

Escaping Poverty

A thesis about the interrelation of poverty and development in the lives of students at a vocational school in Malawi

Kiki Haan
Leanne Snijder



Escaping Poverty

A thesis about the interrelation of poverty and development in the lives of students at a vocational school in Malawi



June 2014

Kiki Haan

Student number: 3584704

k.m.j.haan@students.uu.nl

Leanne Snijder

Student number: 3861236

l.c.snijder@students.uu.nl

Supervisor: Marloes Hamelink
University of Utrecht
Bachelor Cultural Anthropology

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	7
Prologue	8
Malawi: the warm heart of Africa (introduction).....	9
The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow.....	9
Research context and research methods	10
Education as facilitator of development.....	12
Index chapters.....	13
The challenge of development (theoretical framework).....	14
Anthropology and development.....	14
Different meanings of development.....	14
Chances of the youth.....	16
The complexity of poverty (theoretical framework)	17
Poverty and poverty reduction	17
Poverty and food security	18
Poverty and income security.....	20
Poverty and education.....	21
Understanding Malawian dynamics (context).....	23
Malawi and its context of poverty	23
Malawi and its context of education.....	24
The pathway to development (empirical chapter)	26
Poverty: a burden of all	27
Food insecurity	29
Why the country is not developing.....	32
Social structures and the stagnation of development.....	35
A bright full future: what does bring about change?.....	36
Freedom through education (empirical chapter)	39
The influence of poverty	40
Powerlessness.....	40
Cultural layer of poverty	41
Constraints to development.....	42
Corruption.....	42
Income security and educational problems.....	44
Solutions to development.....	46

Income security through education	46
A better future.....	48
The leaders of tomorrow (conclusion)	49
Discussion and future recommendations	49
Poverty	51
Development and its constrains	51
Food- and income security	53
How create development.....	54
Epilogue	56
Bibliography	57
Appendix I: Executive summary	63
Escaping poverty.....	63
Appendix II: Song text	66

Acknowledgements

At first we would like to thank the students at the vocational school. You've welcomed us, accepted us and took the time to tell us about your views and opinions related to our research subjects. We are amazed by the courage and hope you've shown in a context of poverty and failing school systems. Besides the students we would also like to thank some of the teachers and headmasters. We'll not mention anyone by name out of ethical reasons but we appreciated the time you took to explain everything about the school to us and we enjoyed all the talks about religion, poverty, politics and other subjects regarding Malawi.

We would also like to thank the organization of Humana, and especially Simone Weert, Marianne Löwik and Karin van Riel who helped us to find a place to do our research. They arranged the first contact and the guesthouse for us, in order to learn what it means to be a student in Malawi. They gave us advice about our research subjects and helped us to prepare our stay in Malawi.

Finally we would like to thank our supervisor, Marloes Hamelink, who gave us great advice in setting up this research, performing it and writing this thesis. She continued giving us feedback until everything was finished and made us look critically at our work.

Leanne and Kiki, Utrecht June 2014

I would like to thank Leanne for being a nice but critical partner during our fieldwork. Thanks to her support, her patience and her punctuality, this first anthropological fieldwork was an unforgettable adventure for me. Thank you for that.

Kiki, Utrecht June 2014

During this entire process the person I would like to thank the most is Kiki. She's been a wonderful partner in science, being critical on my work and on her own work and she always stayed positive. Kiki, I had a great time with you, thank you.

Leanne, Utrecht June 2014

Prologue

Mark: How does the education system work in Holland? Are there many illiterates in your country too?

Leanne: No in my country going to school is obliged until you're sixteen. We don't have a choice so almost everyone knows how to write and read.

Mark: So everyone is rich?

Leanne: Well, no, not everyone. But for those who cannot afford to pay for education on their own, they get support from the government. In Holland education is seen as one of the most important basic needs, so money should not be an issue.

Mark: Can I come with you to your country?

