that compensation is essential because of the efforts that the participants have to make in their participation in their focus groups. However, Liamputtong (2011) argues that compensation is a symbol of the researcher's respect for the participation of these people. In this research therefore, only focus group participants were given some gifts as a token of appreciation to the poor elderly people who made an effort to come to focus group meetings.

4.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research design and framework that was employed to understand contestations over urban land in Malawi's cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe, was described. In this study as I have shown in the chapter, mixed research design was employed to generate data that addresses the three dimensions of Lefebvre's urban theory, namely representations of space, spatial practices and representational spaces. Based on these multiple methods of sample designs, data collection, and data analysis were also used to reflect this multiplicity of methods. On the basis of the foregoing, a methodological framework for the study was used as depicted in **Figure 4.9.** In the next chapter, a discussion of the history of production of urban space in Malawi is presented.

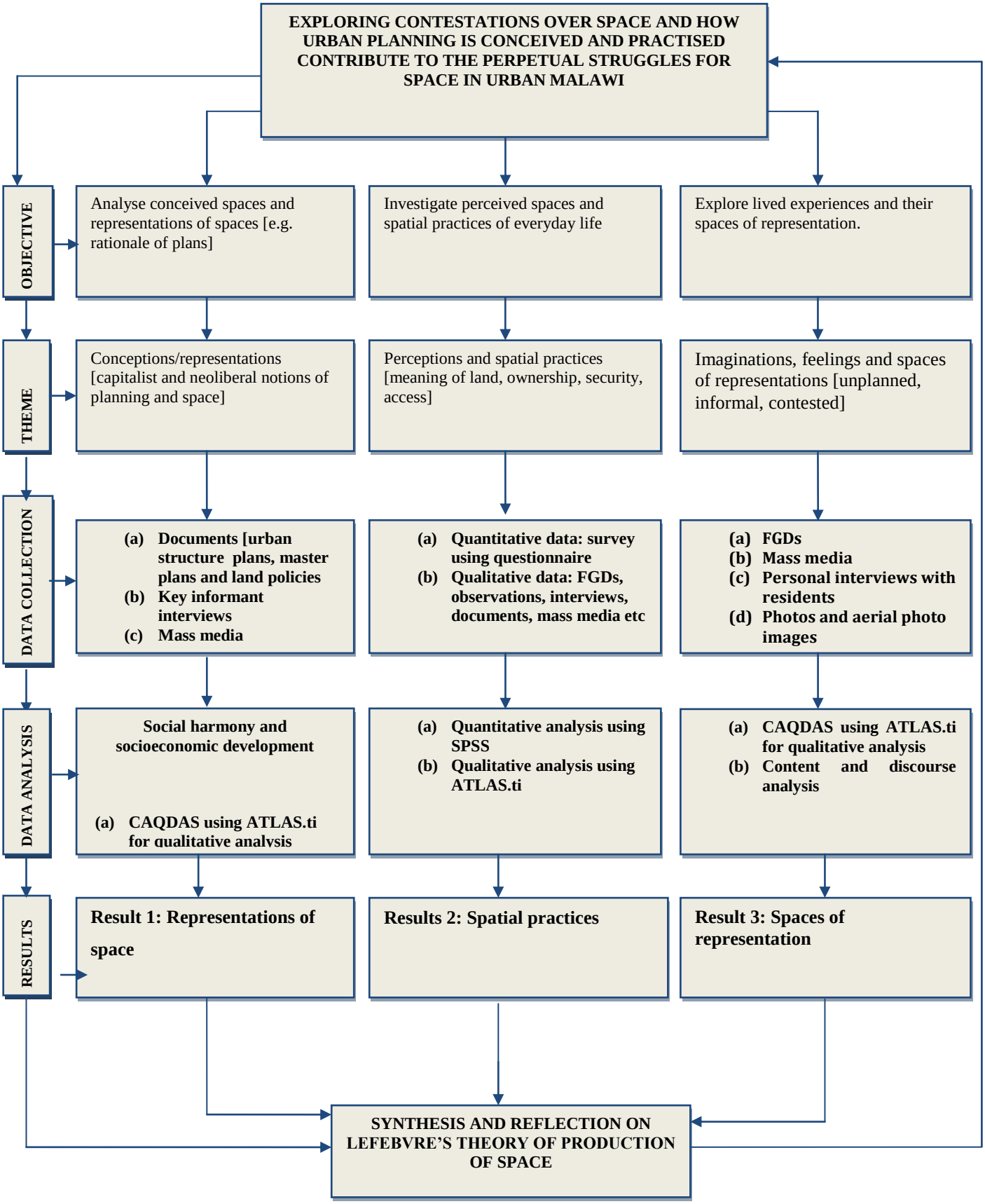


Figure 4.9 Methodological framework for the study

CHAPTER 5 HISTORICAL PRODUCTION OF URBAN SPACE IN MALAWI

"We should have to study not only the history of space, but also the history of representations, along with that of their relationships - with each other, with practice, and with ideology"
– Henri Lefebvre, 1991:42

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Underscoring the importance of history in the production of space, Lefebvre (1991:46) in his 'Production of Space' argues that spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute to the production of space: first, according to their qualities and attributes; second, according to the society or mode of production in question, and third, according to the historical period. In this regard, it is imperative to study not only the history of space, but also the history of representations, along with that of their relationships - with each other, with practice, and with ideology. Arguably, representations of spaces have substantial impact on the production of space in the sense that the genesis of these spaces can be linked with particular spatial practice. On the basis of this understanding, the history of the production of urban space and how it has contributed to the on-going contestations over urban space in Malawi is traced in this chapter. The production of urban space in the pre-colonial era is specifically discussed by tracing the genesis of urban settlements in pre-colonial Malawi. Then there is an analysis of the production of urban space in the colonial era with particular focus on how the imposition of colonial modernist planning and its conceptualisation produced urban space by erasing pre-colonial space through spatial practices of violence, zoning, segregation, and homogenization. **Table 5.1** depicts conceptions and perceptions of space at particular historical moments and how these impacted on the spatial practices and ultimately, the production of urban space.

Table 5.1 Periodisation of production of space in Malawi

Conceptualisation of space	Periodisation of production of space			
	Pre-colonial Malawi (pre-1891)	**Colonial Malawi (1891-1963)**	**Postcolonial (One party (1964-1993)**	**Postcolonial (Multiparty) 1994-2012**
Notion of land	Communal	Both customary and private notions of land	Both customary and private notions of land	Both notions but moving towards full privatisation of customary land
Authority over land	Traditional chiefs	The state (crown)	The state	The state
Access mechanism	Inheritance, birth, gifts	War and conquest, free gifts from chiefs,	Compulsory purchase	Inheritance, purchase

Source: Researcher's own construction (2013)

5.2 PRE-COLONIAL ERA (PRE - 1876)

In this section, histories of early settlement, colonial (European) settlement and urban settlement are discussed. In this regard, the history of settlement provides a context in which to understand the perceptions of urban space especially as they relate to land rights and how these were suppressed by the imported conceptions of land, and urban land in particular.

5.2.1 History of settlement

The origin of settlements can be traced back to the early immigration of the Bantu-speaking peoples of Malawi. These people have been moving into their present areas of occupation during at least the last six hundred years such that before 1800 the Nyanja and Chewa tribes had already arrived in the south and the Tonga and Tumbuka tribes had settled in the west and north (Lamport-Stoke 1970; Pike 1965; Kalinga & Pike 1965). Later, other clusters of migration included the invading groups of the Yao and Ngoni from Mozambique and Zululand (South Africa) respectively; the Lomwe from Mozambique; and the Sena from the Zambezi area. These groups of people established human settlements in various parts of the country.

Specifically, urban settlements, though not in the western conception of urban, existed in Malawi even prior to European occupation. Urban functions existed specifically in the concentration of activities and population mainly at a chief's or paramount chief's court. Quite often these settlements occurred where trade routes passed through the society's area. Examples of settlements the growth of which is attributed to their location along the ivory and slave route to Indian Ocean include urban growth at Nkhotakota and Chief Mponda's headquarters (in the present day, Mangochi) (Agnew and Stubbs 1972).

5.2.2 Pre-colonial perception of land

Generally, there are commonalities with regard to the notion of land (land ownership) in Malawi. In the pre-colonial period, land was largely perceived as a gift from god to most indigenous communities for their subsistence. Being a gift from god, it meant that there would be no individual who could solely claim exclusive ownership and rights over land but rather lineages. Consequently, traditional chiefs as heads of these lineages were mandated to exercise mere trusteeship over land. In other words, chiefs were mere custodians who could not claim individual ownership over land (Msisha 1998).

In the pre-colonial period, when land was predominantly managed under customary rules, the dominant perception was therefore, that 'Africans do not own land'. This pre-colonial notion of land could be described in the following response from an elderly African civil servant who was asked about the land in the Shire Highlands which belonged to various chiefs:

"All the land from Zomba to Soche was 'owned' by Chief Kapeni expect that part which was given to Makata by Chief Mlumbe"(Lamport-Stoke 1970).

By implication, the anecdotal evidence reveals perceptions over land that indigenous Malawians held : first, contrary to western notions, fixed boundaries mean little to old chiefs (a chief allocating land belonging to another); second, Africans generally do not 'own' land in the western sense of land ownership; third, indefeasible rights mean nothing to village Africans ; four, no man can own land except chiefs who were mere custodians and trustees over land. Thus fundamentally, it can be suggested that land belongs to some divine being and individuals may only occupy and use the land, thus acquiring user rights not ownership rights. In this case, land cannot be sold because it belongs to not just the present users but future generations as well.

In view of the foregoing, it can therefore be argued that urban settlements existed before the colonial occupation in Malawi. In fact the colonial invasion of Malawi succeeded in reducing these indigenous towns to casualties of the colonial occupation. For instance, commercial settlements (by Mlozi in Karonga and Makanjira in Mangochi) were destroyed by the British during the anti-slave trade campaign. Mponda's village retained a population of over 3000 as late as 1931 as compared with 820 living within the township boundaries in the capital

Zomba. Of the precolonial commercial settlements, NkhotaKota retained dynamism during the colonial period by taking on some aspects of the colonial town.

5.3 COLONIAL ERA (1876-1963)

In this section the focus is on the origin of colonial settlements in Malawi; colonial conceptions and perceptions of land and how these influenced the spatial practices regarding European settlement and their access to land, and the strategies they engaged in to consolidate their possession of land and protect it from possible repossession.

5.3.1 History of colonial (urban) settlement

By 1964, over 95% of Malawi's population lived in the countryside and the economy was almost entirely agricultural in character (McCracken 2012). Notwithstanding this ruralilty, the importance of Malawi's colonial towns should not be underestimated. McCracken (2012) observes that settlements like Blantyre, Limbe, Zomba, and Lilongwe, in their diverse ways, represented the colonial 'imagination'. Specifically, urban space was ordered into precisely designated functions, normally involving the segregation of the European zone from Asian and African sections.

However, it must be noted that although towns were perceived as strong points in the colonial system of control the reality was often rather different. In the years after 1945, Blantyre and Limbe witnessed the emergence of a group of independent African businessmen. At the same time, Africans living in the vicinity of Blantyre, most of them in peri-urban villages such as Ndirande not directly under colonial control, forged a distinctive urban-rural culture: continued commitment to the rural villages as the place of ultimate identity to which most Malawians expected to return, and exposure to a variety of predominantly urban experiences – in sport, leisure, or work place (McCracken 2012).

5.3.2 Conceptions and perceptions of (urban) land

Visitors in the early decades of the twentieth century described Blantyre as Nyasaland's Glasgow, 'the seat of its trade and enterprise. Zomba, the colonial capital, was described as its Edinburgh, 'the elegant although rather languid seat of government'. In other words, Zomba presented a masking or combined superficial charm with an altogether less appealing reality.

The last decade of colonial rule was a period of particular importance for Malawi's towns. With the national population now rising at more than 3% per annum, the influx into all major

towns accelerated urban growth. Lilongwe, a sleepy market and administrative centre containing only 400 inhabitants as late as 1936, grew rapidly in the post war era to reach a population of over 19000 thirty years later. In Blantyre, beside the influx the incorporation within its city boundaries of peri-urban villages partially explained the doubling of the population between 1956 and 1966 (McCracken 2012:300).

Land is not merely a commodity that gains value by reference to the market, but also as a resource that has socio-cultural value in that it is an integral part of the formation, location and preservation of social identity of communities (Kanyongolo 2005:135). Yet in the colonial era the government conceived land as a commodity that could be governed by market forces. It is this notion of land which encouraged Europeans to acquire portions of communal land and convert them into their own possessions.

5.3.3 European settlement in colonial Malawi: Spatial practice and representations

Research reveals that in the colonial era there were a number of mechanisms that Europeans employed to gain access to urban land. First, land could be accessed through direct occupation of deserted land. In the case of Blantyre for instance, it is reported that when a missionary called Henry Henderson arrived in Blantyre in 1876, he first occupied a spot whose occupants had fled, driven by fear of raiding Ngoni. Second, land was accessed as grants from local chiefs. In Blantyre, Kapeni, the local chief, gladly granted missionaries right to settle as they afforded him protection from the raiding Ngoni. Eventually, the grant was later confirmed by purchase (probably the first land transaction) and undoubtedly there was exchange of goods such as guns or cloth. Third, land was also accessed through purchase transactions. For instance, in 1879 the African Lakes Corporation purchased 7000 acres from Chief Kapeni. By 1890s most of the Mudi Valley area had been sold.

As noted earlier, these land acquisitions whether direct occupation of vacant land, gifts and grants, or purchases were later legalised through the introduction of Certificate of Claim (COC). It was against this background of land acquisitions that in 1899 Harry Johnston was mandated to enquire and settle all land claims north of the Zambesi through the introduction of COC. The COC could be considered as the first legislation of land claims which was meant to grant all claimants whose titles had been proved to be true. Effectively, the COC meant that land which was previously owned on communal basis under the custodian of local chiefs eventually became free hold to the extent that 15% of the country was under freehold tenure. In a nutshell, colonialists employed both peaceful and violent means such as invasions and

forced removals to acquire land, and urban land in particular, and these claims were later legalised through COC.

From the colonial era to the present the Malawi state has implemented various land acquisition and reform policies, the aim of which has been the creation and maintenance of a capitalist economy based on large scale export-orientated agriculture, at the expense of peasants (Mhone 1992). The colonial and postcolonial land policies undertaken in 1920, 1946, 1967, and 2001, can only be distinguished in so far as colonial policies defined land ownership and occupation on the basis of race, while postcolonial policies deracialised ownership in the freehold agricultural sector (Kanyongolo 2005).

Colonial land policies in Malawi, as in other countries aimed at facilitating white economic enterprise (Krishnamurty 1972). Most settlers acquired land as a result of agreements with local chiefs who purportedly transferred ownership on behalf of their communities (Kanyongolo 2005). Finally, colonial rule in Malawi was characterized by the imposition of a political and social system whereby a superior European authority attempted to exercise its will over a territory already populated by Africans (Tangri 1968). Imposition of conceptions and perceptions over existing practices did not go uncontested. For instance, in Nyasaland, after 1949, there was growing peasant unrest as a result of enforced implementation of various agricultural policies (Tangri 1968).

To conclude this section, it can be argued that the conception of land as a product with exchange value coupled with belief in the free market led the early settlers to use a number of means to acquire land and to defend the acquired. Starting with the issuing of COCs, these temporary acquisitions were granted freehold status with a view of consolidating land holdings, leaving the indigenous people effectively landless.

5.4 POSTCOLONIAL ERA (1964 – 2012): THE MULTIPARTY ERA

In this section, conceptions and perceptions of land and urban land in particular during the postcolonial period are discussed. In the early 1990s, politicians campaigning in favour of the introduction of a multiparty system of government also used land to gain the support of the people, particularly in the land hungry districts of the Southern region as well as in urban areas. Once in power, the democrats were more concerned with preserving their bourgeoisie status and creating supremacy of the market forces as evidenced in the land policy of 2002, than in redressing the historical injustices of unequal access to land in Malawi.

5.4.1 Conception and perception of land

The changes effected by the popularly elected government in 1964 did not lead to any transformation in Malawi's political economy nor in the conceptions of land inherited from by colonial predecessors. To a larger extent, the postcolonial government largely retained colonial land policies (Kanyongolo 2005). Like in the colonial era, the postcolonial government conceived land as a commodity that could be governed by market forces. Essentially, the notion of land as a commodity was meant to encourage entrepreneurs to acquire portions of communal land and convert them into their own private possessions. Unlike in the colonial period, the beneficiaries of this liberalisation of the land market were to a large extent, indigenous capitalists (Moyo 2000).

In line with this conception of land as commodity and its attendant stimuli of free market and private enterprise, government produced various land reforms in the 1960s, namely the 1967 Land Act; the Registered Land Act; and the Customary Land Development Act (Lamport-Stoke 1970). Fundamentally, these reforms increased privatisation of customary land, consequently reducing per capita land available to peasants (Kanyongolo 2005).

Although theoretically any parcel of land can be converted from one type of ownership to any of the other two, it has historically mostly been customary land that has registered a net loss of total hectarage to the other categories while public and private lands have earned net gains (Kanyongolo 2005). For instance, between 1967 and 1994, more than 1 million hectares of customary land were lost to private and public land (Malawi Government 1999:66 in Kanyongolo 2005:124). Like in the colonial era, the reforms of 1967 failed to address the legacy of landlessness and hunger bestowed by colonial land policy. In this case, the 1967 reforms, by adopting free market doctrine, perpetuated landlessness and inequalities in the sense that the reforms benefited people who can afford to purchase leasehold or freehold titles to land (Kanyongolo 2005).

The 2002 Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire Survey conducted by the National Statistics Office indicated that up to 46% of the country's landless people live in urban areas (Kanyongolo 2005). In urban areas, this situation is evident in the squatter settlements of peri-urban areas where migrants live in very poor environmental and health conditions (United Nations 2001).

In the opinion of this researcher, contestations over land emanate from differences in conceptions and perceptions of land. Indeed with reference to the above anecdote, Lamport-Stoke (1970) wrote that in 1953, trouble brewed when a chief's grandson could not be

convinced that it amounted to breaking the law for his people to build or cultivate on the European land (see section 5.2.2). In this regard, traditional conceptions of land ownership whether matrilineal (land allocated to all females of the community and the rest shared communally) or patrilineal were contrary to the European notion of land ownership, thereby causing tensions.

5.4.2 Spatial practices in postcolonial Malawi

One of the spatial practices in postcolonial Malawi during the one party era (1964-1993) was with regard to terms of land access. Although these original land grants have been described as swindles and robberies, unlike in Tanzania where all freehold property was turned overnight into leasehold property with stringent conditions attached to the lease, Dr Banda guaranteed the concept of freehold tenure in Malawi.

For purposes of control, the Land Act of 1965 vests the right to public and customary land in the President of Malawi in perpetuity. However, control and administration of customary land is delegated to the minister responsible for land matters who in turn delegates such function to chiefs (Msisha 1998). Chiefs therefore, are empowered to authorise the use and occupation of any customary land in accordance with customary law making customary land flexible enough to accommodate local socio-economic and demographic conditions (Kishindo 2004). Chiefs in this regard, play an indispensable role to ensure the equitable distribution of the land among the current generations and its preservation for future generations (Presidential Commission on Land Policy Reform 1999). On the basis of the foregoing meaning of land, determinants of land access include kinship, marriage, and residence. Non-indigenous people can be granted user rights on being accepted as members of the host community.

5.5.3 Postcolonial representation of space: Land policies as conceived spaces in Malawi

For over 45 years, the Malawi Land Act of 1967 has remained the main piece of land legislation in the country. The Act, among other things, empowers the Minister to regulate, manage or control the uses of all land other than private land. The Act also divides land tenure into three main categories, namely Customary Land i.e. all land held, occupied or used under customary (i.e. African Law); Public Land i.e. all land occupied, used or acquired by Government - all estates bought by Government for resettlement, forestry areas and lapsed leaseholds; and Private Land i.e. all held, owned or occupied under a freehold titles, a

leasehold title or a Certificate of Claim.[6] According to the Act, customary land or public land vests in the President in perpetuity but the Minister may grant leases over Public or Customary Land for not more than 99 years and the leased land then comes under the heading of Private Land. The Act also provides that the Minister may also order that Customary Land shall become Public Land. Finally, the Act provides for trespass and the means of removal of trespassers.

As conceived space, the Malawi Land Act of 1967 reveals the dominance of ideologies and conceptions which formed the basis of this legislation and its conceptualisation of land. At the heart of the act, is the pursuit of modernity and that the act was a representation of modernity. The legislation paved the way for modernising the agriculture sector in favour of the commercial sector. Indeed, after independence it was official policy to persuade farmers to follow modern agricultural methods as in capitalist modernity.

In line with this act, the Land Registration Act states that the "registration confers the right of ownership as private land". In other words, beside modernisation, land policy in the postcolonial Malawi favoured individualisation and freehold tenure as opposed to communal or customary ownership of land. It is therefore clear, that the land act represented the path which Malawi was taking under the leadership of Dr Banda, that is, there was to be no Communism and no socialism. In essence, capitalism was the driving ideology during the post-independence era under the leadership of Dr Banda. Under this ideology, the understanding was that ordinary incentive-producing capitalism was the only way of running a viable state to the best advantage. Eventually, this conception, as provided for in the Land Registration Act, opened up the way for gradual movement away from the matrilineal society to individual acquisition of land. Another practice or tendency was a shift from subsistence agriculture (‘full stomach mentality’) to commercial farming and enterprises (‘money mentality’).

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[6] Public land is land that is occupied used or acquired by government and it vested in perpetuity in the President. Customary land is that land held under customary law, although at the same time statutory laws vest it in the president and grant the power of its administration and of it to the Minister of Lands. Private land is that which is held under leasehold, freehold or Certificate of Claim title.

To underscore, the devotion to modernisation, government promoted the notion of individual ownership of land. In this regard, Government conceived land registration as a mechanism to ensure that people own land individually. In the immediate post-colonial era, to impose this conception on the people government recognised that "it cannot sit back and expect the people to automatically obey" and to that extent a great deal of work was necessary to put over the new "revolution" to the people. In other words, government acknowledged inadequacies such as lack of quality surveyors and lack of funding to roll out the land reform process.

5.5 ORIGIN OF MODERN URBAN PLANNING IN MALAWI

In this section, modernist urban planning is discussed with specific reference to Malawi. The growth of the urban systems is discussed followed by an analysis of planning in terms of its conception and practice from the colonial to the postcolonial era.

5.5.1 Growth of the urban system in Malawi (1876-1970)

Pre-colonial 'urban' settlements aside, during the early colonial period, the development of the urban system can be traced to the establishment of the Blantyre mission in 1876 in Blantyre, making Blantyre the first colonial town in Malawi. Generally, the development of the urban system consisted of the establishment of transhipment points on the penetration route from the Indian Ocean; the establishment of Blantyre as the systems nucleus and primate city; the consequent diffusion of Blantyre of mission, administrative and trading activities and the emergence of associated urban settlements (Agnew and Stubbs 1972). Specifically, Blantyre was established as a base for missionary expansion (after the early failure of the Universities Mission to Central Africa's (UMCA) base at Magomoero), trade, and the Shire Highlands planters. In contrast, Zomba was developed as the administrative capital of Nyasaland especially because of its pleasant climate and scenery.

As noted earlier, there are complex of factors which influenced the diffusion of mission, administrative and trading functions and urban settlements in general. First, location of early nineteenth century concentrations of population and their degree of disruption by the slave trade and the Angoni invasions; second, the extent of the area dominated by the Ayao Moslem chiefs hostile to Christian missions; third, the location of principal slave trade depots and routes. It can therefore be argued that in colonial Malawi, missions had some influence upon the growth of the urban system. However, it must also be noted that few modern urban centres

above the fourth order have developed from mission sites. Thus in addition to Blantyre and Zomba,[7] other towns were also developed throughout the country predominantly as administrative towns or fort towns to combat slave trade **(Table 5.2).**

Table 5. 2 Classification of early urban settlements in Malawi

Administrative function	Commercial function	Transport/Transshipment	Fort towns (defense function)
Zomba[8], Lilongwe[9], Cholo (Thyolo),Chiradzulu, Mlanje (Mulanje),Chikhwawa, NkhotaKota, Chintheche, Karonga, Nkhata Bay, Mzimba, Dowa, Dedza	Blantyre[10], Lilongwe, Balaka,	Monkey Bay, Salima,Chipoka, Balaka, Luchenza	Liwonde, Mangochi, Cape Maclear, Makanjira, Ntcheu, Kasungu, Mchinji

Source: Adapted from Agnew & Stubbs 1972

In terms of urban development therefore, the nature of urban development in Malawi can be described as weak and fragmented until in 1956, when the twin towns of Limbe and Blantyre were amalgamated as the municipality of Blantyre (McCracken 1998). In other words, with the colonial capital sited at Zomba in 1891, and the construction of a railway terminus at Limbe (five miles from Blantyre) in 1907, urban development was not concentrated on a single dominant commercial and administrative centre (McCracken 1998).

In Malawi the development of the urban system from 1876 can be explained in terms of the following: penetration route transfer centres of which some subsequently became administrative bomas; initial and continuing primary urban centres (e.g. Blantyre); as colonial administrative capital (Zomba); early Bomas in estate areas which continued as administrative centres; early slave trade prevention and pacification forts which continued as administrative centres though some were abandoned completely; former regional centres and national and regional centres e.g. Lilongwe (Agnew and Stubbs 1972:110).

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[7] From Zomba, its capital and forward base, the Protectorate established a series of forts along the Shire-Lake Malawi exit to combat the slave trade and to pacify the Ayao slave-raiding chiefs.

[8] Zomba was the colonial administrative capital of Nyasaland whose choice of location was primarily its pleasant climate and scenery and nearness to the slave trade route.

[9] Lilongwe is the capital city of Malawi whose initial settlement growth factors were mainly administrative and commercial marketing functions for the growing tobacco production in the central region of Malawi.

[10] Blantyre is the first colonial settlement named after the Blantyre district in Scotland, the home of Dr David Livingstone, an early missionary explorer to Nyasaland in 1859. Initial factors for growth include: establishment of the Blantyre mission, trade and commerce with the influx of Asians, availability of land and support from Chief Kapeni, proximity to the Shire Highlands tea and coffee plantations etc.

Anybody wishing to understand urban growth in Malawi needs to appreciate that these controlling factors did not exist in isolation. Indeed, where mission, military, administrative and commercial functions coincided spatially, continued urban growth occurred. Also, it is worth noting that the establishment of and location of colonial towns was mainly based on serving colonial interests, not needs of indigenous Malawians (Agnew and Stubbs 1972). Arguably, justifications for the choice of these towns were in pursuance of colonialists' economic interests such as the legitimate trade and commerce (as opposed to slave trade), tea and coffee plantations in the Shire highlands and relatively easy access to the Indian Ocean.

In terms of spatial pattern, the distribution and nature of Malawi's urban centres stem largely from the need for administrative and trading centres in the colonial period (Potts 1985). As noted earlier, Shire highlands in the Southern region became the main area of European settlement and of estate agriculture for tea and tobacco. In this regard, the town of Blantyre was the main service centre for the European population and soon emerged as Malawi's commercial capital. Consequently, in its role as the centre of European urban and agricultural development, the Southern region attracted the major share of industrial and commercial urban-based investment in the colonial period, as well as the best provision of transport and communications infrastructure (Potts 1985). Zomba, also in the Southern region, became the national capital, but was never linked to the railway. Zomba's role was limited almost entirely to its administrative function, which by itself generated relatively little growth. The narrow and limited nature of the economy did not encourage the development of large multi-functional, urban centres.

Urbanisation was only 5% at independence and almost three-quarters of the urban population lived in the three main centres of Blantyre, Zomba and Lilongwe. The rest of the urban system consisted mainly of the administrative district centres, all of which were very small, a few trading posts on the railway and mission centres (Potts 1985).

5.5.2 Origin of urban planning in Malawi

The Malawi Government's Statement of Development Policies (1987-1996) recognizes the need for physical planning in the sense that among others it addresses the following: first, regional imbalance in development at independence in favour of the southern region; second, tendency towards haphazard urbanization in the sense that without planning, urban development activities would compete for scarce urban land to an extent that only the rich and those with power would access it; third, increasing land pressure in many urban and rural

areas as manifested in numerous cases of fighting over land and arrests as reported in densely populated districts of Thyolo, Mulanje and Nkhata Bay as the landless invade vacant, forests or idle land; four, insufficient service infrastructure especially at district and sub-regional level; and finally, the realization of costs of uncoordinated development of economic and social infrastructure (Zeleza Manda 2005). For instance, proper location of resources and population has the potential to avoid negative environmental and health effects such as persistent occurrence of water borne diseases such as diarrhoea in the unplanned settlements of Lilongwe and Blantyre.

In terms of origin, physical planning is indebted to the British attempts to handle problems arising from the excesses of the industrial revolution, particularly public concern about unsanitary and congested conditions in rapidly growing towns. The legal framework however originated from several public health and housing laws. For instance, the 1909 Housing and Town Planning Acts sought to encourage the building of workers' housing in urban and rural areas. In 1914, the Town Planning Institute was formed to complement the statutory framework and most importantly to mark the start of exports of legislation to colonies (Zeleza Manda 2005:3). Such laws empowered local authorities to prepare town planning schemes in the interest of sanitary conditions, amenity and convenience. In 1932 the 1909 law was repealed by the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act that extended the making of schemes to all land, developed or vacant (Flowers 1986 in Zeleza Manda 2005:3).

5.5.3 Planning as conceived in colonial era (1891-1963)

Manda (2005) observes that in the colonial era, physical planning was used to promote order, amenity, good sanitation and convenience. In addition, the role of planning was also broadened to separate blacks from whites on the pretext that blacks had unsanitary mannerism.

Also, urban life was conceived as a European way of life to which blacks would find it difficult to adjust. For instance, the Jack Commission found and reported among other things that:

'The Nyasaland African is not yet conditioned to permanent and independent residence in towns and he shows little or no desire at present to break with his traditional form of society completely (Jack Report quoted by Pennant, 1985)".

In the absence of a legal basis for urban planning in most part of colonial Malawi, planning policy at national level included the establishment of African villages situated on the borders

of towns where all permanently employed natives were forced to live with adequate supervision in most cases by police patrol. In pursuance of this policy, as early as 1899 a township police force was established to enforce a 9 pm – 5 am curfew on natives (McCracken 1998). Contrary to the ideological justification of public health, housing for the poor was of unbelievably poor standard, consisting of windowless brick and thatch hovels in poor repair (McCracken 1998:251). In areas such as Naperi, there was no provision for latrine, water supply nor disposal sites.

In addition to national planning, colonial planning, at the local level, introduced by-laws that made native presence in urban areas illegal. Such laws included banning Africans from building private accommodation; from decision-making and participation in township councils. Also only permanent buildings were to be allowed in the townships (McCracken 1998).

In order to respond to the demand for wage labour, colonial Malawi witnessed a policy shift from restriction to encouraging rural-urban migration. These temporary workers were however incarcerated in designated areas on the urban periphery where they would provide their own houses while government provided negligible services. In conclusion, planning and urban housing patterns in Malawi continue to reflect those established in the colonial era when production of urban space was based on racially segregation as elsewhere (Kings 1977; Pennant 1983). European housing was typically rented from an employer, mainly the state, with some owner-occupied or privately rented in the case of longer-term residents. Asian housing was commonly owner-occupied or employer-housing. Africans residing within the official urban boundaries were regarded as temporary residents and their housing was tied to employment for instance in servants' quarters with much of the urban population living outside township boundaries (Pennant 1983:190). In this regard, as Mabogunje (1990:129) argues, segregation based on ethnic differences was sometimes pursued as policy not for reasons of health or sanitation but as a viable strategy of labour control.

Physical planning attained its prominence and power soon after the Second World War with the enactment of the British Town Planning Act in 1946. This law was conceived to address sanitary and healthy concerns through spatial practices of statutory zoning and development control. In 1948 this law was exported and introduced in Malawi, thereby becoming the planning law in Malawi. Briefly, as conceived, the 1948 planning provided for the declaration of (statutory) planning areas; the appointment of planning committees to prepare statutory

plans for such areas; and for the definition of the powers of the minister (to request for the preparation and submission of plans) among others.

In terms of production of space, the products of such representations of space were towns that were carbon copy of towns in Europe as they were guided by European principles. Also, more often those areas that were declared as planning areas were only those where some whites lived as it was possible to declare a planning area for only part of an urban area or outside an urban area. Moreover, planning committees were given town planning powers in declared planning areas. In addition, no person was allowed to develop in the planning area without seeking planning permission. Furthermore, in order to enforce conformity and commitment to orderly development, penalties of 500 British Pounds were imposed for development without permission. Ultimately, the rationale for planning and spatial tactics such as penalties, were enough to prevent the poor, mainly blacks, from squatting; thereby minimising contestations over urban space.

Consequently, physical planning in the colonial era was primarily part and parcel of colonial administration policy. Indeed, its conceptualisation was essentially based on addressing the public health concerns of colonising Europeans. On the basis of such conceptions, spatial practices of segregated zoning based on race, characterised the spatial structure of urban space in colonial Malawi.

5.5.4 Planning as conceived in the postcolonial era (1964-1993)

Malawi attained her independence from British colonial rule in 1964 under the dictatorial leadership of Dr. Banda. From 1964, physical planning in Malawi was conceived as a local level activity and a tool for development control, and at national level as a tool for national development. First, with regard to development control, local physical development plans namely urban structure plans and urban layout plans were used as instruments of zoning and plot-and-road layouts respectively. This is a replica of colonial modernist planning where zoning was used for purposes of segregating class and land uses.

Second, at national level, under Dr Banda, government policy was directed towards the spatially balanced development of both regional and urban-rural areas. In this regard, the Government's Statement of Development Policies (1971-1980) breads as follows: 'the fruits of development (should be) spread as evenly as possible though out all sections of the population and all parts of the country' (Republic of Malawi 1987:1). The state policy was 'equitable distribution of the fruits of development 'to all parts of the country and among

sections of the people" (Malawi Government 1987). The National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) and the National Rural Centres Programme (NRCP) were conceived to redress these spatial imbalances in development.

Moreover, the development of the new capital city, Lilongwe, in 1975, the creation of Liwonde as an industrial growth centre as well as the Secondary Centres Development Programme (SCDP) attest to the state policy of decentralised urbanisation since the 1960s. Furthermore, the National Physical Development Policy (NPDP) of 1987 became the first policy document to deal with the spatial development aspect of national socio-economic development through a proposed six-tier settlement hierarchy based on Christaller's central place theory, namely national centres, regional centres, sub regional centres, district centres, rural market centres and village centres (Republic of Malawi 1987).

On the basis of the foregoing, planning in the postcolonial era (1964 – 1993) was mainly used as an instrument for decentralised urban development so as to address the spatial economic development imbalances inherited from the colonial era, which arguably concentrated development in the southern region.

Although physical planning and the NPDP as conceived were meant to ensure decentralized production of urban spaces, the plan lacked flexibility to incorporate emerging areas from scaling up the settlement hierarchy. Also, although the NPDP was conceived to promote decentralised urban development, practically, by concentrating national development projects in two major resources in the two major centres of Blantyre and Lilongwe, the policy subjected these centres to highly lopsided rural-urban migration. Consequently, the inflexibility of the NPDP, coupled with its special attention to two major cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe, contradicted its spirit of decentralise urbanisation. Ultimately, this led to increased urbanisation in the two cities as was the case in the colonial era.

To sum up, during the dictatorial regime of Dr Banda, planning as an instrument for equity in national development through decentralised urbanisation led to the implementation of a number of programmes and projects, namely: development of small and medium towns through SCDP (i.e. from 1985 onwards); development of rural service centres through Rural Growth Centre Programme (RGCP); provision of infrastructure, credit, land development and extension services through the NRDP; the establishment of the new capital city of Lilongwe in 1975 and the declaration of the city of Mzuzu in 1985.

With regard to the production of urban space at the local scale, contrary to the aspiration for equity as proclaimed in the Devpol 1971-1980, urban plans continued to be used as an instrument of racial segregation through land use zoning based on income levels. Zoning was strictly enforced and no unsightly settlements existed close to city centres. The power to approve plans was left with the minister responsible for physical planning, in this case Dr Banda himself. Like in the colonial era, demolitions and evictions were used as spatial strategy to impose order in urban space. In this regard, dictatorial tendencies and political will contributed to the orderly production of urban space by disapproving 'illegal' development and land invasions within the city. Until the early 1990s massive parcels of land in cities remained undeveloped. Indeed, as Zeleza-Manda (2005:14) observes, during Banda's regime, physical planning was linked to dictatorship and those illegal developments were construed as 'working against the life president'. In other words, dictatorship and the taste of Banda inherited from the colonial modernist planning shaped the production of urban spaces.

5.5.5 Planning as conceived in the postcolonial era (1994 – 2012)

In the multiparty and democratic era, planning in Malawi was conceived as an instrument to thwart and an impediment to development. In terms of approach, planning was based on a laissez faire approach in the sense planning controls were relaxed and urban residents perceived multiparty as freedom to exercise control over any piece of land. Planning's forward and equity function was abandoned. The planning function was reduced to the approval of development applications and land subdivisions. Indeed, the era witnessed the dissolution of institutional arrangement for planning especially, elected assemblies, town planning committees and planning boards (Zeleza-Manda 2005).

One notable development in the democratic era was that in line with government policy of poverty alleviation, participation in decision-making was conceived as critical, hence the adoption of a decentralised policy in 1996, the Local Government Act in 1998 (LGA). In theory, although the LGA empowered local assemblies to formulate, approve, and implement development plans, the main planning legislation remain the TCPA of 1988 which mandated the Minister of Physical Planning as the authority to approve plans. This created contestations between local government and central government, effectively implying that planning continued to be a central government function, as was the case inin the colonial era as well as in the dictatorial era. Indeed, in Malawi, as Tambulasi (2009) argues, democratic decentralisation has been a breeding ground for conflicting relationships between central

government and local government as well as tensions between local government and traditional authorities.

Consequent to the laissez faire approach to planning in the democratic era, urban spaces witnessed the growth of contestations over land. Such manifestations of these contestations included invasion of road reserves and open spaces and invasions of perceived vacant land in the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe.

5.6 BLANTYRE CITY AS A COLONIAL CITY

In the next sections a picture of the city of Blantyre as a colonial city is presented. First, origin and location factors are discussed and this discussion is followed by the urban geography of the city in terms of morphology.

5.6.1 Origin and location factors

In terms of origin, Blantyre is one of the oldest colonial settlements in Central Africa, with a history going back to the foundation of the Blantyre Mission in 1876 (McCracken 1998).

The city originated with the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland's Blantyre Mission (BM) in 1876, followed by the African Lakes Company depot (ALC), individual European traders and a British consul (Agnew and Stubbs 1972: 122). In 1897, Blantyre was declared a planning area by the Scottish missionaries. The city has experienced high population growth, with the population increasing from 109,461 in 1966 to 661,256 in 2008. The National Statistical Office (2003) projects the population to be 813,457 in 2008 and 1,068,681 in 2015, with annual growth rates of 4.4% and 3.7% respectively (UN-HABITAT 2011). The city is Malawi's primate city, containing almost all professional, commercial and social services and most manufacturing and processing establishments (Agnew and Stubbs 1972).

There are complex location factors which influenced the choice of Blantyre as a regional site. Agnew and Stubbs (1972) identify several factors namely: accessibility from the Thyolo escarpment; healthier conditions of the Shire Highlands rather than in the Rift Valley floor; proximity to river communication with the Indian Ocean; the presence and proximity to northerly Magomero Mission ; the favourable attitude of Chief Kapeni in whose area the site was located ; and finally, the Mudi River, the steep watershed boundary of the Likabula, the ring of residual hills namely Michiru, Nyambadwe, Ndirande, Mzedi, Mpingwe, Bangwe and Soche that provided defence to the resident population in the face of Ayao and Angoni raids.

5.6.2 Colonial city as a segregated city

Lefebvre (1991:77) suggests that the history of space is produced and reproduced in connection with the forces of production (and with the relations of production) in what he terms spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces. Hence, in terms of planning, for much of the colonial period the administrators' attitude was laissez-faire as their primary concern was trade development with a particular focus on the Shire Highlands where Blantyre city was situated.

Since the official founding of the township in 1895, as John Iliffe has noted, Blantyre 'exemplified that combination of colonial poverty and southern African racialism that was Nyasaland's particular misfortune'. From its inception, there are several manifestations which reveal the segregated nature of Blantyre city. Unlike other colonial cities, in Blantyre city, spatial practices of segregation were imposed by European traders and estate owners who had staked out land claims in the valley neighbouring the Church of Scotland mission station. (McCracken 1998:249). These spatial practices and tactics permitted only male Europeans to stand for the founding town council elected in 1897 , this although in theory at least, Asians and Africans who possessed property within the Township to the annual value of 100 Pounds were eligible to vote. Other examples of discrimination were the prohibition of Indian traders to purchase property outside the centrally located but increasingly crowded 'Asiatic Ward'; the banning of Africans from providing housing for themselves the imposition of curfew to forbid Africans from remaining in the township between 9p.m and 5 a.m. without a pass provided by their employers; not allowing Africans to purchase property; serving Africans through a window in most European-owned shops; and forbidding African custom in hotels. .

In terms of residential segregation, the city was divided into residential zones namely high income, middle income and lower income residential areas. Blantyre's European population was resident mainly in the suburb of Sunnyside. In 1920s plans for native locations were produced modelled loosely on those in Bulawayo and Pietermaritzburg.

5.6.3 Blantyre as a postcolonial city (after 1964)

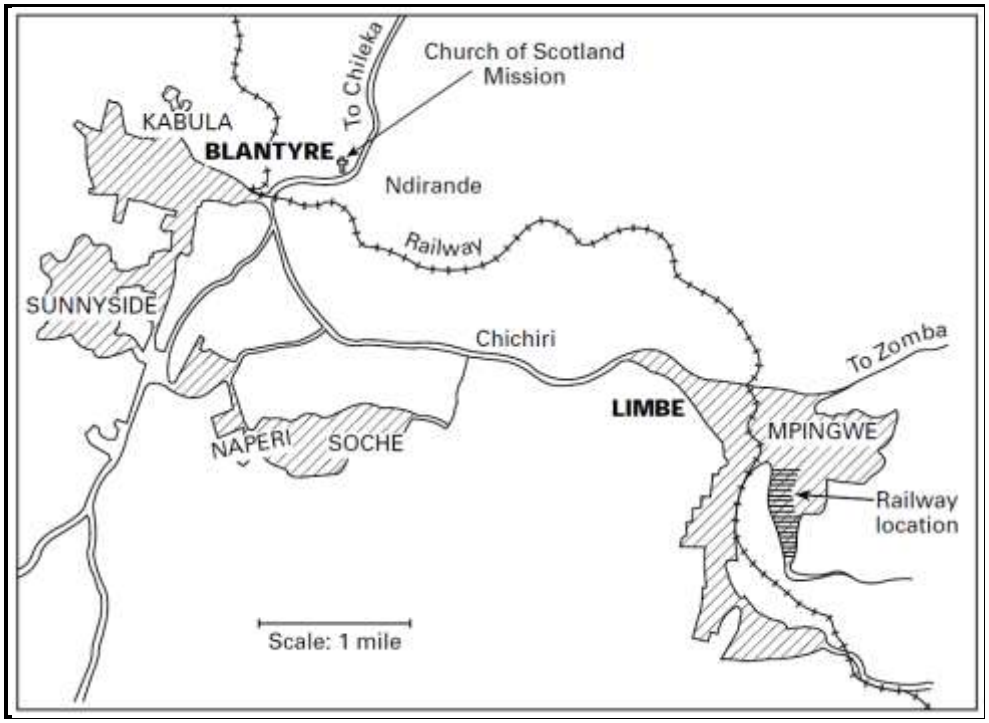
In this section, the term postcolonial city is consistent with Myers (2009) understanding as elaborated in Chapter two. In this case, Blantyre city is a postcolonial city in the sense of temporal aftermath (i.e. a city living after colonialism) as well as critical aftermath (i.e. to understand the city and its representations). Also, as critical aftermath, the analysis of

Blantyre city as a postcolonial city will form the basis for our understanding of how the city is recovering from colonialism (Sidaway 2005).

First, in terms of housing provision, government-provided housing in Naperi for example, was described as of unbelievably poor standard consisting of windowless brick and thatch hovels in poor repair' (McCracken 1998:251). Second, employer housing e.g. Imperial Tobacco Company (ITG) and Nyasaland Railways continued after independence. Third, failure to manage the tidal wave of rapid growth of urban population in the postcolonial city. For instance, the population grew from 4000 in 1937, 55,000 in 1947 and 109,461 inhabitants in 1966 partly owing to the incorporation within the city boundaries of peri-urban villages (McCracken 1998:254). Fourth, the inability of the council to overcome the acute shortage of African housing that afflicted the city after the Second World War (McCracken 1998:262).

With regard to functional zoning, commissioning of the Town Plan of 1951 continued the practice of racial zoning through the demarcation of the town into high, medium and low density areas McCracken 1998:262) and government employee housing at Soche and Naperi (between 1955 and 1956). **Figure 5.1** shows residential areas namely Sunnyside, Mpingwe and Naperi which were specifically zoned for whites, Asians, and black Africans respectively. Also the destruction of lively settlements of independent householders, businessmen, prostitutes, and pimps that had grown up along the main road at Chichiri continued after the Town Plan of 1951. Furthermore, evictions continued sporadically. In the face of these evictions, African householders protested and the protests reached a climax during the state of emergency in March when the Rhodesian troops were employed to destroy a squatters'

colony in the vicinity of the Rangeley Stadium (McCracken 1998:262).



Source: McCracken (1998)

Figure 5.1 Colonial Blantyre as a segregated city

McCracken (1998) concluded that between the ending of the Second World War and the transfer of political power in 1964, Blantyre's population increased nearly ten-fold. Yet the city that witnessed independence still retained many of the features that had shaped the character of the colonial town. Both spatial and economic segregation persisted, evidenced by the continued dominance of the European and Asian sector over business.

Since independence and an extension of the city boundaries, there has been considerable building activity, with the construction of a new high income suburb in Namiwawa, extension of the government suburbs and Sunnyside and Nyambadwe, of middle and lower middle income housing in the Soche and Kanjedza areas, and of lower income 'site and service' housing in the Chimwankhunda and Chilobwe areas.

Finally, the provision of low income housing, improvement of suburban service centres, and the mass transit system, and the extension of water, electricity, and sewerage supplies remain major problems. The duality of the urban structure, with centres in both Blantyre and Limbe, which has added to the cost of providing services, the constricting circle of deep residual hills,

and the large forest plantations all make difficult the achievement of an efficient urban spatial system (Agnew and Stubbs 1972:122).

5.6.4 Spatial practice of segregation

In terms of residential spatial structure, on the one hand there were higher income residential areas included Mount Pleasant, along the Chikwawa Road, and a club and golf course built in the Mudi River Valley between this and the commercial centre, and Sunnyside which was mainly established as a high income government residential area.

On the other hand, compounds for lower income and seasonal workers were established for instance within Eucalyptus saligna plantations in Limbe and also around the further side of Mpingwe Hill for lower paid railway workers **(Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2).** More importantly, closer to Blantyre, the Ndirande low income suburb, originally consisting of nine traditional villages, had grown in size and population as permanent labour was attracted to the town. Other similar villages occupied the areas between Blantyre and Limbe and north of Soche Hill (Agnew and Stubb 1972).

Source: Researcher's photos (June 2013)

Figure 5.2 Colonial housing for low income workers (2013 photo)

Source: Researcher's photo (2013)

Figure 5.3 Colonial workers' housing in Limbe (currently occupied by civil servants)

5.6.5 Spatial practice of relocation

In the colonial period, evictions and relocation were the main strategies for implementing the conceived space. Research indicates that in the Newlands and Namiwawa areas all villages and African suburbs were cleared to pave the way for higher income suburbs. In this case, the residents had to move beyond the boundary, and (concentrated) settled in densely built up areas where not even a convenient access road existed, hence the emergence of the present low and lower middle income suburbs of Chilomoni, Zingwangwa, Bangwe and Matenje. In Soche housing was constructed for middle income residents. Also, at the southern pediment of Ndirande Mountain between Ndirande and Matenje suburbs, was cleared of existing villages and designated a protected water catchment, as was an area immediately north of Soche Hill. Furthermore, between Blantyre and Limbe, particularly in the Chichiri Area, other villages and suburbs were cleared, to construct the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, a secondary and primary school and other public buildings (McCracken 2012; Agnew and Stubbs 1972).

5.7 LILONGWE AS A COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL CITY

5.7.1 Origin and locational factors

In spite of the agreement among scholars that Lilongwe city initially emerged as a small administrative and market centre for the tobacco industry in the central region (Agnew and Stubbs 1974), there are contestations regarding the justification for the location of Lilongwe city as Malawi's capital with reasons ranging from personal prestige and gratification through

national symbolism, decolonisation, to efficiency justifications. With regard to the efficiency criteria, Richards has identified three main reasons: firstly to improve the efficiency of government by concentrating central government administration in one city; second, to stimulate development in the central and northern regions by establishing a major focal growth point near the centre of the country; and third, to encourage a broad national unity through widely shared development which can be enjoyed by all sections of the community (Richards 1974). Potts (1985) concurs that centrality, regional planning issues (growth centre policy), and political motivation influenced the relocation decision of the capital from Zomba to Lilongwe. With regard to political motivation, Mlia (1975) observes that since Malawi's independence most decision-makers in government were from the Northern region which enjoyed the highest level of education (mainly due to missionary influence) yet the lowest level of economic development, a northward shift of administration was considered the best move to consolidate political support. On the basis of this, the choice of Lilongwe as Malawi's capital (as opposed to Zomba and Blantyre), was arguably based on regional economic policy. In other words, the conceptualisation was that Lilongwe as growth point would reduce regional inequalities in incomes and facilities between the north and south as inherited from the colonial era (Richards 1974).

Contrary arguments have pointed out that the transfer of the capital city from the colonial capital of Zomba to Lilongwe was motivated by Dr Kamuzu Banda's personal and political interests other than the need to spread development. Connell (1972), for example, asserts that Dr Banda wanted the capital to be closer to his home district of nearby Kasungu in the Chewa-speaking area where most of his supporters live.

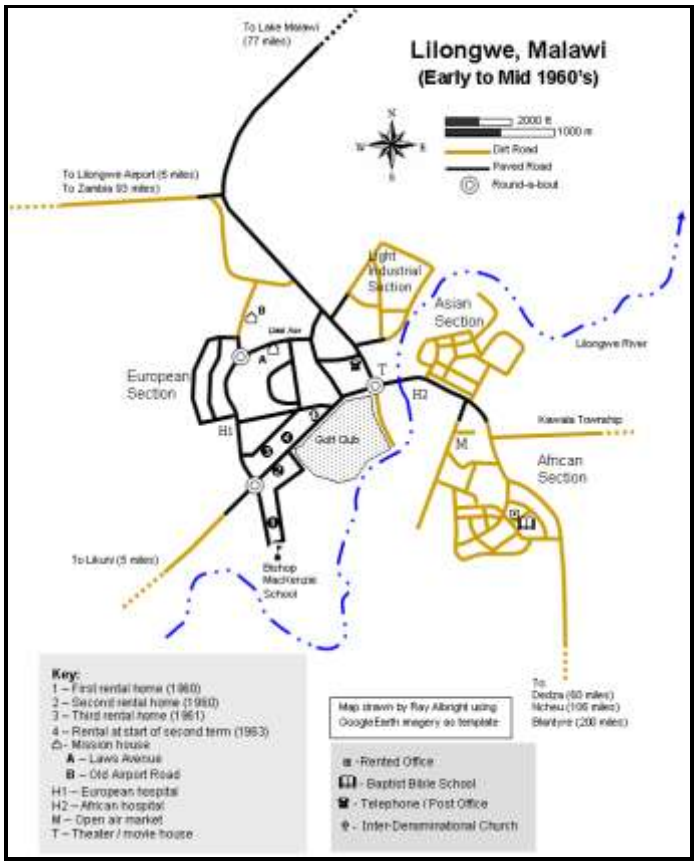
5.7.2 Lilongwe the colonial town

In terms of urban planning, subsequent to planning of the postcolonial city, Lilongwe's urban development was administered by the Outline Zoning Scheme (OZS) of 20th July 1955. The Outline Zoning Scheme was prepared by a single town planner who was an advisor to the town planning committee and he was based in Salisbury (now Harare) in Zimbabwe. In terms of population, notwithstanding the accuracy of the population data, it was estimated that the town comprised 7000 Africans, 600 Europeans and 700 Asians (Kawonga 2005). It can therefore be noted that it was difficult to manage and forecast the growth of Lilongwe at an early stage. This also reveals that the conception of the town at the early stage was for a small town and not of one which would grow into a national capital**.** In terms of conceptualisation, the OZS anticipated growth of an industrial town, a town which would enable its citizens to

enjoy healthy and happy life and provide areas for town development to minimise the need for compensation in the future growth of the town. It can therefore be noted that the basis of the plan was the British Town and Country Planning Ordinance of 1948 which called for the securing of proper health, sanitation, communication, and convenience in connection with the laying out and use of land.

5.7.3 The colonial city as segregated city

The colonial town of Lilongwe as per the 1955 OZS comprised most of the present 'Old Town' sector. In essence, Lilongwe as a colonial town **(Figure 5.4)** depicted colonial modernist planning which was characterised by residential segregation. Like colonial Blantyre, Lilongwe was sliced into a European zone, Asian zone and the African zone. Also, the spatial allocation of facilities such as hospitals, schools and recreation facilities (e.g. golf club) was based on this zoning whereby the best facilities were allocated in the European zone while their African counterparts only had minimal services.



Source: http://www.freewebs.com/albrightstory/Maps/Lilongwe%20map_bmp.bmp

(Accessed 24 October 2012).

Figure 5.4 Lilongwe as a colonial town

5.7.4 The post-colonial city

To understand Lilongwe as the post-colonial city, the 1969 Lilongwe Master Plan (LMP) is used as a representation of space. In this section, therefore, an analysis of the 1969 Lilongwe land use plan is presented with specific reference to the urban morphology of the city **(see Figure 5.5).**

First, in terms of urban morphology, the form of the city is determined by the spatial relationships between a new city core, containing the government administrative area and shopping and commercial centres, a recreation zone, industrial zones, residential sections, and a processional way connecting these new elements with the old town. Second, the undulating site meant that few relatively level area spaces were reserved for industrial and commercial uses and the residential zones are on the more steeply sloping parts. Third, the site for the Government area is on Capital Hill about 5 kilometres north of old town centre. Generally, the resulting pattern as seen in **Figure 5.5**, follows a modified linear city with the main spine running north south between old and new Lilongwe (Gerke and Viljoen 1968). It must also be noted that the city is a multi-nucleus city with centres at old town, new capital Hill area, Kanengo and Mcheri Hill (Connell 1972). In terms of residential areas, the Master Plan proposed three different residential densities from plots of one acre to plots of an eighth of an acre in the large areas reserved for traditional housing.

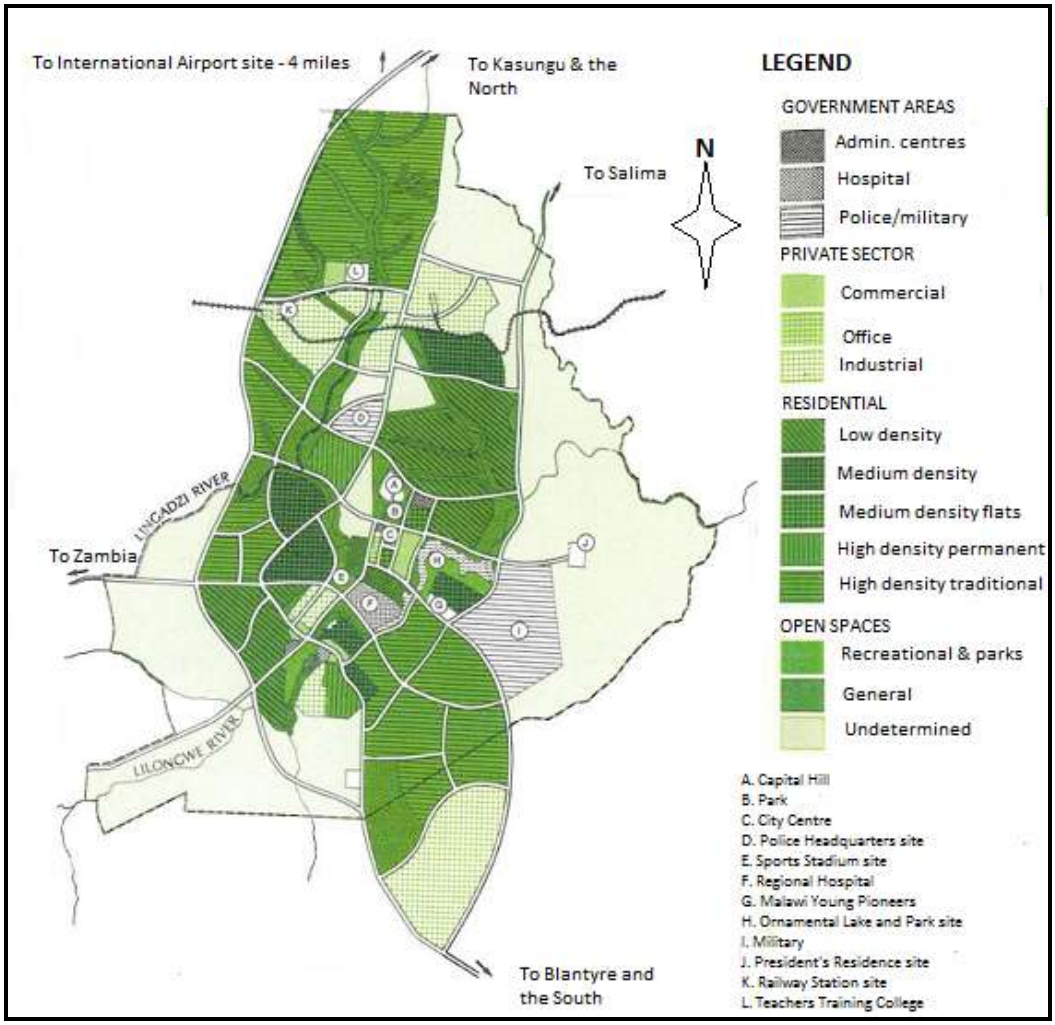
It must also be noted that the plan was prepared by a South African consultancy whilst a loan of R8 million (4.7 million British Pounds) was secured towards what was expected to be a 25-30 million British Pounds project. Also noteworthy is that the UK rejected the scheme as unnecessary (Connell 1972).

One of the representations of space is that the capital city was conceived as Garden City (Richards 1974). In pursuance of this dedication therefore, the LMP of 1969 adhered to the spatial allocation of land use planned by the Town and Country Planning Department as shown in the map. In practice, however, many of the zones have not yet been developed and relatively little of the extensive planned area is actually built up.

Next, the Lilongwe Master Plan suffered the problem of artificiality a**s** experienced in Brasilia and Canberra. In other words, the plan exhibits few of the usual characteristics of urban areas which have grown more or less organically.

Like in colonial Blantyre, the implementation of the Garden City also wiped the indigenous residents away from the city. In this regard, an area of 38,000 acres was designated for the new capital with the result that six small villages were resettled from this area so that their land could be used for the new city (Connell 1972).

With regard to spatial practices of relocation, the implementation of the capital city project displaced the original inhabitants of the city. Thousands of rural people were resettled from within Lilongwe city's boundaries to outside locations (Potts 1985).



Source: Adapted from Richards G (1974:18-19)

Figure 5.5 The capital city master plan

In true modernist planning philosophy, there is no intermixing between commercial, industrial, and residential land use. Second, there is no intermixing of residential land use such that the plan adhered to residential separation into high-medium- and low-density areas. Third, there is no intermixing of low income, high density zones in the sense that even these

zones are further subdivided into traditional and permanent housing. THAs are site and service plots while permanent housing is formally built housing largely for government employees, whose rents are subdivided.

Lilongwe Master Plan represents the city as garden city and the government commitment is to preserve this garden city image (Richards 1974; Potts 1985). In pursuance of this abstraction, the new high density housing area has been located away from the city centre and screened from the road by tree belts. Also, in line with this conception, squatting is seen as highly undesirable and legal provision is made in the Urban Structure Plan (USP) to prevent unsightly sites (Town Country Planning Department 1978 para 3.10.11). Consequently, adherence and obsession with abstract space creates contestation.

Indeed, in Lilongwe, government's commitment to the Garden City image had already started generating conflicts with the city population. First, rapid growth of population with 75% of the population expected to reside in high density areas, continue**s** to put pressure on vacant urban land. Second**,** the state's financial incapacity means that housing programmes for high density could not cope with population growth for example at Gulliver in Area 49. Third, the commercial interest of CCDC means there will be less commitment to providing low cost site and service plots which yield no profit. Unsurprisingly, by 1977 only 1400 site and service plots were laid out (not even meeting the then demand) (CCDC 1977).

In reality, the little growth of the formal sector mean informal employment will lead to informal settlement growth. Indeed, as Potts (1985) observes, Lilongwe's administrators will have to temper their commitment to the Garden City image and allow the emergence of peripheral and therefore largely 'invisible' unplanned settlements.

5.8 CONCLUSION

On the basis of Lefebvre's understanding of history of space, this chapter has traced the development of urban space in Malawi as a historical phenomenon. Changing conceptions of urban space and land in general from the pre-colonial through the colonial to the postcolonial eras have also been examined. Arguably, notions of spaces have continued to shape spatial practices thereby produce urban spaces. Indeed, the erasure of customary notions of space dominant in the pre-colonial era, and replacing them with individual or commodified notions

of tenure in the colonial era justified the colonial mechanisms of land access through violence and conquest. In the post-independence era, it has been noted that notions of land inherited from the colonial era persisted and were perpetuated by the Banda regime to access land through the so-called land grants and the trend continued into the democratic era.

In terms of planning as a state mechanism for producing urban space, the chapter has also reviewed the changing notions and influence of planning from planning for control and segregation, through planning for equity development in the post-colonial era. Indeed, as noted, the Muluzi era represented the death of planning largely because planning failed to adapt to the new demands brought about by rapid urbanisation and unemployment owing to SAPs. In the Banda era, planning survived courtesy of the president's dictatorship as opposed to rational planning principles. Land invasions by citizens increased, not necessarily because of fear of diminishing land, but rather because there was vacant land, yet planning was unable to release land. Meanwhile liberal democracy led people to realise that they had a right to urban space. For instance, names such as Dubai and Baghdad which symbolise cheap plots and invasion attest to the fact that the planning was socially unjust, restrictive and exclusionary. In line with the argument of this research, every society or mode of production has its way of producing space, planning by sticking to colonial modernist planning which survived at the messy of the president failed to evolve and adjust to current wave brought about by neoliberal politics, freedoms and rights hence was reduced to the peripheral. As Lefebvre (1991) observed, successful imposition of conceived space as represented in urban plans is buttressed by non-critical (positive), backed up by a frightening capacity for violence, and maintained by a bureaucracy which has laid hold of the gains of capitalism in the ascendant and turned them to its own profit. In other words these are the mechanism and tactics for the survival of abstract space. In the Muluzi era invasions were tolerated and this minimised overt confrontations between the institution of planning and urban residents. In the Mutharika era, however, contestations were visible because planners wanted to exert their muscles to claim their lost glory through the imposition of abstract space as represented in policies and urban structure plans, as will be seen in the next chapter. In the next chapter, I build on these historical developments in the understandings of urban space and the dynamism of urban planning to analyse representations of space mainly urban structure plans and land policies. Challenges encountered by the state to impose their representations of space on users of urban space are also presented.

CHAPTER 6 CONCEIVED SPACES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

"Abstract space contains much, but at the same time it masks (or denies) what it contains rather than indicating it. It contains specific imaginary elements: fantasy images, symbols which appear to rise from 'something else...from values bound to other places" - Lefebvre 1991, p.311

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter conceived spaces and their representations of space are analysed with specific reference to laws and policies, urban strategies, structure plans, and layout plans. The chapter commences with a brief methodology followed by an overview of Lefebvre's theory of production of space with emphasis on one element of his spatial triad namely, conceived or representations of space. Then the focus will be on the Malawi National Land Policy (NLP) of 2002 as conceived space to understand how space is conceived and represented in the policy and how the policy as conceived contributes to contestations over urban land. Later, there is an examination of how master plans interact with other land policies and this is followed by an analysis of layout plans for selected residential zones in the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe as local spaces where struggles over land are being played out. Finally, a framework of conceived space is suggested to describe the nature of abstract space and the challenges it encounters in its imposition of hegemonic space.

6.2 METHODOLOGY

During the analysis of conceived spaces and representations of space, the research relied on the following primary sources of data: archival data both in the form of print media (i.e. the *Daily Times* and *The Nation* newspapers from the National Archives of Malawi in Zomba, and electronic media (Nyasa Times, and Malawi Voice, Nation Online, and BNL Times); cadastral maps from the Surveys Department in Blantyre with the aim of understanding ownership of land in various urban centres in Malawi including Blantyre and Lilongwe Cities; Urban Structure Plans for Blantyre and Lilongwe cities; perimeter surveys and lay out plans obtained from MHC to ascertain the boundary of land under the jurisdiction of MHC and to understand planned lay out for the land under contestation in Soche area. These multiple sets of data were subjected to multiple analysis techniques. Atlas.ti (qualitative data analysis software) was used to analyse key informant responses and data from electronic and print media. GIS was used to carry out spatial analysis for the geo-data and content analysis for policies and plans.

6. 3 LEFEBVRE'S THEORY

In his monumental work on production of space, Henri Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is a social product. On the basis of this, he argues that there are three moments (i.e. interrelated elements or a spatial triad in the production of space namely perceived space, conceived space, and lived space and in spatial terms he refers to these as spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces respectively. First, spatial practices refer to the social practices through which space is materially produced. Second, representations of space are the ways in which space is abstractly conceived. Third, representational spaces are the phenomenological spaces of lived experiences. In this chapter, the analysis focuses on conceived spaces and representations of space.

In terms of their nature, representations of space are characterised as abstract. Also, they have a tendency of homogenising social life and at the same time fragmenting it. In addition, they tend to erase historical reality including representational spaces or lived experiences of everyday life. Since they inform policy, they, as their tactic, eliminate any contradictions to demonstrate coherence and reduce reality in the interests of power. Finally, abstract space of capitalism, as Lefebvre (1991:52) writes:

"is buttressed by non-critical (positive) knowledge, backed up by a frightening capacity for violence, and maintained by a bureaucracy which has laid hold of the gains of capitalism in the ascendant and turned them to its own profit".

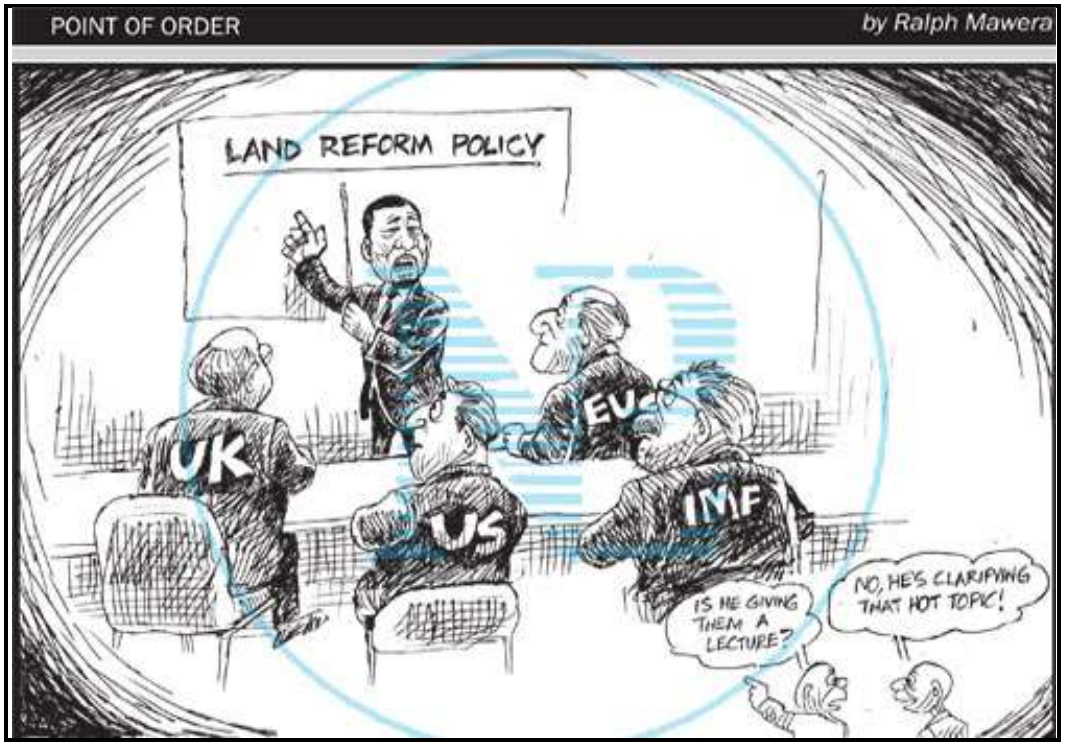
In this regard, therefore, in addition to their abstract and homogenising predisposition, representations of space, also subordinates, totalises, and uses violence mechanism and tactics for survival. Notwithstanding the foregoing, they ultimately lead to differentiated space.

To understand how urban space is conceived and represented and how in turn this contributed to contestations over urban space, this analysis relies on the Malawi National Land Policy of 2002 and Urban Structure Plans (for Lilongwe and Blantyre cities) as representations of spaces that shape and regulate the production of space in urban Malawi.

6.4 THE NEOLIBERAL LAND POLICY OF 2002 AS CONCEIVED SPACE

In April 2013, when Malawi's president Joyce Banda announced her government's desire to replicate Zimbabwe's radical land reform in favour of indigenisation, she received all sorts of condemnation from civil society organisations, land reform experts, and the international

community (mainly the US, UK, IMF, World Bank and EU)[11]. On the one hand, the presidents hailed Harare's land reform as an economic success; on the other hand, analysts observed that implementing the land reform in Malawi amounts to economic suicide. Of interest, however, is that the World Bank, IMF and UK were quick to seek clarification regarding the president's statement, forcing Malawi's minister of Foreign Affairs to provide clarification **(see Figure 6.1).**



Source: The Nation (2013)

Figure 6.1 Neoliberal institutions contesting the discourse to copy Zimbabwe's land reform in Malawi

Clearly, the debates revealed that there is one thing on which everybody agrees: the unequal distribution of land in Malawi is real. The institutions as highlighted in the carton could be representing some of the neoliberal institutions holding on to land in Malawi; and finally, over a decade of the neoliberal land policy since 2002, the land issue in Malawi has not been resolved, thereby raising questions about the effectiveness of the modern land policy.

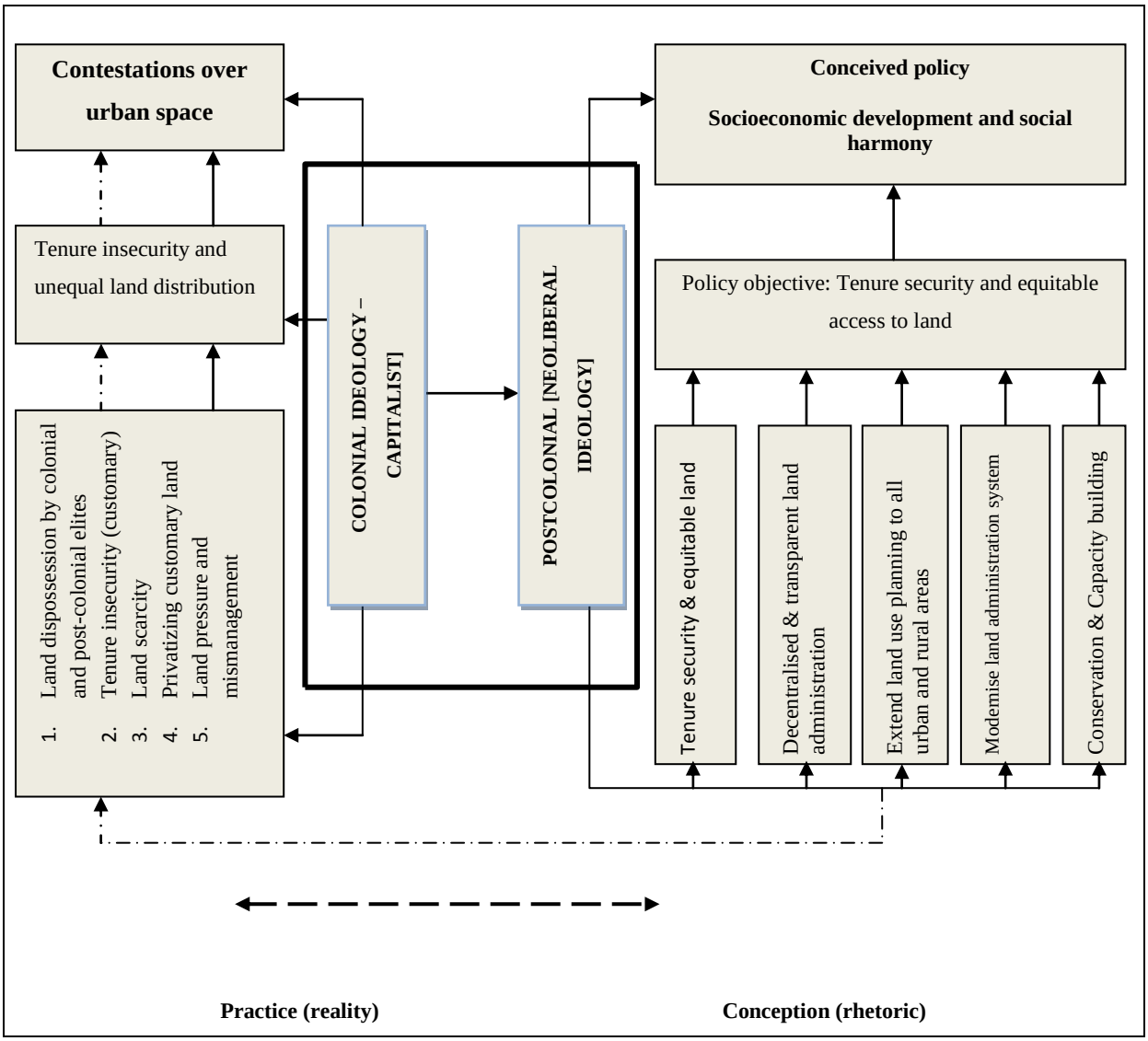
The neoliberal land policy of 2002 as a representation of space will be analysed to examine how the policy as conceived contributes to the on-going contestations over urban land in

[11] http://www.zimeye.org/?p=79618; http://www.nyasatimes.com/2013/05/04/malawi-govt-moves-in-to-clear-jbs-zimbabwe-land-reform-copying-issue/; http://panafricannews.blogspot.com/2013/04/malawi-president-banda-lauds-zimbabwe.html

Malawi. To this end, representations of space are analysed using mass media (both print and electronic); interviews with government officials; official documents and secondary literature as sources of data. In particular, the analysis focuses on the national land policy of 2002 as conceived (in terms of its objectives and strategies) followed by an analysis of the capacity of the state to transform the abstract aspirations of modernity as aspired by the policy into practice. At the end, implications on securing access to land as conceived by the policy and subsequent contestations over land are examined.

6.4.1 The land problem as conceived

The Malawi National Land Policy of 17 January 2002 embodies the post-dictator Malawi government's desire to address the constraints to Malawi's social and economic development caused by the absence of a comprehensive land policy (Malawi Government 2002). It is of interest that policy-makers recognise high population land ratio; land scarcity, provocative squatting; the privatisation of access to customary land; and illegal and unplanned urban developments as some of the major land problems in Malawi. On the role of colonialism on the current land problems in Malawi, the policy admits that colonial land policy through its imposition of English Law and English property conceptions of freeholder's rights and the simultaneous operation of customary tenure with private ownership of land has contributed to the skewed distribution of freehold land in Malawi. In the postcolonial era, post-independence land policy which favoured estate agriculture contributed to the skewed distribution of freehold land in the country. Further, the policy recognises that the fraudulent disposal of customary land by headpersons, chiefs, and government officials has also exacerbated the land problem in Malawi (Malawi Government 2002). The proposed framework (see **Figure 6.2**) reveals that although the land policy as conceived admits that the present land problem in Malawi originated from the free market and capitalist notions of space in the colonial era, the current land policy is a mere replica of the colonial and post-independence land policy such that it offers very little in addressing the challenges of unequal land access it rhetorically seeks to address. Consequently, by focusing on economic growth, the policy is likely to generate continued tensions over land in Malawi.



Source: Researcher's conceptualisation (2013)

Figure 6.2 Schematic analysis of Malawi's land policy of 2002

6.4.2 The solution as conceived

Overall, the policy seeks to ensure tenure security and equitable access to land, to facilitate the attainment of social harmony and broad based social and economic development through optimum and ecologically balanced use of land and land based resources. Specifically, the land policy identifies six specific objectives which seek to: first, promote tenure reforms that guarantee security and instil confidence and fairness in all transactions (i.e. to guarantee secure tenure and equitable access to land without gender bias and discrimination); second, promote decentralised and transparent land administrations; third, extend land use planning strategies to all urban and rural areas; fourth, establish a modern land administration system for delivering land services to all; fifth, enhance conservation and community management of

local resources; and finally, promote research and capacity building in land surveying and land management (Malawi Government 2002).

Specific mention should also be made that in principle, the ultimate goal of the policy is two-fold: the attainment of 'social harmony' and 'socio-economic development'. Admittedly, therefore, the land policy acknowledged the existence of tensions over land which ought to be addressed by the policy. However, as it will be seen later, by focusing on economic development, the policy continues to create tensions and struggles over land, thus effectively undermining and contradicting its very foundations that triggered its formulation.

6.4.3 Significance of land and the question of equity

Questions of equity, fairness and justice tie up with the struggle for control over access to, and/or location vis-à-vis usable land in all societies (Lefebvre 1968). In this regard, having analysed the land problem in Malawi in terms of conceptualisation of the problem and objectives intended to address the conceived problem, it is equally important to examine further the significance of land specifically with reference to the question of equity which is central to the land policy. First, the geographic distribution of usable land is by nature inequitable. Consequently, any human activity that contributes to the maladministration of land invariably exacerbates inequality, fairness, and justice (Njoh 2013). Also, land constitutes an important factor of economic production and serves as a repository of wealth. Seen in this light, access to land is only a means to an end and not an end in itself. Hence, differential access to lands invariably affects equity, fairness and justice in other development domains. Moreover, land possesses non-quantifiable but nonetheless critical religious and spiritual values. Hence, from a postmodern perspective, land constitutes a basis for equity, fairness and justice as a socio-cultural product. In addition, land is a scarce, immovable and non-substitutable and steadily decreasing resource rather than an increasing or augmentable one. Hence, how it is distributed among different societal entities (tribal, regional, socio-economic and demographic groups) raises a series of equity, fairness and justice concerns (Njoh 2003). In addition, since distribution of society's benefits and burdens to different groups are based on their location within a given territory, quite often, the most disadvantaged are the minority groups or those without access to levers of power (Abbot 1996).

With regard to urban space, it must be noted that urban spaces are the stage in which inequity and injustices are played out or manifested. For instance, Njoh (2013) observes that in the built space, the notion of spatial or territorial justice inextricably links social justice with land in the sense that it is on land that injustice against the underprivileged and disenfranchised

members of society manifests itself (Njoh 2013). Moreover, in urban spaces, the questions of equity have serious implications on urban planning in the sense that planning policies are expected to *inter alia*, redress social injustice or provide some recourse for those victimised by spatial injustices, *ceteris paribus.* Yet, in spite of this, the land policy implications on urban spaces have received scanty attention in Malawi, primarily because the land policy focuses on customary land in rural spaces thereby ignoring the urban spaces.

6.4.4 The Land Policy of 2002: Towards a critique

The policy recognises inheritance as a legal manner of land acquisition, which improves access to disadvantaged groups such as women, widows, and children. More importantly, it provides for regularisation of informal settlements. The policy is quite ambitious, but unfortunately financial and human incapacity constrain its successful implementation. In addition, the land policy is not clear on tenure issues. Finally, allocation criteria such as income, ability to pay plot development charges, and ability to develop the land exclude the youth, the poor, women and vulnerable groups. This leads these groups to resorting to the informal land delivery sector, contributing to the growth of informal settlements (Zeleza-Manda 2005).

6.4.4.1 The conception of the policy

The policy undermines the meaning of the land. The Malawi National Land Policy of 2002 proposes relocation with compensation as a spatial strategy to relocate those landless poor in areas unsuitable for human habitation and farming. However, participants observed that people were attached to their land and they know it will be a tug-of-war.[12] It can therefore, be argued that its conceived spatial strategies are bound to be contested as they seem to undermine the importance of people's attachment to places.

Conceptions and practices that informed and guided colonialist's approaches to land persist to this day in three ways. First, the new national (local) elite continue to dispossess the poor of their land. The mass media is awash with reports of political and business elites who continue to grab land from innocent citizens in spite of owning huge expanses of land throughout the country.[13] Second, relocation of residents away from their land continues to this day like in the colonial era, when for instance, the land planning committee made a suggestion to relocate

[12] P51: NEWS-MW (21).pdf:(@279-@570)
[13] P56: NEWS-MW (26).pdf: (@297-@475).

people in Thyolo and Mulanje[14]. Third, the racially skewed land distribution, dual tenure systems based on received law and customary law; and in districts like Thyolo and Mulanje, a dispossessed black rural population ended up confined to degraded and overcrowded lands - a situation that continues to this day[15].

Indeed as noted earlier, from the planning standpoint, it is expected that there would be no traditional chiefs in towns and cities once the area has been declared a planning area (Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1987). However, in terms of the Local Government Act of 1998, traditional authorities are duly recognised as ex-offio members of the local government area, by implication, including town or city assembly. Notwithstanding these conflicting laws, in practice, traditional leaders or 'town chiefs' (Cammack, Kanyongolo & O'Neil 2009) do exist in urban areas and they continue to discharge such functions as settling land disputes or in some cases allocating land, thus contrary to the TCPA of 1987. In this regard, it can be argued that space as represented in towns and cities, as per the TCPA of 1987, advances the agenda of modernity which regards the presence of local chiefs as a backward step. In one interview a respondent had this to say:

"…when government says chiefs should not be in towns, it is simply saying that the poor cannot live in towns; we belong in villages while the rich belong in towns".

To sum up, in this entire land row, chiefs must not claim land that is not theirs. Chiefs belong to rural areas and not cities and towns.[16]

When critically examining the policy, it can be seen that it aims to clarify and strengthen customary land rights, among other issues, and is intended to secure land rights for the majority of Malawians living on land formerly under customary tenure. It will allow all customary land to be registered and protected by law against abuse.[17] In addition, the assembly needs to safeguard its territory fast enough to avoid experiencing last minute complications over relocation of residents."[18]

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[14] P59: NEWS-MW (5).pdf: (@19-@103).
[15] P56: NEWS-MW (26).pdf: (@296-@472).

[16] P16: NEWS-BT (14).pdf: (@417-@579)
[17] P39: NEWS-MW (10).pdf: (@299-@388)
[18] P40: NEWS-MW (11).pdf: (@105-@220)

6.4.4.2 Rhetoric 1: The myth of tenure security and equitable access

The first objective of the land policy as depicted in **Figure 6.2** is "to promote tenure security that guarantees security and instils confidence and fairness in all land transactions". On conceptualisation, the new land policy is conceived to promote equitable access to land without gender bias and through inheritance directly to children and spouse. In addition, it also seeks to curb encroachment and illegal developments (Malawi Government 2002:5).

In abstract terms, the new land policy is conceived to promote equitable access to land through inheritance directly through children and spouse. Yet, there are conflicts with other related laws making implementation a challenge. In Malawi, for instance, access rights are determined under customary laws in accordance with the rules of patrilineal or matrilineal inheritance. In practice, regardless of cultural variations, in our society men still make most decisions involving land. Seen in this light, the current statutory law, by allowing individuals to bequeath their privately acquired property (in this case, land) directly to their surviving spouse and children, contradicts practice, essentially customary law. Therefore there is need to harmonise laws so that they are in compliance with this policy. Otherwise, it will remain abstract.[19] Corroborating this, CSOs in one workshop observed that:

"The issue *(land policy)* is likely to evoke a clash with customary law. Government should not treat each and every document confidentially. It should also be flexible in giving enough time for debates and information".[20]

On the same question of equity as opposed to unequal access to land, it must be mentioned that tenure formalisation, by stipulating the procedure for land certification, perpetuates unequal access to land as opposed to equity as conceived by the policy. In practice, this process is skewed such that it only facilitates access to land for preferred societal groups while preventing access to their underprivileged counterparts. For instance, empirical evidence suggests that middle income groups as opposed to disadvantaged groups**,** are able to have their land formalised. This agrees with what Firmin-Sellers and Sellers (1999:1118) found, namely that in Cameroon State elites received 83% of the land titles issued since 1974. In the case of Malawi, in the study area in Lilongwe, land tenure formalisation has benefited middle or high income groups such as lawyers, high court judges, politicians, business icons,

[19] P57: NEWS-MW (3).pdf:(@248-@374)
[20]P51: NEWS-MW (21).pdf: (@259-@346).

bureaucratic elites and other government employees who are directly or indirectly involved in the land tenure formalisation process and have privileged information about land and knowledge of the complicated land titling procedure. In this regard, instead of promoting equity as conceived by the policy, the tenure formalisation process leaves the poor without land and the so-called land encroachers continue to face constant threat of eviction at the hands of the state security.

Moreover, in order to increase access to land by citizens, the policy as conceived seeks to bar non-Malawians from acquiring land in the country. Malawians should be given priority in land acquisition. However, if interviews and mass media reports are anything to go by, there are other challenges facing land acquisition in the country such as corruption. Thus unless government addresses these challenges, stories of foreigners dominating in land ownership will not be history. Consequently, failure to do so may lead to tensions over ownership of land between Malawians and non -Malawians.

6.4.4.3 Rhetoric 2: The myth of decentralisation and transparency

The second objective of the policy is to promote decentralised and transparent land administration. To this end the policy seeks to recognise, clarify, and protect existing customary rights especially customary tenure, in law. Also, the policy intends to establish economically viable ceilings on land ownership to prevent concentration of land on a few individuals or organisations. Moreover, the policy seeks to prevent extreme fragmentation of land (Malawi Government 2002:5)

6.4.4.4 Rhetoric 3: The myth of extending planning to all urban and rural areas

Third, as conceptualised, the policy seeks to extend land use planning strategies to all urban and rural areas. In this regard, the policy hopes to facilitate efficient use of land under market conditions to ensure optimum benefits from land development. The National Land Policy of 2002 attempts to address some shortcomings in the TCPA by considering the socio-economic background of Malawians. The policy is specifically designed to improve access to land by declaring the whole country a planning area. This means that even customary land is subject to development control.

A number of implications can be drawn from the declaration of the country as a planning area. In the opinion of traditional leaders, this policy objective is vague and unclear. At a workshop attended by 15 traditional leaders, Chief Kadewere said:

"I feel we are being cheated on this issue. And even when we try to explain to our people, they ask us to explain why government has come up with such an issue and who is going to benefit once they register their land".

He also feared the policy would demean their powers and would create a loophole for unscrupulous leaders to benefit by cheating poor people that feared government had plans to seize their land.[21] Chief Malengachanzi is reported to have complained:
"If this policy passes into law and government takes control of land, what's the point of our existence? If that's the case we expect the same government to abolish traditional authorities because our major role has to do with the same land government wants to take control of."[22]

In relation to this, the chiefs view the policy as a mere tactic and machination of the state to ensure that chiefs lose their authority over land allocation. In their perception, chiefs in Malawi do not want to lose their role of allocating land to their subjects because of the new draft land policy and the on-going decentralisation programme.[23] In other words, the policy as a conceived space represents loss of authority of chiefs over land.

6.4.4.5 Rhetoric 4: The myth of modernising land management

Fourth, the policy as conceptualised, seeks to establish a modern land registration system for delivering land services to all. In this regard, the policy advocates the formal and orderly arrangement of granting titles and delivering land services in a modern and decentralised registration system that supports local government throughout Malawi (Malawi Government 2005:5).

One of the driving forces behind the modern land policy is that it is externally driven and neoliberal, a market led policy funded by the World Bank. In this regard, it can be argued that modernising land management in terms of land rights, acquisition, and data storage among others, is at the heart of the policy. In her own words, the World Bank country manager, Sandra Bloemenkamp was quoted as saying:

"The bank considers this (computerised registry and staff training) an important undertaking because it will improve the efficiency and timeliness of land transactions, thereby enhancing the development of land markets, in line with the land policy which was adopted in 2002".

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[21] P47: NEWS-MW (18).pdf: (@188-@397)
[22] Frank Namangale Daily Times, Monday, march 25, 2002). (P51: NEWS-MW (21).pdf: (@115-@257)
[23] P57: NEWS-MW (3).pdf: (@273-@502)

From this statement a number of implications can be drawn. First, it can be observed that at the heart of the land policy is the emphasis on efficiency and speed. These are characteristics of the space of capitalism, yet quite often they are mere rhetoric and promises. Second, modernising land demands computerised land registries and expertise. These are challenges of conceived spaces as market led policies. Third, land reforms in Malawi are donor-driven and funded. This underlines the role of neoliberal perceptions superimposed on national policies.[24]

Echoing this statement, the Secretary for Lands and Housing, Fletcher Zenengeya observed that an organised land information management system would help improve revenue collection on the part of the Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA), local assemblies, utility companies and banks:

"This will be a robust system that will improve efficiency in land management, revenue collection and planning because it will be a comprehensive data bank for land information, covering the whole country". As recommended in the national land policy, this will address problems such as land scarcity, mismanagement of land development and squatting.[25]

On the basis of the foregoing the policy as conceived attempts to address problems such as land scarcity, mismanagement of land development and squatting[26] through modernisation of the land management system, noting the slow pace at which land transactions in the country are undertaken.

6.4.4.6 Rhetoric 5: The myth of conservation and community management of local resources

Fifth, the policy as conceived aspires to ensure environmental sustainable land use practices as well as good land stewardship through community participation and public awareness. In the case of Blantyre however, it is clear that state through the Blantyre City Council (BCC) intends to protect Soche Hill as a conservation area. In this regard, building structures on the mountain contradicts this use and function of the space as conceived. On the one hand, the city has tolerated other residential structures situated on the mountain even though they have violated the plan. On the other hand, those dwellings perceived by the state to be temporary and substandard are the ones that are targeted for demolition. In this regard, the BCC is

[24] P50: NEWS-MW (20).pdf: (@593-@1)
[25] P54: NEWS-MW (24).pdf: (@132-@213)
[26] P54: NEWS-MW (24).pdf: (@132-@213)

playing double standards in its efforts to maintain the forest as a conservation space while at the same time approving and demolishing structures erected on the mountain.

6.4.4.7 Rhetoric 6: The myth of capacity building

Finally, the policy as conceived seeks to promote research and capacity building in land surveying and land management. Crucial in this case, is the need for research and continuous education of the public on duties and obligations of land tenure, land stewardship, and operation of the land market. By implication, the drafters of the land policy assumed that Malawians lack knowledge and are ignorant of land ownership.

The policy will promote the influence of Land policies on access to land and its price. Malawi National Land Policy of 2002 provides an enabling environment for investment in housing and it recognizes the need for equitable access to land in rural and urban areas. The Land policy proposes transfer of the administration of urban land leases to respective local governments. This will improve development control as allocated land conforms to the provision of the plans and hence can reduce illegal development (ALMA Constancy 2006). In addition to the need for computerising the land registry system, lack of capacity remains one of the challenges and weaknesses in the country's land administration, hence proposals for staff training.

6.4.5 Critical reflection of the 2002 policy as a postcolonial conception (1964-1993)

In Malawi, like other former colonies in Africa, the immediate post-colonial era was marked by further action on the part of the state to consolidate its grip on land throughout the country. In this regard, post-colonial authorities proved more insensible and numb than their colonial predecessors to any other formal claims to land.

Land reform measures have done much to supplant customary land laws with Eurocentric equivalents. Reformers have continued to ignore all claims to land backed by anything other than formal or modern instruments (Njoh 2013). Pos-tcolonial authorities inherited and religiously endeavoured to adhere to the letter and spirit of the land legislation blue print of their colonial predecessors. For instance, authorities, mainly the head of state, established rules governing land tenure. Like in Cameroon, the post-colonial authorities went several steps further to 'modernise' the land tenure system (Njoh 2013). The implication here is that the registration of land title is a prerequisite for entitlement; both urban and rural landowners have to formalise their land ownership or entitlement claims; all land for which there is no government issued land certificate or title is *ipso facto* property of the state. Njoh (2013) has

extensively argued that rather than enabling capital accumulation for all, land tenure formalisation process serve to aggravate socio-economic inequalities. For instance, in Cameroon, by stipulating government issued land titles as the unique testament to land ownership, indigenous leaders have compounded the problem of inequitable, unfair and unjust access to land created by their colonial predecessors (Njoh 2013).

The foregoing analysis of the land reforms including the land policy of 2002 reveals that land reform initiatives from the colonial to the postcolonial era have paid little attention to the issue of equity although the policies purportedly claim to do so. This observation supports conclusions drawn by various researchers who observe that on-going reforms throughout the continent since the colonial era have historically neglected questions of equity, fairness and justice (Feder and Noronha 1987; Njoh 1998; Rakodi 2006).

One fundamental proclamation of the land policy is to improve access to land through tenure formalisation. The belief is that tenure formalisation will thereby improve access to credit and hence socio-economic improvement in the lives of Malawians. However, as it will be seen, this is a mere tactic by the state to allow the middle class and upper class who have appropriated land illegally to finally consolidate their land holdings. State spatial practices of formalisation consequently perpetuate exclusion as was the case in the colonial era since only those with money can afford to pay for the costs of formalisation.