- Part of a conversation with Mark, a student, during classes -

The school system in Malawi has similarities with the one in the Netherlands with a structure of following eight years of primary school, four years of secondary school and four years of higher education. But where we in the Netherlands are obliged to go to school and see it as the most normal thing in the world, in Malawi the youths are not so lucky. While we complained about the fact that we rather play outside when we were kids, we rather spend time with our friends when we were teenagers and we think that the amount of home study we have to do is too much as college students, the youths in Malawi complain about the lack of food in their homes, the lack of schools in the neighborhood, the lack of school supplies and the lack of good quality teachers. Where in the Netherlands almost hundred percent of the teenagers finishes secondary school successfully, in Malawi this number only is about 24 percent (World Bank 2010:227).

The youths in Malawi live in a context of poverty; the youths in the Netherlands live in a context of wealth. Why they were born in poverty, while I was born in luxury, I wondered many times. It doesn't seem fair. Still, these young people try to make something out of their life. They have hope for a future, even though it doesn't seem bright; they keep their heads up, starting with their educational training. It's not of high quality and it's not enough to reach their dreams, but they will try to make it life changing.

Leanne, Utrecht June 2014

Malawi: The warm heart of Africa

Introduction

The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow

In Malawi, which is known as the warm heart of Africa because of its peaceful environment, the youths of the country are seen as the leaders of tomorrow, or at least, that is what the contemporary leaders are aiming at. The youth of Malawi is growing up in a developing world, in a country where poverty is the norm, not an exception. A specific group amongst the youngsters is the boys and girls who are receiving education. Not the high quality education that the children of rich people are receiving, but education that is sponsored by many family members or NGO's, hoping that this child will find the way out of poverty. These students experience pressure from parents, family members and villagers who are pushing them to succeed and create a better environment, not only for themselves, but for everyone they are related to. This field of poverty and expectations to which the youth are exposed to forms the basis of our research.

Much effort has been done to create development in developing countries. Billions of dollars are given to the Malawian government and many projects are put up by international and national organizations, yet people are still suffering. Since many Malawians depend on agriculture for their livelihood, food insecurity is a threat to all. A nutrition fact sheet from 2006 shows that malnutrition has been endemic in Malawi and that there has not been a significant change over the years (Government of Malawi 2006). Food insecurity is closely related to income security since many people depend on agriculture for their income. Income insecurity is therefore also a part of poverty in Malawi. So we can see food- and income security as part of poverty. In turn, part of our field of interest is how poverty can be eradicated. This research will show that poverty is not only determined by actual income of food and money, but highly depends on social relationships and the cultural context of the country.

The scientific opinions about what poverty is and how it can be eradicated have not reached a consensus. Many theories about poverty come from the science of economy, in which the basic principle is that economic growth needs to be stimulated in order to eradicate poverty. One specific theory, that has been very influential in the debate about development, is the idea that economic growth will be stimulated in countries where governments respond to the demands of their people by giving them access to the bundles of rights which include social facilities (Sen 1981). The econometrist Moyo (2009) argues that all the money that is invested in Africa did not facilitate development, and therefore economic growth, because of corruption. Both of the statements are applicable in Malawi, as many of the poor do not have access to political entitlements, and the local, national elites and the government do not take

responsibility for the country. Instead they are filling their own pockets with money from the donors.

While these economic explanations make poverty seem like a static condition someone is in, poverty from an anthropological viewpoint depends on social relationships (Green 2006). Green (2006) argues that poverty is a consequence of social relations, in which the poor are powerless and are subjected to the power of local and national elites and the government. On top of that, the poor also depend on the development institutions, as they have the power to recognise and define the poor, and therefore determine when poverty matters (Green 2006:8). In Malawi, chiefs, Members of the Parliament and implemented projects are indeed the ones who determine who benefit from development initiatives and who does not. More often than not, it is not the actual target population who benefit from the development initiatives, since the people in power decide differently. To understand the social structures that underlie these selections, one should be able to determine why people act differently than what they say they would do. As Harris (2004) states, it is only through ethnographic research the anthropologist can show a difference between what people say they do and what they actually do.

Because of the high interrelation between poverty and development it is hard to distinguish views between them. But in short we can conclude that lack of economic growth is indeed part of the problem of the stagnation of development, considering people do not have access to political rights, as Sen (1981) argues, and corruption takes places on a regular basis (Moyo 2009). Nonetheless, this research will show that being poor means more to people than simply not having economic resources as it has its implications on the social well being of people too. To understand how development takes place we need to understand the socioeconomic and cultural processes that take place in the local context, or as the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (Fisher 1997) argues, we need to understand and use local knowledge.

Research context and research methods

In order to understand the full picture of the lives of the youth in relation to poverty, we conducted ten weeks of fieldwork from the 30th of January till the 14th of April 2014. In the empirical chapters, we will show in which ways anthropological research can contribute to the discussion about development. The fieldwork has been conducted at a vocational school, in which students from 18 till 30 are enrolled. We chose to execute this research amongst the youth of Malawi, and specifically youth that is receiving education, as they are the ones who are the 'changing' generation. The youth of Malawi, which is struggling to follow education, are also the ones who have a future ahead of them, who have to find a job, take responsibility and are in a position that will determine the future of the country. We conducted a complementary research, because there are two kinds of courses provided at the vocational school, namely, the courses

that are called 'business courses' and the 'technical courses'. The students themselves explained that the business courses were of a higher level and more theoretical, while the practical courses are meant for the students who want to receive practical skills. As there were too many students enrolled in the courses, Kiki focussed on students enrolled in the Agricultural and Community and Development courses, which are business courses. Leanne focussed on students enrolled in the Textile and Design and the Salon and Hairdressing courses, which are technical courses. We also divided our themes, as Kiki focussed on food security and Leanne on income security, since these students are taking classes that prepare them to set up a business. In the end, we shall both contribute to the debate around education, development and poverty eradication by providing insights on how students experience processes of development in a poor environment. This field of interest has led us to the following research question: *'How do poverty and development interact with each other in the lives of Malawian adolescents who are following training at a vocational school in Malawi?'* To be able to answer this question we looked into the daily lives of students, the interaction between people, main worries of the students as well as family and social backgrounds of the students. Specifically, we focussed on the role of education, food security, income security, social relations and development in order to understand how these students give meaning to the idea of development.

During the different parts of our anthropological research we regularly bumped into ethical dilemmas. The most common dilemmas were about contrasting social relationships. During the first days of our stay in Malawi we noticed that social relationships at the school were much more hierarchical than we are used to at our university. The most obvious example is the fact that we got a housekeeper, who bowed for us every morning. We felt like it was humiliating for her to be so humble. We made the consideration to not have a housekeeper, because we felt like it was wrong, the lady would not have a job. Ultimately, we decided it would be better for her to have an income, and therefore we left the situation as it was. Besides it would be ungrateful not to accept her help, towards the principal of the school. Another dilemma was formed when the students (our research population) decided to go for a demonstration march. We had to consider whether we would harm the relationship with the principals and teacher of the school, who were receiving us, if we would decide to go with the students and win their sympathy. We decided not to join them, by telling the students a little lie for our own good. We also made use of informed consent during the fieldwork process. This is the informing of the participant about the research and assuring that he or she will be anonymous. Besides, as there might have been some things said that are sensitive for the organisation that is sponsoring the vocational school where we have stayed, we made the decision to change the names of all the participants. We also won't name the name of the school we have been as there are also some critical things said about the Malawian government. One thing that must be kept in mind when

reading this thesis is that the research was done in English, which is not the mother tongue of the research population. This could mean that there was a barrier for the students to express themselves.