First, it must be understood that such access, as proponents of land tenure formalisation such as Hernando de Soto (2000) states, can enable even the poor to become successful business people. In this case, land tenure formalisation is apparently a feasible means of ensuring some degree of equity among different groups in society. However as the Malawian experience with the land policy demonstrates, the faith of De Soto and his disciples in the ability of land titles to financially benefit the poor is clearly misplaced. Interestingly, there is substantial evidence from De Soto's own native Peru that reveals that land titles do not increase the credit worthiness of the poor (Gilbert 2002). In Peru, out of 200,313 households in Lima alone who were issued with land titles from government in pursuance of land tenure formalisation between 1998 and 1999, only 24% had by 2002 used the land titles as collateral to secure financing from the commercial banks (Gravois 2005; Gilbert 2002).

Similar experiences where land titles have not been a viable means of accessing credit have also been reported in Turkey, Mexico, South Africa and Columbia (Gravois 2005). Indeed, Gilbert's (2002) extensive research on land issues in Colombia and other parts of Latin America points to the conclusion that property titles seem to have brought neither a healthy

housing market nor a regular supply of formal credit. In this regard, notwithstanding the importance of land titles for collateral purposes, there is consensus that access to such loans depends on other factors like connections to the levers of socio-political power (Njoh 2003). In addition, even the tenure formalisation process depends on connections to the extent that it is only bureaucrats, politicians, and business people who benefit from tenure formalisation at the expense of the poor groups in society (Njoh 2013; Njoh 1998).

The land policy as conceived, aspires to improve the socio-economic status of Malawians. In practice, however, the institutional infrastructure for land administration in Malawi is poorly designed and marred with bureaucratic incompetence and ineffectiveness. According to Deininger (2003), the administration of land in Malawi lacks transparency, thus providing fertile ground for numerous administrative malaises ranging from corruption to bribery and others. Under these circumstances, the poor are the most victimised (Rakodi 2006; Palmer 2007) especially because they lack the ability to bribe officials. Consequently, they cannot formalise their claims to land and are thus unable to defend their rights to land. Ultimately the poor resort to informal means of accessing and defending their rights to land. On the other hand, the bureaucrats and other agents of the state benefit from these opportunities created by complex and cumbersome procedures and enrich themselves. Arguably therefore, land tenure reform in Malawi largely benefits the elite while excluding the poor from accessing urban land.

Furthermore, since the majority of the landless urban populations are poor as depicted in the socio-economic profile of the urban residents, with most of the relying on informal economic activities, they cannot afford to pay for the process of tenure formalisation. In one focus group discussion in Blantyre city, one participant emphatically said he could not allow government to formalise his land because he does not have money to pay for such an expensive process.

Finally the requirement for a certificate as evidence of land ownership continues to dispossess the natives of urban areas of their land simply because they cannot produce formal documents. Yet during interviews with indigenous residents in Soche West ward, the residents who claimed to be the natives in the area complained that in fact the state continues to confiscate land from them simply because they do not have formal instruments to attest to their claims of land ownership.

6.5 URBAN STRUCTURE PLANS AS REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

When discussing contestations over urban spaces as represented in urban structure plans of Blantyre and Lilongwe cities, it is important to recall that Blantyre and Lilongwe were

conceived at the national scale as commercial city and capital city respectively. The NPDP of 1987 as representations of space designates Blantyre and Lilongwe as national centres. However, while Blantyre is represented as a commercial and industrial city, Lilongwe is represented as a political and administrative city with the expectation that political and administrative functions in Blantyre will be relocated to Lilongwe with the passage of time (Republic of Malawi 1987:65-66).

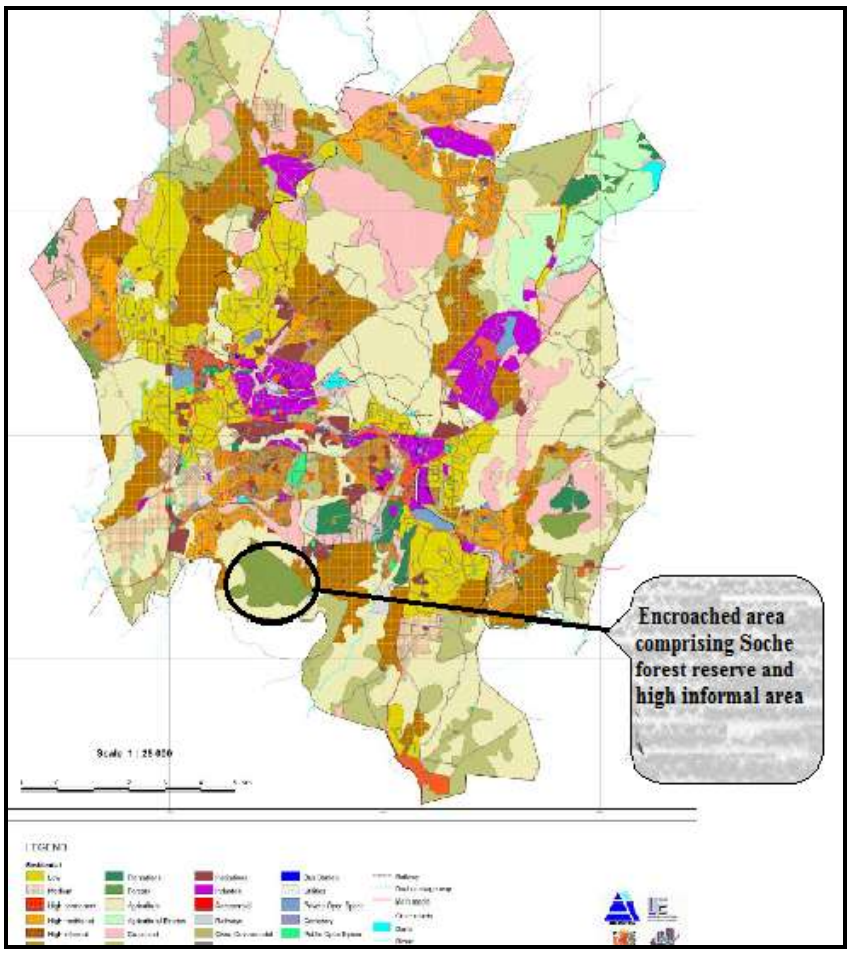
6.5.1 Case Study 1: The contested Blantyre USP and Chimwankhunda layout plans

On the basis of Blantyre Urban Structure Plan (BUSP), Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC) perimeter surveys and lay out plans which in this analysis depict representations of spaces as portrayed in master plans and lay out plans. An analysis of contestation of urban space in Soche Area in Blantyre city is presented. Current uses by the inhabitants of the space in question as portrayed in Google images were also then compared with the planned layout.

6.5.1.1 The BUSP and the Chimwankhunda Plan

The Blantyre Structure Plan (BSP) was the strategic plan guiding the development of the city since 1980 and until 1999 when another structure plan was prepared. The Blantyre City Assembly is responsible for performing all urban planning and development control functions in the city including the preparation and implementation of the BSP. The BSP provides for the growth of Blantyre to a population of approximately 500 000 and made provision for the preparation of district (local) and layout plans. **Figure 6.3** below shows the general land use plan for the city. The plan applied land-use zoning to all parts of the city and identified future development requirements and areas for the various land-use zones including low-density housing, medium-density housing, high-density permanent housing and high-density traditional housing.

Conceived land use. Concerning the study area (Soche West), the plan also proposed a district commercial centre, similar to those in the other main residential districts of Ndirande, South Lunzu, Chirimba, Nkolokoti and Chigumula (BCC 1978:3). The plan also retained Soche Mountain Forest Reserves while adjacent Kanjedza Forest Reserve was proposed for medium and high-density housing with the catchment area of the Burn (Chiwembe) Dam reserved for afforestation. It also extended the Chigumula Forest Reserve to include Chigumula Hill. On the basis of the current BSP, the land use pattern for the city is depicted in **Figure 6.3.**

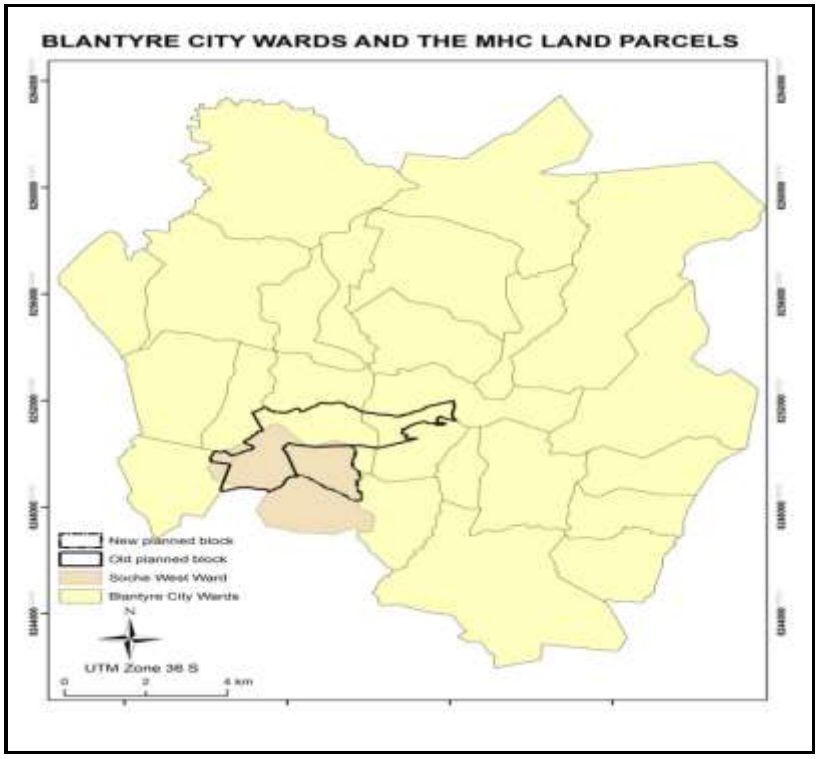


Source: BCC (1999)

Figure 6.3 General land use plan for Blantyre city, 1999

Ownership of land. On the basis of cadastral maps that were obtained from the Department of Surveys in Blantyre, the squatted area belongs to Malawi Housing Corporation, Blantyre City Assembly and Department of Forestry. In this regard, MHC is the legal authority over over the land especially on the lower part of the mountain. According to the MHC, the land in question is represented as a medium density housing area as per the layout plan for the area. On the other hand Soche Hill, is the other squatted space, was conceived as conservation and hence protected area. In this regard, control over the forest or conservation areas is within the jurisdiction of the Department of Forestry and the Blantyre City Council. It must be noted further that conceptions of ownership of land in urban areas and how urban residents perceive it have implications on land rights and ultimately contestations of land. For instance, as it will be discussed later, the state's legal claim over land is continuously being contested by residents, which means that struggles over land are effectively struggles over conceptions of land rights.

With regard to land tenure, land in Soche area is private land belonging to MHC **(Figure 6.4)**. However, their plans should be in conformity with the BSP which is regarded as the master plan for the city.



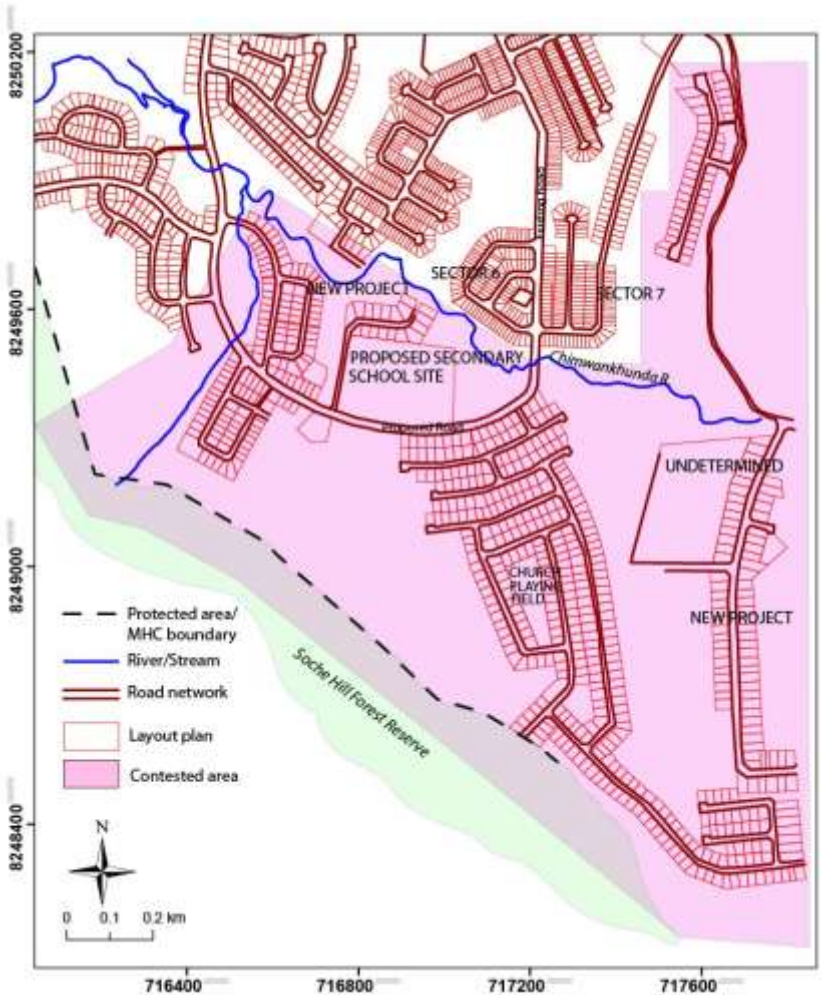
Source: Researcher's production using data from (MHC 2011)

Figure 6.4 MHC land in Blantyre city

From the plan map that was obtained from MHC, it was found that a well-laid out plan for the area and proposed amenities was developed by MHC. The plan for the area show well laid out plots for a medium density residential area. The plots are regular and ordered with access roads passing through the residential area. The plan stretches southwards down to Misesa ward which ironically falls under the jurisdiction of the chief and is thus governed according to customary law.

Conceived plan versus existing land use. In Soche West, the existence of unplanned settlements could be a manifestation of how local inhabitants contested the plan as depicted above. GoogleEarth® images downloaded from the internet were used for the mapping of the current land uses in BCA. Apart from their correctness (i.e. 2009), GoogleEarth® images for the city are of high spatial and spectral resolution and enabled observation of some of the finer details of the area. The images were downloaded, imported

into ArcGIS 9.3TMand georeferenced to UTM Zone 36S projection system. On the basis of these, it was possible to compare the plan as conceived by MHC planners and how local inhabitants contested the plan by erecting the structures without regard to owners of the land i.e. MHC. Further analysis using an overlay technique based on the MHC plan map layer on the Google image, was employed to compare the current land use map and the map layers from land parcels and the unplanned settlement areas, it has been possible to compare the original MHC plan and the current land use patterns in the area, the extent and magnitude of squatting and potential land use conflicts. Figure 6.5 depicts the MHC plan for the area (The Chimwankhunda lay out plan) and the difference between the conceived plan and the existing spatial practice (Figure 6.6).

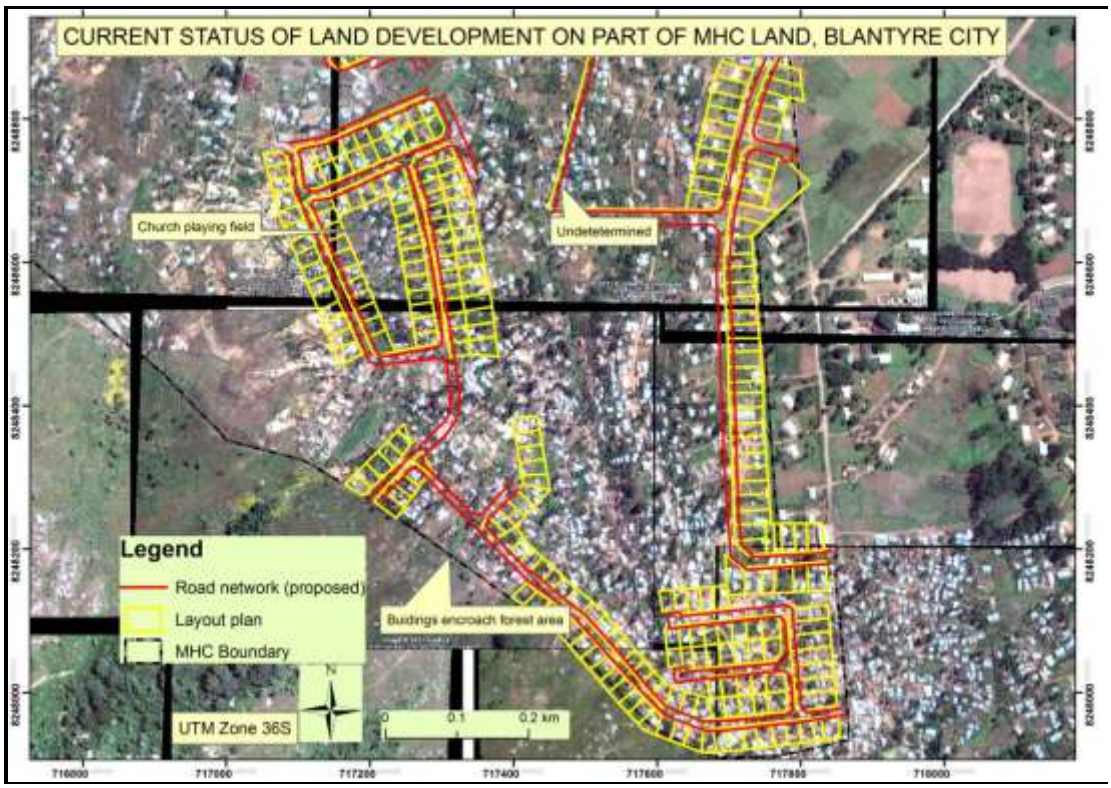


Source: Researcher's production using data from MHC and 2012 aerial images

Figure 6.5 MHC plan and the invaded area

On the basis of **Figure 6.6,** it can be observed that almost all the land development within the MHC boundary (the black dotted line), has deviated in five ways from the MHC lay out plan

for the area. First, for instance, a closer look at the figure above reveals that land to the north east, which was previously undetermined as per the lay out plan for the area, has now been encroached upon. Even the lay out plan to the right of the undetermined has not been adhered to by the developers, thus ignoring the plan for the area. Second, to the South West of MHC boundary lies the Soche Forest. This conservation area which initially belonged to MHC was handed over to BCA to manage. In spite of this protected area status it can also be seen that settlements are fast encroaching this forest area. Third, to the North East, there is a clearly laid out plan with some land in the middle of the housing area planned for institutional use, in this case, a church and church playing field. The situation above reveals that there is haphazard residential development in the area including encroachment on the land reserved for church use. Fourth, it is surprising to note that to the east of MHC land boundary there seem to be no or few encroachments. The cadastral map for the area shows that this area is public land. This again raises questions as to why there are more occurrences of encroachment on private land (i.e. MHC land) as opposed to public land. Finally, it should also be noted that to the southern border of MHC boundary lies the city boundary. In this case, beyond this point lies customary land where chiefs have control over allocation. During group discussions with indigenous residents (as will be discussed in the next chapter) it was explained that they are currently farming on the public land and at the same time they cannot encroach on customary land because they have practical knowledge regarding the owners of that piece of land.



Source: Researchers output (2013)

Figure 6.6 MHC plan overlead on aerial images

All in all, while the Chimwankhunda layout plan designated the Soche and Misesa area as medium density area, Soche Hill is a forest reserve hence of environmental significance. In other words, the space means space of environmental significance. However, the people have encroached on the forest reserve as well as the lower part of the hill to shape it into a space of human habitation. The challenges that the state faces in the imposition of their representations of spaces on the residents of Soche West as well as Lilongwe's Area 49, will be examined.

6.5.1.2 Geography of unplanned settlements in Blantyre city

In Blantyre city, the terms 'informal' and 'unplanned' settlements are used interchangeably as a residential category comprising those areas where there is a concentration of people residing in an area which has not been planned at all. Generally, these are referred to as squatter areas. Spatially, these settlements characterised as semi-rural are largely located on the urban fringe characterised by lower densities and a traditional or rural lifestyle (BCC 2000).

In terms of magnitude, it is reported that about 55% of the inhabitants of Blantyre reside in these informal unplanned settlements covering 25.52% of the total residential land area in the

city **(see Table 6.1)**. In some informal settlements, for instance, Ndirande, densities are as high as one unit per 129 m^2 or 300 people per ha in some settlements (BCC 2000).

Table 6. 1 Growth of informal settlements in Blantyre city

Settlement category	Population	Population as % of total	Surface area as % of total	Estimated no. of households
Formal planned	169 339	32.63	50.17	34256
Informal unplanned	285 210	54.95	25.52	63380
Semi-rural	64 484	12.42	24.31	10955

Source: BCC 2000

It must be noted that as of 2008, the city of Blantyre accommodates a total population of 600 000. In terms of residential land use, the residential areas are classified into three broad categories, namely: formal planned settlement, informal unplanned settlement and semi-rural settlement.[27]

Like in the colonial era, the low-density residential areas (the oldest areas such as Namiwawa, Sunnyside, Mount Pleasant, Mandala and Nyambadwe, Mpingwe and BCA hill) are located closest to the two City centres of Blantyre and Limbe CBD while the medium-density areas such as Naperi, Nancholi, Namiyango and Newlands tend to be slightly further away from the CBDs.

Noticeably, high-density permanent areas (PHAs) are in fairly close proximity to employment centres for instance, Ndirande, Kanjedza, Chitawira, Nkolokosa, Manja, Chinyonga and Chiwembe. It is of importance as noted earlier that most of these settlements are the result of colonial planning which meant to ensure that workers are close to spaces of employment. Unlike, PHAs, postcolonial traditional housing areas, are located further away from spaces of employment. Excluding Ndirande, such settlements include Zingwagwa, Chilobwe, Chimwankhunda, Chilomoni, Bangwe, Namiyango and South Lunzu.

On the basis of the foregoing analysis of residential spaces in Blantyre, it can be observed that the geographic spread of squatting clusters is around the CBD and spaces of employment such as Kanengo industrial areas or in proximity to these spaces. This probably explains absence of

[27] **The** formal planned category includes the areas generally referred to as low-density areas, medium-density areas, high-density permanent areas and THAs. The informal, unplanned category includes those areas where there is a concentration of people residing in an area which has not been planned at all. These are generally referred to as squatter areas. The semi-rural category refers to settlements on the urban fringe characterised by lower densities and a traditional or rural lifestyle.

squatters in South Lunzu notwithstanding land availability in the area. The pattern also suggests the significance of close proximity to spaces of employment as a consideration in choosing a home. Also, as will be observed later in the analysis of perceived spaces and spatial practices, the remoteness of South Lunzu is one of the reasons squatters in Soche Hill cite as basis for disobeying relocation efforts by the BCC and MHC. In the next chapter factors such as land ownership and its role on squatter developments will be also examined especially mindful of the fact that land invasions are predominantly in the city on land belonging to the government, MHC or local authority.

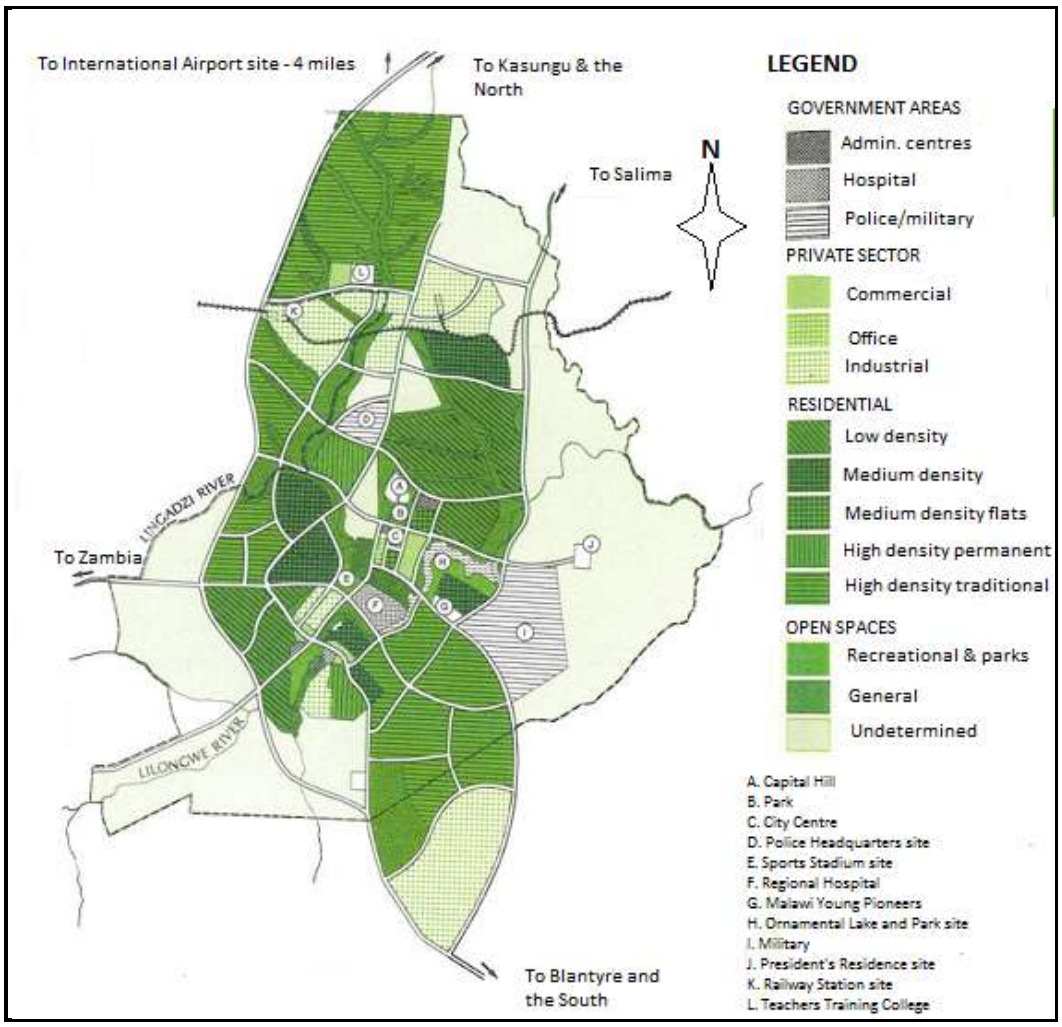
6.5.2 Case Study 2: Contesting the Lilongwe USP and Area 49 Layout Plan

Lilongwe, located in the central region of Malawi, was established as a trading centre in 1906 and became the capital city with a purpose-built town in 1975. As of 2008, Lilongwe has a population of about 674,000 which is larger than that of Blantyre. In this analysis, I commence with the a general overview of the production of space at the macro scale in this case, Lilongwe city, followed by a micro-scalar analysis of how space is conceived and represented with reference to Area 49. In this regard, the following representations of space in the production of this post- colonial city space are analysed: the initial master plan of 1969; the OZS of 1986; the Lilongwe Integrated Development Strategy (IDS) of 1990; and the current City Development Strategy (CDS) of 2009.

6.5.2.1 The 1969 master plan: Malawi's 'Garden City'

One of the ways to analyse conceived spaces and representations of space is to first examine the first Lilongwe Master Plan of 1969 especially with reference to the conceived urban morphology.

Artificiality and dull abstraction. In terms of conception, the master plan adhered to the spatial allocation of land use planned by the Town and Country Planning Department (see Figure 6.7). In practice, however, many of the zoned areas have not yet been developed and relatively little of the extensive planned area is actually 'built up'. Next, as an abstraction, the plan suffers from 'artificiality'. Indeed, like Brasilia and Canberra, the conceived plan exhibits few of the usual characteristics of urban areas which have grown more or less organically.



Source: Adapted from Richards (1974:18-19)

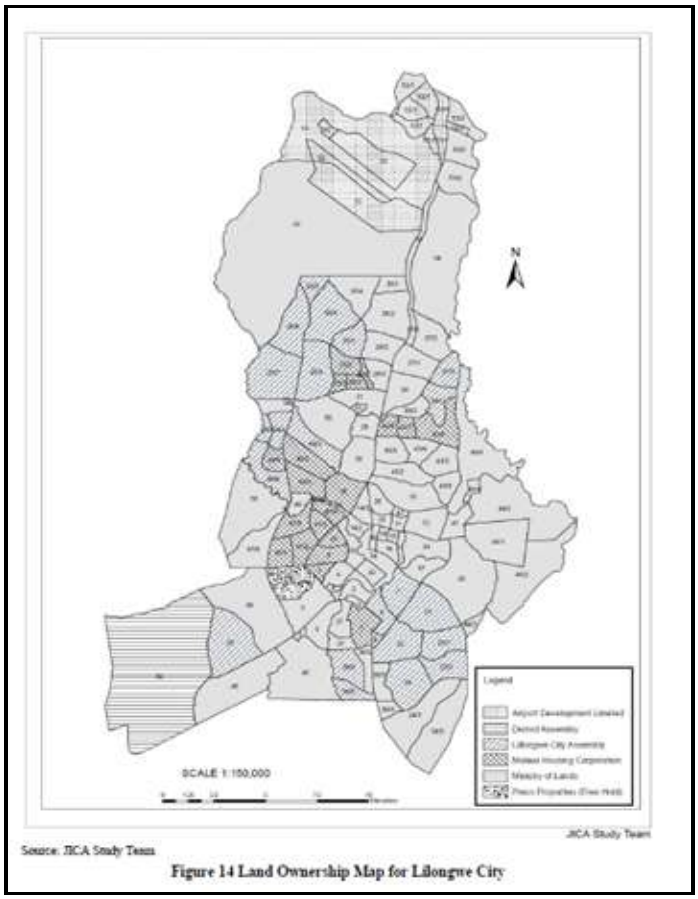
Figure 6.7 Lilongwe City Master Plan of 1969

Segregation as opposed to integration. An analysis of the postcolonial master plan as conceived reveals that there was no intermixing between land uses. First, there was no intermixing between commercial, industrial, and residential land use. Second, the plan lacked intermixing of residential land use. For instance, residential spaces were divided into high- medium- and low-density areas. Furthermore, low income, high density zones are further subdivided into traditional and permanent housing. In this case, Traditional Housing Areas (THAs) comprise site and service plots whereas permanent housing represents comprise formally built housing largely for government employees, whose rents are subdivided.

Ownership of urban land in Lilongwe city. One of the aspects of conceived space is to analyse ownership of urban land as represented in urban plans and policies. In turn ownership as portrayed in plans and policies will be compared with residents' perceptions and their spatial practices regarding ownership. First, as noted earlier, the Lilongwe city operated

without a development plan or Master plan especially at the expiry of the 1986 Outline Zoning Scheme in 2000. Consequently, the city grew in an unrestrained fashion implying difficulties in ascertaining current land ownership in the city.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, in their preparation of the Urban Development Strategy (UDS), the JICA team found that the majority of the land in Lilongwe city is owned by the following corporate entities: Airport Development Limited (ADL), District Assembly (specifically the land of Area 58 which is customary land under adjudication title to individual family units), Lilongwe City Council (LCC), Ministry of Lands, and Press Properties (Freehold) and private individuals **(see Figure 6.8).**



Source: LCC (2010)

Figure 6.8 Land ownership in Lilongwe city

Specifically, with reference to Area 49, the study area, land is shared between the Ministry of Lands, Malawi Housing Corporation and Lilongwe City Council. In practice, existing land uses in the area include: high density traditional, high density permanent housing, bare land and unplanned settlements. Worth noting, is that much of the land especially Dubai was initially MHC land but was later surrendered to LCC after land invasions at the dawn of

multiparty democracy in the 1990s hence the name ‘multiparty’ and ‘Dhubai’ to signify plularity and freedom as well as cheap plots (Dhubai was a source of cheap second hand minibuses around the early 1990s).

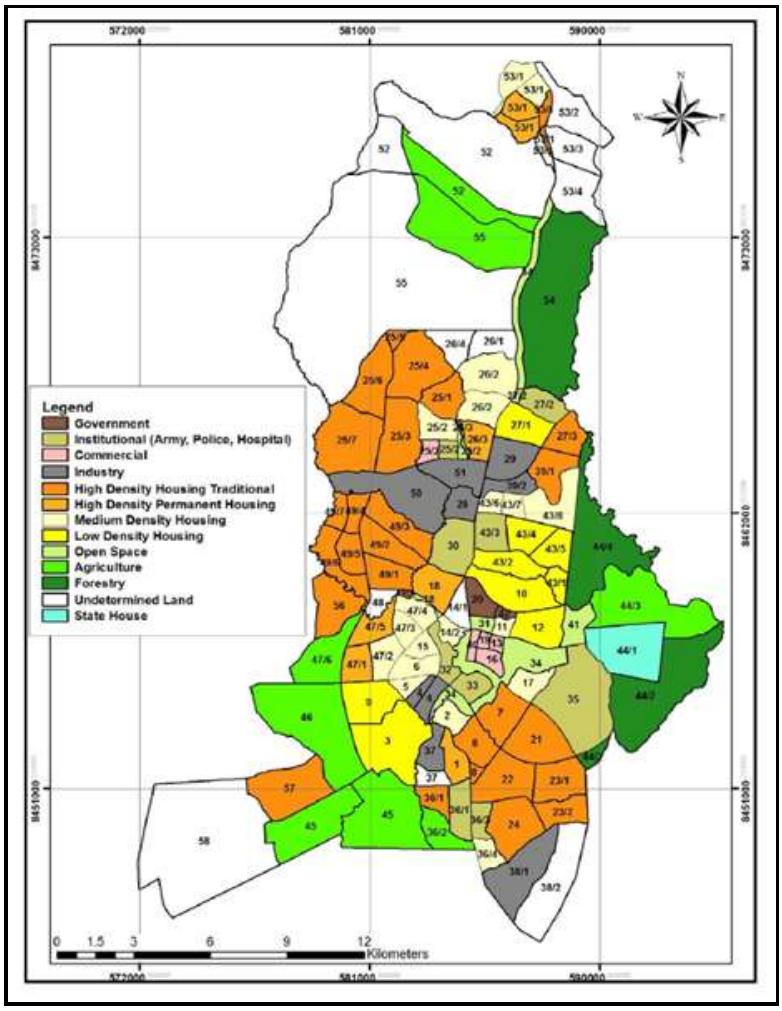
The Garden City and implications for spatial practice. The city is represented as a Garden City. Government commitment since independence has been to preserve this garden city image (Potts 1985). Continued adherence to the promotion of this representation has led to new high density housing areas being located away from the city centre and screened from the road by belts of trees. Also, in line with this representation, squatting is seen as highly undesirable. In this regard, there is a legal provision in the USP to prevent unsightly sites (Town Country Planning Department 1978).

Arguably, adhering to and obsession with abstract space by the state as observed above, leads to contestation over urban space. The government's commitment to the garden city image started generating conflicts with the city population soon after the city’s declaration. Among other factors, these conflicts can be attributed to the rapid growth of the population due to rural-urban migration with 75% of these residents expected to reside in high density areas. Other factors include the financial incapacity of the city council which meant that housing programmes for high density could not cope with population growth; and worse still since the CCDC as a private vehicle in the implementation of the New Capital City Project had commercial interest, this meant that they had less commitment to providing low cost site and service plots which yield no profit. Indeed, by 1977 only 1400 site and service plots were laid out (not even meeting then demand) (CCDC 1977). Ultimately, contrary to the representation of a garden, in reality the city also continues to experience little growth in the formal sector paving the way for the informal employment which will lead to informal settlement growth. In this case, Lilongwe's administrators will have to temper their commitment to the 'garden city' image and allow the emergence of peripheral and therefore largely 'invisible' unplanned settlements.

6.5.2.2 The Outline Zoning Scheme (OZS) of 1986

The Lilongwe Outline Zoning Scheme (OZS) is a statutory land use plan for the City prepared in 1986. Essentially, it is an updated version of Lilongwe Structure Plan of 1978. The 1986 OZS portrayed the postcolonial city as linear, multi-centred urban form for the city. It can therefore be implied that by adhering to principles of linearity among others, the postcolonial capital of Lilongwe perpetuated images and conceptions of modernity. This conception was

motivated by the desire to avoid the congestion problems of a single centre city. In its pursuance of this vision of a linear multi-centred form, the Lilongwe Structure Plan divided the City into four sectors stretching from the southern end of the city to the northern end, namely: Old Town, Capital Hill, Kanengo, and Lumbadzi. Ideally, each sector of the city was conceived as being self-contained and complete with own commercial centre **(see Figure 6.9)**.



Source: LCC (2010)

Figure 6.9 Lilongwe OZS of 1986

Guided by this principle, the OZS set out three strategies, namely promotion of more efficient land use (layout for housing, industrial, commercial, and other areas to be designed to maximise use of land consistent with minimising infrastructure and service costs per plot); consolidation of the urban form (in this case, vacant sites within a built-up area would be developed first before sites on the edge or elsewhere); and finally, attainment of a more balanced pattern of development. To this end, each sector and neighbourhood would be self-

contained with housing, employment opportunities, services, and facilities) with Capital Hill and the Kanengo sectors as development priorities.

Like in Blantyre city, land for housing was divided into two categories namely permanent and traditional with permanent land being further categorised based on density **(Table 6.2).** It is also noteworthy that beside institutional land use (e.g. land for police, army, health, training, religion, sports, and other large establishments) the OZS earmarked undetermined land which was acquired to be used for unforeseen land use in the future (arguably this had implications on squatting as it will be seen later in the discussion).

Table 6. 2 Residential land distribution according to the OZS of 1986

Residential land use		Area (ha)	%
Permanent	Low Density	2,005	5.9 (17.1)
	Medium Density	1,855	5.5 (15.8)
	High Density	1,135	5.5 (9.7)
Traditional	High Density Traditional	6,740	5.5 (57.4)
Total		11,735	34.5 (100)

Source: OPC (1986)

Worthy of note is that the plan made allowances for agriculture and forestry which accounted for 23.5% as compared to 19.2% for undetermined land (OPC 1986 Lilongwe OZS). By implication, allowance for agriculture and forestry as will be discussed later eventually contributed to contestations over urban space as residents farming on the land used their temporary cultivation as evidence of their claims for urban land.

The conceived plan as represented by the 1986 OZS was intended to guide and regulate the development of 34,000 hectares of land of the city by designating 13 land uses. However, Lilongwe failed to implement the proposed scheme. Some of the reasons include: time consuming application process; poor implementation capability of Lilongwe city council; insufficient capability to control development; and the absence of legal stakeholders responsible for planning application for the zoning scheme (Malawi Government/Lilongwe City Council 2010). Consequently, there has been unprecedented increase in the development of public land among others.

6.5.2.3 The Lilongwe Integrated Development Strategy (IDS) (1990 – 2000) and the City Development Strategy (CDS) of 2009

Fundamentally, it must be noted that comparing the two Outline Zoning Schemes (OZSs) of 1969 and 1986 as representations of space, it is clear that OZS concentrated on describing land uses for the new capital. Additionally, contrary to the original 1969 OZS, the 1986 OZS

which was intended to regulate urban development expanded the city jurisdiction by incorporating Area 56 and Area 57. Further, in 2008 Area 58 was added to the jurisdiction of the city although it was not yet legitimised. In this regard, in spite of the existence of plans as representations of space, the city has since 1969 continued to undergo reclassification to incorporate areas previously under rural authority into its planning area. Conversions of land, as it will be discussed later, are perceived as pilfering of rural land without due regard to matters of compensation, thereby causing tensions over land between traditional authorities and city authorities.

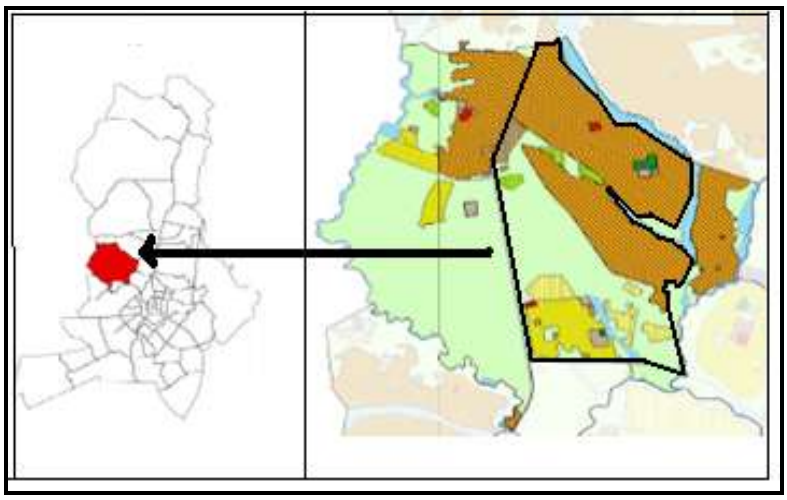
In 1990 a Lilongwe Integrated Development Strategy was developed and abolished 10 years later. Noting that master plans and structure plans produced for the last four decades of the city's existence are unable to address current challenges facing the city of Lilongwe, in 2009, a City Development Strategy was produced to deal with the complex social and economic challenges facing the city. Some of the urban development challenges include: increase of residential land demand; ineffective land use; poor living conditions in THA/Unplanned settlements and encroachment of unplanned settlements among others (LCC 2010). It is worth noting here that the absence of any guiding instrument between 2000 and 2009 effectively imply that the city has been managed without any guiding plan. In pursuance of the strategic planning approach, the CDS focuses on five thematic areas namely: governance, shelter and land, community development, service and the environment, and economic development (Malawi Government/Lilongwe City Council 2010).

In terms of its vision, according to the CDS' view of development trend, Lilongwe is expected to have the following three missions in the national context. First, the city of Lilongwe should attain the status of the primate city. Second, the capital city must embrace harmonising the environment, economic and social development embodied as embodied in the Malawi Vision 2020 and the Malawi Growth Development Strategy (MGDS) as the concept. Third, the capital city should be the international gateway of Malawi to its neighbouring countries.

6.5.2.4 Area 49/1 Conceived plan versus spatial practice

In city plans, Area 49 **(see Figure 6.10)** especially the encroached areas of Dubai and Bagdad is part of an urban zone also referred to as Mariya in official documents. Mariya covers an actual total area of 1360.3 ha of which 964.0 ha are official. During the period 1988 to 2008 the area's population doubled from 13,501 to 26000representing a growth rate of 6.8% per

annum. Unplanned settlements grew from 590 in 1987 to 1994 in 2005 representing an increase of 238%.



Source: Adapted from LCC (2010)

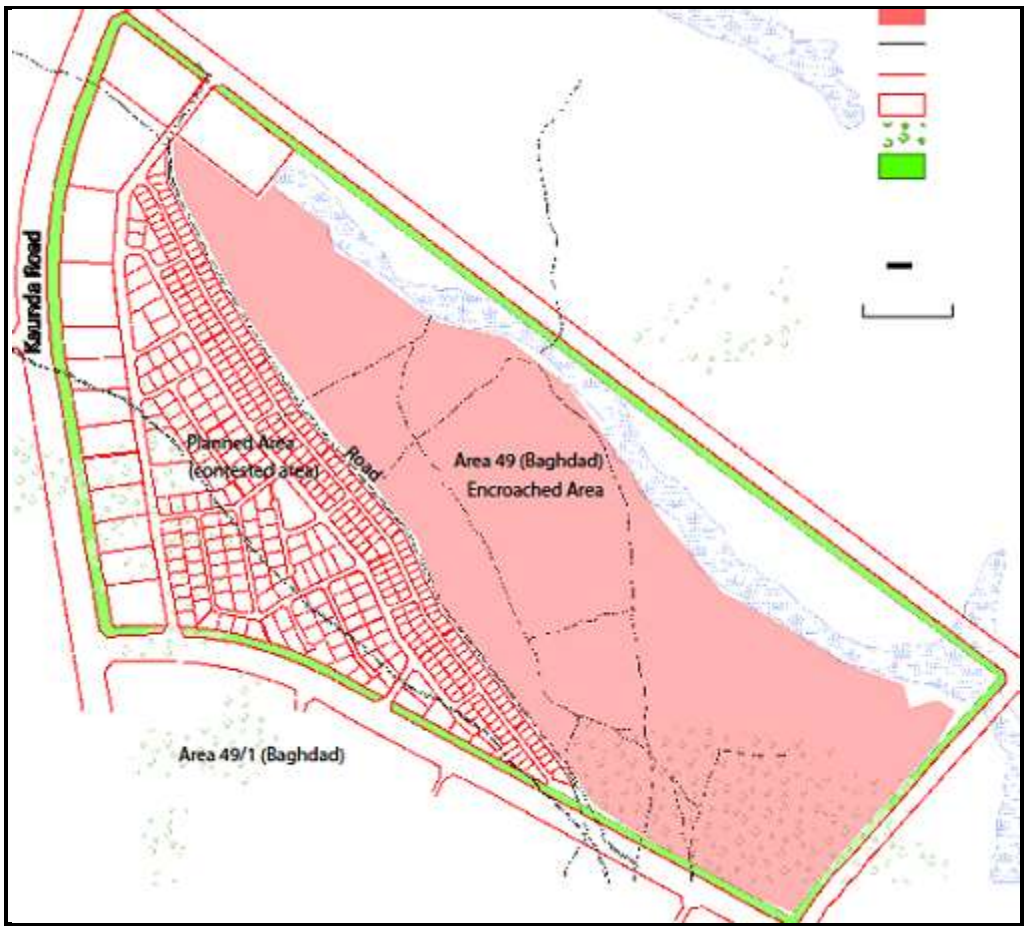
Figure 6.10 Area 49/1 as concieved

As a representation of space, the Lilongwe Outline Zoning Scheme of 1986 designated high density housing as land use for this area covering 1360.3 ha of land. Contrary to this, Area 49 has become a mix of agriculture land use and informal settlements as follows: Seasonal agriculture (48.8%), informal settlements (32.7%), rivers and dambos (6.2%), high density permanent housing (5.8%), medium density housing (2.2%), religious buildings, centres and institutes (1.1%) and others uses (3.1%). From this it can be observed that although as an abstract space, the area was conceived as THA, in practice however, around one third of the area is currently occupied by informal settlements. In this case, the reality is that the so-called unplanned or informal settlements are much more prevalent than high density permanent (6%) and medium density housing (2%).

Further analysis revealed that since much of the land was encroached as shown in the aerial image below, MHC surrendered the land to Lilongwe City Council. In this regard, the land use changed its status to THA now under the mandate of the LCC. Now having won the battle for land, urban residents continued with new invasions towards the south popularly known as Baghdad. Through a series of battles involving state agents who deployed police to the area to claim and defend their land, eventually residents also managed to occupy the southern parcel (encroached area).

Upon realising that MHC was losing its valuable land to encroachers, and that these encroachers were extending their invasions westwards (the vacant land), the corporation

moved quickly to produce a plot layout for the area **(see Figure 6.11).** By the year 2011, MHC had lost land much of its land in Area 49 through these bloody invasions.



Source: Research output (2013)

Figure 6.11 MHC layout plan for the contested area produced after land invasion.