The research methods that are used are participant observation, informal conversations, focus groups, open-interviews and semi-structured interviews. Participant observation is important to learn the context of the research and to fully understand the daily lives and worries of the research population. A technique that is combined with this is the making of field notes, for we could not memorize everything we experienced. A notable anthropological rule states that an observation is not an observation unless you have written it down (deWalt&deWalt 2011:158). The hard thing about participant observation is that sometimes the researcher understands things wrongly because he or she does not understand the meaning of the social situation. Therefore, it was important for us to keep informal conversations during participant observation to understand the setting we were in. Besides that, small talks there are also other ways to get to know the research population. Informal conversations reveal the viewpoint of informants by letting them lead the conversation and letting them free in formulating answers (deWalt&deWalt 2011:137). The creation of focus groups was the next method wherein a group of students was collected in a classroom to have a group discussion about research related subjects. This helped to get a first understanding of the students about the topics, but together with informal conversations, it just forms the basis for more thorough understanding of how the students experience their livelihood situation. Therefore, participant observation, informal conversations and focus groups were followed by unstructured or semi-structured interviews. These were the most useful to get in-depth information about all the themes in the research. We waited with these interviews until we gained the trust of our participants. As Mommersteeg (2013:25) says: *'The interviewer determines the focus, while the informant determines the content of the interview'*.

Education as a facilitator of development

The focus of the research lays on instruments that can facilitate development, as there are many discussions (scientific as well as in public institutions) about which path to follow towards development. According to the World Bank (2014) for instance, education must be seen as *'a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability'*, while Haile (2005) is pleading for a focus on food security and agricultural improvements to eradicate poverty.

Whatever aim would be the best or most effective to stimulate development, in Malawi all the aspects that are important according to the debates to stimulate development are not present. The gross enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education for instance is low

(61.9 percent), while one of the major constraints to higher investments of the economic business is because of the lack of skilled labour (Castel, Phiri and Stampini 2011:2). Inadequate infrastructure, the lack of materials and the lack of adequate teachers in primary and secondary education limit the enrolment of students and affect the efficiency in higher education (Castel et al. 2011). Public higher education is nearly inaccessible for students of lower segments because of the tuition fees that need to be paid (Government of Malawi, 2006). Poorer students depend on development programs like the vocational school we have been to, which is (partially) financed by development organisations.

The scientific discussion about education as a facilitator of development is also influenced by the adjustment of the educational programs to the local needs. Among others Crossley and Holmes (2010) criticise the use of the western education system which leaves no adjustment to local knowledge and values. Although this sounds like grounded critique, the statement is not based how the recipients themselves experience this form of education. Besides, what economic and educational scientists forget is what the availability of education does with society itself. Questions like ‘what opportunities do people experience once they have access to education?’ or ‘what kind of social structures does education create?’ remain unanswered, while anthropological research can give these insights. In the empirical chapters, we will try to answer these questions.

Index chapters

To answer the main question of this research, the thesis will first start with the chapter: ‘*The challenge of development*’, which is divided in two paragraphs. It starts with how anthropology and development are related according to scientific research, in which it shows the complexity of the concept of development and its different actors involved. This is followed up by the subject poverty, food-and income security as part of poverty and the contribution of education to development. The next chapter ‘*Understanding Malawian dynamics*’ provides an holistic view of the context the research situation, since it will give the reader some background information about the lives of the research population in order to embed the arguments made in the empirical chapters that follow. In the fourth and fifth chapter ‘*The pathway to development*’ and ‘*Freedom through education*’ the existing theoretical arguments and the value of anthropological research into the topics of development and poverty from the viewpoint of the research population will be critically analysed. Finally, in ‘*The leaders of tomorrow*’ a conclusion will be given, wherein we summarize our main conclusions and give some recommendations on further research. The thesis ends with a literature list and appendices, which includes a summary of the entire research.

The challenge of development

Theoretical framework¹

Anthropology and development

This research is about local insights in the debate about development, poverty and education, seen from an anthropological view. *'Development anthropology is a branch in applied anthropology that focuses on economic development, adding cultural and social issues'* (Kottak 2011:84). Anthropology got more acknowledgment in the world of development aid in the early 1970s. According to Escobar (1991:659) a re-evaluation took place at that time in the debate around development. Where culture first was seen as a residual category it now became an important part of the problems related to establishing development. A specific contribution of anthropology to the field of development can be the use of ethnography, an anthropological method in which the anthropologist commits long-term fieldwork at one place to get to know the local people. Harris (2002:493) says that only through ethnographic research the anthropologist can show a difference between what people say they do, and what they actually do. This way, anthropology has led us to a different view of poverty and development once ignored by an economic discourse.

Different meanings of development (aid)

Development is a fluid concept which is defined in a variety of ways in scientific literature. In the economic discourse, development is mostly defined by economic growth, like Little shows (Diawara 2000:362). He sees development as a new version of economic growth that produces more consumer goods. Social sciences take a broader definition and include that the view on development in the western region is not by definition good for other countries. Apffel-Marglin and Marglin (Diawara 2000:362) state that development is not only about economic growth, but that it has everything to do with new improvements in economical, technical and agricultural areas. Diawara (2000), a native Mali and now social scientist, states that in many countries in Africa development is organized the same way as it was in western countries, as a consequence of modernization. With modernization he means the four interconnected processes of secularization, scientization, industrialization and democratic participation. He sees 'the west' as the region that has passed these four stages and is now 'modernized'. Complicated problems like food shortage and illiteracy are thought to vanish by one simple task: catching up with these processes (Diawara 2000:362-363). He criticizes this thought, and many anthropologists agree with him in naming this an ethnocentric way of thinking about development. Anthropologist

¹ This chapter is written by Leanne

take this social view on development even a step further in stating that the views and needs of the local people are the most important. In this view, culture lies in the heart of definitions about development (Escobar 1991). Besides, it's about local knowledge, a term first introduced by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (Fisher 1997), as the most important feature of development. It means that the ideas and perspectives of the local people involved, need to be the main focus of development research.

Besides different views on development, there are also different views in scientific literature on development aid. Bräutigam and Knack (2004), both development scientists, state in their article about development aid in Sub-Saharan African countries that aid can contribute to development, but that good intentions of donor countries do not always succeed. They conclude that the effectiveness of aid programs depends on the local context. This partially correlates with the findings of Gabas and Fauré (Carlsson et al. 1997:39-40), who name some contextual factors after comparing the effectiveness of aid programs in eight different countries in Africa. Extend of project ownership, costs accompanying the aid program and the behavior of the clients, which includes NGO's and local governments, are examples of factors affecting the effectiveness of development work, according to them. Dambisa Moyo, an econometrist from Zambia, takes part in this discussion with her book 'Dead Aid. Why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa'. Moyo (2009) shows that the billions of dollars going to African countries each year do not have the desired effect they should have. One big reason for the failure of many African countries is the debt they must pay; another reason is corruption taking place on a big scale. But the aid continues to be given to inefficient governments. A better strategy would be to use aid money to buy food from farmers within the country, and then distribute that food to the local citizens in need to stimulate local markets.

Moyo (2009) is very negative, and not entirely in her right with her only economic approach. Different authors do show that development aid has had positive outcomes in African countries. Maipose et al. (Carlsson et al. 1997: 16-18) talk in their article about aid effectiveness in Botswana. In contrast with the story of Moyo (2009), they say that foreign aid has contributed to development in Botswana. The country was one of the poorest countries in the world at the time it became independent in 1966, and relied on aid from Britain. In the following decades it sustained high economic growth rates and is now a middle-income country. This growth was partly possible because of the significant mineral reserves, but would not be as successful without British aid used strategically by the local Botswana government. These different authors show that the debate around development aid is alive and the one way to development has not yet been found. At least taking into account the local context is one thing that is essential for the succeeding of development and anthropological research does exactly that.

Chances of the youth

Development is a layered concept and to fully understand this we need to look at different actors involved in development work. Scientists, governments, Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO's) and the local population all may think that they have the absolute truth about how to reach development. In this debate anthropologists emphasize that it is important not to overlook local ideas of development, here we look at a specific local population group: the youths.