It is of interest that although the plan now existing shows well laid out plots for the area, it must be mentioned that much of MHC land has already been invaded by squatters and the resultant land use has deviated completely from the one as conceived by the USP for the area. Also, it is important to note that apparently, the lay out plan for the area as depicted in **Figure 6.11** was produced in reaction to the rapid and uncontrollable invasion that was heading towards the remaining land in question. In this case, the plan could be a reactionary measure to gain control of the remaining piece of land, the city having lost most of the land to squatting groups.

Consequently, the resultant landscape as shown in **Figure 6.12** is a complete departure from the plan for the area. Indeed, residents have produced their own spaces, popularly referred to as Dubai and Bagdad (or multiparty area) as depicted in the Google image.

Source: Google earth (2013)

Figure 6. 12 Existing land use in Dubai and Baghdad

6.5.2.5 Geography of unplanned settlements in Lilongwe city

By 2005, it was reported that the population of unplanned settlements in Lilongwe city had grown up to 277, 762 and this implies that about 47% of the total population of the city live in unplanned settlements (LCC 2010). In this regard, from 1987 to 2005 the population of unplanned settlements had therefore increased by 340% (i.e. from 82,180) representing 7.4% per annum (that is, higher than the city's population growth of 4.7% per annum between 1998 and 2008). It is worth noting that the population growth of unplanned settlements accelerated between 1995 and 2005 as compared to the period 1987 to 1995 **(see Table 6.3).**

Table 6. 3 Growth of unplanned settlements in Lilongwe city

	Year					
Urban Zone	**1987**	**1990**	**1991**	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**
Alimaunde	10066	12331	13193	17296	24259	34022
Lumbadzi	7966	9760	10444	13686	18197	26925
Mvunguti	6726	8239	8816	11557	16209	22732
Kanengo	12990	15913	17028	22319	31302	43904
Mariya(Area 49)	**1521**	**1864**	**1993**	**2614**	**3666**	**5141**
Chimutu	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nyama	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tsabango	8105	9929	10623	13926	19532	27395
City Centre	0	0	0	0	0	0
Old Town	9569	11722	12542	16441	23060	32342
Chinsapo	12628	15469	16552	21697	30430	42682
Ngwenya	12609	15447	16528	21665	30386	42619
Total	**82180**	**100674**	**107719**	**141201**	**197041**	**277762**

Source: Adapted from BCC (2010)

Overall, unplanned settlements in Lilongwe City constitute the predominant residential land use (39.7%) followed by high density traditional housing (18.9%), low density housing (14.4%), indigenous village (11.8%), medium density housing (9.1%) and institutional housing (2.5%) (LCC 2010). With regard to spatiality, it is clear from the unplanned settlement map **(Figure 6.13)** and **(Figure 6.14)** that the encroachments tend to occur on undeveloped land towards city boundaries. Besides other factors such as the existence of commercial industry and work areas in the Old Town sector, it can also be argued that the concentration on the southern part of the city can be explained in terms of colonial planning as this area was initially zoned for Africans. In this regard, the colonial town seems to have an impact on the post-colonial city in terms of the residential location of low income groups.

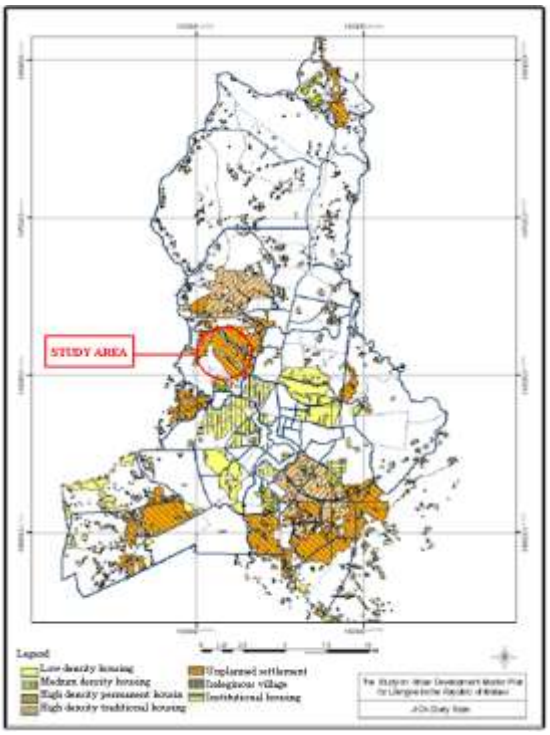


Figure 6.13 **Encroached area in relation to other residential land uses as of 2009**

Figure 6.14 **Encroached area in relation to other unplanned settlements in Lilongwe City**

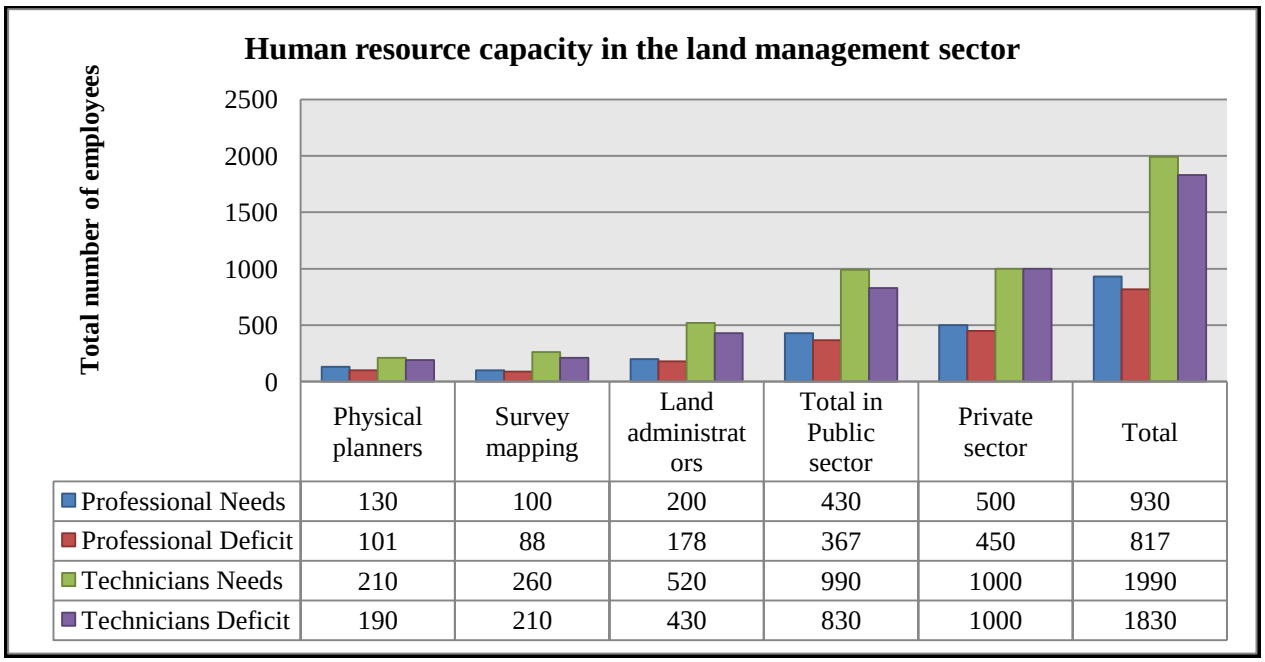
Source: Adapted from Malawi Government/LCC 2010

6.6 CHALLENGES IN THE PRODUCTION OF ABSTRACT SPACE

In Malawi, the imposition of abstract space and its representations of space are confronted with numerous challenges which incapacitate its hegemonic tendencies to impose abstract space. In particular, the analysis focuses on the institution of physical planning as a state mechanism in the production of urban space in Malawi. Challenges, in this regard, range from the institutional and administrative framework of urban planning, legal challenges and contradictions, inherent spatial planning contradictions; political factors vis-à-vis democracy; economic factors and finally perceptions of urban residents.

6.6.1 Institutional and administrative contradictions

On institutional challenges, lack of capacity in terms of human and financial incapacity hinders the planning system in its mandate to administer and manage urban land. For example, in the public and private sector there is a deficit of 817 (88%) of the total required professionals (101 physical planners, 88 surveyors, 178 land administrators/valuation officers and 500 in the private sector) (Mkwambisi 2009). In the technical sector there is a deficit of about 92% **(see Figure 6.15)**.



	Physical planners	Survey mapping	Land administrators	Total in Public sector	Private sector	Total
Professional Needs	130	100	200	430	500	930
Professional Deficit	101	88	178	367	450	817
Technicians Needs	210	260	520	990	1000	1990
Technicians Deficit	190	210	430	830	1000	1830

Source: Adapted from Mkwambisi (2009)

Figure 6.15 Human resource incapacity in land setor

On the same aspect of capacity, lack of technological capacity as reflected in the use of old geo-data sets means that accurate information and development planning continues to be based on out-dated geo-databases, making equitable socio- and economic development a challenge.[28] Consequently, state incapacity may result in poor enforcement of development control, lack of territorial control, an overwhelming duty on the state to provide monitoring and surveillance practices, inefficient land supply, and hence increased encroachment. Ultimately, this culminates in territorial conflicts and the production of unplanned and slum settlements.

In addition, fraud and corrupt practices as reported in the mass media are arguably another change that hinders the state's capacity to produce urban space as conceived. Corrupt practices in this regard, entail selling land to non-Malawians who are not eligible to purchase land in Malawi and charging prohibitive prices to exclude Malawians. Admitting how corruption is entrenched in the administration of urban land, the deputy minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Honourable Christopher Ngwira was reported to have said in 2012:

[28] Thom Khanje, The Daily Times, Thursday, November 5, 2009). (P54: NEWS-MW (24).pdf: (@216-@304)

"There are times when wealthier people or companies entice you with K1million kickback that will go into your pocket without a receipt for you to allocate them to a particular place of their choice instead of them paying the development fee of about K2milion that goes into government account," said Ngwira (Thokozani Chenjezi, Daily Times, February 6, 2012).

Consequently, beside loss of revenue on the part of the state, corrupt practices may lead to the exclusion of the poor from accessing urban land as they do not have resources to bribe land officers. Also, it may result in multiple land allocations which may ultimately lead to contestations over urban land.

Furthermore, bureaucratic and cumbersome procedures make the entire land acquisition process complex. Coupled with ignorance of land acquisition procedures, this means that only the affluent and those with networks and inside information are able to acquire land in urban areas. Consequently, the urban majority are left out with no option and therefore seek recourse to land invasions. **Table 6.4** reveals the length of period that various groups of residents waited to have their property registered and title issued.

Table 6.4 Processing period for land registration

Lessee*** (pseudonym)	Date applied	Date of registration	Processing period (in months)
Ms A	13/11/2002	18/10/2010	96
Mrs B	06/01/2010	18/11/2011	12
Mr A	11/05/2009	18/01/2011	21
Mr B	06/01/2010	26/07/2010	6
Mr C	17/08/2004	30/08/2010	72
Mr D	29/12/2006	15/09/2010	48
Mr E	12/11/2009	10/05/2010	5
Sir A	22/01/2004	13/02/2004	1
Sir B	28/06/2010	23/07/2010	1
Sir C	21/06/2010	13/08/2010	2
Sir D	20/05/2010	27/07/2010	2
Mr F	01/02/2010	18/10/2010	8
Ms C	01/02/2010	12/07/2010	5
Mr G	01/02/2010	06/07/2011	18
Ms M	01/02/2010	18/10/2010	8
Sir M	02/01/2010	18/10/2010	9
Mr H	01/02/2010	18/10/2010	9
Sir E	04/12/2010	15/02/2011	2
Mr I	02/11/2004	03/12/2010	73
Mr J	16/07/2010	23/07/2010	0.2
Mr K	30/06/2010	11/10/2010	4
Mr L	01/01/2009	18/10/2010	21
Ms G	14/04/2010	30/08/2010	4
Mr N	18/03/2009	26/10/2010	21
Mr O	05/12/2008	11/08/2010	32
Co Ltd	13/11/2009	17/12/2010	13
Ms Q	21/05/2010	02/01/2011	8
Mr R	15/07/2010	14/11/2011	16
Mr S	31/05/2010	09/09/2010	4
Mr T	18/02/2011	14/06/2011	4
Mr Obwera	12/09/2002	20/09/2004	24
Mr U	04/04/2002	07/12/2004	32
Mr V	17/07/2003	29/03/2004	8
Mr W	18/01/2002	24/02/2004	25
Mr X	24/07/2003	14/01/2005	18
Mr Officer	11/10/1999	10/06/2004	56
Mr Z	25/08/2003	01/08/2004	12

Source: MHC property register (2008/2009)

***Although the researcher has the names of the lessee, for purposes of confidentiality and anonymity, the actual names have not been disclosed. Although, all females are referred to as Ms or Mrs, the use of abbreviations does not in any way represent the actual initials of the applicant.

From **Table 6.4**, it is clear that it has been determined that it requires a total number of 700.2 months to process 37 lease applications, translating into an average of 18.9 months (one and half years) to process a single lease application. Further scrutiny of the names revealed that

most of those applicants who got the lease applications in less than one year have connections with MHC or are senior officials at the corporation. The findings support Njoh's (2013) observations in Cameroon that it is those people with networks and knowledge who are likely to benefit from tenure formalisation, not the poor. Evidently, as the media represents it, "bureaucracy is the cause of many Malawians not acquiring houses and plots for which they applied many years ago".[29]

To assess the capacity of MHC in the delivery and supply of land housing in urban Malawi, analysis of the MHC portfolio was carried out focusing on the following: housing provision (construction), total housing stock, and finally, plot development. With regard to housing construction **(Table 6.5),** results show that MHC only managed to build 664 houses throughout the country's towns and cities with particular emphasis on Lilongwe and Blantyre cities.

Table 6.5 MHC housing provision form 1984

Region	**No. of houses built (1994 to 2011)**
South (Blantyre)	305
Central (Lilongwe)	249
North (Mzuzu)	90
East (Zomba)	20
Total	**664**

Source: Research output (2013) using data from MHC Register Book for South (pp. 149, 154, 175), Centre (pp. 121), North (154) and East (IT property register)

On total housing supply **(Table 6.6),** as of 2009, MHC's total housing stock was estimated at 6200 with the majority (about 90%) classified as high density houses.

Table 6.6 MHC total housing supply, 2009

Region	**Residential typology**		
	Low density	**High density**	**Total**
South	192	2504	**2696**
Central	119	1622	**1741**
North	102	884	**986**
East	69	708	**777**
Total	**482**	**5718**	**6200**

Source: MHC Asset Register 2008/2009

It is worth noting that the limited supply of housing as shown above is against a total backlog of approximately 50,000 applicants on its waiting list waiting to be allocated a house for rent.

[29] P49: NEWS-MW (2).pdf: (@376-@468)

Table 6.7 Plot development by MHC (2007-2011)

Region	Period (2007 -2011)					Total
	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	
South	14	33	39	380	286	**752**
Central	311	-	2	1520	50	**1883**
North	122	-	-	11	1	**134**
East	-	-	45	1	4	**50**
Total	**447**	**33**	**86**	**1912**	**341**	**2819**

Source: Plot development schedule from MHC planning section (2011)

As the table indicates, over the five-year period (2007 to 2011), the MHC which is one of major land lords in Malawi's towns and cities, only managed to allocate about 2820 plots with majority of these plots being allocated in Lilongwe city, followed by Blantyre.

On the basis of MHC's current supply of land and housing, it becomes clear that the MHC as the major provider of land and housing in urban areas, is overwhelmed by land and housing demand, rendering it incapable of satisfying the current housing needs. One of the implications is that the situation creates fertile ground for corrupt practices as people fight for the limited housing available. In this regard, only those with social status and political influence are able to access the limited housing through corruption or jumping the queue. In this case, allocation criteria shift from the 'first come first served basis' to 'who you are'. Ultimately, the majority of urban residents resort to other means of accessing land and housing which include squatting and land invasions.

6.6.2 Legal and policy challenges

Findings also point out that coupled with time consuming, costly and complex land acquisition, the entire certification and formalisation process is also lengthy and costly. The majority of urban residents' recourse is to acquire land from chiefs. Of interest, as the case of Area 49 in Lilongwe reveals, it is not only the poor who seek relief in the informal processes. The profile of urban residents in the area shows that in Area 49/1 (southern part of Area 49), the majority of 'illegal' residents are affluent groups who can afford to build houses independently, including paying for planning and building procedures. In the end, the poor majority is squeezed out of urban spaces.

Findings also show that archaic laws and regulations which are a mere replica of colonial laws frustrate the very rationale of imposing abstract space by the state. For instance, respondents observe that at the time of their conception, existing land and planning laws and

regulations did not anticipate the rapid urban growth. In this case, the rigidity, and unresponsive nature of the laws makes them unable to cope with rapid urban growth in Malawi's cities. Like in many developing countries, as Ikejiofor (2005) argues, the formal land delivery processes in Malawi, based on legal concepts and administrative systems that were introduced by colonial and post-colonial governments have proved unable to cope with the demand in the context of extreme poverty and limited state capacity. Consequently, most land for urban development especially that occupied by the poor, is in practice supplied and developed outside state regulatory frameworks, leading to unplanned and informal settlements. Also as noted earlier, these existing planning legislation and land tenure processes are time consuming, complex and costly for those seeking to acquire their own land and build houses independently since, among other things, they must pay for independent building inspectors at multiple stages in the building processes.

Another aspect of the current laws and policies is their emphasis on efficiency[30] at the expense of the social function of land, for instance, people's attachment to place. In this regard, too much emphasis on improving efficiency in land management coupled with privatizing customary land, means that land laws and policies are subjecting urban land to the demands of the market. In this regard, this amounts to modernising, commodifying and valorization of urban space, which ultimately works to the advantage of the urban majority. Absence of an enabling law, in this case land law in Malawi, continues to generate tensions over urban land. For instance, although the modern land policy of 2002 seeks to ensure equal access to land, the draft Land Bill of 2008 is yet to be enacted into law by parliament.

Finally, inherent tensions between abstract spaces lead to tensions over urban land. For instance, although it is argued that planning as an institution does not recognize the existence of chiefs in urban areas, other laws provide for their recognition in urban areas including in land administration. Consequently, urban residents who perceive land acquisition from chiefs as less costly, less time consuming, and generally more efficient resort to traditional authorities. Arguably, this could lead to struggles over authority over land.

6.6.3 Complexity of land rights

The imposition of abstract space on urban residents results in other problems including ambiguities and tensions among the state institutions mandated to enforce abstract space. In

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[30] P49: NEWS-MW (2).pdf: (@203-@290)

this case, there is lack of clarity between the MHC and the city authority regarding who has mandate to enforce development control. For instance, in Blantyre, as noted earlier, land in the city is owned by the central government (lands department), Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC), the private sector, and Blantyre City Council. The multiplicity of land owners makes land management difficult as the existence of numerous institutions in the administration of land is a catalyst for chaos resulting from unclear authority and mandate over land and also when it comes to development control. Arguably, tension between the MHC and city authorities ultimately leads to contestations over urban spaces.[31]

Besides the formal institutions, the presence of traditional chiefs also makes the system of land rights in Malawi's urban centres quite complex. Consequently, there is much confusion in terms of rights to and control over land. One respondent stated:
"...although chiefs are not allowed in towns (legally), in practice they still allocate land and it seems Malawians have more trust in these chiefs than in the lands department."

6.6.4 Planning contradictions

On planning, the research found that from the rural authorities' point of view, tensions over land between city and rural authorities are caused by planning strategies of 'reclassification' of rural spaces in order to extend urban areas of city authority jurisdiction. In an interview, with one planning and development director, it was observed that quite often conflicts emanate from 'reclassification of planning area without due regard to gazetting the same into law and as a result rural authorities disobey any reclassification'[32]. He also reported that failure by city authorities to compensate for infrastructures already created by previous rural authorities coupled with planning strategies of conceiving and practising reclassification without consultation and compensation, is tantamount to 'pilfering' or stealing of rural space and its infrastructure as city authority want to expand their tax base from markets, rents etc.

Indeed, unlike Lilongwe City where people were resettled and compensated, many cities expand outwards incorporating villages with their customary titles without officially compensating them and officially converting the customary tenure to public land. In other words, incomplete conversion of land from customary to public in planning areas has also contributed to contestation, leading to the production of informal spaces. However, this response does not explain why contestations still exist in Lilongwe where arguably

[31] P 7: KEY-MHCBT.doc: (16:17)
[32] Interview with senior official from the department of planning and development at Lilongwe district council in June 2012.

indigenous residents were compensated and resettled. In Lilongwe, although the planning system as conceived "has a positive role in guiding appropriate development in the right place, as well as preventing development that is not acceptable" as provided for in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1988 (S.44 of the Laws of Malawi), reportedly, there are some people who feel they were not compensated when the land was declared a planning area when the capital city was being moved from Zomba to Lilongwe[33].

Moreover, crucial to planning is the fact that Malawi lacks forward planning of settlements. Indeed, much of its planning is reactive and as a result, there has been some laxity in the provision of land for housing. Notwithstanding the existence of a detailed plan for main urban centres, there have been problems with illegal developers. Coupled with political interference in the planning process including enforcement and development control, this has led to squatting. It is of note that hoarding of land for a time has also contributed to squatting and land invasions.

6.6.5 Politics and democracy

In addition, political dynamics in their numerous ways apparently have an impact on the operation of abstract space. On the one hand, politicians exert pressure on the planning process by influencing the land allocation process in their favour and undermining development control and enforcement. On the other hand, the advent of multiparty democracy in the 1990s created space for squatting and land invasions as new concepts of freedom, and multiparty politics were perceived to mean freedom to occupy any space. Also, the constitution of the republic of Malawi provides for the right to development and pursuance of an economic activity anywhere in the country. In this regard, planning is deemed as an enemy of development. Moreover, politicians in their desperate efforts to win electoral votes, use land as an electoral pledge, and this results in invasions immediately or prior to elections. Prior to the 1994 multiparty general elections in Malawi, aspiring members of parliament deliberately instigated people to occupy land in the city in exchange for votes.

Local leadership seems to incapacitate the conceived or formal urban land management system. Indeed, as noted earlier, when an area is declared a city, it becomes a planning area and chiefs no longer have power over the land. The chiefs, however, do not always relinquish their control. In Blantyre, for instance, there have been conflicts between the Misesa Village headman and the MHC over land in the Chigumula area. The entire Ndirande Township is

[33] Daily Times, Friday, September 12, 2003.

officially under control of the MHC, but there are chiefs who still maintain that the land belongs to them and continue allocating it to people (Mwathunga 2012). Similarly, chiefs in the Chiswe area continue to allocate land to people despite its being within city boundaries. In the words of one respondent:

"I blame the local political leadership starting from village headmen to members of parliament. Local leaders get some 'kickbacks' in form of money from people desperate for land. For instance, in Soche in Blantyre City, local chiefs were allocating MHC land in exchange for money within the range of MWK75, 000 (US$535) to MWK100, 000 (US$714)".

6.6.6 Economic factors

On the economic front, both local and global undercurrents apparently contribute to the failure of the state to impose its hegemonic abstract space on urban residents. On the local level, the high price of land is reportedly one of the major factors contributing to the growth of unplanned settlements as the prohibitive prices force the poor into the informal sector. On the global scale, neoliberal policies which include privatisation, have led to loss of jobs as well as of urban land consequently forcing the poor to resort to the informal sector including the informal land sector. In one focus group discussion, one participant in his late twenties said:

"The government is biased, because to be honest, not everyone can manage to go and buy land from the government. Everyone knows that the government has money and everyone who works in government has money. But if you consider a place like this, there is no one who can manage to buy a piece of land from the government. Some of us rely on the same chiefs; we buy land from the chiefs. So when the government says chiefs should not be in towns, it is simply saying that the poor cannot live in towns; we belong in villages while the rich belong in towns".[34]

[34] P 1: FGDS-BTSW.doc - 1:264).

6.7 LINKING CONCEPTIONS, CONCEIVED SPACES AND CONTESTATIONS OVER URBAN SPACE IN MALAWI

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, a spatial framework is proposed that seeks to understand conceived spaces and representations of space in urban Malawi.

6.7.1 Conceived space and representations of space

The conceived space framework **(Figure 6.5)** reveals that that abstract space is characterised by its commitment to abstraction, bureaucracy, efficiency, fragmentation and homogenisation as represented in its grand or master plans or policies. It survives on bureaucracy. Also, as noted earlier, abstract space of capitalism aims at homogenising while at the same eliminating the contradictions. In other words, by ignoring reality and emphasising on abstraction, homogenisation abstract space is violent hence dehumanising. In pursuance of these ideologies, both the poor and middle class are excluded from land access because they cannot afford urban land. Consequently, informal mechanisms take over, thereby contributing to contestations between the formal processes of land delivery and the so-called informal processes devised by those unable to acquire land from the formal system.

6.7.2 State's apparatus for imposing conceived space and inherent constraints

For the state to impose its capitalist space otherwise known as conceived space and representations of space in the form of master plans, it assembles its apparatus mainly the planning institution, and legal framework. However, instead of achieving organising space in accordance with the capitalist ambitions and images of order, homogeneity, and functional zoning among others, in Malawi, the state faces six main constraints. First, the institutions mandated to impose abstract spaces are incapacitated in terms of human capacity and technological incapacity capacity. Thus, although formal institutions are needed to achieve the state's modernist notions of order and efficiency, they are marred by inefficiency, massive corruption, bureaucracy and cumbersome procedures as well as poor enforcement of master plans.

Second, the legal and policy framework is characterised by archaic and rigid laws which reduce urban space to a commodity while silencing and suppressing other equally important functions and meanings such the social and emotional values of space; and conflicts and tensions among laws. In other words, the research in Malawi cities suggests that the laws regarding urban land are out of context such that they eliminate any other contradictions that exist in reality.

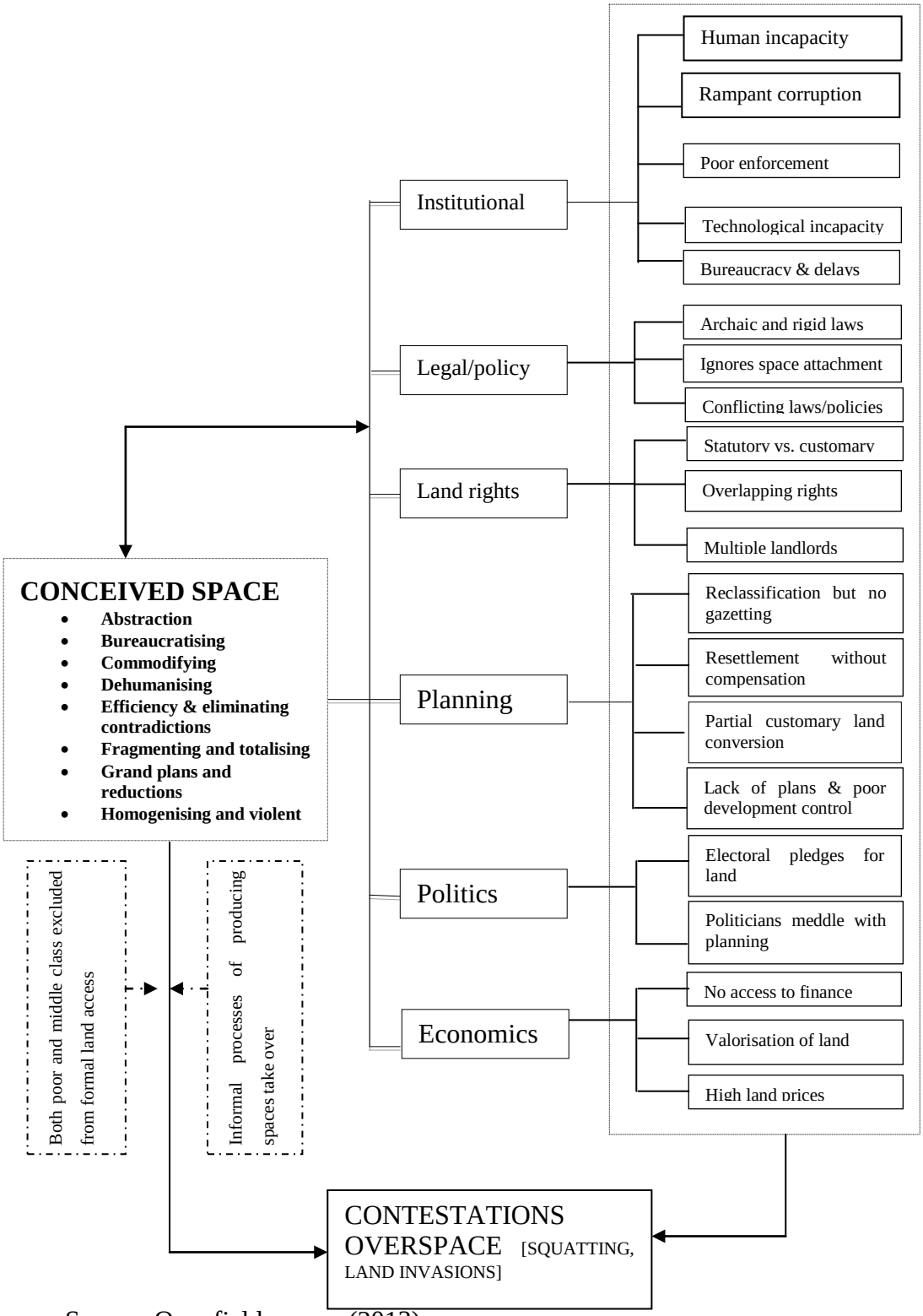
Third, in relation to laws, the existence of multiple and overlapping rights on urban space frustrate the imposition of representations of urban space. Indeed, there are tensions between customary and statutory rights to land and the presence of multiple land lords imply that there are ambiguities regarding urban land.

Fourth, planning as a function is faced with hurdles such as rushing to reclassify previously rural spaces to urban spaces without gazetting the same into law. Also resettlement strategies without sufficient or any compensation at all face resistance from existing residents who perceive planning as stealing rural land. Besides lack of plans and poor development control as is the case the Lilongwe's Area 49 and Blantyre's Soche West, there is, in some cases, partial conversion of customary land into planning areas such that the delineation between planning area and customary spaces becomes blurred.

Fifth, political factors interfere with planning in a number of ways: politicians use urban space as electoral pledges to gain votes during parliamentary elections; politicians can incite landless people to invade urban land (using the landless as a bait to gain access to land); political interference in the planning process including making appointments with planning boards and planning institutions thereby undermining planning as apolitical exercise; and finally, multiparty politics has meant changes in people's perception of urban space to the extent they perceive democracy as meaning freedom band the right to appropriate any free piece of urban space. Finally, economic fundamentals such as lack of financing mechanism, valorisation and the high prices of urban land, mean that only the middle class or upper middle class can purchase urban land.

Consequently, as the proposed framework shows, instead of advancing the ideology of abstraction, bureaucracy, commodification, dehumanising, efficiency, fragmentation and totalising, grand modernist plans and reductions and homogeneity which are inherent in conceived and abstract spaces, the apparatus of the state is incapable of delivering what it promised. Failure of these formal mechanisms to deliver urban land opens up loopholes for informal mechanisms to take over. Ultimately, contestations emanate between those considered informal and the so called formal mechanisms through such mechanisms as squatting and land invasions, as is the case in Lilongwe's Area 49.

Since as Lefebvre argues, “spatial contradictions express conflicts between socio-political interests and forces”, these conflicts manifested in space reflect contradictions of space (Lefebvre 1991). All in all, land allocated by the formal system is very expensive and unaffordable for the majority of urban residents. Consequently, poor people who migrate to urban areas cannot afford to access plots, forcing them to turn to the informal sector, usually the unauthorised local chiefs, and leads to informal or unplanned settlements.



Source: Own field survey (2013)

Figure 6.16 Characteristics and constrain s of concieved space

6.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the aim was to analyse representations of space namely the modern land policy and the urban structure plans for the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe. First, using the suggested framework for analysing land policy in Malawi, it was argued that despite the rhetoric of tenure security and social harmony as promised by the neoliberal land policy, the policy reveals numerous contradictions that can in turn lead to inequity in land access. Ultimately, this will suffocate the achievement of the objectives it intends to achieve. Of importance is the fact that the framework also shows that the policy is a mere copycat of the colonial land policies which were mainly meant to consolidate the land holdings of the elite land owners. After analysing the policy at national scale, urban structure plans for the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe as representations of spaces, are analysed. Evidently, in spite of the existence of plans which are meant to organize urban space, it is apparent that the state is overwhelmed in its function to enforce the plans and policies.

By way of illustration, the suggested diagrammatic representation depicts the nature of conceived space and how the very apparatus that it uses to impose abstract space turns against itself through incapacities. In the context of the theoretical framework for this research, these plans represent what Henri Lefebvre referred to as ‘conceived space’ or ‘representations of spaces’ or planners’ space. As will be observed in the next chapter, in spite of the existence of these representations of space, urban inhabitants as users of space, continue to reject these spaces by among other things, contesting both ownership and access as well as how to produce and appropriate this land. The situation led to series of court battles between urban residents, local chiefs and politicians on the one hand and the MHC on the other hand, both parties claiming that they hold rights to the parcel of land. In the next chapter, perceived spaces and spatial practices are analysed to provide an understanding of the mismatch between the conceived spaces in this chapter and how these are being contested by users of urban space to produce their spaces.

CHAPTER 7 PERCEIVED SPACES AND SPATIAL PRACTICES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the question of contesting urban spaces through the analysis of perceived spaces and associated spatial practices employed by various actors in the process of contesting and producing urban spaces in Malawi, is discussed. The analysis of perceived and spatial practices is based on one of the three elements of Lefebvre's spatial triad, namely, perceived space and spatial practices. The chapter is broadly divided into four sections. First, the demographic, socio-economic and migration characteristics of urban residents in the two cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe are analysed. Second, an analysis of perceptions regarding status of urban land, ownership and control, and tenure is presented. Third, the spatial practices and tactics used by urban residents and the state to shape, produce and defend urban spaces are analysed. Finally, a specific framework based on the respondents' characteristics, their perceptions, and associated spatial practices, and that can be used to analyse spatial practices and their role in the production of urban space in Malawi, is proposed.

In his production of space, Lefebvre(1991) argues that space is produced in the interaction between the society's spatial practices (that is, the everyday spatial routines through which it is reproduced), its representations of space (that is, the conceptions of particular spaces as developed typically by administrators detached from these spaces), and its representational spaces (that is, the directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of the inhabitants and users) (p.38-39).

Spatial practice comprises the empirically observable material city (hence conceived space); daily routine practices of everyday life (e.g. journey to work) and socio-economic processes by which the material city is produced (Leary 2011:195). Thus for Lefebvre, spatial practice represents "a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private' life and leisure)" (Lefebvre 1991:38). In the next sections these spatial practices are explored in terms of urban residents' perceptions of urban space and how this relates to their spatial practices as they appropriate and claim urban spaces, as well as their spatial and/or strategies to claim or defend their urban spaces in Malawi.

7.2 CASE STUDY 1: PERCEIVED SPACES AND SPATIAL PRACTICES IN BLANTYRE CITY

7.2.1 Demographic characteristic of residents in contested 'informal' spaces

Demographic characteristics of the respondents are useful attributes as they shed light on the perception that different groups of people have regarding urban space. In this case, the survey included questions to gather personal characteristics namely: age composition, sex/gender composition, ethnic composition, marital status and nationality of residents in Soche West, Blantyre **(Table 7.1).**

Table 7.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Age		Sex		Ethnic composition		Marital status	
Category	Percentage	Category	Percentage	Category	Percentage	Category	Percentage
20-29	15%	Male	51%	Lomwe	37%	Married	86%
30-39	33%	Female	49%	Yao	16%	Widowed	5%
40-49	33%			Tumbuka	14%	Single	4%
50-59	14%			Ngoni	10%	Divorced	3%
60+	5%			Chewa	9%		
				Mang'anja	6%		
				Sena	4%		
				Tonga	3%		
				Other	1%		
Total	**100%**		**100%**		**100%**		**100%**

Source: Own field survey (2013)

Note:

N=115, Totals of percentages are not 100 for every characteristic because of rounding.

With regard to age composition, findings from the survey have shown that more than one third of the respondents are aged between 30 and 39 years. In this case, added together the results mean that the majority (66%) of urban residents are between the ages of 30 and 49. By implication, although these people are in their productive age, it can be seen that they still cannot access urban land and are living in conditions described as informal. Similarly, a fair representation of people aged 50 and above (that is, about 20%) also suggests that the area has both migrant residents as well as indigenous residents with both groups facing obstacles to access urban land from the formal system of land allocations. From the governance point of view, the presence of the elderly explains why people in these areas look up to local chiefs as custodians of land owing to their long stay in the area. In essence, the age distribution has

significant implications in terms of ability to access formal jobs, urban land, as well as practices to access urban land.

The survey sought to analyse the structure of the sample by gender category. As can be seen from **Table 7.1** the majority (51%) of the informal residents are males. It must be noted however that the figures above do not necessarily mean there are more male-headed household than female-headed households although this would be the intention of the question item. Among other reasons, since men are quite often absent during the day leaving their wives at home, this means that we may not rush to conclude that there are more male headed household that females. Indeed, if the men were away more females should have answered the questionnaire. Notwithstanding these limits, it can be said that in Soche West, the population of male households is approximately equal to that of female households.

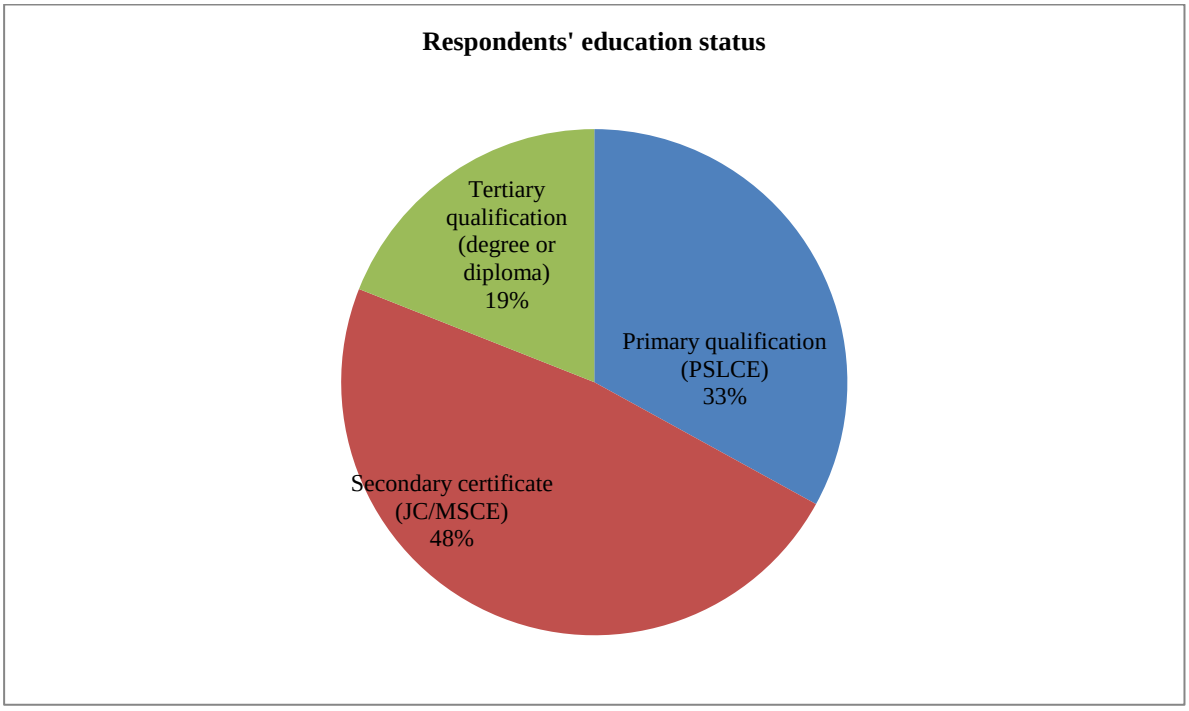
In terms of ethnic composition, the survey results show that the Lomwe ethnic group constitute the largest population group (about 40%) in Blantyre's Soche West followed by Yao (16%). To understand the multiplicity of cultures in Blantyre city it is important to take cognisance of the fact that that Malawi is divided into three major administrative regions, namely South, Centre and North. The Lhomwe, Yao, Mang'anja and Sena are arguably the major tribes in the Southern region. The Chewas are predominantly from the Central region. Finally, the Tumbuka and Tonga represent major tribes in the Northern region. The Ngoni, however, are found throughout the country. From this background it can be seen that in the neighbourhood under study the majority of the residents are originally within the Southern region districts which forms the immediate hinterland of Blantyre city. The predominance of the Lhomwe tribe can be explained by the fact that: the tribe forms the immediate catchment area of Blantyre city; they are arguably the majority tribe in the southern region and are migrant labourers from the surrounding high density districts of Phalombe, Mulanje, Thyolo, and Chiradzulu – districts experiencing land shortage problems owing to the presence of tea plantations dating back to the colonial period. Similarly, The Yao are originally from Blantyre district as well as the surrounding eastern districts of Zomba, Machinga, Balaka and Mangochi. Finally, it is interesting to note that although the traditional leader in the area (Group Village Headwoman, Misesa) is a Ngoni by tribe most of her subjects are not Ngoni by tribe. Essentially, it can be argued that they are migrants in the city. In spite of this, they owe their legitimacy to the chief on land and other matters.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to indicate their marital status in terms of single, married, divorced or widowed. Approximately, 9 in every 10 people who participated in the household survey are married.

7.2.2 Socio-economic characteristics of residents in Soche West, Blantyre city

In addition to the demographic characteristics of age, sex, marital status and ethnic composition, the survey also gathered information on the socio-economic conditions of the urban residents especially in terms of their levels of education, composition of their households, the economic status and household income.

First, with regard to education levels, the residents were asked to mention the highest level of education they had attained at the time of the survey. The results **(Figure 7.1)** show that one third of the residents of the residents in contested informal areas of Blantyre Soche West had attained primary school education. In other words, the respondents are able to read and write. Further, in terms of perception, it can be assumed that the residents are knowledgeable about means of accessing urban land including understanding of the right authorities to administer urban land.



Source: Own field survey (2013)

Figure 7.1 Percentage of respondents per highest level of education

Second, regarding economic status, household heads who participated in the survey were asked to mention their main economic activities or primary occupations. In terms of analysis, the responses were grouped into eight categories which ranged from formal to informal economic activities. Interviewees identified multiple occupations which were later coded in SPSS as multiple responses since households depend on more than one economic activity, as depicted in **Table 7.2.**

The results show that about one quarter of the urban residents interviewed, engage in vending activities as part of their everyday life to earn some income. In addition, the results reveal that a small proportion of urban residents engage in farming.

Table 7.2 Urban residents' economic activities

Primary occupation	**Responses (%)**
Vending	26%
Business enterprise	15%
Other (e.g.gifts,remittances)	13%
Professional/Managerial	13%
Artisan	12%
Casual labour	10%
Clerical	9%
Farming	4%
Total	**102%**

Note:
N=115, Totals are not always 100% because of rounding

It must be noted that the results as depicted above, reveal that informal residents in the study area earn their living by engaging in more than one economic activity to complement each other. The majority of these residents resort to the so-called informal activities such as vending agricultural products such as maize, horticultural crops (e.g. tomatoes, onions), charcoal selling and small mining activities (mainly, quarrying). In terms of production of space, it means urban residents perceive the land in question as having multi-layered functions which go beyond shelter production. For this reason, it was physical observations in the area that revealed that the residents organised their own spaces they consider as market spaces for their products. Such markets include '3 Ways' and 'Quarry' markets. . Thus, individuals employ multiple and heterogeneous activities to earn a living as part of their everyday lives.

With regard to the wealth status of the household, urban residents were asked to state their monthly household income. At the time of the survey, it was found that the majority (51%) of the informal residents in Blantyre's Soche West earn a total of K30,000.00 (US$115) per month while about 16% of households earn above K100,000.00 (US$384) **(Figure 7.2)**. The results show that although the upper middle and upper income residents are referred to as informal residents, encroachers, invaders, or illegal settlers, it cannot generally be concluded that these people are poor people who cannot access urban land. Indeed, as the results depict, the residents comprise heterogeneous population groups, namely: low income, middle income, higher income and upper higher income populations.

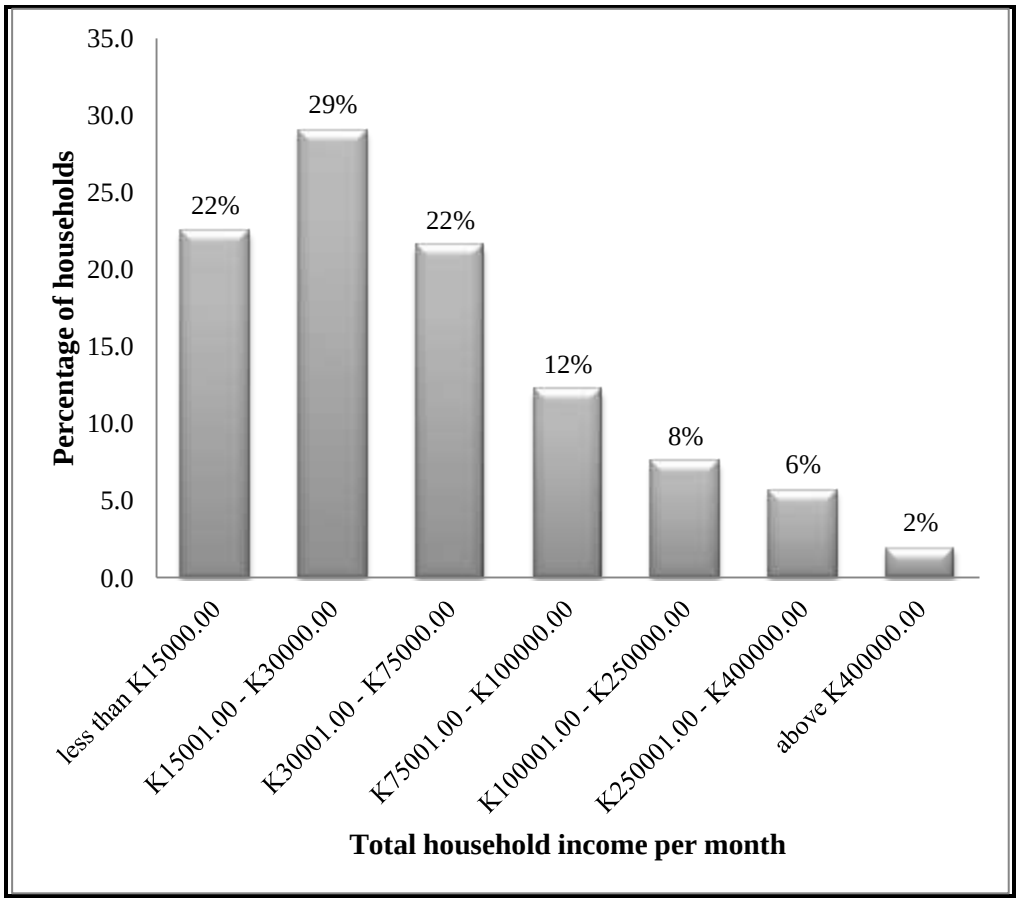


Figure 7.2 Total household income per month
Note:
N=115, Totals are not always 100% because of rounding

Finally, regarding household size, the results showed that at the time of the survey the majority (51%) of the households interviewed were composed of 4 to 6 members per household representing a mean household size of 5.81 with a standard deviation of 1.884 **(Figure 7.3)**. In summary therefore, most households in contested informal spaces have on

average 6 persons. This has implications both on the meaning and significance of urban space and how this space is used.