Big population groups who are affected by the development process in a country are the youths (Chant and Jones 2005). They are an interesting population group because they are the ones on which a lot of development programs are aimed at and they are the ones who might have the possibility to make changes. They are different from other age groups in that they define themselves also as a group and feel like they are set apart from older adults. They think they are the most important for development programs because they're still young, but old enough to make changes.

Unfortunately, youths in Africa find many problems on their way to development; problems of education and unemployment are examples of this (Chant and Jones 2005). A field study done in Gambia and Ghana shows that youths already in their teens 'start giving back' to their parents. The culture expects from them to contribute to the household income. Besides this, they frequently have to work to pay for their own education to find a good, which limits their opportunities (Chant and Jones 2005:191). Awogbenle and Iwuamdi (2010) show in their research about youths, development and entrepreneurship that because of the lack of jobs in many African countries the youth use the entrepreneurship strategy more and more to create a better future for themselves. Okafor (2011), a social scientist, did a field study in Nigeria where he found that many youths were unemployed. This has, he says, social, political and psychical consequences and indicates that there are complex factors contributing to this problem. Rural-urban migration, rapid population growth, outdated school curricula, lack of educational manpower and economic market failure are all factors found in Nigeria contributing to the problem. As final major problem, Okafor (2011) identifies corruption taking place on a big scale which has robbed the country of establishing a stable economic position. Funds for development projects are also misused while the corruption is taking place on different levels in society. These corruptions have cost the country billions of dollars and robbed the youth of any chance of establishing a good future (Okafar 2011:362-365).

Thus, there are many problems youths have to face, here the question arises: what are specific ways to accomplish development in third world countries and how can this poverty be reduced? To answer this question we need to know what poverty actually is.

The complexity of poverty

Theoretical framework²

Poverty and poverty reduction

During the 1970's the World Bank, one of the most influential institutions in the field of development (aid), putted worldwide poverty eradication strategies on the agenda. Their emphasis on poverty eradication made policies and therefore discourses about poverty change. Before the public and scientific consensus about poverty was that poverty meant not having the economic means to improve livelihood circumstances and that it was caused by overpopulation. In the same time span an Indian economist, Amartya Sen (1981) wrote an influential essay about the relation between poverty and political entitlements people have. Sen (1981) sees political involvement as a mean to gain economic improvement and therefore welfare. He argues that economic growth will be stimulated in countries where governments respond to the demands of their people by giving them access to the bundles of rights which include social facilities like education, health care, access to sanitation etc. In the contemporary debate the idea rules that economic growth is the mean through which poverty can be eradicated. Poverty is therefore measured by the economic assets someone has, but the anthropologist Green (2006) argues that this can lead to the categorisation of the poor (Green 2006).

Unlike economists, who see poverty as a consequence of the lack of economic growth, anthropologists consider poverty to be a consequence of social relations. Poverty is therefore not a static condition some lives in, but it is fluid and depending on the context (Green 2006). The anthropological viewpoint helps scientists to get a deeper understanding of for instance the powerlessness that poor people are subjected to and the power people have over them, which does not only involve local and national elites and governments, but also the power of development institutions to recognise and define them and to determine when poverty matters (Green 2006:8). As a consequence, all these actors have the ability and the power to decide who is categorised as poor and who has therefore access to the helping hands the poor get. Bastiaensen, de Herdt and D'Exelle (2005) argue that there is a cultural layer present that is part of the regulation of society. People in society base their social identities' and perceptions about what is possible, normal and valuable in life on this cultural layer (Bastiaensen et al. 2005:980).

In development projects the powerlessness of the poor is also found. Binns, Hill and Nell (1997) argue that the implementation of development projects has failed, because the program leaders have failed to understand 'the complexities of the socioeconomic and cultural contexts in which indigenous livelihood and production systems function' (Binns et al. 1997:1). This failure

² This chapter, besides the paragraph about income security, is written by Kiki

of combating poverty is illustrated by an example of Cameroon (Bastiaensen et al. 2005:983), where scientists have studied a remote area where a NGO started a project with onion producers with the objective to empower them. They concluded that elites were the ones who came into contact with the organisations because they have the connections, skills and knowledge to communicate and help the organisation and therefore benefit from the project, while the onion producers stay left behind. This example of having power over the poor brings us back to the importance of understanding how local structures are regulated. As the example shows, by misunderstanding the local social relationships, the situation of the people will not be improved.