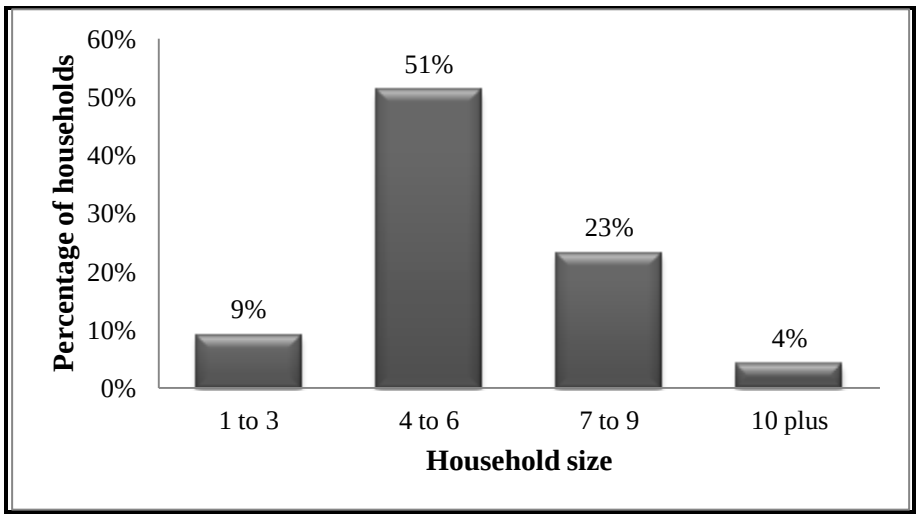


Figure 7.3 Household size of informal respondents

Note:
N=115, Totals are not always 100% because of rounding

Having shown the respondents' characteristics in terms of demographic and household characteristics, the next section explores the residents' perceptions as they relate to urban land in Malawi.

7.2.3 Squatters' knowledge and perceptions of urban space

Perera (2008) argues that many of today's planning problems are caused by perceptions especially in the sense that planning is socially, politically and culturally incompatible with and lacks empathy with its subjects. In this regard, the survey sought to explore residents' perceptions and knowledge regarding the status of land prior to purchase, its vacant status, the state legitimacy and finally perceptions of tenure security.

7.2.3.1 Squatters' knowledge of the original status of land in Soche West, Bantyre

First, respondents were asked to state if they were of the tenure status of the land in question prior to their invasion or occupation **(Table 7.3).** Data analysis revealed that that a majority (71%) of the urban residents perceived the land as being under customary status as opposed to government or public status.

Table 7.3 Squatters' understanding of the original status of land prior to purchase/squatting

Knowledge of original status of land	Responses (%)
The land belonged to the chief (customary)	71%
The land was free and idle	13%
The land belonged to government (the public)	9%
Other	6%

Source: Own field survey (2013)

Note:
N=115, Totals are not always 100% because of rounding

7.2.3.2 Squatters' knowledge of the occupancy status of the land

Second, it must be noted further that although respondents perceived land as belonging to a traditional chief, the majority (96%) of the residents in Soche West reported that at the time of their invasion of the land, the land in questions was vacant. In other words, it was 'vacant and idle' **(Table 7.4**).

Table 7.4 Was the land vacant at the time of purchase/or occupation?

Was the land vacant?	Responses (%)
Yes	96%
No	4%
Total	100%

Source: Own field survey (2013)

7.2.3.3 Squatters' perception of the legitimacy of the state control over urban land

Furthermore, in Malawi, like in most African countries, land including urban land is under state control and/or institutions mandated by the state to control and manage urban land. In as much as laws including planning laws as conceived mandate the state with this responsibility, it is not clearly known if the citizens or urban residents recognise the state's authority over urban land. In this case, the research sought to investigate the residents' perception of the state (or its agents) as having legitimate control over urban land. Respondents in Blantyre South West were therefore asked: Do you recognise the state as the legitimate authority over urban land in Blantyre city? **(See Figure 7.4)**.

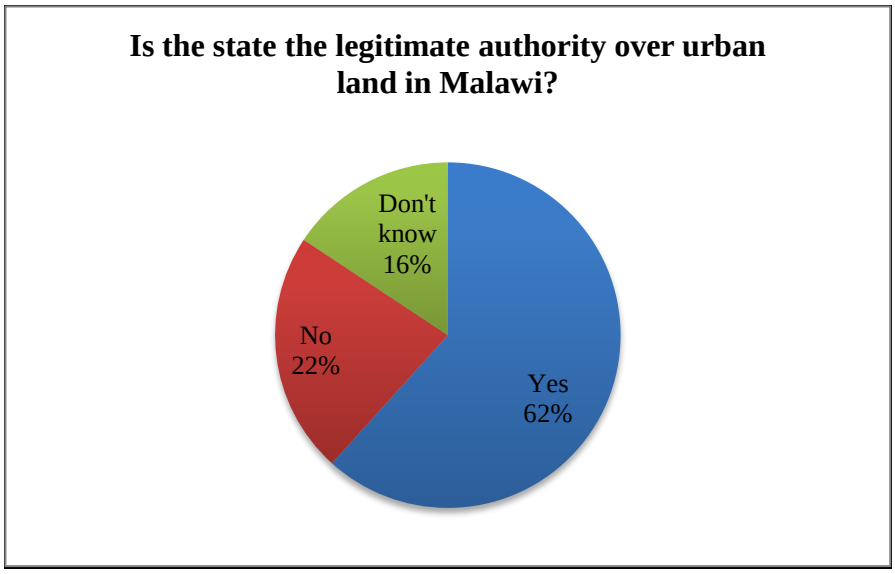


Figure 7.4 Perception of the legitimacy of the state control over urban land

Note:
N=115, Totals are not always 100% because of rounding

In Blantyre South West, as depicted in **Figure 7.4** the majority of informal residents (62%) revealed that they do recognise the state as the authority responsible for the management and administration of urban land. This implies that although informal urban residents are knowledgeable about the legal authority responsible for urban land management, it may probably appear that they deliberately ignore this authority as it does not serve them.

From the in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions, it was however revealed that there were different views as to what the 'state' or 'government' means to ordinary urban residents. Those who acknowledged the state as the legitimate authority indicated that as far as they are concerned, *'boma ndi anthu'* (government means people). They emphasised that the state governs through our traditional leaders such that by recognising our leaders who happen to be Chief Misesa we are also acknowledging the state as the ultimate authority over urban land. Other respondents revealed that the state has many organs that help it to carry out its functions. However, in as far as urban land is concerned; squatters are not sure whether the mandate lies with Malawi Housing Corporation, City Assembly, Ministry of Lands, or Department of Authority. In this case, they say they are left to conclude that the land in question belongs to the state but administered through a duly appointed traditional leader, in this case Chief Misesa. It is also important to note that those who said they don't know explained that they were not sure because the so-called 'state' is not visible in the area. They said that if indeed the state was the ultimate authority then they could have provided

infrastructure to the area such as water, electricity, good roads, markets and schools among others. For this reason, they pointed out the area is not an urban areas as they perceive urban areas. In their opinions, they are still living in a village. Paradoxically, they said 'Yes' the state could be the authority because they are told that they are in urban areas.

7.2.3.4 Squatters' perception of tenure security

Furthermore, regarding the perceived tenure security, informal residents who participated in the survey were asked to express the extent of perceived tenure security on land occupations that are considered as informal or illegal in the eyes of the state or its apparatus. Research results reveal that almost half of the respondents in Soche West feel very secure about their land while about one-third of the informal residents feel secure. Essentially, this implies that approximately 80% of informal land occupants feel at least secure about their land **(Figure 7.5).**

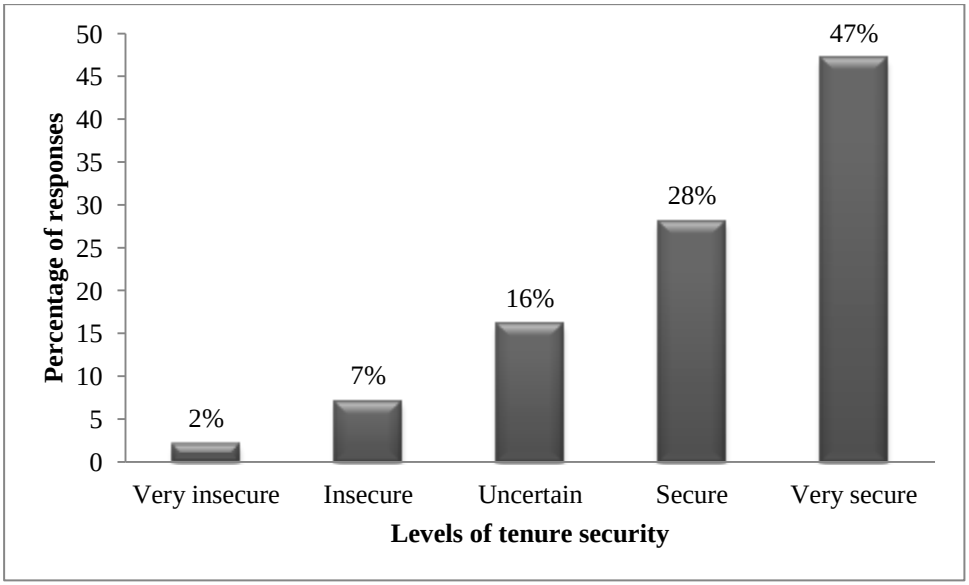


Figure 7.5 Residents' perceived tenure security

7.2.3.5 Squatters' knowledge of legal ownership of land in Soche West, Blantyre

Finally, the survey also sought to explore the extent of informal residents' knowledge and awareness of the government's plan and intention to claim back the land already occupied by the informal residents. To begin with, the informal residents (or land encroachers) were asked if they think the government or any other relevant state institution will want to claim back the land they are currently living on.

7.2.3.6 Squatters' awareness of potential eviction from the land in Soche West, Blantyre

Findings reveal that the majority (almost 60%) of the residents, are aware (they think) that although they are occupying the land, the state will want to repossess it from them **(Table 7.5).** It must be noted however, that most of those who indicated that they are aware that the state may want to repossess the land openly disclosed that they just hear from people instead of the state informing them directly. In other words, the residents' involvement in decisions regarding the subsequent dispossession of their land by government or their agencies is very minimal or non-existent.

Table 7.5 Do you think that the state will claim back its land?

In your opinion, do you think the state would want to claim back its land?	Responses (%)
Yes	57%
No	32%
I don't know	10%

Note:
N=115, Totals are not always 100% because of rounding

Following on residents' awareness of the state's motives to claim back the responsible authority's land, respondents were asked to mention any actions the state might employ or was currently using to claim back the land from invaders **(Table 7.6).**

Table 7.6 Squatters' perceived state strategies to claim back land

Likely spatial strategies to reclaim urban land	Responses
Relocation	39.1%
Demolition and evictions	30.4%
Others (silent spatial tactics)	20.0%
I don't know	7.0%
Using state security/courts	3.5%
Total	**100%**

Source: Own fieldwork survey (2013)

From the research findings, it can be noted that about 40% mentioned relocation as the action that the state intends to use to claim back its land, followed by demolition and evictions.

Based on these findings, it can be inferred that 'illegal' settlers are aware of the state's plans to repossess the land and possible actions that the state may use within its mandate to claim

back urban space. In this case, actions by residents may not be out of ignorance but rather well calculated and well thought out.

On the basis of the above results, it can therefore be observed that the majority of informal urban residents who encroached on urban land (migrants or indigenous urban residents) are aware that the state or its agencies will want to claim back the land they are illegally occupying. In addition, it is apparent that they are also aware that the state is likely to relocate or demolish their existing structures. Arguably, therefore, the residents are conscious of the dangers of their occupation of the land and this has implications with regard to the strategies or tactics they devise in order to safeguard their spaces from possible dispossession. In the next section, spatial strategies and/or tactics employed by these residents to defend their territory are presented.

7.2.4 Spatial practices of residents (squatters): migration as a spatial strategy

One of the dimensions of the study was to understand the urban residents in terms of migration characteristics as this will help in the understanding of the settlement history of the inhabitants and in turn how this impacts on perceptions regarding urban space.

First, regarding places of origin, the findings reveal that the highest percentage of residents in Soche West are originally from the neighbouring district of Thyolo (16%) while about 12% are said to be indigenous residents (i.e. those born in Blantyre) It is worth noting that the other urban residents migrated from the tea growing district of Mulanje (10%), Zomba district (10%), Chiradzulu district (6%). It must therefore be noted that the majority of the residents come from the surrounding districts of Blantyre city in the southern region. Further, it must be noted that about 16% of the residents came from the northern region. Finally, about 12% of the residents reported that they originally come from the central region, with only about 1% coming from Lilongwe. In a nutshell, with 15.8% of the residents born in Blantyre (not necessarily in the city nor study area), it can be concluded that the majority (81.6%) of the residents are in-migrants into the city, while 2.6% of the residents are immigrants from neighbouring countries, mainly Zambia.

Table 7.7 Places of origin of urban residents in Soche West, Blantyre city

Northern region		**Central region**		**Southern region**	
Out-migrated from	**%ge**	**Out-migrated from**	**%ge**	**Out-migrated from**	**%ge**
Rumphi	6%	Ntcheu	5%	Thyolo	16%
Nkhata Bay	4%	Dedza	2%	Blantyre	12%
Mzimba	4%	Lilongwe	2%	Mulanje	10%
Karonga	2%	Mchinji	1%	Zomba	10%
		Nkhotakota	1%	Chiradzulu	6%
		Salima	1%	Balaka	4%
				Mangochi	4%
				Chikwawa	3%
				Nsanje	3%
				Neno	2%
				Machinga	1%
				Phalombe	1%
Total (%)	**16%**		**12%**		**72%**

Note:
N=115, Totals are not always 100% because of rounding

Second, the study sought to understand the period of migration to Blantyre city. Respondents were asked to mention the year they settled in or came to Blantyre city. Figure 7.6 shows that prior to independence there was a slow rate of migration (less than 1% in-migrants) into Soche West. However the figure doubled after Malawi's independence in 1964. Also, the figure reveals a constant increase of migrants into the study area in the years prior to the multiparty election in 1994. A similar trend is also observed over the years prior to the second multiparty elections in 1999 when the rate of migration doubled from around 5% in 1997 to about 10% in 1999. One of the implications of these findings is that prior to elections and years immediately after elections the number of in-migrants increases, as was the case prior to and immediately after 1964, 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009. It can therefore be deduced that politics and elections are associated with growth of in-migrants and subsequent land invasions.

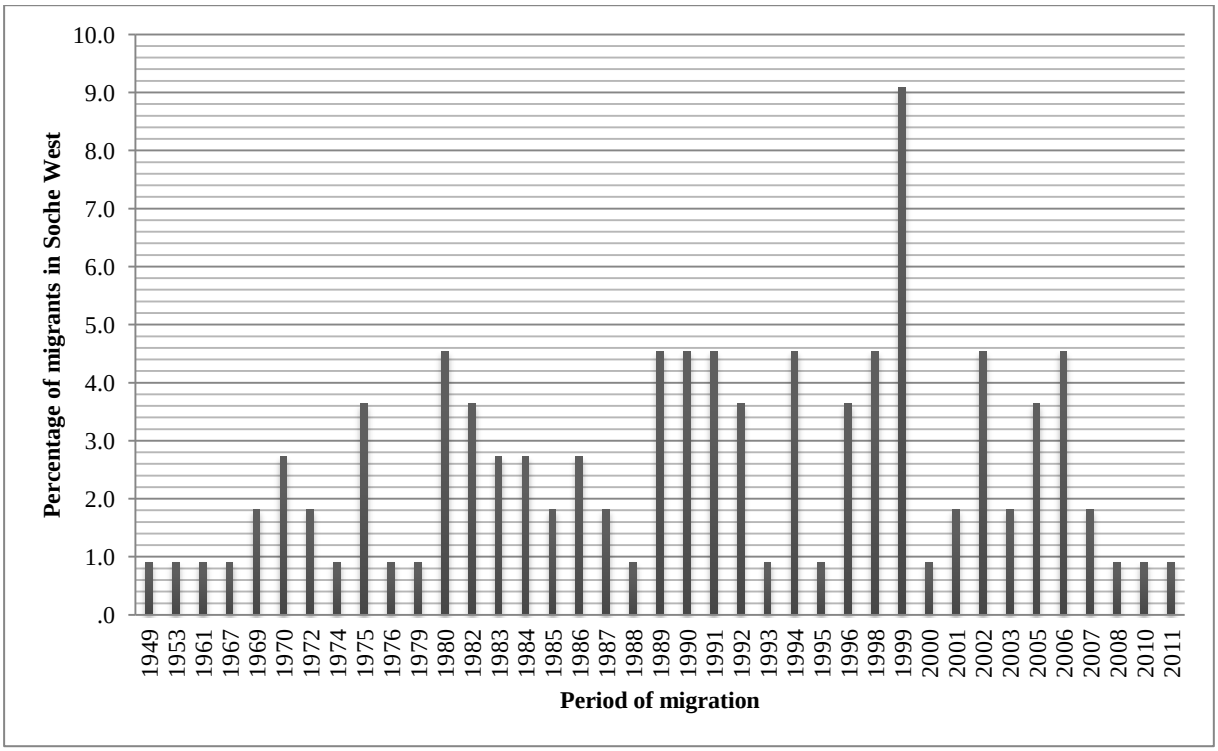


Figure 7.6 Period of migration to Blantyre City

The time periods represent four historical moments in the production of urban space in Malawi namely: colonial era (before 1964); 30-year dictatorship era of Dr Banda (1964-1993); first democratic era (Muluzi) and second democratic era (Mutharika).

From the findings, it appears that at the attainment of democracy (political pluralism) in 1993, about 60% of the respondents were already living in Blantyre city while about 40% of the residents settled in Blantyre city in the post democratic era, that is 1993 onwards.

On period of residence in Blantyre city, the indigenous people and the in-migrants were asked to state how long they had been living in Blantyre city **(Figure 7.7).**

Figure 7.7 Yeasr of residence in Soche West, Blantyre
Note:

N=115, Totals are not always 100% because of rounding

The results show that about one third (26%) of urban residents have lived on the plot for 5 to 8 years followed by those who have stayed on the plot for 9 – 11years (23%). It must be noted that cumulatively, while about 12% of encroachers have lived on the land for 12 years or more, about 88% of the encroachers have lived on the land (within) for the last 11 years or so. The results mean that those who have stayed longer might have invested more in the land in terms of emotional investment, traumatic investment as well as financial investment. This makes any relocation strategies difficult. In this regard, the period of stay has implications on any government strategy.

7.2.4 Spatial practice of land access and appropriation

On the basis of people's perceptions and the meanings they attach to urban land as well as their history of settlement in the area, the researcher further sought to explore how these perceptions and their history influence or determine the way these urban residents produce and defend their urban spaces. To this end, the researcher asked questions concerning ways in which urban residents acquire urban land and the strategies or tactics they use to defend their land against possible repossession or eviction by the state authorities **(Table 7.8)**

Table 7.8 Means of accessing urban land, Soche West

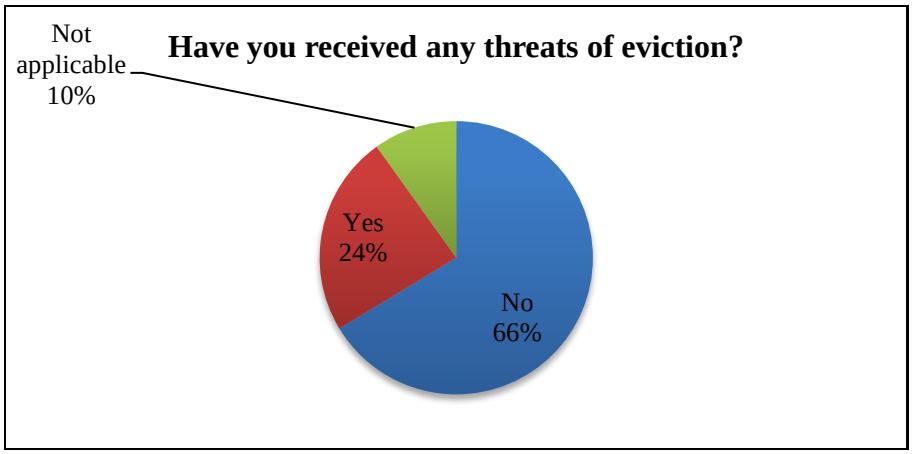
Means of land access	Responses %)
Traditional leaders	59%
Government (Department of Lands)	26%
MHC	10%
Other people	1%
Others	4%
Total	**100%**

Source: Own field survey (2012)

One interpretation of this is that the majority **(**about 60%) of those in the informal residence of Soche West accessed their land from traditional leaders. Consistent with these findings is the fact that most respondents perceive land in question as belonging traditional chiefs. Interpreted differently, their response could perhaps mean that they think that is part and parcel of their defense against eviction.

7.2.5 Spatial strategies by residence to defence urban land

In addition to weighing their extent of security, the survey also sought to explore the residents' perceived risk of eviction as an indication of their security of tenure. The results **(Figure 7.8)** show that at the time of the survey the majority (closer to 70%) of respondents said they had not yet received any individual threats regarding eviction by public authorities.



Source: Own field survey (2012)

Figure 7.8 Eviction threats

Note: N=115, Observed total of 101% is due to rounding

From these findings, it can therefore be inferred that although rumours of eviction to the neighbourhood as a whole are there, and lack of individual warning on every household gives the residents a feeling of being secure.

Furthermore, regarding the source of information on eviction or relocation, the majority (54%) of respondents reported that they rely on rumours, followed by traditional chiefs (20%) as their main source of source of information of the state authority's plans to move them. Arguably, source of information, could have implications on the nature of participation in decision-making between urban residents and city authorities, but also it could have an effect on residents' perceived tenure status. By implication, it can be observed that residents are not adequately informed about actions taken by government regarding the land the residents are actually occupying. In the absence of official communication from government authorities, residents feel secure, presumably as no one has approached them to tell them that they are living on unauthorised land.

Table 7.9 Sources of information for urban residents

Source of information	Responses (%)
Rumours	54%
Chiefs	20%
Press	15%
Door to door	6%
Letters	4%
Other	2%
Total	101%

Source: Own field survey (2013)

Finally, having established that residents are aware that the state might want to claim back their land and that they are aware of the likely strategies that the state will use, the residents were asked about the various spatial strategies they are going to use or are using to defend their urban space.

First, from the household survey, it was found that land invaders devise a combination of spatial strategies to defend their land from potential dispossession by the state and other relevant public agencies. Individual respondents were asked to mention all strategies and/or tactics they use or will use to safeguard their land from possible repossession. In this case, multiple responses sets were gathered and the number of positive responses were analysed using multiple response analysis in SPSS. From the **Table 7.10,** it can be seen that from a sample of 115 residents, a total of 170 positive responses were recorded (N=170). The results show that use of letters from traditional chiefs comprised 43 out of 170 responses (25%) followed by pressure on government from invaders to regularise and legalise their occupation (18%). Other strategies include: silence (17%); forming coalitions to negotiate with

authorities (12%); non-compliance (9%); rushing to courts or the police (7%) among others. Further, as the percentage of cases show**s,** the majority (45.3%) mentioned that traditional chiefs are their main source of protection followed by regularisation (32%), silence (30%), coalitions (21%), silence (17%); courts (13% and non-compliance (9%). Furthermore, it can be noted that at least one individual employs more than a single tactic to defend his urban spaces.

Table 7.10 Spatial strategies to defend urban space

Strategies used by residents to defend urban space	**Responses (%)**
"We obtain letters from traditional chiefs as proof of ownership. The chief will defend us"	25%
"Once I find money, I shall apply for title deeds and have my plot surveyed"	18%
"We do nothing about it - Since the government is quiet we are also quiet"	17%
"We form coalitions to negotiate with authorities to legalise our occupying of this land"	12%
"I do not comply with their prescribed planning and environmental standards"	9%
"I am building another house until they come to stop me. So we will continue to occupy and use the land"	6%
"We demonstrate and protest through violence against government"	4%
"We call places here by our own names as sign of protest"	1%
"We approach politicians to defend our land"	1%
Other miscellaneous strategies (silent and tactful)	7%

Source: Own field survey (2013)

7.3 CASE STUDY 2: AREA 49, LILONGWE CITY

In this section, research findings from household surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, media surveys as well as observation of spatial practices are presented.

The section commences with a description of household characteristics with regard to demographic and socio-economic characteristics of residents in the study area, namely Area 49 in Lilongwe city. Next, a migration and settlement history of the residents in the area is presented. Residents' perceptions regarding tenure and ownership of urban land; their perceptions versus knowledge about the legitimate authority over urban land; and ultimately the practices they use to appropriate, access and defend urban land are presented.

7.3.1 Demographic characteristics of residents in informal spaces

Demographically, the residents have been described in terms of age, gender, ethnic and marital status **(Table 7.11)**. These attributes have implications for perception of space and how spaces should be used or mechanised to defend the space in question.

Table 7.11 Demographic characteristics of informal residents

Age		Sex		Ethnic composition		Marital status		Nationality	
20-29	11%	Male	58%	Chewa	32%	Married	83%	Malawian	99%
30-39	35%	Female	42%	Tumbuka	17%	Single	7%	Non-Malawian	1%
40-49	36%			Ngoni	14%	Widowed	6%		
50-59	13%			Lomwe	13%	Divorced	4%		
60+	6%			Yao	12%				
				Tonga	4%				
				Sena	3%				
				Mang'anja	3%				
				Other	2%				
Total	**100%**		**100%**		**100%**		**100%**		**100%**

Source: Own field survey (2013)

First, on age composition **(Table 7.11)**, 36% of the respondents reported that they are aged between 40-49 years followed by those aged 30-39 (35%). One other interpretation is that more than 70% of urban residents in the so-called contested areas are aged between 30 and 50 years. Second, regarding sex composition, the results in the table show that males constitute a majority (about 60%) of the total population of residents in Area 49 (Lilongwe city).

Third, ethnically, one third of the entire residents are Chewas by tribe. One of the interpretations could be that the pattern is exceptional since the Chewas of the central region (where Lilongwe is located) constitute a single dominant group in the central region. Historically, the Chewas are the original settlers of the area where the new capital city was established. These findings are consistent with the observation in chapter two regarding the history of space where it was argued that the Chewas were removed around the 1970s to give up space for the Lilongwe City Project. Consequently, these tribes moved away into the periphery and surrounding disctricts of Kasungu, Salima, and Dowa among others.

Fourth, on residents' marital status, the research found that like in Blantyre, in Area 49, married men and women constitute the largest percentage (more that 80%) of the urban residents in question.

Finally, on nationality, the survey found that only 1% of residents who participated in the survey are non-Malawians. Often, these are migrants from Nigeria. At this point it is also crucial to admit that due to the sensitive nature of the issue of land invasion and as well as access to land by non-Malawians, it was difficult to get information regarding the nationality of residents. Most residents, who bought land illegally, were afraid of disclosing their nationality for fear of being evicted or repatriated back home. In addition, nationals from other countries marry local Malawian to obtain land. In these cases it was difficult to solicit information from these respondents who are also able to speak English or other local languages.

Socio-economic characteristics of residents in Area 49, Lilongwe City

To understand the socio-economic status of residents in the contested area in Area 49 (popularly known as Bagdad and Dubai), the household survey sought information on education, economic activities as part of everyday life, their total monthly income and household size.

First, on educational status of residents, the household survey **(Figure 7.10)** shows that nearly two-fifth of the respondents had attended a primary school, followed by secondary school (38%) (That is, junior and senior secondary school combined), while one-fifth possess either a diploma or a degree. From the results it is apparent that cumulatively, 72% of the residents do not possess a diploma or degree and that only 5% of these have post-MSCE training, for instance, certificates, apprenticeship among others. By implication, absence of post-secondary school skills means that these residents' chances of securing to secure formal employment are minimal, thereby forcing them to engage in everyday practices of informal economic activities. It must also be noted that if the data is disaggregated into two neighbourhoods namely Bagdad and Dubai (the two communities that make up Area 49), it will be seen that the educated are mostly found in Bagdad where decent housing, albeit informal, is found.

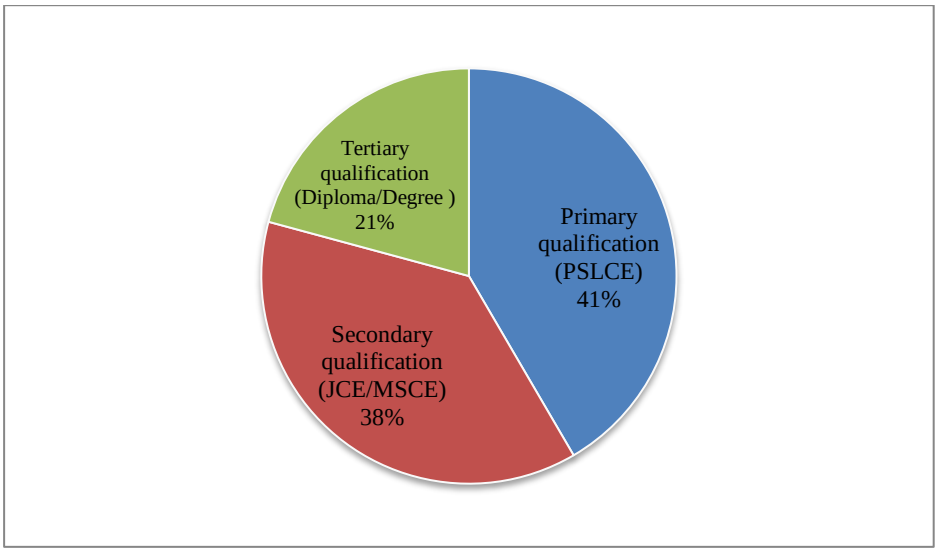


Figure 7.9 Level of highest education attained

Second, economic activities are one of the major aspects of people's everyday life especially in the so-called informal areas. To this end, the survey asked respondents to mention the economic activities they depend on to earn a living. In this regard, multiple response sets were used to allow the respondent to list all activities that form part of their livelihoods. Findings **(Table 7.12)** show that one quarter of residents depend on informal vending activities while farming appears to be the least reported economic activity. Most importantly, it must be noted that the multiple response analysis presented reveals that a single individual depends on more than one economic activity to earn a living as opposed to one single occupation. It must also be noted that the contested Area 49 represents both affluent elites (mostly in Bagdad) and the marginalised poor (mostly in Dubai) such that if the results are split into these two residential communities it will be obvious that those with higher income and probably in white collar jobs are mostly located in the affluent Bagdad area. Overall, the results show that there are diverse economic activities that people engage in such that any attempt to reduce Area 49 to homogeneity use (such as purely residential) could be seen as disruption of people's livelihoods, hence a recipe for chaos and struggle over space.

Table 7.12 Types of economic activities in Area 49

Type of economic activities	Responses (%)
Vending	23.8
Other (Gifts, remittances etc)	19.5
Artisan	14.0
Professional/Managerial	12.2
Business enterprise	10.4
Casual labour	9.8
Clerical	7.3
Farming	3.0
Total	**100.0**

Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Third, on economic status of urban dwellers in Area 49 (both Bagdad and Dubai areas), half of the respondents to which the questionnaire was administered earn up to K30, 000.00 (US$115) a figure that is slightly lower than in Blantyre (52%) (**Figure 7.10)**. It must also be noted the percentage in the lowest income bracket is lower (16%) than same income category in Blantyre (22%). Similarly, the proportion of residents in the middle income categories (that is, those earning between K75000.00 and K250000.00) is almost similar in both Blantyre (20%) and Lilongwe (20%). Of importance, there is a higher percentage of people in the upper income group in Lilongwe (3%) as compared to Blantyre (2%).

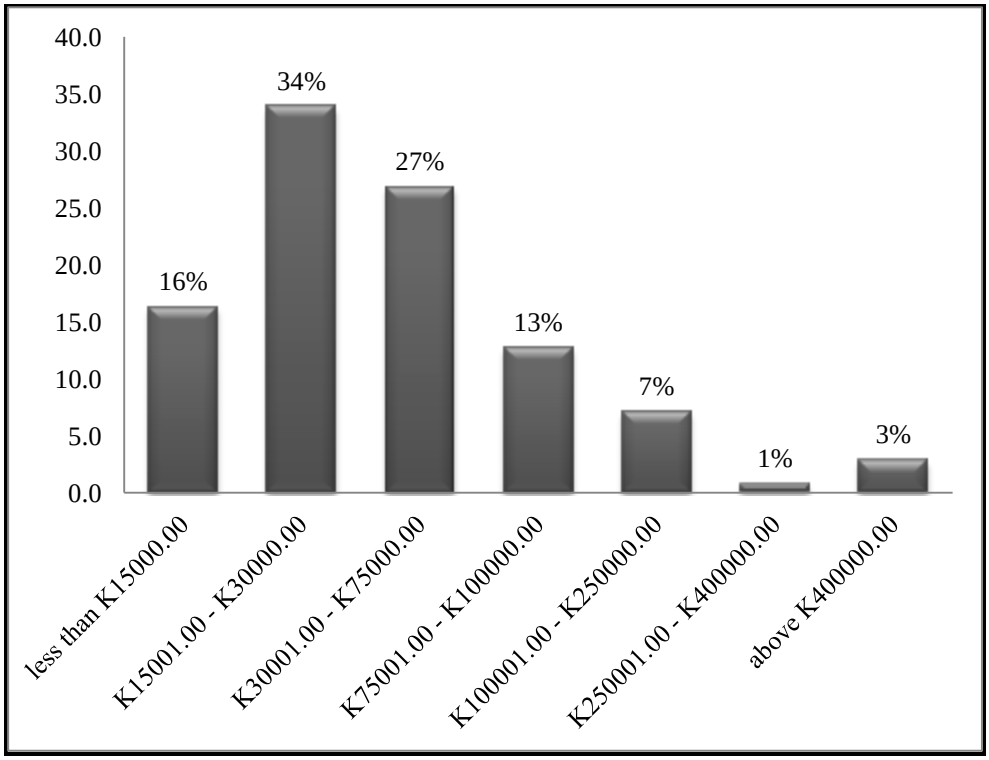


Figure 7.10 Total household incime per month

Finally, regarding size of the household (that is, individuals living in the house), the survey found that household size ranges from 1 to 14 members with a median of 5.0. and mean of 5.6 **(Figure 7.11).** Compared with Soche Area in Blantyre City, it can be seen that household average size is higher in Blantyre than in Lilongwe. It must be noted however, that, these results also vary from one neighbourhood to another within Area 49 (that is, the high income area of Bagdad versus the low income areas of Dubai). In sum, the majority (about 60%) of households in Area 49 consist of 4 to 6 members.

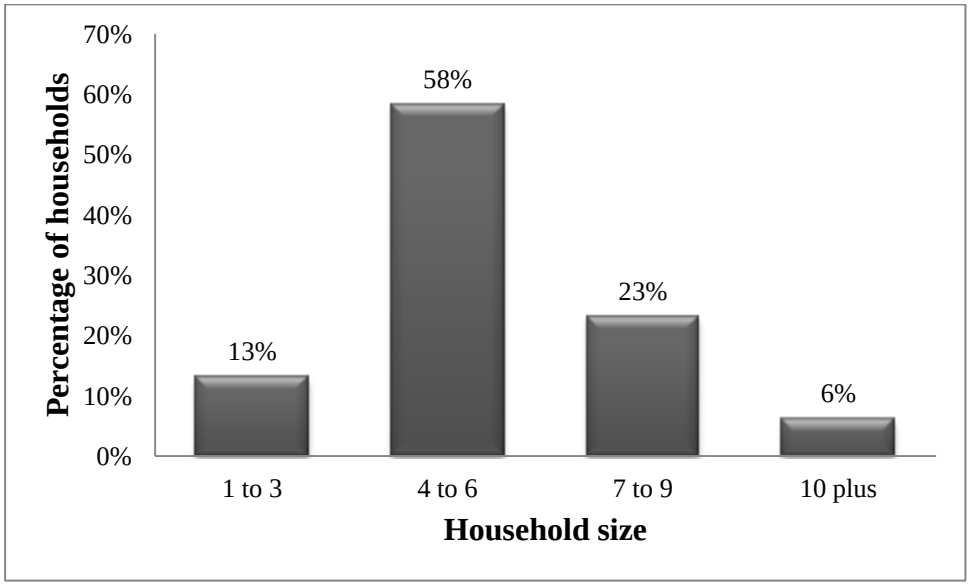


Figure 7. 11 Household sizes of informal residents in Area 49, Lilongwe City

7.3.3 Squatters' knowledge and perceptions of urban space

Following on the analysis of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of urban residents in the 'informal' spaces, the knowledge and perceptions of these residents with respect to knowledge and perceptions of the original status of the land they occupied is analysed as well as the occupancy or vacancy status of the land; rightful authority and legitimate authority over the land; perceived tenure status and knowledge of the existence of any threats of relocation from the state.

7.3.3.1 Squatters' knowledge of the original status of land in Area 49, Lilongwe

On knowledge about the status of land at the time of invasion, the majority (72%) of respondents were of the view that the land in Area 49 was customary. In other words, prior to invasion, the land belonged to the chief. Other respondents thought the land to be either free land (17.5%) and hence available for occupation or that it belonged to government (7.0%). 3.5% of the respondents mentioned "other" (17.5%) or thought of the land as free land under the authority of traditional chiefs. 3.5% of respondents mentioned other forms of status such

as individuals and parents among others. In Lilongwe, follow up interviews uncovered that some residents understand freehold as vacant land. Further, it was noted that there was confusion as to what 'government' entails. Some individuals view the MHC, Lilongwe City Council and Ministry of Lands as government. The findings imply that people who invaded the land believed that the land belonged to the chief since most of them had been farming on the same piece of land for many years before they finally resorted to invading it for settlement.

7.3.3.2 Squatters' knowledge of the occupancy status of the land

Furthermore, at the time of invasion, the majority (80%) of the residents reported that they occupied vacant land and started developing it themselves while the remainder bought an already existing stand in the study area.

7.3.3.3 Squatters' perception of the legitimate authority over urban land

On legitimacy, the respondents were asked whether or not they recognize the state/its agencies as legitimate authority over urban land. The survey **(Figure 7.12)** found that **the** majority (about 80%) of the residents duly recognized the state as the rightful authority over urban land. From this, it can be deduced that the residents have full knowledge that the land belongs to the state, and that accessing it by any other means is not out of ignorance but rather a well thought out intention to do so.

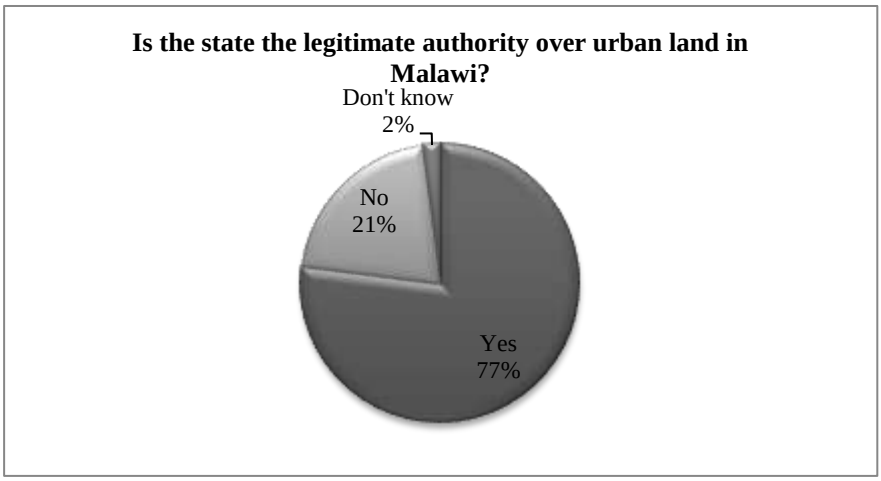


Figure 7.12 Perception of the legitimacy of state control over land

7.3.3.4 Squatter's perception of tenure security

Further to the question of rightful authority over urban land, the survey also investigated the residents' perceived security of their land. Findings as depicted in **Figure 7.13** show that the majority (about 60%) of the residents feel that they are very secure while 2% of the residents expressed feelings of being very insecure about their occupation of the land.

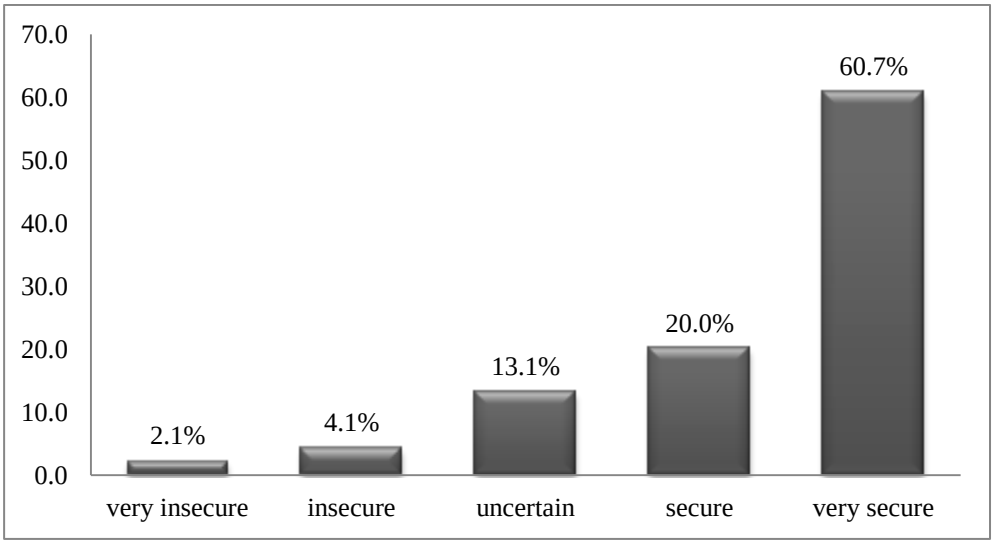


Figure 7.13 Residents' perceived tenure security

7.3.3.5 Squatters' knowledge of legal ownership of land in Area 49, Lilongwe

Finally, having analysed people's perception, the survey attempted to confirm whether or not the encroachers have certain knowledge of the legal owner of the land subjected to invasion. On the basis of this information, it should be possible to understand whether there exists a mismatch between people's perception and conceptions of legality of ownership as well as existing practices of land access. Further, it should be possible to understand whether non-conformity through diverse practices and tactics is out of ignorance, perceptions, or deliberate and conscious choice not to comply with legal expectation.

Indeed, responses **(Table 7.13)** to the question: "Who do you consider to be the legal owner of this land?" show that one third of the participants were convinced that traditional leaders are the legal owners of land in Area 49. However, it must be noted that a combined total of state institutions namely the MHC, City Authority and Government (Lands) gives a total of 34%. In other words, more people recognise the state as rightful owner.

Table 7.13 Squatters' knowledge of the legal status of the land

Legal owner of urban land[a]	**Responses (%)**
Traditional leaders	31%
Government/Department of Lands	21%
City authority (Lilongwe city)	9%
Malawi Housing Corporation	4%
People (individual)	3%
Others	1%
Don't know	30%
Total	**99%**

Source: Own field survey (2012)

Note: Total percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

7.3.3.6 Squatters' awareness of potential eviction from land in Area 49, Lilongwe

In this section, the researcher investigated the spatial practices employed by the state to claim back urban land on the one hand, and spatial practices or tactics employed by land invaders to defend their land from possible repossession by the state. First, having established that invaders are aware that the state is the ultimate authority over urban land, the survey further sought to find out whether the land invaders are aware that the state will (not) come back to claim its land. Survey results show that that the majority(76%) of the invaders said that in their view the state would not come back to repossess the land from them while 24% reported that the state would likely come back to claim back its land.

Second, the respondents were asked to mention the strategies the state or its agency would use to claim back its land. In essence, the question sought to understand how prepared the residents are to face the state and how on the basis of this perceived fear of the state, households devise strategies to defend their urban spaces. Using multiple response analysis, the survey found that the residents expected the state to use a combination of strategies to force them off the land. Specifically, 14% said they don't know, whereas 36% of the residents indicated demolition (16.1%). All in all, it can be noted that invading groups of residents are not ignorant of the state's potential strategies to repossess the land. Also, as noted **(Table 7.14)**, the state would likely use more than a single strategy to repossess its land including: demolition, relocations, seeking legal redress or the police.

Table 7.14 Squatters' awareness of spatial strategies by the state

Likely spatial strategies to reclaim urban land	Responses (%)
I don't know	33%
Demolition and evictions	30%
Others (silent spatial tactics)	15%
Relocation	13%
Using state security/courts	9%
Total	**100%**

Source: Own field survey (2013)

In the next section, spatial strategies and/or tactics that the invading groups devise to defend their land against any potential repossession by the state are presented.

7.3.4 Spatial practices of residents: Migration as a spatial strategy

In the first place, regarding places of origin of residents in Area 49, the survey results **(Figure 7.14)** show that one third of the residents mentioned Lilongwe as their place of birth followed by Zomba with about 6% of the residents. Of interest is that Zomba was the colonial capital of Nyasaland such that its contribution of in-migrants to Area 49 can as well be explained by the relocation of the capital to Lilongwe in 1975. Unlike the contested land in Soche West (Blantyre City), more residents in Area 49 might just have relocated from within Lilongwe. In Blantyre, however, most residents were in-migrants from the surrounding districts of Thyolo. Unsurprisingly therefore, land invaders involved in encroaching land in question claim that Lilongwe is their home and that the city is encroaching on their land. Indeed, some point out that their parents told them the land belongs to them. Overall, the majority of residents are in-migrants into the city.

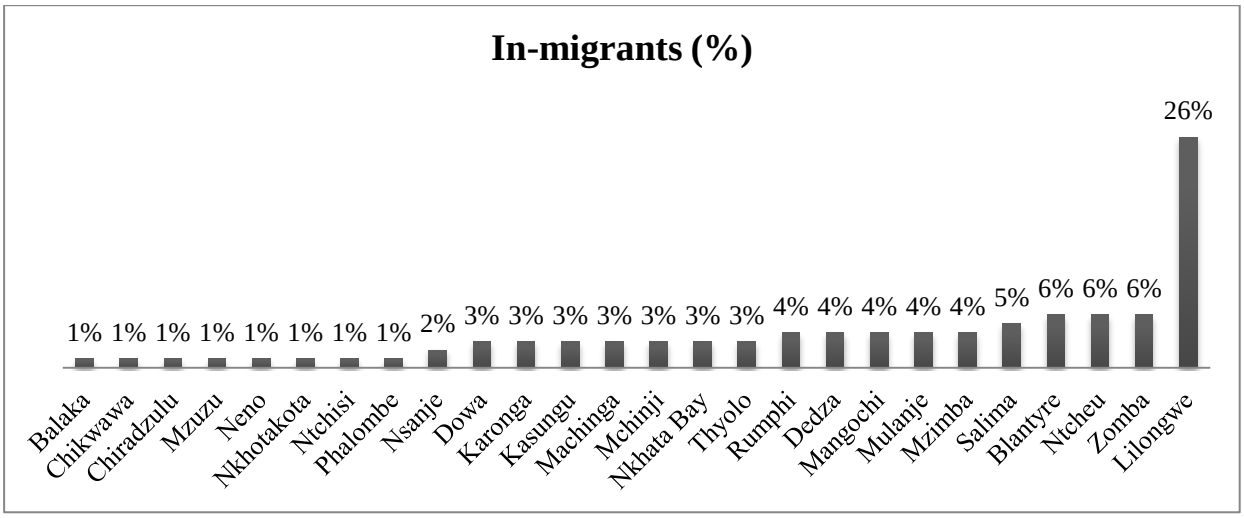


Figure 7.14 Places of origin of urban residents in Area 49, Lilongwe city

Moreover, besides place of origin, the researcher wanted to find out when the 'occupants' migrated to Lilongwe. Respondents were asked to mention the year they migrated to Lilongwe city. Consistent with our periodisation of the history of production of space in Malawi, the following historical moments were used to explain the migration trends, namely colonial era (1891 to 1963), the Dr Banda's dictatorial era (i.e. post-independence era) (1964-1993), and multiparty democratic era (i.e Muluzi's era from 1994-2004 and Mutharika's era from 2004 to 2011). First, the results **(Figure 7.15)** show that none lived in the area prior to independence in 1964. Second, prior to the establishment of the postcolonial capital in 1975, there was less in-migration (less than 1%) into Lilongwe. Immediately after the establishment of the capital rates of in-migration tripled from about 1% to almost 3%. In-migration also peaked prior to 1995 (5%), and recording highest levels just prior to 1999 (7%) and 2009 (7%). One of the conclusions from this migration pattern is that overall there were low levels of in-migration into Lilongwe during the Dr Banda's era although slight increases were registered after the establishment of the capital. However, there is a noticeable trend in the immediate pre- and post-election years in 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009. It can therefore be argued that the wave of democratisation in Malawi is associated with high levels of migration and subsequent invasion of urban land. This phenomenon is more observable in Lilongwe city than in Blantyre. It is therefore not surprising that the study areas of Dubai and Bagdad are commonly called multiparty to reflect period of the invasion as well as to signify pluralism, freedom and heterogeneity. In other words, Dubai is both used in temporal and spatial terms.

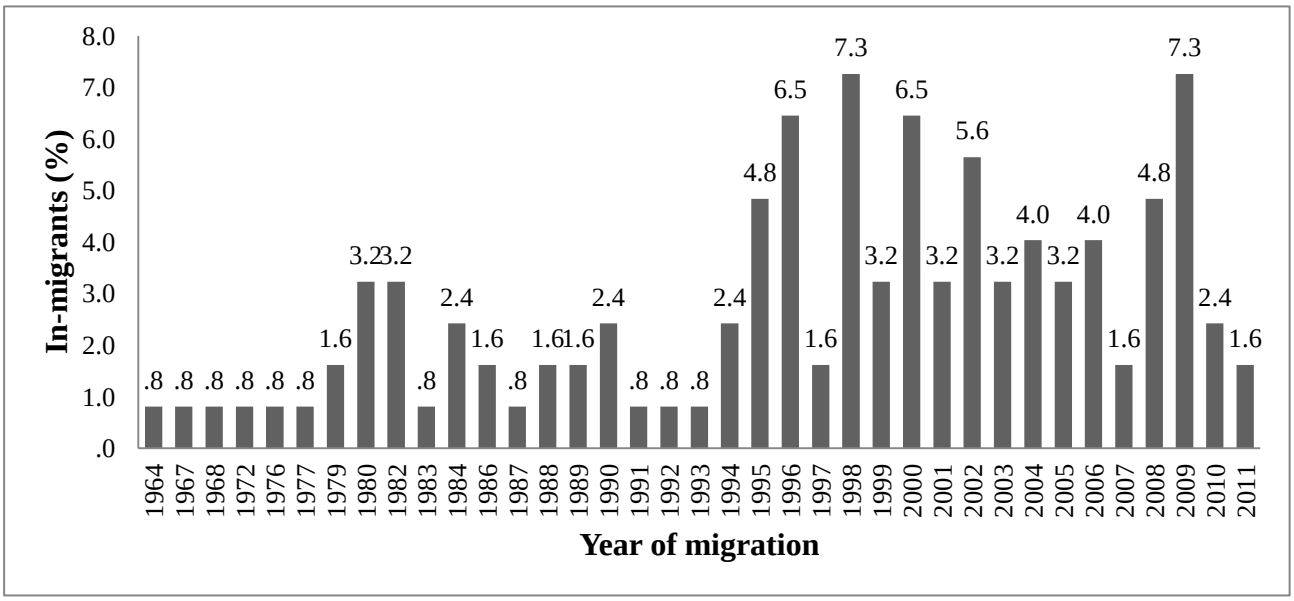


Figure 7.15 Year of migration

One of the interpretations from this migration pattern is that some of the residents in Area 49 use 'mbadwa' (citizens) or 'indigenous' statuses as strategy to exert their claim to urban space. Quite often these are the residents who relocated from other parts of the city but to claim that they are indigenous citizens in the city**.**

Finally, regarding duration of residence in the contested area, the survey found that the majority (75%) of the households have lived on their land for less than 12 years. Yearly analysis of these reported figures reveal that the period of invasion on the land corresponds with pre-election or post-election periods. For instance, presidential and parliamentary elections in 2009 may have incited the invasion of urban land in the area as politicians used land to garner political support. Consequently, failure to deliver election pledges in the post-election period seems to force the electorates to invade urban land. In this regard, as **Figure 7.16** shows, a pattern of higher rates of encroachment, in this case of about 25% of encroachers, corresponds with the elections in the periods 1993, 1999, 2004 and 2009.

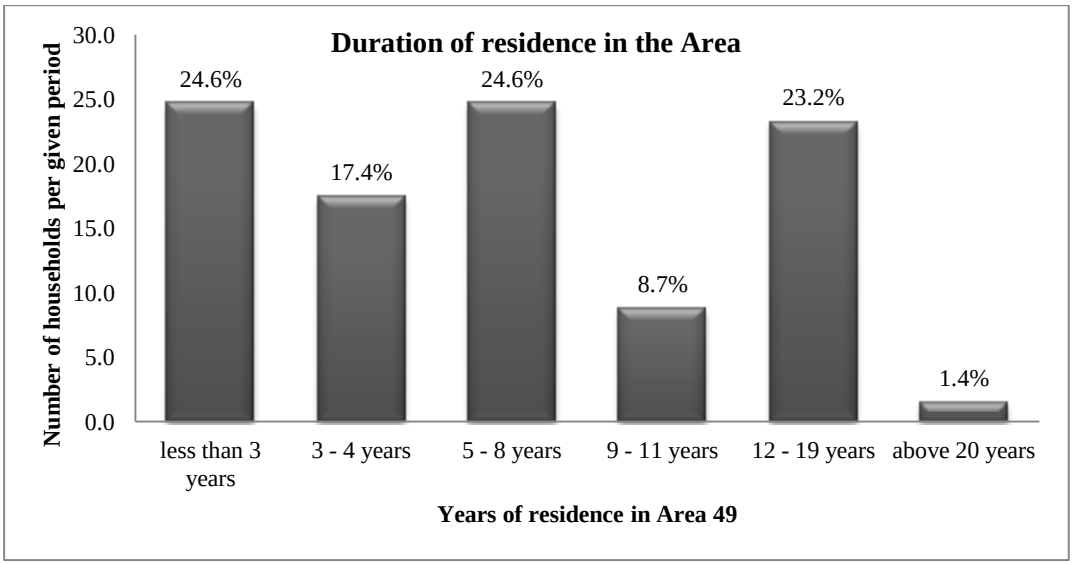


Figure 7.16 Duration of residence in Area 49 or nearby locations

Also beside political promises, another interpretation is that it is also possible that invaders deliberately grab urban land knowing well that politicians will always defend them for fear of losing electoral votes, hence the struggle for urban spaces prior or soon after electoral voting.

7.3.5 Spatial practice of land access and appropriation

In view of the foregoing understanding of residents' perceptions over urban land, the researcher went further to establish the means that residents use to acquire urban land. The survey **(Table 7.15)** found that the highest proportion (45%) of the residents used local chiefs to acquire urban land as compared to individuals, city authority and other entities.

To investigate the spatial practices that individuals employ to acquire urban land, the survey first attempted to explore invaders knowledge and perceptions of urban land with respect to: their knowledge of the original tenure status of the land before invasion; whether they occupied vacant land or existing stand and whether or not they recognize the state as the legitimate authority over urban land in Malawi. On the basis of these perceptions, the researcher used the survey to investigate spatial practices and tactics the residents used to acquire the land and the extent to which they feel secure about their occupation of the land in question.

7.3.6 Spatial practice by residents to defend urban land

In Lilongwe city, as was the case in Blantyre, the researcher wanted to investigate the everyday strategies and tactics employed by residents in an attempt to defend their land from

possible eviction, demolition or repossession by responsible government authorities. Analysis of multiple response sets using SPSS showed that urban dwellers engage in a number of spatial practices to defend their land from eviction, demolition or repossession by the state. In **Table 7.15** it can be seen that about one-fifth of respondents indicated formation of groups to negotiate with the responsible authorities to allow them to continue occupying the land, followed by politicians (17%). In this case, urban dwellers who invaded land in the area approach politicians for help. Quite often these include ward councillors, members of parliament, or the head of state. Other strategies include: doing nothing about it, silence, organizing peaceful and violent demonstrations against government; obtaining proof of land ownership from the traditional/local chief in the area, and registering and regularization of the land.

Table 7.15 Spatial strategies to defend urban land in Area 49

Strategies used by residents to defend urban space	**% of responses**
"We form coalitions to negotiate with authorities to legalise our occupations"	19%
"We approach politicians to defend our land"	17%
"We do nothing about it - Since the government is quiet we are also quiet"	15%
"We demonstrate and protest through violence against government"	14%
"We obtain letters from traditional chiefs as proof of ownership. The chief will defend us"	14%
"Once I find money, I shall apply for title deeds and have my plot surveyed"	5%
"We call places here by our own names as sign of protest"	5%
"I do not comply with their prescribed planning and environmental standards"	5%
"I am building another house until they come to stop me. So we will continue to occupy and use the land"	5%
"Courts are open to everyone and every case. I can also go to police"	2%
Total	**100%**

Source: Own field survey (2013)

Note: Observed totals of 101% are due to rounding

From the household survey, it could be observed that invading residents in Area 49 know the rightful owners of the land; hence their occupation of the land is unlawful. They are also aware that the state may decide to come and repossess the land in question including being aware of the likely strategies that the state will employ to repossess their land. In turn, the invading groups also mobilise multiple strategies and tactics to defend their territory from possible repossession or eviction by the state.

Interviewing the residents themselves and physical observation have made it clear that the belief that informal means "unplanned" or spontaneous is in direct contrast with the actual spatial practice. Castillo (2001:105) is justified here that viewing informal as unplanned is a mere myth about urban informality.

Furthermore, as the results reveal, squatting (whether incremental or organised), constitutes only one mode of irregular land acquisition, and not necessarily the most important. The aerial photographs depicting Baghdad taken over different time periods, illustrate how evidently *planned* the area is. Evidently, the regular layout and empty properties indicating a steady development process not requiring immediate occupation to secure possession, attests to this. Indeed, the so-called squatter settlements in Lilongwe city (both Baghdad and Dubai), do not necessarily demonstrate the structure generally described as filthy, chaotic, disorganised or substandard. Squatters have subdivided one settlement into equal-sized plots on a regular grid plan.

On the one hand, the analysis of people's perception reveals that prior to invasion and subsequent occupation, the majority (72%) of the households saw the land as belonging to traditional leaders. On the other hand, analysis of people's knowledge shows that the majority (77%) of the households recognize the state (and not traditional leaders) as the ultimate authority over control of urban land. Notwithstanding this knowledge, the findings indicate that in practice, most (82%) households acquired land from traditional chiefs (45%) and individuals (37%) who invaded urban land in Lilongwe city's Area 49. Arguably, therefore, people knew that their occupying and settling on the land in question was unlawful, which effectively meant they were encroaching or invading on state property.

From this, a number of implications can be drawn: first, probably the residents have more respect for traditional leaders as owners of the land as opposed to the state; second, by willingly disregarding the law, land invaders acted based on their perceptions as opposed to their knowledge, in this case that of urban planning; third, the knowledge of planning does not seem to serve the people being planned for; four, the apparent trust in chiefs as owners and custodians of the land effectively means chiefs and the so-called encroachers are on one side while the state as an institution is on the other side; In essence, therefore, the conflict over urban land in Malawi could be a contest between the (modern) state versus the people. In this regard, therefore, struggle over urban land is a manifestation of the contest between perceptions and conceptions vis-à-vis tradition (that is chiefs and their subjects) versus modernity.

7.4 SPATIAL TACTICS TO DEFEND URBAN SPACE: ANALYSIS OF FIELD OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Based on field observations in the contested areas namely Area 49 and Soche West in Lilongwe and Blantyre respectively, it was observed that both invading groups and the state employ tactics in order to appropriate and defend urban spaces.

7.4.1 Temporary farming as spatial tactic

From the interviews, it was observed that 'pakamwa' which literary means 'the mouth' is used as weapon to gain access to urban land. In other words, land invaders are very crafty with their utterances regarding their intentions and motives for occupying a given parcel of land. Apparently, invaders can claim that they would like to occupy a given parcel of land temporarily for subsistence agriculture (or in some cases business). Once the land is offered to them they start claiming to be natives of the area. In other words they start claiming that they are indigenous owners of the land.

Next, they mobilise themselves and start claiming compensation for relocation and later refusing to relocate, arguing that the money was not enough for a decent relocation. Indeed, as noted in earlier, it is at this point that they engage politicians who mostly side with the invaders in a bid to gain political mileage. At this point, they become militant to the extent of issuing death threats.[35].

Temporary shelter as spatial tactic

In both Blantyre and Lilongwe cities, physical observations revealed that in addition to the strategies that were captured from the survey, there are other silent spatial tactics that users of urban space practise in order to appropriate, produce, contest and defend 'their' land. One such spatial tactic involves erecting temporary huts on the site and in some cases with a board ('plot not for sale') in order to secure the plot from other invading groups. Also, it was observed that resident mould and burn bricks on the contested site in most cases using heaps of soil that were deposited on the site by the state, in this case the MHC to deter would be encroachers. In relation to this, it was discovered that quite often these structures are erected during weekends when enforcement officers are on recess **(Figure 7.17)**.

[35] This information is based on an interview I had with a physical planning officer based in Blantyre. Complementary details were gathered from an interview I had with interviewees in Lilongwe city in May 2012.

Source: Own field survey (2013)

Figure 7.17 Spatial tactics to defend urban space in Area 49

From left to right, **Figure 7.18** depicts some of the silent but observable tactics that residents employ to defend urban land. First, 'plot not for sale' represents inscriptions written on temporary huts to secure the plot from other squatters. Second, temporary huts and moulding bricks and oven activities on the site are also used to defend their land. Third, squatters are always present on the land to provide surveillance and thereby safeguard their plots. In some cases, their presence on the site is basically to undertake land sale transactions with potential buyers of squatted land.

As a counter tactic, the paved road is a MHC constructed road which was mainly a strategy to stop encroachment by demarcating the encroached space from the contested area. Also, heaps of soils were deposited on the site to show the visible presence of the MHC as land lord. Interestingly, as a sign of defiance, squatters used the heaps of soil to mould bricks on the same contested site.

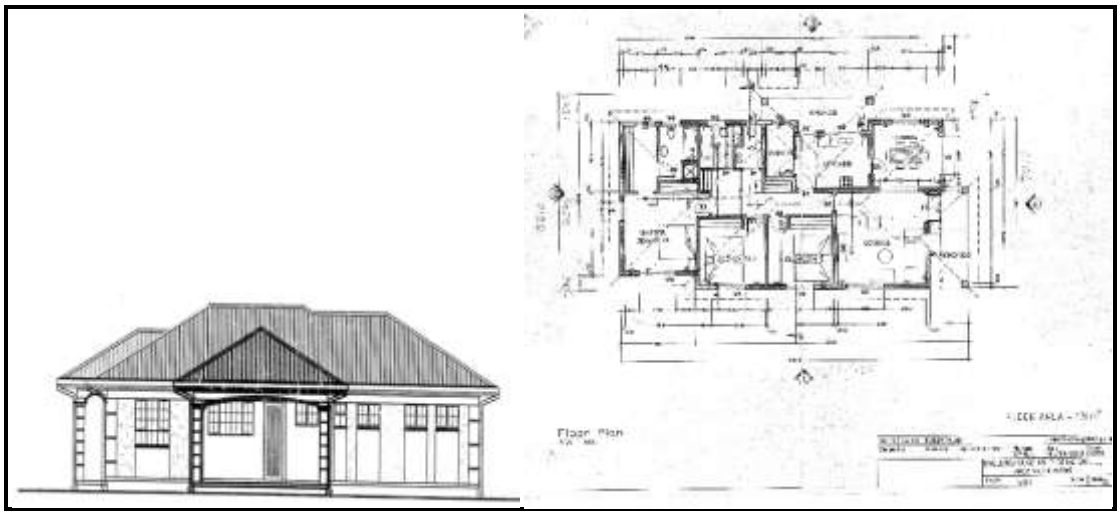
7.4.3 Mimicking the state

Another strategy that squatters employ in their quest to appropriate and defend urban land is to copy the practices of the state (in this case the MHC) in respect of land access, and planning and building guidelines.

On land access, multiple processes were observed. First, having identified vacant land or land they have been farming on for some time, invaders form unofficial committees that are mandated albeit unofficially to giving land to people seeking land for occupation. Second, a group of young men popularly referred to as *'dobadobas'* move around and identify idle land to sell to land seekers. Dobadobas are usually understood as middle men, conmen or tricksters who do not have any means of earning a living and hence rely on 'picking land' that does not belong to them. Third, affluent groups instigate people to encroach on urban land and then buy land at a cheaper price from these encroachers with the hope of legitimising their occupations later.

More importantly, accessing land and confirmation for land ownership, as complex mechanisms have emerged which also confirm state imitation. For instance, people may have been allocated land by the city council, albeit through dubious means. In the analysis of conceived spaces, it emerged that the state capacity to impose abstract space is constrained by numerous challenges including corruption leading to multiple land allocations among others. However, after obtaining land unofficially (but from city officials) these land buyers approach traditional leaders to confirm the land transactions. In other words, land access mechanisms involve a combination of both formal (unofficial) and informal mechanisms of land access (or traditional land access).

In Lilongwe's Area 49 especially the contested area of Bagdad, urban residents have managed to create a series of land layouts that imitate the state's activity of "planning" the land which is essentially "ordering' the land. In other words, there is some form of planning that also imitates the state practices. Indeed, plot subdivisions, conform to plot measurement of 30m by 30m resembling some order practised by the state. For instance, in the words of one invader, they make sure that house orientation is 'back to back' meaning they are arranged in a rectilinear pattern while ensuring that the front faces the access road. Therefore, as the invader observed, it will be easy for state authorities to tolerate the structure since in as far as he knows, the state will only demolish those houses that are substandard **(Figure 7.18)**.



Source: Own field survey (2012)

Figure 7.18 'Illegal' but 'planned ' house in Area 49 (Baghdad)

Note: This is a typical example of a drawing of a house for an 'illegal' resident in Area 49 in Lilongwe (Bagdad) (designed by an architect (unofficially) and built without official authorisation in the Bagdad neighbourhood. Source: Image sourced from the house owner in 2013 with his permission to publish the structure)

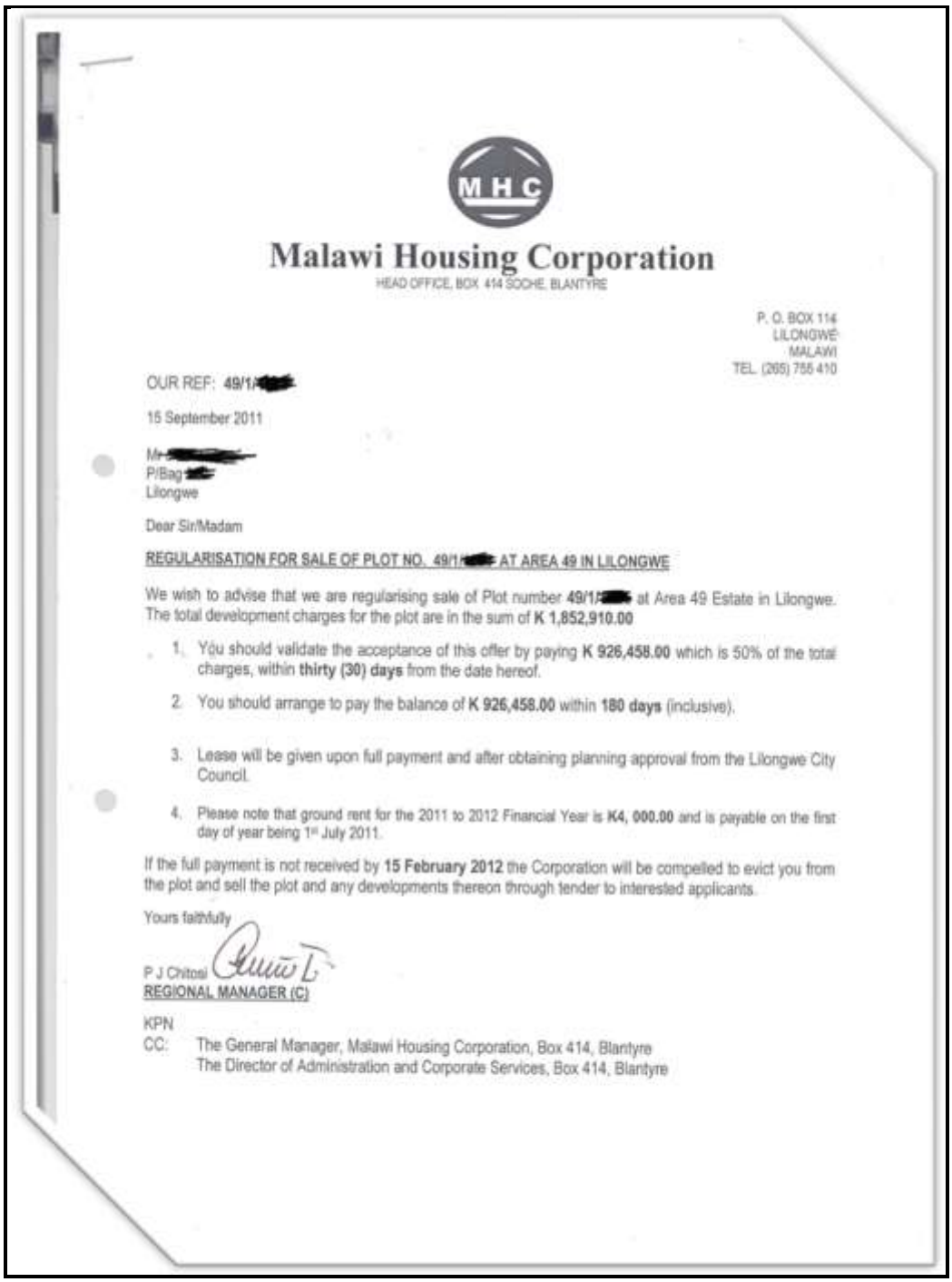
Moreover, residents build permanent houses that conform to the city's building regulations or to standards higher than those prescribed by the state. In this regard, the occupation of the land itself aspires to imitate the state in terms of constructing at least a permanent house. In this regard, residents are convinced that the house will receive approval by the state authority responsible for planning in this case, the Lilongwe city council. In the majority of cases in Baghdad, anticipation of getting planning permission as a practice continues.

Lefebvre (1991:376) describes mimesis as imitation and its corollaries; analogy and impressions informed by analogy; resemblances and dissimilarities; metaphor (substitution of one term for another) and metonymy (use of a part to refer to the whole). In this case, mimesis imitates nature by assigning an abstract model imitating nature thereby ensuring violence by destroying desires of the relationship between occupants and their spaces. He also observed that spatial strategies have as many aims as abstract space which could be manipulated and manipulative. In this regard, there are six aims of strategic space. First, strategic space aims to force worrisome groups, the workers among others, out towards the periphery. Second, it aims to make available spaces near the centre scarcer, thereby increasing their value. Third, it organises the centre as locus of decision, wealth, power, and information. Fourth, strategic space aims to find allies for the hegemonic class within the middle strata and within the elite.

Finally, a strategic space intends to plan production and flows from the spatial point of view (Lefebvre 1991:375). Strategy of classification aims to distribute the various social strata and classes across available territory, keeping them separate and prohibiting all contact as is the case of apartheid planning that is manifested in Lilongwe city. It can therefore be argued that although Lefebvre only considered the role and function of mimesis in the domination of space, urban residents ('illegal occupants') in Area 49 have continued to mimic state practices to avoid facing the wrath of abstract space.

Observed practice in Lilongwe proves that notwithstanding the incapacitations of abstract space (such as human and technical capacity, limited finance, poor enforcement, bureaucracy and complex procedures, residents still anticipate that one day permission will be granted. Quite often what matters is not the formal approval as such but the implicitly declared intention to potentially seek this approval although it might be at some far off date in the future. **Figure 7.19** shows MHC response to land invaders in Area 49 who applied for formalisation of their plots. Essentially, land invaders through continued dialogue are optimistic that one day their developments will be approved.

Thus from the correspondence **(Figure 7.19)** between the MHC and illegal occupants, it could be deduced that while residents continue to copy the official planning practices in terms of land development, their structures are tacitly accepted by the city authorities who appear to be more willing to officially regularise such land occupation especially in view of the weaknesses of abstract spaces and its inherent contradictions.



MHC

Malawi Housing Corporation

HEAD OFFICE, BOX 414 SOCHE, BLANTYRE

P. O. BOX 114
LILONGWE
MALAWI
TEL. (265) 755 410

OUR REF: 49/1/[redacted]

15 September 2011

Mr [redacted]
P/Bag [redacted]
Lilongwe

Dear Sir/Madam

REGULARISATION FOR SALE OF PLOT NO. 49/1/[redacted] AT AREA 49 IN LILONGWE

We wish to advise that we are regularising sale of Plot number 49/1/[redacted] at Area 49 Estate in Lilongwe. The total development charges for the plot are in the sum of **K 1,852,910.00**

1. You should validate the acceptance of this offer by paying **K 926,458.00** which is 50% of the total charges, within **thirty (30) days** from the date hereof.
2. You should arrange to pay the balance of **K 926,458.00** within **180 days** (inclusive).
3. Lease will be given upon full payment and after obtaining planning approval from the Lilongwe City Council.
4. Please note that ground rent for the 2011 to 2012 Financial Year is **K4, 000.00** and is payable on the first day of year being 1st July 2011.

If the full payment is not received by **15 February 2012** the Corporation will be compelled to evict you from the plot and sell the plot and any developments thereon through tender to interested applicants.

Yours faithfully

P J Chitosi
REGIONAL MANAGER (C)

KPN
CC: The General Manager, Malawi Housing Corporation, Box 414, Blantyre
The Director of Administration and Corporate Services, Box 414, Blantyre

Figure 7.19 Correspondence between informal residents and MHC regarding regularisation

7.4.4 Setting as spatial tactic for deliberation

The saying, "land matters are best resolved on-site" implies that on-site versus office setting for deliberation is used as a spatial tactic to defend space. Beauregard (2012) observes that holding meetings on site moves the negotiations outside the planning department's offices – a setting which conveys the formality of the occasion and the importance of the city authority in

the in the development process as it reminds the developer that his project depends on permissions from the government. Also, the professional venue minimises offensive language, threats, and frivolous talk as planners behave like planners, developers like developers. In other words, the confined space mutes confrontation. On the one hand, while the site is developer's venue (site of spatial practice and reality) and confers legitimacy on him and his experts, the planners' office (space of abstraction) is where planning authority reigns.

PERCEIVED SPACES AND SPATIAL PRACITICES: BLANTYRE AND LILONGWE CITIES

On the basis of the foregoing analysis of perceptions and spatial practices, it is therefore clear that to understand these various phenomena, a conceptual framework must be developed which takes into consideration all the demographic characteristics, socio-economic variables, local and global dynamics and their interplay with perceptions and spatial practices. Thus in order to understand the spatial practices in the production of urban space in both the colonial and postcolonial city in Malawi, we need a framework which takes into account people's perceptions, their social and occupational dimensions (social organisation) and their cultural understandings which legitimise the way they claim urban spaces. Since, no framework exists so far, the proposed framework **(Figure 7.21)** seeks to understand the interrelationships between urban residents' perceptions of space and spatial practices they engage in to access, produce and defend these spaces

Findings from the two case studies reveal variations in perceptions of tenure. To analyse variations in perceptions of tenure among urban residents in the two study areas of Soche West and Area 49 in Blantyre and Lilongwe cities, the data was disaggregated into spatial variables (city, neighbourhood, migration), demographic variables (age, marital status, gender) and socioeconomic variables (educational status and income status) of urban residents in the informal or contested areas.

7.5.1 Socio-spatial influences on urban residents' perceptions and spatial practices

One of the major components of statistical analysis involves the analysis of categorical data. Field (2009:687) defines categorical data as data that describe categories of entities. Chi-square test was used to see whether there is a relationship between two categorical variables. The chi-statistic compares observed frequencies in certain categories to the expected frequencies to be obtained in those categories by chance (Field 2009:687). In this analysis, the dependent perception variables namely perception tenure security and practice variables

namely means of accessing urban land, were correlated with independent variables namely: demographic variables of age, sex, marital status, and ethnic group; socio-economic variables such as educational status, level of income (as it depicts one's socioeconomic class); and size of household.

First, regarding spatial dynamics, city of residence and neighbourhood were correlated with perception of tenure to find out if city of residence determines one' perception of tenure security. The analysis reveals that informal residents in Blantyre city's Soche West are the most insecure (62.8%) as compared to Lilongwe's Area 49 informal residents (**Table 7.16)**.

Table 7.16 Locational influences on perception of land tenure

	City	
Perception of tenure security	**Blantyre**	**Lilongwe**
Insecure	62.8%	37.2%
Secure	39.6%	60.4%

On neighbourhood and resident location, the results revealed that 90 of informal resident's inin Bagdad feel secure while Soche West is the least secure (75.2%) (**Table 7.17)**.

Table 7.17 Neighbourhood influence on perception of land tenure

	Neighbourhood		
Perception of tenure security	**Soche West**	**Bagdad**	**Dubai**
Insecure	24.8%	6.2%	14.0%
Secure	75.2%	93.8%	86.0%

Second, demographic dynamics of gender and marital status are associated with one's perception of tenure. Dissecting the results in terms of gender, the analysis shows that females are the more insecure than their male counterparts **(Table 7.18)**.

Table 7.18 Relationship between gender and perception of tenure security

Perception of tenure security	Gender	
	Male	**Females**
Insecure	48.8%	51.2%
Secure	55.6%	44.4%

Regarding marital status, the results **(Table 7.19)** for the two cities revealed that residents that are married feel more insecure than their unmarried counterparts.

Table 7.19 Relationship between marital status and perception of tenure security

Perception of tenure security	Marital status of residents	
	Not married	**Married**
Insecure	11.6%	88.4%
Secure	15.0%	85.0%

Third, socio-economic dynamics appear to be associated with particular perceptions of tenure security. Further analysis regarding perception of tenure security on one hand, and educational and economic status on the other hand revealed that the least educated are the most insecure as compared to those with higher education **(Table 7.20)**. Similarly, in terms of economic status, the upper income class is the least insecure whereas the lower income class is the most insecure **(Table 7.21)**.

Table 7.20 Educational status and perceptions of land tenure security

Perception of tenure security	Highest educational qualification		
	Primary level	**Secondary level**	**Tertiary level**
Insecure	39.0%	34.1%	26.8%
Secure	18.2%	14.4%	24.4%

Table 7.21 Economic status and perception of tenure security

Perception of tenure security	Economic status of residents		
	Low income	Middle income	Upper income
Insecure	70.7%	26.8%	2.4%
Secure	74.7%	22.7%	2.5%

7.5.2 Spatial practice of appropriating urban space in Blantyre and Lilongwe cities

Further analysis was undertaken to identify factors that determine urban residents' choice of the means of acquiring urban land. Three factors namely economic status, knowledge of legitimate authority over land, and perception of the original status of land were selected.

Findings **(Table 7.22)** reveal that although the vast majority (87.2%) are aware that the state is the legitimate authority over urban land, they continued to acquire land from unofficial mechanism such as traditional chiefs as is the case in Blantyre city, and self-acclaimed landlords and squatters in Lilongwe city. This implies that both the original squatters and those who acquired land from the squatters are not ignorant about the legal ownership of the land in question. In other words, knowledge of the rightful owner of land is not enough to deter people from invading urban land. Thus knowledge does not determine one's choice of access mechanism.

On economic status **(Table 7.23)**, the results show that none in the upper class obtained land from the formal mechanisms. Of interest, is that more than three-quarters of those who accessed land from the informal mechanism belonged to the lower income population. Arguably, this is the group that is excluded from the formal land delivery mechanism as they cannot afford land from the formal system.

Table 7.22 Income status and means of accessing urban land

Means of accessing land	Economic status of residents		
	Lower income class	Middle income class	Upper income class
Formal access	59.1%	40.9%	0.0%
Informal access	75.5%	22.3%	2.1%

On gender, the results revealed that majority of those residents who accessed land by official means were males (59.1%).

Regarding age, more than 60% of those who accessed land from informal mechanisms were aged between 30 and 49 years, followed by those aged 20-29 (16%). The results indicate that the youth and middle aged group do not have access to urban land using formal means. Arguably, it is this population group that resorts to informal means of accessing urban land. In other words, squatting is associated with the youth and middle aged groups.

Findings also reveal that none of the respondents who feel insecure about their land, acquired land using the formal land delivery mechanisms **(Table 7.24).** These results suggest that although residents feel insecure about acquiring land from informal mechanisms, their feeling of insecurity does not seem to prevent them from obtaining land from the informal mechanisms. Arguably, informal means of access seem to be the only resort for residents who are denied access to the formal land delivery system.

Table 7.23 Perception of tenure security and means of accessing land

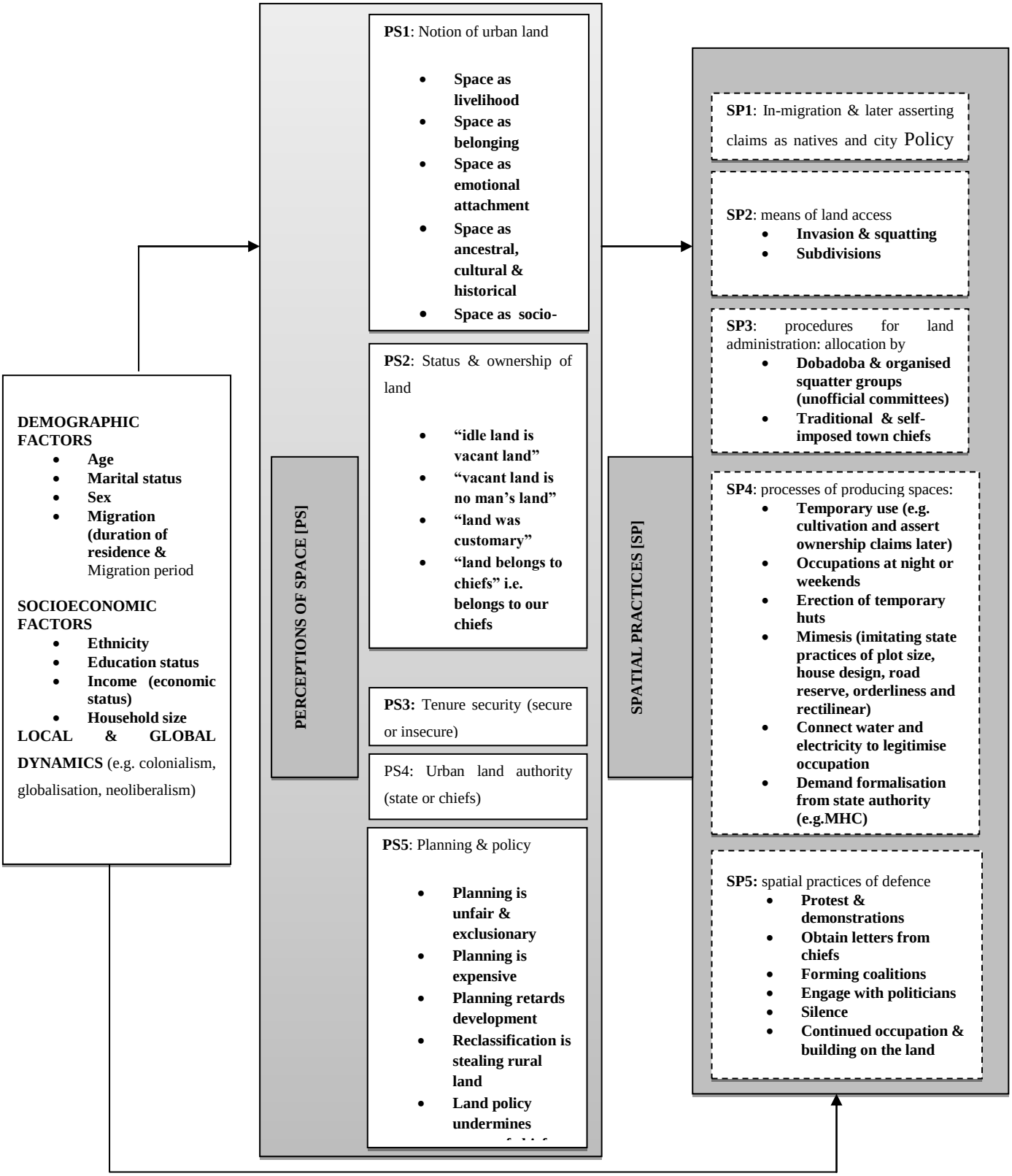
Perception of tenure security	**Means of accessing urban land**	
	Formal access	**Informal access**
Insecure	0%	100%
Secure	23.4%	76.6%

7.5.3 Implications of perception and knowledge on spatial practice in Blantyre and Lilongwe cities

From the foregoing analysis, it can be observed that there are multiple factors which influence residents' perceptions of tenure security. Indeed, as depicted above, about a quarter of informal urban residents feel insecure about their urban land. Such feelings of insecurity as the analysis reveals could be attributed to spatial, demographic and socio-economic factors. First, comparing Lilongwe and Blantyre cities, squatters in Blantyre Soche West feel more insecure (62.8%) than squatters in Lilongwe city. Using the neighbourhood as spatial unit of analysis, however, squatters in Lilongwe's Area 49/1 (Bagdad) are the most secure followed by Area 49 (Dubai), with Soche West being the least secure. Second, with respect to socio-economic status, the findings reveal that those squatters with low levels of education (primary education) feel more (39%) insecure than those with secondary (34.1%) and tertiary (26.1%)

education. Similarly, in terms of economic class, a similar trend was observed in the sense that about three-quarters of those who feel insecure come from lower income class. In other words, high income class like higher education is associated with lower feelings of insecurity.

The proposed framework (**Figure 7.21**) depicts the relationship between perceptions and spatial practice and how these are also affected by demographic, socio-economic characteristics and local and global dynamics such as colonialism and neoliberalism (and their associated importation of urban plans and policies). Fundamentally, urban residents' perceptions of space (PS) such as their perception of land as having multiple meanings (economic and social); their knowledge and perception of the status of land before invasion; their perceived tenure security; coupled with their perception of the rightful authority over urban land, influences the type of spatial practices (SP) they engage in to appropriate, produce, defend and contest urban spaces. Also, the proposed framework suggests that those residents' perceptions and interpretation of planning and policies as conceived spaces in the production of urban spaces also influences their spatial practices. For instance, one of the spatial practices identified in the research relates to reclassification of rural land thereby incorporating land under rural authority into the jurisdiction of urban authority. Rural residents perceive this spatial practice of the state as tantamount to pilfering or stealing of rural land hence their demand for compensation. Once residents hear rumours of the state's intention to repossess their land they quickly resort to selling the land before the state comes in, thereby contributing to invasions or subdivision hence contestation over space.



Source: Own field survey (2013)

Figure 7.20 Schematic presentation of the residents' perception of urban space and their spatial practices

7.6 CONCLUSION

On the basis of household surveys of urban residents in the two case studies of Soche West (Blantyre city) and Area 49 (Lilongwe city), perceived spaces and spatial practices in the production of spaces in urban Malawi were investigated using the lens of Henri Lefebvre's theory of production of space. First, contextual factors as they relate to demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the two cities were analysed. Then perceived spaces as they relate to perceptions of land ownership, status at the time of occupation, perception of land tenure and perception of the legitimate authority over urban land were analysed. On the one hand, the analysis of people's perception reveals that prior to invasion and subsequent occupation the majority (over 70%) of the households saw the land as belonging to traditional leaders. On the other hand, analysis of people's knowledge, show that majority (77%) of the households recognize the state (and not traditional leaders) as the ultimate authority over urban land. Notwithstanding this knowledge, the findings indicate that in practice, most (over 80%) households acquired land from traditional chiefs (45%) and individuals (37%) who invaded urban land in Lilongwe city's Area 49. Arguably, therefore, people knew that their occupying and settling on the land in question was unlawful, which effectively meant they were encroaching or invading on state property.

From this, a number of implications can be drawn: first, probably the residents have more respect for traditional leaders as owners of the land as opposed to the state; second, by willingly disregarding the law, land invaders acted based on their perceptions as opposed to their knowledge, in this case that of urban planning; third, the knowledge of planning does not seem to serve the people being planned for; four, the apparent trust in chiefs as owners and custodians of the land effectively means chiefs and the so-called encroachers are on one side while the state as an institution is on the other side; In essence, therefore, the conflict over urban land in Malawi could be a contest between the (modern) state versus the people. In this regard, therefore, struggle over urban land is a manifestation of the contest between perceptions and conceptions vis-à-vis tradition (that is chiefs and their subjects) versus modernity. Also, the spatial practices by the residents as well as the state in the process of producing and contesting space is analysed in the chapter. From the foregoing analysis it can be seen that squatters employ both open tactics of defiance as well as silent tactics to defend their spaces. In the final analysis, a proposed framework based on this research has been suggested to comprehend the link between perceptions and spatial practice. On the basis of conceived spaces (chapter 6) and perceived spaces (chapter 7), the next chapter will analyses

lived spaces as they relate to lived experiences associated with demolition and relocations and how residents use these lived experiences to contest and produce their own spaces.

CHAPTER 8 LIVED SPACES AND REPRESENTATIONAL SPACES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Lived spaces and representational spaces in relation to contestation over urban spaces in Malawi are explored in this chapter by means of the third triadic moment of Lefebvre's theory of production. The chapter commences with an overview of research methodology, followed by the highlighting of Henri Lefebvre's epic work on production of space. By analysing lived experiences and specific representational spaces, it is argued that urban spaces have multiple meanings and these meanings are in turn used by those who share them to contest and thereby shape and produce urban spaces.

8.2 METHODOLOGY

Carp (2008:135-6) observes that open-ended questions focus on the place in its representational, fluid nature rather than defining it from a fictive, one and only "true" standpoint, say perceived space or conceived space. In other words, places as social space can evoke multiple lived experiences b the differences between which may not be easily observed. Lefebvre (1991) illustrates this understanding using a single family home neighbourhood as a representational space of the sanctity (or sacredness) of the biological family. While many residents experience such places as secure, safe, orderly, and right; other residents experience them as exclusive, culturally rigid, and ecologically wasteful (Carp 2008:136). On the basis of this understanding, lived spaces (that is both physical features and lived experiences) were explored using multiple sets of data collected from mass media (print and electronic) and focus group discussions with both indigenous and immigrant urban residents. Open-ended question items were also included in the survey questionnaire and physical observations, photographs and music were used. Data were analysed using CAQDAS (specifically, ATLAS.t.i.) and content analysis. Specifically, therefore, analysis of lived spaces and representational consists of two interrelated moments: first, an analysis of physical features which carry symbolic significance and meanings with them; and secondly, analysis of lived experiences of everyday life in relation to daily struggles as they relate to living, access to land and defending land.

8.2 LEFEBVRE'S THEORY AND LIVED SPACES

In this section an overview of Lefebvre's theory of production of urban space with particular focus on lived experiences and lived spaces component of the triad is given.

8.2.1 Lefebvre's theory of space

The key to Lefebvre's theory is the view that the production of space can be divided into three dialectically interconnected dimensions or processes which Lefebvre calls "formants" or "moments" of the production of space. From the spatial perspective, these moments refer to the three triadic elements of "spatial practice," "representations of space," and "spaces of representation." From the human experience perspective, these moments refer to "perceived, "conceived," and "lived" space. Essentially, therefore, as Carp (2008:29) observes, these two parallel series point to a twofold approach to space namely: phenomenological, on the one hand, and linguistic or semiotic on the other hand.

For Lefebvre, space is a product of and a precondition for social processes: "space is at once result and cause, product and producer (Lefebvre 1991: 270)." In this case, this added dimension means that space itself is not a neutral container but plays a role in shaping the social processes that determine**s** representations of space, spatial practice, and representational space (Milgrom R 2008). This underscore the point that the production of space is a continual process and that space is always changing as conceptions, perceptions, and lived experiences change. Arguably, this further explains the "heterogeneous spatio-temporalities" that Harvey refers to as a result of moving from a place (or space) of origin to a new place (space) of settlement (Milgrom R 2008).

On the basis of this back ground, lived space as one major moment in the production of urban space will be examined in the next section. On the basis of this understanding, lived spaces and representational spaces as they relate to the study areas in questions will be examined as well as how these have contributed to the growing contestation over urban space in Malawi's cities.

8.2.2 Lived spaces and representational spaces

Lefebvre defines lived spaces as referring to the actual experience of living which infuses both physical space and mental space (Carp 2008:135). Unlike conceived spaces (planners' space produced for exchange values), lived spaces are appropriated by citizens for use values (Ng et all 2010). Characteristically, like other spaces, lived spaces are also understood from two perspectives, namely the physical perspective and human experience point of view.

First, from physical perspective, lived spaces or representational spaces are those spaces that evoke an unusually deep sense of meaning. As observed by Lefebvre (1991) these representational spaces are lived directly through their associated symbols in a way that

overlays the physical space that is associated with it. Though tacit and inarticulate (i.e. unspoken and unstated), these places are imbued with meaning that people recognise and experience as significant beyond themselves as individuals. Examples of lived spaces in this regard include bed, bedroom, dwelling house, square, church, and graveyard among others.

Second, from the human experience angle, lived space refers to in-the-moment awareness of being alive or being fully present (Carp 2008:135). Moreover, as Lefebvre (1991) calls it, lived space is "highly complex and quite peculiar because culture intervenes here". Unlike those lived spaces identified by physical features, here representational space is recognisable as a matter of lived experience. Finally, they are infused with meaning that can adequately be expressed with music, painting, photography, sculpture, literature, symbolism, gestures, awkward metaphors, sighs and gaps, a muttered expletive, spontaneous tears, rapt attention, or the straightening of one's back (Lefebvre 1991).