The understanding of the local context is of major importance because the degree of understanding local processes and dynamics determines the success of for instance a development project. It is therefore that the anthropologist Geertz (Fisher 1997) pleads for the use of local knowledge in development processes. Anthropological research has the ability to identify differences in how people perceive poverty. Thierney (1997) shows, with interviews, that there are also differences in generational views on poverty in the same local context. An elderly man identifies the poor as those who do not have people to live with and eat with, while a man in his twenties refers to the poor as those who do not have access to education (Thierney 1997:256). Note that both the elderly man, as the young man, don't identify the poor as the ones who do not have access to material stuff (Booth et al. 1999). These examples illustrate that poverty is the result of social relationships that vary significantly in different cultural settings.

In short: although in the general debate poverty is seen as a problem of access to economic means, anthropologists plead for a different perspective, in which poverty is seen as a consequence of social relationships. Thus measuring income or boosting economic welfare is not the right strategy to combat poverty as long as there is no understanding of the social relationships that will influence the division of poverty and welfare.

Poverty and food security

Despite all the actions that have been undertaken by national as well as international agents, a third of the African households are still exposed to the risks of food shortages and hunger (Haile 2005:2169). The relation between food insecurity and poverty is mutual, as poverty can be combated by targeting food security (Haile 2005) and food security can be reached by getting poverty out of the household levels. This because poverty on national and household levels contributes to baseline levels of malnutrition, and to infant mortality that is so high that these indicators of extreme deprivation have become normalised (Devereux 2008:27). Due to the lack of necessary emergency response in developing countries to protect their population from natural disasters and economic shocks, households are exposed to food crises and hunger. Haile (2005) explains: '*in the absence of functioning safety nets and rural financial mechanisms poor*

households will be unable to cope with droughts, while continuing to engage in sustainable economic activities' (Haile 2005:2172). As a consequence households do not longer take long term planning into account, but use strategies that focus on meeting immediate food requirements of their families (Haile 2005:2172).

Although food insecurity was earlier thought of as caused by overpopulation³, the Indian economist Sen (1981) argues that *'starvation is a matter of some people not having enough food to eat, and not a matter of there not being enough food to eat'* (Sen, 1981:434). Just like poverty is caused by not having social/political access to the right means, food insecurity is caused by not having the entitlement to access food (markets, fields, etc.). This is economic view on food insecurity argues that food security can be brought about by economic welfare, but there is no attention paid to how social relationships and the cultural environment regulate access to food in specific contexts. Here it is argued that food security is not only determined by the political entitlements to access food. The way people understand and explain food insecurity differs, depending on local contexts. Periods of food insecurity and hunger are for instance explained as caused by social action from within the community rather than being caused by external factors/actors as social scientists claim. De Boeckx (1995) illustrates this statement with an example of the Great Lakes region where inappropriate social activities can provoke 'famine to go around the land'.

Anthropological research contributes to the discussion about food security by looking into the question which social and cultural structures are the basis of persistent vulnerability by giving insights in how social structures are embedded in society and the view on food insecurity. The anthropologists Baro and Deubel (2006) show that famines and food shortages are linked to persistent vulnerabilities, which are often the result of historical and contemporary processes that limit the options and opportunities of households by focusing on Sub Saharan Africa with a case study on Niger (Baro&Deubel2006:522). Social structures are part of these historical and contemporary processes that determine access to opportunities, which are in their turn context dependent. Although there are not many anthropological studies that are looking into food security, the theory of Green (2006) is also applicable when it comes down to food insecurity. In the empirical chapters more attention will be paid to the consequences of