Summarily, representational spaces, as Lefebvre argues, need no rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Their source is in history (i.e. in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people). They are alive and do speak. Moreover, they have an affective kernel or centre: ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling house, square, church, and graveyard. Additionally, they embrace the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations. Also, they are diverse in that they can be directional, situational or relational because they are essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic (Carp 2008). Contrary to Soja's third space, lived spaces are characterised by their interconnectedness with perceived, and conceived as moments and processes. All in all, spaces of representation embody the images, symbols and associative ideas of the 'users' that give meaning to space (Yacobi, 2004) and it is the space that the inhabitant seeks to change and appropriate (Yakhlef, 2004).Finally, it is directly lived space, felt rather than thought about (Merrifield, 2006). In the next sections, I examine lived spaces from both the physical or spatial perspective and the human or experiential standpoint as they relate to the struggle for land in both Blantyre and Lilongwe cities.

8.3 ANALYSIS OF LIVED SPACES AND SPACES OF REPRESENTATION

Corresponding to Lefebvre's conceptualisation as sustained through this thesis, spaces of representation are generally, the symbolic dimensions of space. In this case, lived space comprises the images and symbols used by people within their spaces to signify meaning. Indeed, for Lefebvre (1991, p. 39) this is:

"space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols . . . space which

the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic uses of its objects . . . tend towards more or less coherent systems of nonverbal symbols and signs".

For purposes of capturing spaces of representation, both indigenous and in-migrant urban residents talked of objects in their spaces that are imbued with meaning and hence symbolise lived experience and produce meaning in relation to earning a living, accessing and appropriating urban land, ownership and defence of urban land and their experiences of demolitions and relocations as imposed by state authorities. In relation to material objects, the findings are discussed below.

8.3.1 Photographs

In one focus group discussion, family photos were also used to support claims for urban space. Use of family photos is consistent with Rose's (2003) study of the production of domestic space using photography in which she argued that referentiality is part and parcel of the conversation especially to express feelings about urban space. In the course of our conversation on control over urban land, the traditional chief stood up and went into her house and collected a photograph:

"Here Sir, this is T.A. Kapeni in this photo...who has just passed away. This is a genuine photo. We did not simply buy it".

In the photo was the late Chief Kapeni posing alongside the current traditional authority, GHV Misesa, an apparent rightful heir to the throne.

In the above excerpt, the photograph here is referred to as if it were a person. For instance, 'this is T.A. Kapeni' instead of 'this is a photo of'.

In spatial and temporal terms, the existence of photograph within the space in question as well as its immediate availability, coupled with its temporal attributes of bringing past memories to the present is evident. Also, the walk into the house and the description of the photo speaks of something beyond words. In addition, the photograph is used to contest any challenge to the chief's authority over urban space. In other words, the chief is the rightful heir of the late Kapeni and therefore has mandate to control the land in question, including its allocation.

8.3.2 Journalists and the media

In relation to photographs, lived experiences in relation to how the residents acquired land and the torture that the state inflicts on the urban residents, were also captured by the mass media. On 9 July 2013, the BNL Times carried an article, "BT council demolishes squatter houses in Soche'. First, the media represents a desperate woman weeping and shedding tears about the loss of her only house and hope.

"My house was almost finished and ready for occupation. This place and this house was my only hope to say good bye to a hard life of paying rent every month".

Source: Juma C 2013. Blantyre council demolishes squatter houses in Soche. http://timesmediamw.com/bt-council-demolishes-squatter-houses-in-soche/

Figure 8.1 Lived experience of demolitions of homes as represented in tears

In addition as reported by the media, a widow and a mother of six children wept:

"I have spent almost K20, 000 on this house and today I am left with nothing and I don't know what to do next. I only wish the government could listen to my plight," said Maness Kazembe, a widow and a mother of six children.

Another woman called Rose John who reportedly broke into tears had this to say:

"I did not run away. I sat here and watched them take down my oven and destroy my bricks. I am a poor woman without a man to look up to. I worked so hard, moulded these bricks myself hoping I will one day house my five children. I can't believe I am being treated like this in my own country".

In the above selected excerpts, it is quite clear that regardless of how others perceive the quality of these houses, to these desperate women, these spaces represent spaces of hope because they finally have a place called home. Also, considering their poverty, the excepts expressed how they struggled to access land, mould bricks, and build a house while the city was watching, but only to be demolished one morning. In this regard, tears and mourning and inability to run away seem to convey meaning which words cannot. Other expressions such shock and inability to give interviews convey shattered hopes and destitution while accusing the city fathers and their agents of being cruel and denying the poor a chance to own houses.

8.3.3 Verbal and visual

When interviewing indigenous residents in Soche West (mainly Misesa village), it is touching that they see relocations as reminding them of the colonial past and its agonies. One participant, an old man probably in his late 70s, observed that it is high time we stop blaming the white man because they are not the ones who are moving people nowadays. In his own words the respondent recounted that:

"The first whites, when they chose a place, a piece of land they asked the natives to move and now natives who have taken over government from the whites simply followed what the whites were doing. The problem is with planners or government. When government came here they found people but they do not respect them, in short. We hear from the radio that people's freedoms/rights must not be violated, but for us our rights are being violated. The rights are violated in the sense that you build your house on your land and they come to move you to another area you did not plan to move to".

In addition, the respondent also bemoaned the tendency by the state and the MHC in particular not to engage with the concerned parties regarding their plans to relocate the residents:

"But they just tell you to live that's why....even when there is money they don't even consider to allow you to see the land they want you to move to; are you going to like the place? Or will you live the way you used to if you moved to the new place? But they don't do that, they just move you. You are not even told where you'll be moved to. In the past you could be told that you were being moved to Maleule or Mwanza but now nobody is told. Those who have their houses destroyed here or those in Lilongwe were not told where they were to be moved to. They only said we are destroying the houses. Period! So if they tell you "we are destroying your house" without giving you anything and on top of that you don't have anywhere to go, then yours is poverty! And then you die premature death because of poverty, suffering and lack of peace of mind".

It can be seen from the above that participants expressed their profound attachment to places they currently inhabit to the extent that they expressed their feelings in phrases like:

"Kusamusa anthu ndi chitsamunda" (Relocation is colonial);

"Kutsamusana ndi zobwelera mmbuyo" (relocation is retrogressive);

"Ndizobwezera chitukuko" (It is anti-development);

"Kuthamangitsa anthu sichitukuko" (Chasing people is not development";

"Kulandana malo sichitukuko" (Grabbing people's land is not development).

Finally, in an interview one married male respondent, who has lived in Blantyre for over 60 years, lamented:

"It can be agonizingly painful to be evicted from this place. They are lucky that I don't have a gun. If I had a gun blood would flow. What you should know is that I have spent a lot of money developing this place. And to be evicted means many steps backwards!"

8.3.4 Metaphors

During focus group discussions as well as personal interviews urban residents occasionally employed metaphors to express their lived experiences especially with respect to demolitions and evictions. In respect of relocation and demolition as a spatial strategy by the state, participants expressed their feelings and attitude using metaphors like: "our children do not know snakes' and 'we look up to the cross'.

8.3.4.1 "Our children don't know snakes'

On several occasions, participants in the focus group discussion used metaphors to express their feelings and discontent with the state's plans to relocate them away from their land especially in Soche West. For instance, when asked about relocation and resettlement, one

participant insisted they are not ready to vacate their current place of residence. The participant emphatically and visibly wondered to why they should be moved to a place where the grocery shop is very far or "an area where you have snakes". Under these circumstances, it is a nonstarter to relocate because they have children who do not know any snakes such that they will find themselves in trouble when they move to another area infested with snakes. In this regard, the use of the word 'snakes' has a different and rather deeper meaning as opposed to the real snake. Indeed, when asked to elaborate, the participant expressed such issues of unfamiliarity with the new environment, hardships in the new settlements which include lack of social facilities such as schools and hospitals. In other words, the participants have developed a sense of attachment and sense of place in their current location. Also, they have infrastructure in place unlike in the proposed relocation site of Lunzu or Machinjiri. Finally, the use of 'snakes' in spatial characterisation conveys a message of 'rurality' and 'villageness' such that the urban residents in the contested area in Soche would not accept going back to an undeveloped site which is more or less a remote village or bush.

8.3.4.2 "We will look up to the cross"

The word 'pamtanda' which means 'at the cross' was also used in the conversation on forced relocations, evictions and house demolitions.

Here is the conversation:

EM: Are you saying relocating people could lead to disputes because of political issues because the MP for that area may not accept that his people be moved?

P14: Yes. Because even the president gets votes from the same people they are trying to relocate.

EM: It also means that they are moving the chief's followers as well?

P14: Yes. For example when people get moved, do you think they will appeal to city assembly officials? Or Housing officials? They will look up to the *"pamtanda"* [means the Cross thus referring to the President].

P2: Even yourself, how would you feel if your own kids were relocated from their land?

EM: Sir, what do you mean when you say the people look to the cross?

P14: You look up to the one in charge (the president). You know, yes because when something bad happens, for example we have children here. If a child starts to swear at people and as a parent you take his/her side, people will say it is the parent who is telling the child to do so. When in actual fact, it is not the father who tells the child to swear.

It can be seen from these excerpts that participants express doubt that the actions of demolitions are sanctioned or approved by either the head of state or the Member of Parliament for the area. On the basis of this perception, the residents are convinced that they

cannot be relocated because doing so would mean loss of electoral votes. Nevertheless, if they are relocated they will hold the president responsible because in their view he is the father or the cross.

From the above, it is evident that urban space is highly politicised such that any spatial strategies to reclaim urban space are bound to face counter spatial tactics (e.g. threats of loss of political support).

8.3.6 Music

In his description of lived space, Lefebvre (1991) observes that lived spaces are infused with meaning that cannot be adequately expressed without music. Between 2004 and 2005 at the peak of demolitions and evictions in Lilongwe city, Lucius Banda, a popular Malawian musician composed one of his hits 'pamtengo wakachere' to utter people's collective feelings and experiences of the moment **(Table 8.1).**

Table 8.1 Lived experiences following evictions as represented in music

PAMTENGO WA KACHERE ***By Lucius Banda*** *Stanza 1* *Amai anga ndabwerako ku tawuniko atisesadi,* *Tchimo lathu ndi lomwelo tinkaipisa mtawuni mwao,* *Mkati mwa tawuni muja atatichotsa tinkamvetsako,* *Koma mpaka ku Kawale, ku 18? Tikadya kuti?* *Stanza 2* *Zochitika moyo wathu masiku ano zikupweteka* *Mukafuna kutimanga mumangomanga tisanalakwe,* *Kutimanga ngati taba kapena tapha tizawonana,* *Ubwino wake masiku samaima amangopita* *CHORUS* *Tidzakumana pa mtengo wa kachere,* *Pothera nkhani pa mtengo wa kachere,* *Ngati si inu ndi mwana wanu.* *Stanza 3* *Ngakhale muzitunza tizakumana tizakumana* *Mwatigumulira bureau tizakumana tizakumana,* *Kutiotchera malonda tizakumana tizakumana,* *Sukulu fees, ndi rent, olo chakudya, tipeza kuti*	***ON JUDGMENT DAY*** *Stanza 1* *Am back from the city mother we have been swept away,* *Our sin is we were an eyesore in their city,* *We understood when we were chased from the inner city;* *But now even Kawale? Area 18? How do we survive?* *Stanza 2* *Everyday life is hard and inflicts pain,* *You arrest us at will even when we are innocent,* *You arrest us as if we have stolen or we have killed,* *You will need us,* *The clock is ticking, and your time is running out.* *CHORUS* *We will meet on judgment day,* *When judgment shall be passed on you,* *If it's not you, it will be your child.* *Stanza 3* *Even though you persecute us we will meet,* *Demolishing our market stalls we will meet,* *Burning our merchandise, we will meet,* *Where shall we get money for school fees, rentals or food?*

Source: Source: Banda Lucius. Pa mtengo wapakachere.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQy_FPM41Gs

Of interest is the imagery in the song of feelings regarding forced eviction, a feeling of having your hard earned structures (including vending stands) demolished. Specifically, as noted from the first stanza, the artist expresses the feeling that the residents and other informal sector workers (often petty traders) have been chased from the planned city of Lilongwe. This

is the 'garden city' referred to in the discussion of representations of space and spatial practices in Lilongwe city. Here Lucius Banda with intent describes this city as 'their city' to emphasise the point that they are treated as strangers, hence an eyesore in this planned city. In other words, they are no longer citizens or 'citidans' as Lefebvre would describe the urban residents.

Following from the first stanza which essentially depicts the violence of abstract space, the second stanza expresses everyday life as inflicted with pain through spatial practices of the state, amongst others using the state security to arrest innocent citizens; demolitions and burning of merchandize (third stanza); and consequences on their livelihoods.

All in all, the song as a space of representation, captures the lived experiences of urban residents in an otherwise planned city. Although urban residents view this city as space of livelihood, the state describes these activities as eyesore, hence illegal in their pursuance of orderliness of space. Finally, the song also reveals the spatial tactics albeit in a brutal way, adopted by the state to impose order. In the end, the users of urban space vow to revenge probably when judgement day comes, probably through the ballot as depicted in the case of metaphors used in Blantyre city.

8.3.7 Conquest and history of settlement

In the research it was also found that indigenous residents of Soche West (particularly Misesa) appeal to history to advance their claims for land. Almost every elder who spoke during the FGD, referred to historical processes in terms of history of occupation and settlement, wars and conquests, colonial (missionary) settlement and the establishment of colonial government.

"My grandmother of my father's side was born in 1886, the year when Gomani Nkhwende died in Mozambique in Villa Domwe in Bonongwe village. It was in that year that the Ngonis entered this country in 1886, that's even before the government came into existence" (P 1: FGDS-BTSW.doc - 1:33).

"Ngonis entered through Dedza, at Tsangano coming here. That was the year my grandfather was born and he told me that the Ngoni found the Yao who were the first people to enter this country. The Yaos found the Akafula and Amang'anja. And it was their search for land which led to wars. When the Ngonis came to this area, they found Kapeni who had already settled in Soche Mountain".

"My grandparents told me that Kapeni was living on top of the Soche Mountain while his people lived just below the hill. When the Ngonis arrived after crossing the Shire River at Mpatamanga, they found Kapeni in the mountain one night. You might have heard of Makwangwala war. That was the night it was fought. Kapeni's people rolled stones down the mountain and broke the Ngoni's legs". (P 1: FGDS-BTSW.doc - 1:34).

In the excerpt, the male participant in his 70s narrates the history of their occupation of the land presently called Blantyre South West. In temporal terms he carefully and repeatedly makes reference to his grandmother to authenticate his story while at the same time to describe how closely related he is to their forefathers/mothers. The year 1886 is also mentioned to underscore the point that they occupied the land before colonial settlement in Blantyre. On means of acquisition, the participant draws attention to the wars fought between the Yaos and the Ngoni by bringing back memories of the 'Makwangwala war". In spatial terms, reference is also made to migrations patterns and initial settlement by Chief Kapeni who was residing on top of Soche Hill (which is represented as forest reserve in the Blantyre USP).

8.5 ANALYSIS OF LIVED SPACES AND REPRESENTATIONAL SPACES

In this analysis**,** spaces of representations are examined as they relate to spaces of graveyard and ancestors, spaces of residence, roads and their names; and spaces of history (i.e. buildings).

8.5.1 Graveyards and spaces of our ancestors

In the FGDs as well as personal interviews, one of the dominant narratives regarding the meaning and significance of urban land was the issue of graveyards and ancestral land. For instance, participants emphasised the view that:

"Chief Kapeni's tombstone is there! *(While pointing at the top of Soche Hill).* His grave is there! The tombstone is erected there actually…(when) the first Kapeni died, he was buried on the hill. Up to now the grave is still there". (P 1: FGDS-BTSW.doc - 1:44).

The selected excerpt, coupled with regular reference to expressions like "this is our ancestors' land" are used to express the feeling and attachment that indigenous residents have to their land. However, in spite of this, the state through its agents namely the MHC, lands department and city council, continue to exert spatial practices which in the eyes of the residents, are meant to destroy completely the meaning and significance of the land and their existence in Blantyre. Some of the practices lamented by participants include that the state is

permitting housing development in grave yards; that the state is selling ancestral land including graveyard space to foreigners (for example for the development of commercial fish farming near Chiwembe area) and that the city's classification of cemeteries is based on one's economic class. For instance, like residential zones, cemeteries are categorised into first class (e.g. Misesa in Limbe and HHI Blantyre) and second class (i.e. Chitawira, Chilobwe, Malabada, Bangwe and Namatapa). ((Malawi News 24 March 2012; P11: NEWS-BT (1).pdf - 11:8).

Notwithstanding the meaning and significance of graveyards and attachment to ancestral land, the state practices imply that everyday life of residents is characterised by spatial segregation in life or after death; contestations over occupation of land as well as location of new graveyards (i.e. while residents prefer the forest area for proximity, the city is proposing locating such sites away from the purview of the city); daily struggles for spaces as graveyards have exceeded their carrying capacity forcing residents to bury their dead in rocky and steep places(P 1: FGDS-BTSW.doc - 1:119) and destruction of their yearly rituals practis ed at Manja graveyards.

In a related struggle over ownership of land on the outskirts of Blantyre city between villagers and the Muslim Association of Malawi (MAM), the latter allowed the people to farm the land and when it wanted to use it the villagers did not let go. On the one hand, in addition to calling villagers "savages", MAM uses the papers they possess and their payment of city rates as evidence of ownership and hence strategies to defend their space.

On the other hand, the villagers claim the land belongs to them. They recounted that they never received any payment for their land. In addition, they threatened MAM with violence, pangas and bows. Villagers argued:

"We were there long before white people came and the Muslims have also just arrived from wherever they are coming from. We are not for war; we are just a hungry people. We have our graves and old mango trees on the land and that is proof enough that we own the land".

This was said by Kingston Malainda, one of the villagers.

Thus, villagers used history of settlement and appealed to their lived experience (graveyard) as well as everyday life (farming on the land) to claim and defend their land.

Similarly, in Lilongwe's Area 49, squatters identify themselves with one of the original traditional leaders in the area, Chief Kalonga, whose tombstone is close to Kalonga Primary

School in the same area (Area 49 Gulliver). However, the graveyard has become a settlement place, and people have built their houses there with the tombstone of Kalonga amidst these people. For Lefebvre, the historical narrative has meaning in the sense that people perceive this as a sacred space. It is a space of their ancestors, hence a space of representation. In this regard, arguably, the new settlement could be interpreted as the state's machination as part of the state strategy to erase meaning of space and its history.

In view of the foregoing analysis, it can be argued that it is apparent that destruction of people's lived space (i.e. ancestral land or graveyards) is one of the major causes of contestation over urban space between residents and city authorities. Indeed, expressions such as "our parents grew up here and we have buried some of them here too" and that there is "no more room in the graveyard that soon it shall overflow to the river all because there is too many of us", (P 2: FGDS-LL49.doc - 2:) have potential to trigger tensions as they are part of people's lived experiences.

8.5.2 Residential areas and their names

Spaces such as residential zones and roads including their names are sometimes used to convey lived experiences of the users of urban space. For instance, in their defence **of** claims to land, participants were of the view that names of residential areas (which are named after the names of their chiefs) are enough to prove that they are the original inhabitants of the city. One participant said:

"The names in towns like Nkolokosa, (those) are names of chiefs who once lived in those areas. Nkolokosa is still a chief now at just across the river from Kaphuka secondary school. At Ginery Corner where you have the hospital, that was land for a Matenje".

"Chinyonga, Chitawila, N'jamba, up to Limbe, there were villages there, Chikuse or Kampala village where now we have the satellite, there were people in all those areas. And all these people were following their chief, Kapeni but they were moved including their chief" (P 1: FGDS-BTSW.doc - 1:66).

Here chiefs' names in towns like Nkolokosa, are names of chiefs who once lived in those areas. By implication, the names bring memories of past relocations while reminding residents that our parents were relocated long time ago so we have to safeguard our space at all costs.

Moreover, personal names of residents are also used in naming infrastructure such as roads either as memory or to remind the Government of how residents deemed as illegal are able to shape space in a concrete rather than an abstract way. For instance, names such as Gavanesi Highway, Khumbanyuwa Highway, and Shumba Highway are used to siginify a number of things such as the name of the people who contributed much to the project.

8.5.3 Historical buildings

In addition to graveyards and residential areas in Blantyre city, participants also made reference to old historical buildings to substantiate their claims to land and what land means to them. In most conversations, the participants emphasised 1939 as the year government was established. For them, the building "Tax Office 1939" **(see Figure 8.2)** presently used by Tourism Department in Blantyre City, carries deep meaning regarding the history of colonial settlement in Blantyre city.

Source: Own field survey (2012)

Figure 8.2 2012 photo of a colonial office in Blantyre which to indigenous urban residents symbolises that the colonial government found the people already on their land in T/A Kapeni (Blantyre City).

In this respect, a married male participant who has lived in the area for over 50 years and currently working as a entrepreneur angrily commented:

"Many people there *(planners)* who deal with these issues are from other areas. They don't know the history of this area, that is why when anybody can simply go there and tell them "I have seen a piece of land" then they will go to that piece of land and soon draw plans and then

tell us what is going to be built on that piece of land. They draw plans when somebody already has built a house there". (P 1: FGDS-BTSW.doc - 1:122).

Here, the excerpt expresses people's sentiments and sensations which undermine the institution of urban planning. In other words, "city planners are ignorant of our history and they lack of forward planning".

Furthermore, in reaction to relocation as part of planning strategy one respondent angrily said:

"We have received warning that we will be moved when in fact our ancestors were already moved from somewhere. And they were not moved in a dignified way. They were just told that the government wanted to build a dam for Blantyre Water Board (P 1: FGDS-BTSW.doc – 1).

In a nutshell, by appealing to history residents are able to capture meanings regarding urban space (that is meanings ignored by planners, hence abstract space). Indigenous residents, through historical narratives convey the extent of their attachment to a place called Blantyre Soche. Indeed, as far as they are concerned, they "live on the land our ancestors bequeathed to us". Sadly, despite being natives, they reported that they are "suffering" and "living as slaves" in their own country as they are subjected to removals. Yet it is quite obvious that although "plans found the people" these plans keep on moving them in the same way as the "plans moved our chief" a long time ago. Thus the "law and government" were brought by the "white man" and "brought these plans to the blacks" he found on the land. Finally, when he left he said "you can scatter and disperse one another". (P 1: FGDS-BTSW.doc - 1:26)

8.6 SIGNIFICANCE AND MEANING OF URBAN SPACE

Lefebvre (1991:146) argues that "space is never empty, it always embodies meaning". In this regard, it is therefore important to understand various meanings that people attach to spaces they inhabit and the attachment to these spaces (e.g. exchange value, use value, emotional value, and historical value among others).

On the basis of the narratives, the section explores people's collective meanings and significance of urban space are explored as this forms the basis to compare with conceptions of urban space as presented in plans and land policies which guide the production of spaces vis-à-vis urban development in Malawi. In this regard, land invaders were asked to what 'urban land' means to them in terms of its importance. The responses were then grouped into categories namely: economic, belonging, social, spatial and others (e.g. security, environment etc).

Survey results as depicted in the combined attribute table **(Table 8.2),** show that there are a total of 154 responses with 'Malo ndi chuma' (land is wealth) constituting 46.1% of the responses followed by 'pa malo pano ndi pamudzi panga' (this place is my home) (33.1%).

First, the results show that though their everyday life is perceived as living under conditions of 'informality', 64% of residents perceive urban land in terms of economic value, hence there was consensus among these land invaders that 'malo ndi chuma (land is wealth). Second, respondents also indicated that 'pamalo pano ndi pamudzi panga' (This place is my home). Beside land being a 'home', the quotation also suggests that although the people have migrated from the village ("kumudzi'), they now consider their current place of residence as their village. Hence, they have no intention of returning to the village since this is their home and village. In the same way, the word 'mudzi' is also used to refer to 'graveyard' as final resting place. For this reason, the invaders view their land as final resting place. Indeed, quite often, they insisted that 'we will die here'. Moreover, 8.4% of the responses indicated that unlike other areas, urban areas and specifically, Soche West has social amenities that attracted them to settle in the area. Indeed, these respondents cited schools and hospitals, among others. Proximity to town was also cited as the siginificance of the land the people have invaded. Residents who mentioned proximity to town were of the view that by saying we are closer to town, they imply that they do not recognise themselves as living in town. To them, Soche West, is a village.

Table 8.2 Residents meanings of urban space

Significance of urban land	**Responses (%)**	**% of cases**
"Malo ndi chuma"	46.1%	64.0%
"Pamalo pano ndi pamudzi panga"	33.1%	45.9%
"This is a place with social amenities"	8.4%	11.7%
"We are closer to town"	5.8%	8.1%
Others (e.g. security)	6.5%	9.0%
Total	**100%**	**138%**

Source: Own field survey (2013)

From these findings, it can therefore be argued that one resident attaches more than a single meaning to urban land. In other words, not only does land carry different meanings to different people, but land also carries multiple or diverse meanings to one individual. Arguably, urban land is both understood in terms of economic value as well as social value.

To appreciate the richness and value of land, focus group discussions, personal interviews, and media surveys were also used to understanding what land means to the users of space.

8.6.1 Space as economic and livelihood space

From the general analysis of documents, it can be seen that space in urban Malawi is understood as a source of livelihood as well as investment. Commenting on reported struggles for land in the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe, one editorial comment observed:

"Our word to such money oriented elites is that everyone else needs land because it is a source of livelihood. Even those who are regarded as poor need land because it is a socio economic resource. The importance of land to economic development and social welfare, even among the local farmers, is unquestionable for it has been used from time immemorial to promote economic growth and human development. This is more so in a country like ours, where more than 75% of the population live and earn their living out of tilling the land as farmers (P56)".

The economic significance of urban space as depicted above has implications for people's reluctance to cooperate with any attempts at relocation. For instance, in Lilongwe city it was discovered that residents view any attempts at relocation as an attempt to destroy and erase their livelihood space. For instance, in reaction to the city's authority's attempt to relocate residents who illegally occupied land in Kanengo Industrial area to Salima, the Group Village, Headman Chatata lamented:

"We were told that we should move just Monday and yet we have already made tobacco nurseries for the new season. It will be difficult to do this in Salima given the time before the rains".

Arguably therefore, with almost 75 per cent of the land surface in Malawi being customary land (NSO 2004), land is the main resource for people's livelihoods and food security in the country, especially in the rural areas where communal and customary tenure dominate.

8.6.2 Space as space for the children and survival

Space is also perceived as space for children and survival. One notable contestation was noted between residents and government over land that was conceived as airport land. A series of confrontations occurred between residents who invaded the land on their own, on one hand, and the government, specifically the Civil Aviation Department, who are alleged to be the owners of the land under contestation. In the Chileka Airport land saga, one respondent reportedly cried:

"...what are we going to tell these children about where they belong? We have no money and cannot afford to find them land elsewhere. How are we going to survive? For us villagers, land is our pride, our farming life. We solely depend on that. It is what has kept us all this time to this old age"

The spatial strategy of new demarcations has left the people without sufficient land for farming. One respondent said:

"We don't know how we are going to survive with no land for farming. We cannot afford to rent a piece of land."

"We inherited this land from our ancestors and the demarcations were so clear".

Contrary to this perception of space, the state conceives this space as security space. In the struggle over airport land in Blantyre (P25: NEWS-BT (4).pdf), the authorities represented the space as security space when they argued:

“Airport is a serious place and we have operations and security problems. We restrict the movement of people within the airport for security purposes. That is why we put up the fence after the first fence was vandalised by the people" (P12: NEWS-BT (10).pdf; P30: NEWS-BT (9).pdf)

8.6.3 Space as belonging

Urban space in Malawi is also significant because it gives people a sense of belonging and that it is a belonging. This is so especially to those residents who have stayed and lived on the land for a long period of time. In such cases, they become part and parcel of the land. One of the respondents wondered why they are only being evicted now when they have been there since 1985.

"I have been staying on here for the past 24 years and this is where I do my business. I pay school fees for my three children through this business".

The respondent was given the land by the then chief and built a house on the piece of land only to be told the land does not belong to him 27 years later.

Space as sacred space: graveyard and ancestral space

Results of the documentary analysis also revealed that space whether urban or rural is perceived to have a sacred meaning. This is reflected in the way in which urban residents emphasise the importance of graveyards in their narratives about space and its significance. For instance, The *Sunday Times* of June 8 carried an article about a wrangle in which residents of Chiwembe in Blantyre city were contesting the manner in which plots of undeveloped land in their area were sold, arguing that the plot layout did not leave room for **a** graveyard (and school)(P22: NEWS-BT (2).pdf),

In relation to graveyard space, urban space is also understood as ancestral space. A considerable number of cases as reported in the media, quoted urban residents singling out what sacred urban space means to them in their everyday lives. For instance, in the Chileka struggle over airport land, indigenous residents lamented that they inherited the land from their fore fathers (P25: NEWS-BT (4).pdf). In the words of one old woman from Chileka:

"Our grandfathers cultivated on the same land. We are bringing up our children on this very land and we expect them to raise their children on this land".

Echoing this, in a related struggle for land between villagers and STECO over a piece of land in Njola Forest in a small town context of Mulanje Boma, the villagers said that the land is ancestral (The Nation, June 11, 2009) P69: NEWS-ST13.pd).

Space as environmental space

Contrary to the understanding of urban space as perceived by urban residents, the city authorities views urban space in terms of its environmental significance. One city authority official was quoted as saying:

"The people must vacate the area because it is illegal for one to build up the mountain; moreover the land was not allocated to them by the City Assembly, Malawi Housing Corporation not the government. They are squatting in the area, which is destroying the environment by cutting down trees" **(**P17: NEWS-BT (15).pdf).

Thus, while the city authorities conceived and perceives the area as a protected space not fit for human habitation, the users perceives it as a space that can be transformed into a home, hence, their reluctance to vacate

In line with our thesis, an analysis of the master plans and layout plans on one hand, and the significance of meanings that urban residents attach to spaces in the two localities on the other hand, reveal two divergent meanings of urban space. In Soche Hill, two opposed, and perhaps irreconcilable, ideological visions of the nature and purpose of Soche Hill forest as public space were evident in the words of the landless and homeless people, journalists, artists, and city officials as they sought to explain the prolonged and sometimes violent struggle over land in the area. On one hand, landless and homeless people who occupied the land promoted a vision of a space marked by free interaction, and the absence of coercion by powerful institutions. On the other hand, the planners' perception was quite different. Theirs was one of open space, forest, and protected conservation area, hence for recreation subject to use by an appropriate public that is allowed in.

In this regard, while in the first perception, public space tolerates the risk of disorder as central to its functioning, in the second perception, public space is planned, orderly, and safe. Users of this space must be could be made to feel comfortable, and they should not be driven away by unsightly homeless people or unsolicited political activity. These two perceptions represent predominant ways of seeing contemporary cities.

These two perceptions and visions correspond to Lefebvre's distinction between representational space (appropriated, lived space; space-in-use) and representations of space (planned, controlled, ordered space). In this case, public space often, though not always, originates as representation of space (e.g. Forest reserve, in the case of squatted Soche Hill) (Harvey 1993). However, as people use these spaces (representations of space); they also become representational spaces, appropriated in use (Mitchell 2010). In the case of Soche West, the standard chronology was reversed. It began as a representational space, one that had been taken and appropriated from the outset.

Moreover, Neal (2010) observes that in addition to being a facilitator of civil order and as a stage for art, theatre and performance, public space can serve as a site for power and resistance. In other words, though openness and egalitarian in theory, public spaces often present opportunities for conflict between those who claim the space for their own use, and those who feel they have been unjustly excluded (Neal 2010).

LIVED SPACES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

One of the critical gaps in urban research is the tendency of voluminous research on urban space towards differentiation of urban research. For instance, Edward Soja in his *Postmetropolis* uses this differentiation in order to divide the different approaches of urban research into three basic categories. Yet notwithstanding its obvious appeal, such a conception does not have much in common with Lefebvre's theory. Thus according to Lefebvre, there cannot be a "third space," or a first or second space. Schmid (2008:42) demonstrates that Lefebvre never proceeds from three independent spaces but from three dialectically interconnected processes of production. Thus, although Soja repeatedly cites Lefebvre, his spatial theory is, in the last analysis, fundamentally different from Lefebvre's theory of the production of space (Schmid C 2008:42).

For planning purposes, one characteristic of abstraction is that it applies models and practices conceptualised without reference to particular social spaces where they are implemented. In essence, this means that the representational space/lived space of an authorised few can prompt their selection and implementation of a representation of space (conceived space) without regard to the full socio-spatial realities of its intended location (Carp 2004). Consequently, the domination implies that viable alternative place-making processes are not well understood. Partially, this could be because formal discourse in planning and place-making revolves around largely iterative representations of space/conceived space and the persuasive capacities of one or another representation. In contrast, Lefebvre's theory of differential space argues for the validity of the particular socio-spatial diversity existing in a location and the production of social space in direct relation to those differences (Carp 2008).

Also, it must be noted that the use of the conceptual triad does not ease the way for conventional planning strategies and procedures. Instead, the use of the conceptual triad enable**s** the researcher to become more fully aware of complexity in the human dimensions of place before planning, requiring considerable time and effort as well as prioritising the human- or micro scale (Lefebvre 1971.1991; Carp 2008). In this regard, the multiple meanings of space represent the multiple dimensions that planning has to grapple with in the quest to organise and produce urban space.

With regard to the meaning of space, it is clear from the foregoing analysis that space is never empty as it always embodies meaning. For this reason, it is therefore important to understand various meanings that people attach to spaces they inhabit and the attachment to these spaces.

In the case of Blantyre and Lilongwe cities, spaces carry multiple meanings encompassing exchange value, use value, emotional value, historical value, and sacred values amongst others.

Notwithstanding this significance, continuous struggles over space as demonstrated by the analysis of lived spaces in this chapter, probably demonstrate the power of abstract space as a tool of domination that aims at destroying the historical conditions that gave rise to itself, its own internal differences and any such differences that show signs of developing. It also shows how abstract space struggles to impose abstract homogeneity which is quite often countered by the lived spaces of everyday life.

8.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has analysed Lefebvre's moment of lived spaces and spaces of representation and how urban residents use these spaces to contest and produce their urban spaces. The research employed field research using observations, discussions, and newspapers. From the foregoing analysis, photographs, the media, verbal and visual representations, metaphors, songs, and historiography are the major spaces in which people's imaginations and feelings about space and lived experiences of relocations, demolitions and evictions are expressed. In addition, representational spaces such as graveyards, names of residential areas and spaces of historical significance have been singled out as some of the spaces which continue to evoke individual and collective memories of the past. Quite often, besides expressing hidden meanings and people's attachment to space, these spaces are also used as points of reference to contest imposition of abstract spaces by the state. Spaces of multiple significance, meaning and lived experiences, such as economic, inheritance, sacred, belonging, and environmental spaces among others, were analysed. Consistent with our argument regarding representations of spaces and representational spaces, it can be argued that in both Lilongwe and Blantyre cities, the multiple meanings attached to spaces represent divergent but true lived experiences that involve different core values that may or may not be recognised by those residents who do not share them. Indeed, as Carp (2008:136) observes, as social space, the places that evoke lived experience are perceptible and practised (spatial practice); conceived as an idea and built accordingly (representation of space); and they transcend mere use and mere thought to include these moments of immediate experience (representational space).

CHAPTER 9 SYNTHESIS AND REFLECTIONS ON LEFEBVRE'S THEORY OF PRODUCTION OF SPACE

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In this thesis contestations over urban space in general and squatting and land invasions in Malawi's urban centres in particular, were addressed. Using two cases studies, drawn from Blantyre and Lilongwe cities, the researcher examined how contradictions over perceptions of space alongside socio-political processes contribute to the struggle for urban space in Malawi. To accomplish this overall research goal, the researcher identified five specific objectives (see Chapter 1). The first objective was to understand contestations of urban space through a critical review of how changing understandings of urban space and conceptions of urban planning from the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras contributed over these historical periods to struggles for space through ideological discourses like colonialism, modernism, postmodernism, postcolonial city, neoliberalism and globalisation. Second, the researcher aimed at analysing the historical production of urban space in Malawi from the pre-colonial to the postcolonial eras particularly the indigenous understandings of urban space and genesis of urban settlements and how colonial modernist planning and its legacies in the postcolonial era impacted on the meaning and significance of urban space. Third, the researcher sought to analyse conceived abstract spaces and representations of spaces such as urban structure plans and land policies in order to understand how the contradictions and constraints of these abstract spaces contribute to contestations over urban space. Fourth, the researcher sought to investigate urban residents' perceptions of urban space and the spatial strategies employed by these residents to shape, produce and defend urban spaces. Fifth, urban residents' lived experiences and representational spaces were explored in order to understand how residents' multiple meanings of space and their attachment to these spaces are used to contest dominant and hegemonic abstract spaces of planners thereby generating struggles over urban space. Finally, the researcher sought to understand the spaces produced as a result of these contestations of urban spaces.

Consistent with the diverse research objectives, a mixed methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative methods was adopted. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) (i.e. ArcGIS 9.3^{TM} GIS) were used to map the contested area (extent of encroachment) on the one hand and to digitise the land use plans and plot layouts in order to visualise the mismatch between the intended plan and visions for the area and the existing practice on the other hand. Atlas.ti software and content analysis were used to analyse qualitative data collected through

focus group discussions, print and electronic media, archival searches, interviews, photographs and physical observations especially with respect to spatial practices and lived experiences used to contest, produce and defend urban land. SPSS software was used to analyse quantitative data generated through household survey in Soche West (Blantyre city) and Area 49 (Lilongwe city) particularly with respect to informal residents' spatial strategies and tactics. In the next section, a summary of the results that emerged from the research is presented. Then, conclusions are drawn based on the integration of empirical results as well as the literature review. The chapter also presents a reflection on Lefebvre's theory of production of space followed by recommendations and the highlighting of areas for further research.

9.2 HISTORICAL PRODUCTION OF URBAN SPACE

On the basis of literature review, the study identified three major historic moments in the production of space in urban Malawi. The results clearly show changing understandings of urban space and the role of planning from the colonial to the post postcolonial era.

9.2.1 Pre-colonial urban space

From the literature survey, it can be concluded that in Malawi, urban settlements, though not in the western conception of urban, existed even prior to European occupation. For instance, urban centres such as Makanjira in Mangochi, and Nkhotakota performed economic functions and were located on trade routes. Indeed, as discussed in Section 2.4, this conclusion is consistent with research by a number of authors who have also argued that urban settlements in Africa existed before colonial invasion (Davidson 1957; Coquery-Vidro-Vitch 1991; Anderson and Rathbone 2000; Jenkins 2009).

The study also shows that land was perceived as communal such that it did not belong to individuals. During this period land could only be accessed through inheritance or kinship relations, birth or gifts. The chief as custodian of custom and tradition was considered the legitimate authority over land. Thus, it can be concluded that people's perceptions and meaning of land as collective and their emphasis on user rights and not exclusive rights, shaped spatial practices of access and appropriation.

9.2.2 Colonial urban space

In the colonial era (1891 to 1963), customary notions of space which were dominant in the pre-colonial era were erased and replaced with individualistic notions of tenure. Colonial mechanisms of land access were through violence and conquest. Another mechanism was through free gifts from chiefs. Authority over land was vested in the state (the crown).

Individualisation of land led to unequal distribution of land forcing native residents to squat on 'European land'.

9.2.3 Post-colonial urban space (one party era)

In the post-colonial era (1964 to 2012), notions of land inherited in the colonial era persisted. Under the dictatorial regime of Dr Banda (1964-1993), colonial conceptions of land were perpetuated by the Banda regime and land was accessed through land grants. Planning as a state mechanism of producing urban space was used as a mechanism of control, segregation, and later equity development. In this era, planning survived courtesy to the president's dictatorship as opposed to rational planning principles. Strong surveillance mechanisms including Dr Banda's dictatorial tendency, meant that no one would dare to squat or invade urban land. In other words, squatting and informal settlements were at a minimum during this era.

9.2.4 Postcolonial urban space (multiparty era)

In the Muluzi era (1994 to 2004) planning failed to adapt to the new demands brought about by rapid urbanisation and unemployment owing to SAPs. People land invasions increased not necessarily because of fear of diminishing land but rather because there was vacant land yet planning was unable to release this land. Because this was a period of liberal democracy, people realised their rights to urban space. Dubai and Baghdad besides symbolising cheap plots and invasion, attest to the fact that planning was socially unjust, restrictive and exclusionary. In line with the argument of this research, every society or mode of production has its way of producing space. Under the democratic president, planning failed to evolve and adjust to neoliberal politics, freedoms and rights and was therefore reduced to the peripheral. Thus while planning continued its adherence to modernist conceptions of order, in the same era, invasions were tolerated and this minimised overt confrontations between the institution of planning and urban residents. In the Bingu wa Mutharika era, however, contestations were visible because planners wanted to exert their muscles to claim their lost glory through the imposition of abstract space as represented in policies and urban structure plans, as will be seen in the next section.

9.3 CONCEIVED SPACE AND REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

In the study three representations of space namely the national land policy of 2002 (at national scale), urban structure plans (at city scale) and layout plans (at neighbourhood scale)

were analysed in order to understand how space is conceived and also the challenges encountered in the production and imposition of conceived abstract space.

9.3.1 The national land policy (NLP) of 2002 as representation of space

The national land policy of 2002 is conceived as a modern and neoliberal policy that seeks to ensure tenure security and equitable access to land, to facilitate the attainment of social harmony and broad based social and economic development through optimum and ecologically balanced use of land and land based resources. Specifically, the land policy identifies six specific objectives which seek firstly to promote tenure reforms that guarantee security and instil confidence and fairness in all transactions (i.e. to guarantee secure tenure and equitable access to land without gender bias and discrimination; secondly to promote decentralised and transparent land administrations; thirdly to extend land use planning strategies to all urban and rural areas; fourthly to establish a modern land administration system for delivering land services to all; fifthly to enhance conservation and community management of local resources; and finally to promote research and capacity building in land surveying and land management (Malawi Government 2002).

However, study results based on literature and focus group discussions and mass media point to the fact that the policy as an abstract space and representation of space is mere rhetoric rather than a reality. First, it was found that despite the rhetoric of tenure security and social harmony as promised by the neoliberal land policy, numerous contradictions that can in turn lead to inequity in land access have been revealed. Ultimately, this suffocates the achievement of the objectives it intends to achieve. Stated differently, the NLP as conceived and acted upon has contributed to the shortage of land, hence land invasions in cities where the land policy is acted upon.

Second, in Malawi, like other colonies in Africa, the immediate postcolonial era was marked by further action on the part of the state to consolidate its grip on land throughout the country. In this regard, postcolonial authorities proved more insensible and numb than their colonial predecessors to any other formal claims to land.

Third, land reform measures have done more to supplant customary land laws with Eurocentric equivalents based on capitalist modernity. Reformers have continued to ignore all claims to land backed by anything other than formal or modern instruments (Njoh 2013). Postcolonial authorities inherited, and religiously endeavoured to adhere to the letter and spirit of the land legislation blue print of their colonial predecessors. In Malawi for instance, it

is the authorities, mainly the head of state that establish the rules governing land tenure. In Malawi like other African countries, the postcolonial authorities went several steps further to 'modernise' the land tenure system (Njoh 2013). One of the inferences here is that the registration of land title is a prerequisite for entitlement; both urban and rural landowners have to formalise their land ownership or entitlement claims; all land for which there is no government issued land certificate or title is *ipso facto* property of the state. Yet it has been argued that rather than enabling capital accumulation for all, land tenure formalisation processes serve to aggravate socio-economic inequalities. In Malawi, by emphasising on government issued land titles as the unique testament to land ownership, the neoliberal land policy excludes the poor from accessing urban land.

Moreover, the land policy of 2002 reveals that land reform initiatives from the colonial to the postcolonial era have paid little attention to the issue of equity as the policies purportedly claim to do. Scholars generally agree that on-going reforms throughout the continent since the colonial era, have historically neglected questions of equity, fairness and justice (Feder and Noronha 1987; Njoh 1998; Rakodi 2006).

During the study it was also noted that the principal rhetoric of the land policy is to improve access to land through tenure formalisation– thereby improving access to credit, and hence socio-economic improvement in the lives of Malawians. Proponents of land tenure formalisation such as Hernando de Soto (2000) claim that formalisation can enable even the poor to become successful business people. In other words they claim land tenure formalisation is a feasible means of ensuring some degree of equity among different society's groups. However, as the Malawian experience with the land policy demonstrates, the faith of De Soto and his disciples in the ability of land titles to financially benefit the poor is clearly mislaid.

Rhetorically, the land policy as conceived aspires to improve the socio-economic status of Malawians. In practice, however, the institutional infrastructure for land administration in Malawi is poorly designed and marred with bureaucratic incompetence and ineffectiveness. Thus, land tenure reform in Malawi largely benefits the elite while excluding the poor from accessing urban land.

Furthermore, since the majority of the landless urban populations are poor as depicted in the socio-economic profile of the urban residents, with most of the citizens relying on informal economic activities, they cannot afford to pay for the process of tenure formalisation. Focus

groups revealed that many citizens could not allow government to formalise their land because they do not have money to pay for such an expensive process.

Finally, the requirement for certificates as evidence of land ownership continues to dispossess the natives of urban areas of their land simply because they cannot produce formal documents. During interviews with indigenous residents in Soche West ward, the residents who claimed to be the natives in the area complained that in fact the state continues to confiscate land from them simply because they do not have formal instruments to attest to their claims for land ownership.

In conclusion, the land policy remains an abstract space and representation of neoliberal interest that aims at rhetoric and promises of efficiency, individualisation, and privatisation of customary land. In reality, the implementation of the policy works to the advantage of the elite at the expense of the landless poor that the policy seeks to serve. Consequently, squatting and land invasions reflect the inability of the policy to live up to its promises and aspirations of redressing the colonial land problem in Malawi.

9.3.2 Urban structure plans and residential layout plans

In the study there was an analysis of the urban structure plans for the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe as representations of spaces. In the case of Blantyre city, the Blantyre Structure Plan of 1980 provides the general land use zoning plan for the city including future development requirements and areas for the various land-use zones including low-density housing, medium-density housing, high-density permanent housing and high-density traditional housing.

For Soche West in particular, the plan proposed a district commercial centre and retained Soche Mountain Forest Reserves. The adjacent Kanjedza Forest Reserve was proposed for medium and high-density housing while the catchment area of the Burn (Chiwembe) Dam was reserved for afforestation (see Chapter 6). The results also showed that the squatted area belongs to Malawi Housing Corporation, Blantyre City Assembly and Department of Forestry. MHC is the legal authority over land especially on the lower part of the mountain. The MHC plan for the area (Chimwankhunda plan) designated the land in question as a medium density housing area as per the layout plan for the area. On its part, the Soche hill, which forms the other squatted space, was conceived as a conservation- and hence a protected area. In this regard, control over the forest or conservation areas is within the jurisdiction of the Department of Forestry and the Blantyre City Council.

Although in terms of land tenure, land in Soche area is private land belonging to MHC, residents perceive the land as belonging to traditional authorities (see Chapter 7). Second, the study found that a well-laid out plan for the area's medium density residential area and proposed amenities was developed by the MHC. The plan for the area shows well laid out plots for a medium density residential area. The plots are regular and ordered with access roads passing through the residential areas. However, the plan stretches southwards down to Misesa ward which ironically falls under the jurisdiction of the chief, hence governed by customary law. Thus, overlapping and no clarity with regard to urban and rural boundaries, create tension over urban land.

In the final analysis, although the Chimwankhunda layout plan designated the Soche and Misesa areas as medium density areas, Soche Hill is a forest and hence of environmental significance. In other words, it is a space of environmental significance. However, the people have encroached on the forest reserve as well as the lower part of the hill to shape it into a space of human habitation.

In Lilongwe city, the first Lilongwe Master Plan of 1969 was the basis to analyse conceived spaces and the representations of space of the postcolonial city. Conceived as a garden city, the master plan adhered to zoning and land segregation. Like in Blantyre city, there are multiple land holders in Lilongwe whose existence creates tension over rightful mandates to administer urban land – a situation which culminates in struggles over urban land.

The study also found that Government commitment since independence to preserve this garden city image, led to new high density housing area being located away from the city centre and screened from the road by tree belts, effectively seeing squatting as undesirable. Also, commitment to the garden city image started generating conflicts with the city population soon after the city's declaration. The conflict is partly due to the rapid growth of the population due to rural-urban migration, with 75% of these residents expected to reside in high density areas (see chapter 6).

Both Blantyre as colonial city and Lilongwe as postcolonial city reveal adherence to modernist conceptions of commodification, efficiency, fragmentation, and homogenising through grand plans and reductions which are essentially influenced by ideas and knowledge (ideology) to serve the interests of capital and power as opposed to people's interaction with the environment (perceptions). Pursuance of this these ideologies tend to exclude the poor and middle class from land access either because they cannot afford urban land or the system restricts them from doing so. Consistent with this conclusion is the fact that a decade ago

Swilling et al (2003) observed that persistent attachment to the images of urban modernity that appear to originate in European and American contexts and that cannot be compared with the cultural, political, and economic contexts shaping African cities today, contributes to tensions in the postcolonial city. Consequently, informal mechanisms take over, thereby contributing to contestations between the formal processes of land delivery and the so-called informal processes devised by those unable to acquire land from the formal system.

9.3.3 Constraints and contradictions to with regard the imposition of conceived abstract spaces

It was found that the imposition of abstract space and its representations of space are confronted with numerous challenges which incapacitate its hegemonic tendencies to impose conceived abstract space. Instead of organising space in accordance with the ambitions of capitalist modernity and images of order, homogeneity, and functional zoning among others, the state in Malawi faces six main constraints. First, the institutions mandated to produce urban spaces are incapacitated in terms of human capacity and technological incapacity needed to achieve modernist notions of order; they are marred with inefficiency, massive corruption, bureaucracy and cumbersome procedures as well as poor enforcement of master plans. Second, the legal and policy framework is archaic and rigid laws reduce urban space to a commodity while silencing and suppressing multiple meanings such the social and emotional values of space. Thus, abstract spaces seem to eliminate any other contradictions that exist in reality. Third**,** multiple and overlapping rights on urban space frustrate the imposition of representations of urban space such as multiple land lords and tension between customary and statutory rights to land. Fourth, reclassification of previously rural space to urban space faces resistance from rural authorities as it is perceived as pilfering, especially as no compensation is made. Fifth, political factors interfere with planning in the sense that politicians use urban space to make electoral pledges to gain votes during parliamentary elections, for example politicians incite landless people to invade urban land. Also, multiparty politics has meant changes in people's perception of urban space; people feel that democracy and freedom mean the right to appropriate any free piece of urban space. Finally, economic factors such as lack of financing mechanisms, valorisation and high prices of urban land, mean that only the middle class or upper middle class can purchase urban land.

9.4 PERCEIVED SPACE AND SPATIAL PRACTICES

On the basis of household surveys of urban residents in the two case studies of Soche West (Blantyre city) and Area 49 (Lilongwe city), the aim was to investigate perceived spaces and

spatial practices in the production of spaces in urban Malawi using the lens of Henri Lefebvre's theory of production of space. First, there was an analysis of contextual factors as they relate to demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the two cities. Then the perceived spaces as they relate to perceptions of land ownership, status at the time of occupation, perception of land tenure and perception of the legitimate authority over urban land were discussed.

9.4.1 Characteristics of squatters

Squatters constitute a heterogeneous population, demographically and socio-economically. . Demographically, the study found that the squatters constitute a diverse population in terms of age group (comprising both the youth and the elderly), sex (males comprising 51%), as well as ethnic diversity. This agrees with what Bodaar (2006) says, namely that ethnicity alongside class is an important category for defining a cosmopolitan space. Educationally, squatters constitute diverse levels of educational status ranging from primary (33%), secondary (48%) and tertiary (19%). Size of the household varies from a mean of 5.81 in Soche West (Blantyre) and 5.6 in Area 49 (Lilongwe). Economically, the results also reveal the existence of a population with varied income levels ranging through low income, middle income, and higher income populations. Also, these residents engage in diversified economic activities ranging from professional and managerial jobs to informal economic activities such as the use of a bicycle taxi locally known as 'nadyanji' (meaning what shall I eat if I cannot use my bicycle to carry people), 'chiwaya' (selling chips or French fries), charcoal vending, and farming among others. One conclusion from this is that in terms of production of space, urban residents perceive land as having multi-layered functions which go beyond shelter production and this is contrary to conceptions of homogeneity as prescribed by modernist planning (see sections 2.5.1.1 and 2.5.1.2). Thus, individuals employ multiple and heterogeneous activities to earn a living as part of their everyday lives (see Section 7.2.2).

9.4.2 Socio-spatial dynamics determining perception and spatial practices

The results indicated that informal residents in Blantyre city's Soche West are the most insecure (62.8%) when compared to Lilongwe's Area 49 informal residents. Similarly, comparing the three neighbourhoods of Soche West, Baghdad and Dubai, the results showed that squatters in Soche West are the least secure (75%) while more than 90% of residents in Bagdad feel secure (see Chapter 7).

The results also showed that there are variations in the perception of tenure security according to demographic dynamics of gender and marital status. First, females are more insecure than their male counterparts. However, despite this perceived tenure insecurity regarding urban land among females, the results further indicated that more women accessed land using informal mechanisms compared to their male counterparts. Thus although females feel insecure they see informal access to land as the only option for them to appropriate and produce urban space. Second, residents that are married feel more insecure than their unmarried counterparts (see Chapter 7). Third, levels of security of tenure also vary between socio-economic groups. In terms of education, the results showed that the least educated are the most insecure compared to those with higher education. Fourth, in terms of economic status, the lower income class is the most insecure whereas the upper income class is the least insecure (see Chapter 7). Similarly, more than three-quarters of those who accessed land using the informal mechanisms belonged to the lower income population. Arguably, this is the group that is excluded from the formal land delivery mechanism as they cannot afford to pay what is asked. Arguably, therefore, although the lower income populations feel more insecure about their land, they have no option other than resorting to invasions as mechanism of land access.

Generally, although the young and middle aged population, women, married residents, lower income residents and less educated squatters feel insecure about land accessed using informal means, their feeling of insecurity does not seem to prevent them from obtaining land by the informal mechanisms. Arguably, informal means of access seems to be the only resort for residents who are denied access to land by the formal land delivery system.

Interestingly, the analysis of people's perception (as opposed to knowledge) reveals that prior to invasion (or subsequent occupation), especially in Soche West (Blantyre city), the majority of the households saw the land as belonging to traditional leaders. On the other hand, analysis of people's knowledge shows that the majority (77%) of the households recognize the state (and not traditional leaders) as the ultimate authority over urban land. Notwithstanding this knowledge, the findings indicate that in practice, most (over 80%) households acquired land from traditional chiefs (45%) and individuals (37%) who invaded urban land in Lilongwe city's Area 49. One conclusion from this is that people know that their occupying and settling on urban land is unlawful, which effectively means that they are encroaching on or invading state property.

Furthermore, the results also reveal that squatters and other informal residents are knowledgeable about ownership of urban land. However, although a vast majority (87.2%) are aware that the state is the legitimate authority over urban land, they continued to acquire land by unofficial mechanisms such as traditional chiefs as is the case in Blantyre city, and self-acclaimed landlords and squatters in Lilongwe city. Stated differently, knowledge of the rightful owner of land is not enough to deter people from invading urban land. Thus knowledge per se does not determine one's choice of access mechanism.

Other conclusions from this are that residents have more respect for traditional leaders as owners of the land as opposed to the state. Also, disregarding the law, land invaders acted based on their perceptions instead of knowledge as conceived in urban planning. In addition, the apparent trust in chiefs as owners and custodians of the land effectively means chiefs and the so-called encroachers are on one side while the state as an institution is on the other side. Therefore, the conflict over urban land in Malawi could be a contest between the (modern) states versus the people. Stated differently, struggle over urban land is a manifestation of the contest between perceptions and conceptions vis-à-vis tradition (that is chiefs and their subjects) versus modernity.

9.4.3 Spatial practices of migration

In SocheWest, only 12% of residents indicated that that Blantyre is their place of birth while the rest are in-migrants into the area. Further analysis of the migration pattern revealed that there were more migrants during the election years of 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009, suggesting the influence of electoral politics on migration through promises of land.

One of the conclusions from the results of the analysis of migration as a spatial practice is that regardless of migration status, both in-migrants and indigenous residents claim that they are citizens on the basis of birth as well as and long periods of residence in the area. Lefebvre (1968) used the concept 'citidan' to refer to city dwellers as citizens of the city. In the case Soche West, both natives and in-migrants by emphasising that they are natives or citizens, are in fact claiming their right as citidans to claim and defend urban space.

From the findings it appears that at the attainment of democracy (political pluralism) in 1993, about 60% of the respondents were already living in Blantyre city while about 40% of the residents settled in Blantyre city in the post democratic era, that is 1993 onwards.

Also, based on period of residence on the land, it can be concluded that those who have stayed longer might have invested more on the land emotionally, socially, and economically.

The longer the period of stay at a place, the more the people invest on the place and imbue the place with meaning and significance. By implication, government strategies such as relocation seem to encounter resistance since people may not be willing to lose their attachment to places as well as material investment, leading to continued struggles over space.

9.4.4 Spatial strategies to defend urban space

The results, as noted earlier, showed that invading residents know the rightful owners of the land and that their occupation of the land is by law, unlawful. Further, the results also revealed that these squatters are aware that one day the state may decide to come and repossess the land. In addition, the squatters are also aware of strategies that the state might employ to repossess their land including demolition and forced relocations.

On account of these results, it was found that squatters mobilize multiple territorial strategies and tactics to defend their spaces from potential repossession by the state. In Soche West, it was found that traditional chiefs are the main source of defence or security for their land. Residents reported that if ordered to vacate their land, they would obtain letters from the chief as evidence of ownership, meaning the chief is their source of defence. This was said by 25% of the total respondents. Besides using traditional chiefs, after developing the plots, squatters put pressure on government to regularise and legalise their occupation (17.6%). In some cases, squatters reported that they "do nothing about it since the government is quiet", in other words, they choose to remain quiet until government provokes them (16.5% of responses). Indeed as Scott (1985) observed, in Soche West, informal residents employ other strategies such as forming coalitions to negotiate with authorities (11.8%); non-compliance (9.4%); rushing to courts or the police (7.1%), among others.

Regarding Area 49 (Baghdad and Dubai), although there are variations in terms of strategies commonly used by residents, one thing in common with Soche West is that at least one individual employs more than a single tactic to defend their urban spaces. In summary, however, the results showed that while traditional chiefs are the popular defence strategy, in Lilongwe's Baghdad and Dubai, formation of groups to negotiate with the responsible authorities to allow them to continue occupying the land in Area 49 was the popular response, representing 20% of responses. Next, urban dwellers who invaded land in the area approach politicians for help (17%). Quite often these include ward councillors, members of parliament, or the head of state. Other strategies include: doing nothing about it; silence; organizing peaceful and violent demonstrations against government; obtaining proof of land ownership from the traditional/local chief in the area; and registering and regularisation of the

land. Indeed, in Dubai for example, after a series of protests and the engaging of politicians, the MHC gave in to the squatters and surrendered the land to the administration of Lilongwe City Council as Traditional Housing Area (THAs). In Baghdad, informal residents are negotiating with the MHC to survey and formalise their occupation.

These findings confirm Scott's (1985) conclusion in his "Weapons of the poor" in which he observed that users of urban space, primarily the poor, may not seek to challenge the state and its actions but rather they find their way through, through such spatial strategies as practising apathy, reluctant compliance, and in some instances by simply improving their livelihood within the context through the use of ordinary acts (see Chapter 2).

Based on field observations in the contested areas, namely Area 49 and Soche West in Lilongwe and Blantyre respectively, it was observed that both invading groups and the state employ other tactics in order to appropriate and defend urban spaces. First, squatters occupy a given piece of land temporarily for subsistence agriculture and once they are offered land they exert claims as natives of the area. Thus, temporary land use is a spatial tactic to appropriate urban space. Second, once allocated land or having invaded land on their own, squatters erect a temporary hut to secure the land from potential invaders or to ascertain if the state is going to come and demolish the structures. Third, in terms of construction, squatters imitate planning and building guidelines acceptable by planning authorities so that they can easily formalise the development at a later stage. Thus, if residents continue to copy the official planning practices in terms of land development, their structures are tacitly accepted by the city authorities who appear to be more willing to officially regularise such land occupation especially in view of the weaknesses of abstract spaces and the inherent contradictions.

9.5 LIVED SPACE AND REPRESENTATIONAL SPACES

Study results revealed that contrary to conceptions of urban space as represented in urban plans and policies, urban residents as users of space attach multiple meanings to urban spaces based on their lived experiences, hence their reluctance to vacate these spaces. For instance, the analysis of lived spaces has shown that while the Blantyre urban structure plan as a representation of space conceives Soche Hill as protected space not fit for human habitation, the users (informal residents) perceive it as a space that can be transformed into a home, hence their continued encroachment and reluctance to obey relocation orders from the city authorities, which culminates in contestations over urban space. In the same way, although according to the Chimwankhunda layout plan, Soche West was conceived as a medium

density area, informal residents continue to contest this modernist vision of the city to produce spaces of multiple meanings and functions.

Squatted spaces are economic and livelihood space. Analysis of focus group discussions, interviews and newspapers indicated that informal residents in Malawi's urban centres view land as a source of livelihood as well as investment. The economic significance of urban space as depicted above has implications for people's reluctance to adhere to any attempts at relocation. For instance, in Lilongwe city it was discovered that residents view any attempts at relocation as an attempt to destroy and erase their livelihood space.

The results also reveal that squatted spaces are spaces for children to come to as well as spaces for survival. During interviews squatters repeatedly said 'pamalo pano ndipa ana anga' (i.e. this space belongs to my children). In this regard, space is inherited and passed on to the next generation such that any attempts to relocate these residents has often generated tensions because residents perceive these attempts as a threat to their survival and to the future of their children.

The study has also revealed that urban space is a space belonging such that residents who have stayed and lived on the land for a long period of time get attached to their land and property. In other words, they become part and parcel of the land such that they cannot be uprooted from their land.

The results in Chapter 8 have also shown that urban spaces are sacred space, graveyard and ancestral spaces. Focus group discussions as well as analysis of newspapers pointed out that land is considered to have a sacred meaning. This is reflected in the way in which urban residents emphasise the importance of graveyards in their narratives about space and its significance. For instance, native residents in Soche West (mainly Misesa) pointed out that they cannot be moved out of the land because it is the land of their fathers. They pointed out a number of cemeteries as well as a tombstone of the late Kapeni which was erected on top of the Soche Hill. In this regard, contest over urban space is also regarded as contest over the meaning of urban space.

In summary, it was found that photographs, the media, verbal and visual, metaphors, songs, and historiography are the five spaces in which people's imaginations and feelings about space and their lived experiences are expressed. These lived experiences as they relate to urban residents' experiences of relocations, demolitions and evictions, are used to communicate and express meanings attached to urban spaces. Yet, these are the meanings that

are quite often ignored in planners' representations of spaces. The study has also singled out representational spaces such as graveyards, names of residential areas and spaces of historical significance as some of the spaces which continue to evoke individual and collective memories of the past. Similarly, besides expressing hidden meanings and people's attachment to space, these spaces are also used as point of reference to contest imposition of abstract spaces by the state (see chapter 8).

9.3 SYNTHESIS AND REFLECTION ON THE PRODUCTION OF URBAN SPACE

Significantly**,** it was underscored in the study that urban space is produced through the interplay of three moments of production of space, namely representations of space, spatial practices and representational spaces. Since Lefebvre's conceptualisation of the spatial triad, there is no framework that seeks to elaborate how these three moments interact with specific conceptions on the one hand, and localised lived experiences, and individual residents' perceptions on the other hand to produce and contest urban spaces. Similarly, the role of dominant discourses and how these are mediated through socio-cultural realities have not been adequately articulated. The researcher therefore proposes a framework which seeks to explain how urban spaces are produced and contested in the context of the colonial and postcolonial cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe respectively **(Figure 9.1).**

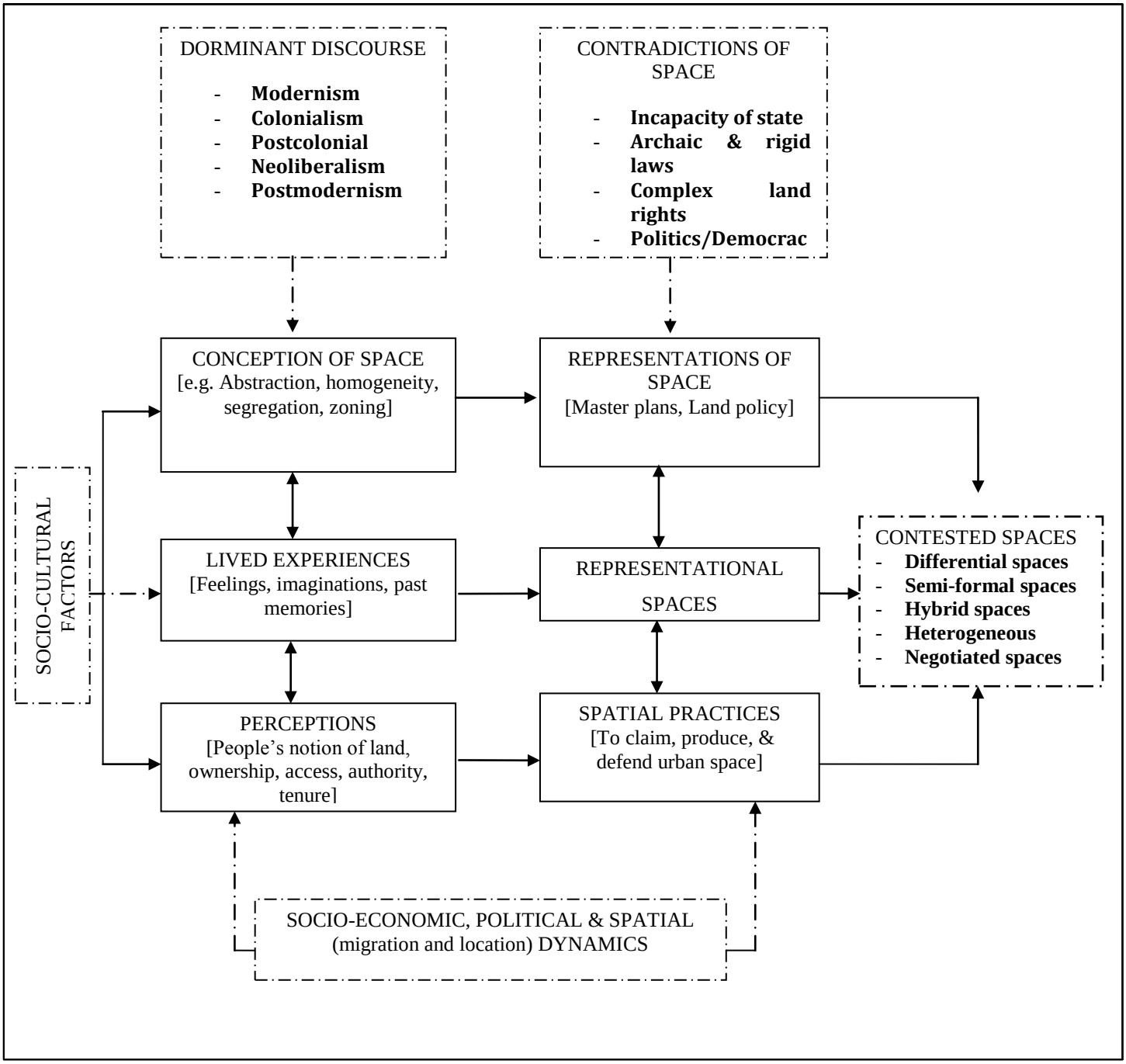


Figure 9.1 Revisiting Lefebvre's conceptual triad

Representations of space

It was revealed in the study that in Malawi representations of space such as master plans and related land policies are indeed expert and planners' spaces. The representations of spaces are nothing other than abstractions which aim to homogenise and segregate through functional zoning and at the same time fragment spaces (see Chapter 8). Indeed, these conceptions are influenced by global discourses such as modernism and its exportation to Malawi through colonisation between 1891 and 1963, and neoliberalism through globalisation from the 1980s.

Other counter discourses such as the postcolonial city which was intended to break away from the ills of the colonial city such as segregation, have only succeeded in replacing colonial elite (Europeans) with local elite while replicating the same modernist ideologies of planning in the colonial era (see Chapter 2). In some cases, however, postmodernism has contributed to changing conceptions of urban space, for example by accommodating some forms of informality in urban spaces.

Although these global discourses of modernism and neoliberalism aim to produce capitalist spaces that are orderly and homogenous, in countries like Malawi, the state has its own contradictions which undermine the effective imposition of abstract space. Such contradictions include human and technical incapacity, rigid laws, complex land rights, political factors including democracy and that citizens lack the money to afford land and the state lacks the finance to implement its plans and policies (see Chapter 6).

Spatial practices

Unlike representations of space which rely on ideas and knowledge (ideology) to produce urban space, in urban Malawi, residents' perceptions of space determine mechanisms that these residents devise to make and shape their own spaces. For instance, in Soche West, it was found that since informal residents recognise the traditional chief as owner of urban land, they access urban land from the chief and use the chief as defence in the event of any conflict with the state. In this case, perceptions as they relate to land ownership, means of accessing land, land tenure security and perception of the legal and legitimate authority over urban land determines people's spatial practices. Spatial practices include the strategies and tactics that both residents and the state authority devise to claim, defend and contest urban land. **Figure 9.1** also depicts that the social context, economic and political and spatial dynamics influence perceptions as well as spatial practices (see Chapters 2, 3 and 7).

Representational spaces

Spaces of representation or representational spaces (Shields 1999) are the spaces of inhabitants and users of towns and cities. These spaces are associated with images and symbols that may be coded or uncoded, verbal or non-verbal. In the Soche West, for example, these spaces are directly lived through images, memories of their past, and their history of settlement in the area. These spaces which result from the interaction of the conceived and perceived spaces are also influenced by socio-cultural factors. Consistent with our argument regarding representations of spaces and representational spaces, it can be argued that in both

Lilongwe and Blantyre cities, the multiple meanings attached to spaces represent divergent but true lived experiences that involve different core values that may or may not be recognised by those residents who do not share them. These findings are consistent with Carp's (2008) observation that social space evokes lived experience that transcends mere use and mere thought to include these moments of immediate experience.

Contested spaces

There are multiple players involved in the production of urban space and these players include formal as well as informal actors. From this it can be argued that spaces in Malawi's urban centres are not moulded by planners alone but also by urban dwellers who devise various tactics to appropriate and produce their own space **(see Figure 9.2).**

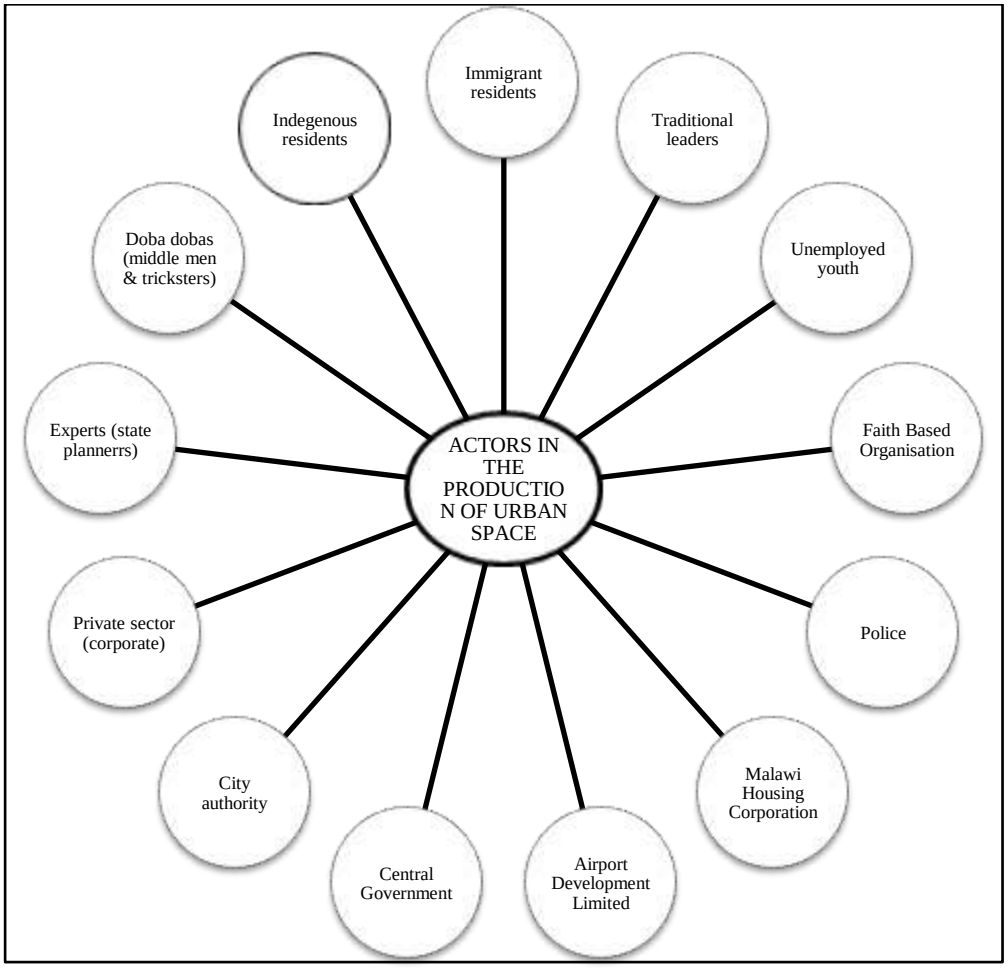


Figure 9.2 Multiple actors in the production of contested space

On the one hand, through violence, urban residents in Area 49 (Baghdad) have produced a contested space called Baghdad which signifies a space produced by fighting, violence, and bloodshed as opposed to sociability and collaboration. On the other hand, the affluent and the educated have taken advantage of the incapacities of the state and used corrupt means to acquire urban land and later negotiated for formalisation of their land to consolidate their claims to urban land. The affluent in Area 49 (Dubai), by taking advantage of democracy and multiparty politics, they have produced spaces through protests and demonstrations against politician. The resultant spaces are spaces of plurality, negotiation, entrepreneurship and self-planning. In the contested spaces, residents have used traditional authorities to appropriate urban space and used official means to legalise the land.

Consequently, the new urban morphology reflects contested spaces living side by side with the planned and ordered city for instance (Area 49 (Gulliver and Area 49 (Ndata) represent images of a planned modern city but in juxtaposition with the contested spaces of Baghdad and Dubai.

A combination of official and unofficial practices in Area 49, have produced morphology with a dual character. According to Lefebvre (1991:381), there are four implications which can be drawn from this duality in urban morphology. First, duality means there is a duality of political power. Second, duality means contradiction and conflict. Third, it means the differences are internal to the dominant form of space. Failing any reversal, duality still persists and will eventually weaken dominated space. In fact however, the dominated space has repressive and assimilative capacity, and failing any reversal of the situation, dominated space will simply be weakened other than maintaining the duality.

In Area 49 (Bagdad and Dubai), the findings suggest that notwithstanding their poverty, both Dubai and Bagdad manifest social life far more intense than the bourgeois districts of the cities do. Also, the neighbourhoods effectively order their space so as to elicit a nervous admiration. For instance, houses are arranged back to back with walls as well as public spaces such as Bagdad market in Bagdad , Dubai market and Three Ways in Blantyre Soche West.

Contrary to modernist planning, in these spaces, appropriation of space is of high order. Squatters' spontaneous planning demonstrates that preceding the organisation of space by specialists, squatters translate the social order into territorial reality without direct orders from economic and political authorities. The resultant landscape is spatial duality which also translates into duality in power (Lefebvre 1991:381).

Lefebvre (1991:319) observes that workers in the city space are free workers and this freedom makes it possible for urban workers to live side by side with other social classes. This is the space that people have produced in both Lilongwe and Blantyre. In deed the juxtaposition of Dubai and Bagdad and the social classes in Bagdad in the words of Lefebvre, mean that the city will allow access of all to the various markets which are among the city's essential function. In chapter 8 it is shown that urban residents reported that access to social amenities is one of the factors that attracted them to the area.

Further, evidence from the study reveals that in both case studies existing centre and homogenisation forces seek to absorb what was initially considered excluded. For instance, informal settlements and other illegal settlements at the edges of the city (e.g. Soche West) that were once perceived as illegal, shanty, informal, disorderly, and unplanned are incorporated into the jurisdiction of planning authorities. Stated differently, spatial practices such as regularisation demonstrate the state's commitment to homogenise and integrate the once excluded 'informal spaces'. Similarly, spatial practices such as demolitions uncover the state's commitment to destroy whatever has transgressed (Lefebvre 1991:380).

Finally, continuous struggles over space as demonstrated by the analysis of lived spaces in this study, probably demonstrate the power of abstract space as a tool of domination that aims at destroying the historical conditions that gave rise to itself, its own internal differences and any such differences that show signs of developing. It also shows how abstract space struggles to impose abstract homogeneity which is quite often countered by the lived spaces of everyday life.

9.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The research has implications for planning research and practice, for policy as well as methodology.

9.4.1 Planning research and practice

First, for planning purposes, one characteristic of abstraction is that it applies models and practices conceptualised without reference to the particular social spaces where they are implemented. In essence, this means that the representational space/lived space of an authorised few can prompt their selection and implementation of a representation of space without regard to the full socio-spatial realities of its intended location (Carp 2004). Consequently, the domination implies that viable alternative place making processes are not well understood, partially because formal discourse in planning and place making revolves

around largely iterative representations of space and the persuasive capacities of one or another representation. Thus, planning research and practice should continually engage with Lefebvre's theory if planning is to comprehend the validity of socio-spatial diversity existing in a location and the production of social space in direct relation to those differences.

Second, the use of the conceptual triad as analytic lens should not be seen as a way of simplifying the way for conventional planning strategies and procedures. Rather, this researcher recommends continued use of the conceptual triad to enable researchers to become more fully aware of complexity in the human dimensions of space before planning. In the same way, by focusing on the two neighbourhoods, the researcher recommends that planning requires considerable time and effort and that it should priotise the human or the micro scale. Planning ought to bring on board the multiple meanings of space as discussed in the study as these are the multiple dimensions that planning has to grapple with in its quest to organise and produce urban space. Since space is never empty as it always embodies meaning, it is imperative to understand various meanings that people attach to the spaces they inhabit and their attachment to these spaces. In the study the fact that spaces carry multiple meanings encompassing exchange value, use value, emotional value, historical value, and sacred values among others, has been explored. .

9.4.2 Methodology

Methodologically, the conceptual triad implies three human dimensions of space, namely the mental (conceived space), the physical body (perceived space), and the emotional (lived spaces) and in spatial terms these translate into the representations of space, the spatial practices, and the representational spaces. By way of recommendation, researchers that seek to understand production of urban space should embrace the multiple epistemologies (positivist, behaviouralist, humanist, and phenomenologist) use of mixed methods designs to capture spatial, qualitative, and quantitative data. As this study has demonstrated, use of geodata helps to visualise resultant urban space, archival data helps to understand histories of representations of space, plans and policies help to appreciate representations of space, physical observations, and household surveys help to appreciate spatial practices, and finally, newspapers, focus groups, songs and spatial stories help to unearth hidden and multiple meanings of space which reveal the clandestine aspects of social life.

9.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study covered two major cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe leaving out two more cities of Mzuzu and Zomba which are equally experiencing similar challenges of contestation over urban space. However, they were left out for practical justification such as resource and time constraints. Similarly, at city scale, since the aim of the research was primarily to investigate spatial practices of everyday life, only one neighbourhood was selected so as to gather rich and contextual data regarding spatial practices and lived experiences of everyday life. Besides spatial constraints, the question of contestation is a politically sensitive topic such that it was not easy to gather urban residents' views regarding their occupation as well as the legitimacy of the state. However, having worked in the urban land management sector before, the researcher used his personal networks to reach out to potential participants. Participants especially squatters considered the researcher as one of them not only because the researcher spent more time with them but also because at the time of the research, Malawian academics were considered to be anti-government at a time when the country was going through economic hardships such as fuel shortages and other forms of citizen discontent.

9.6 FURTHER RESEARCH

Contrary to the criticism that Lefebvre's theory is Eurocentric as noted in the literature review, African cities remain an arena where neoliberal discourses and policies are played out through a wider circuit and networks. This calls for research to continuously engage with Lefebvre's conceptual triad as an analytical framework. Since this study was narrowed down to a neighbourhood, further research ought to scale up to city level to fully comprehend the spatial strategies and tactics that urban residents deploy to contest the hegemonic discourses of modernist images of homogeneity, fragmentation, and segregation that continue to haunt planners in both colonial and postcolonial cites.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot · your knowledge partner

CONTESTING URBAN SPACES IN MALAWI: THE VIEW OF KEY INFORMANTS:

My name is Evance Mwathunga, a lecturer at the University of Malawi's Chancellor College in the department of Geography and Earth Sciences. Currently, I am doing my PhD in Geography and Environmental Studies at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. In fulfilment of the requirements for a doctorate degree, I embarked on a research project titled ***"Contesting urban spaces in Malawi".*** In essence, the research intends to explore the nature of urban land conflicts in the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe with a focus on how planning/land management as it is conceived and practised, contribute to the tensions over urban land in Malawi's cities. In this regard, I have purposively selected you as a participant in this study especially in view of your expertise in the area of urban planning/land management in Malawi. Please note that the questions are meant to serve as a guide. You are therefore free to add anything you may find relevant.

To this end, I would like to seek your consent to respond to the questions as presented below. Specifically, **I would like to request you to formulate a response to these questions which will be the basis for our discussion when I arrive in Malawi in mid-May 2012.** Most importantly, be assured that information you supply in this regard will be treated with the utmost privacy and confidentiality. You are therefore not coerced to disclose your name.

Your Name: **Profession:**

Guiding Questions

1. **NATURE OF URBAN LAND CONFLICTS**
   NB: For exploratory purposes, this item is simply intended to explore the various forms of land conflicts you know or you may have experienced or handled in terms of but not limited to the following:
   a. **What are the conflicts all about?**

b. **In terms of tenure, do the conflicts occur on private land, public land or customary land?**
c. **Which land uses are the subjects of land conflicts?**

2. **ACTORS IN THE URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT (PRODUCTION OF URBAN SPACE)**
   a. **Who are the major actors/stakeholders involved in the management and administration of urban land in your city?**
   b. **What are their specific roles and interests on urban land?**

3. **DRIVING MECHANISMS OF URBAN LAND CONFLICTS**

   In your opinion, what are the major driving forces or factors that trigger the prevailing conflicts over urban land in Malawi's cities?

4. **THE ROLE OF MALAWI'S PLANNING SYSTEM ON URBAN LAND CONFLICTS**
   a. **How do laws, local urban plans and land policies <u>contribute</u> to the growth of conflicts over urban land?**
   b. **How does the overall system of managing and administering urban land contribute to the growth of these conflicts over urban land? *(NB: Please include such issues as weaknesses/challenges encountered with the formal planning approaches, including master plans).***

5. **STRATEGIES TO CLAIM BACK URBAN LAND**
   a. **In the event of land invasion by residents, what strategies do local authorities employ to defend or claim back urban from these invaders? *(Please, include tactics, efforts, or approaches that you use to assert your authority over your land e.g. evictions if applicable).***
   b. **What are the obstacles/ or successes you encounter in the process of administering the interventions as outlined in 5a, above?**

6. **STRATEGIES BY URBAN RESIDENTS TO CLAIM AND DEFEND THEIR LAND**
   a. **Please, explain the tactics that urban residents (informal residents/invaders) use in order to gain access to urban land?**
   b. **Please explain the strategies or tactics that urban residents employ in order to defend their acquired land (informal)?**

7. **CONSEQUENCES/IMPACTS OF URBAN LAND CONFLCTS**
   In your opinion, what are the consequences or impacts of these land conflicts on the urban restructuring? *(NB: You may include such aspects as impact on the economy, infrastructure and service delivery, environment, or cityscape/appearance of the city).*

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING PROCESSES [PRODUCTION OF URBAN SPACE]

a. **What mechanisms or strategies if any, do you have in place to enhance the participation of all users of urban space in the planning process?**
b. **In your opinion, how successful are these participatory planning processes?**
c. **In your opinion, what should be the role of traditional chiefs (authorities) in the administration of urban land?**

9. Please, feel free to add any comments you may find relevant in this regard.

Thanks very much for taking your time to respond to this questionnaire

End of Questionnaire

Appendix B

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY ON CONTESTATIONS OVER URBAN SPACE IN MALAWI

AREA 49, LILONGWE CITY, MALAWI.

Date of interview				
Consent sought from interviewee?	**YES**		**Place of interview**	
	NO		**Questionnaire No.**	[ ]

SECTION A: RESPONDENT'S DETAILS						
ID. NO.	**Item**			**ID. No.**	**Item**	
1	Age	20-29		**4**	Marital status	Single (never married) [1]
		30-39				Married [2]
		40-49				Divorced [3]
		50-59				Widowed [4]
		60+				
2	Sex	Male	1	**5**	Nationality	Malawian [1]
		Female	2			Non Malawian
3	Ethnicity	Chewa	1			*(Please specify)*
		Ngoni	2			..... [2]
		Lomwe	3			
		Sena	4			
		Tonga	5			
		Tumbuka	6			
		Yao	7			
		Other (specify)	8			

SECTION B: SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS						
Educational status				**ID**	**Economic status**	
6	What is your highest level of education attained?	PSLCE [primary]	1	**7**	What is your occupation?	
		JCE [junior secondary]	2			
		MSCE[senior secondary]	3		.....	
		Certificate[post-MSCE]	4	**8**	How much is your household income per month?(Malawi Kwacha/MWK)	<15000 MWK
		Diploma	5			15001 - 30000
		Degree	6			30001 - 75000
						75001 - 100000
						100001 - 250000
						250001 - 400000
						>400000
						(US$1=250MWK

Household characteristics	
9	How many members of your household live in this house?[Please, insert number] [ ]

SECTION C: HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT IN THE AREA	
10	What is your original place of birth?.....
11	When did you move to Blantyre?.....
12	How long have you lived on this piece of land? .....

SECTION D: PERCEPTION OF URBAN SPACE: MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF URBAN LAND			
13	Why is this urban land so important to you? *[multiple responses possible]*	It's our only livelihood	[1]
		Our ancestors lived here	[2]
		This is where we belong	[3]
		It is land for our children	[4]
		Others(specify) .....[5]	

SECTION E: OCCURENCE OF URBAN LAND CONFLICTS	
14	Have you encountered any conflicts over this land since you settled here? Yes [1] No [2]
15	If YES, what was the conflict all about? *(Please explain in detail)* ....
16	Who was involved in the conflict?..... ....
17	How did you resolve the conflict? *(Please explain in detail)* ....

	.....

SECTION F: PERCEPTION OF URBAN SPACE: MEANS OF ACCESSING AND OWNERSHIP OF URBAN LAND			
18	What was the original status of this land before it was declared urban land?	Public/Government	[1]
		Customary	[2]
		Freehold/Private	[3]
		Other *(please specify)*	[4]
19	Did you purchase a vacant stand/land and build your own house or did you purchase an already existing house?	Yes, I purchased a vacant stand	[1]
		No, I purchased already built house	[2]
20	Do you recognise the state as the legitimate authority over control and allocation of urban land? Yes [1] No [2]		
21	To what extent do you feel secure about your occupation of this land?	Very secure	[5]
		Secure	[4]
		Uncertain	[3]
		Insecure	[2]
		Very insecure	[1]
22	From whom did you acquire this piece of land?	Blantyre City Assembly (BCA)	[1]
		Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC)	[2]
		Lands Department	[3]
		Individual (with legal ownership status)	[4]
		Traditional leaders (chiefs)	[5]
		Direct occupation (invasion)	[6]
	Other (Please specify)		[7]
23	If land was bought from local chiefs or invaded, who do you consider to be the legal owner of the land before?		

Instructions: If your response was not 5, 6, or 7 in question 22 above go to section H. If your response was 5, 6, or 7 in question 22 above, answer the rest of the questionnaire.

SECTION G: SPATIAL PRACTICES TO CLAIM BACK URBAN SPACE			
24	Do you think government/MHC/City Authority will want to claim back the land you are living on?	Yes	[1]
		No	[2]
25	What is the government/relevant authority over the land doing or intends to do claim back what they consider as 'their land' *(Multiple responses possible)*	Demolish our houses (without compensation)	[1]
		Demolish our houses (with compensation)	[2]
		Relocation (to already identified place within the city)	[3]
		Relocation (to identified location outside city)	[4]
		Relocation (no place identified for us	[5]
		Using state security to arrest us	[6]
		Other *(please specify*	[7]

SECTION H: SPATIAL PRACTICES TO DEFEND URBAN SPACE (by urban residents)	
26	Have you received any threats of eviction house demolition since you occupied this land? Yes [1] No [2]
27	How did you hear about the pending eviction, house demolition, or relocation? .....
28	If you are told to relocate, will you be willing to obey the relocation or eviction order? Yes [1] No [2] *(Please go to question 29 if you respond No)*
29	Explain why you are not going to move away from this land? ....
30	How did or do you feel about being evicted from this land? ....
31	Did they tell you where they are relocating you to? Yes [1] ***(go to question 32 below)*** No [2] ***(go to question 33)***

32	If YES, where?		
33	What are you doing do defend you land against any possible repossession? *(multiple responses possible)*	Non compliance with their prescribed building standards & environmental requirements	[1]
		Contesting through violent against state authority	[2]
		Continue occupying and using the land (building)	[3]
		Give the location our own names in protest (i.e. daily practices of signification)	[4]
		Use politicians to defend us	[5]
		Form coalitions to negotiate with authorities to legalise our occupations	[6]
		Doing nothing about it – simply keep quiet	[7]
		Obtain letters from local chiefs as proof of ownership	[8]
		Other (specify)	[9]

SECTION I: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	
34	In case you have any additional comments, what are your final words? ....

Thank you so much for your valuable time to participate in this survey

End of Questionnaire

Appendix C

All Communications to be addressed to the Deputy Director of Culture Telephone: (265) 1 525 240/ (265) 1 524 184
Fax : (265) 1 524 089
Cell : (265) 888862758
E-mail: archives@ndrp.org.mw

In reply please quote No: NA/I/I/vol IV/31

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF MALAWI
MKULICHI ROAD
P. O. BOX 62 ZOMBA MALAWI

5th August, 2011

Mr. E. Mwathunga
Chancellor College
P.O. Box 280
Zomba.

Dear Sir,

RE: PERMISSION TO ACCESS ARCHIVAL DATA AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF MALAWI

I would like to inform you that the ministry has granted you permission to conduct archival research at the National Archives of Malawi as you requested in your letter dated 14th June, 2011.

You are reminded to deposit a copy of your researcher findings with the National Archives for record keeping in accordance with the Printed Publications Act (Chap 19:01) of the Laws of Malawi.

I. Langwe
For: Deputy Director of Culture

All Communication should be address to:
The District Commmissioner

Phone (265) 01 824 412/824 919 /824580
FAX: (265) 01 836 894

Ref. No. ADM/22/vol.XI/(49).
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER,
BLANTYRE DISTRICT COUNCIL,
PRIVATE BAG 97,
BLANTYRE,

2nd December, 2011

Mr Evance Mwathunga
Department of Geography & Environmental Studies
Stellenbosch University
Private Bag XI M
SOUTH AFRICA

Copy: The Officer In-charge
Limbe Police Station
LIMBE

Dear Sir,

SURVEY STUDY IN SOCHE AREA

Reference is made to your letter requesting for an authority to carryout a survey concerning Housing and Urbanisation in Malawi.

Amongst the areas to be covered includes Soche, Misesa Village in Traditional Authority Kapeni.

This letter therefore serves as an introductory letter to Mr. Evance Mwathunga a Student from Malawi but currently studying Doctrate in South Africa.

Kindly accord him all the necessary support as he approach your area.

By copy of this letter the Officer In-Charge, Limbe Police is informed about this development.

Yours faithfully,

District Commissioner
Commissioner for Oaths
02 DEC 2011
Blantyre District Assembly
Private Bag 97, Blantyre

C.E. Mphepo
for: **THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER**

Ref. No: ADM/22/Vol. XI/(50) 2nd December, 2011

KUCHOKERA KWA: BWANA DISSI, BLANTYRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
PRIVATE BAG 97, **BLANTYRE**

KUPITA KWA : A GROUP VILLAGE HEADMAN MISESA, T/A KAPENI, **BLANTYRE**

Wokondeka Amfumu,

KALATA YA UMBONI: BAMBO EVANCE MWATHUNGA

Alandireni Bamo Evance Mwathunga omwe ali ku sukulu omwe akupanga kafukufuku wa za nyumba m'Malawi.

Choncho uwu ndi umboni kuchokera kuno ku Boma kuti muwalole Bambo Mwathunga ndi kafukufuku wawo.

Ine mtumiki wanu

C.E. Mphepo
Mmalo mwa: **BWANA DISSI- BLANTYRE**

District Commissioner
Commissioner for Oaths
02 [illegible] 2011
[illegible] District Assembly
Private Bag 97, Blantyre

LILONGWE CITY COUNCIL

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

P. O. BOX 30396
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI
Tel: (265) 01773144
Fax (265) 01770885

Our Ref. LCC/Admin/7

8th June, 2012

Evance Mwathunga
UNIMA
Department of Geography and Earth Sciences
P.O BOX 280
ZOMBA

Dear Sir,

RE: **REQUESTING FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH ON CONTESTING URBAN SPACES IN MALAWI**

We write in response to your letter in which you sought permission to carry out a research at area 49.

We wish to inform you that there is no objection to your request. You are however advised to adhere to research ethics and proper community entry procedures.

Yours faithfully,

C.L.K Mbewe
Chief Administrative Officer
FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE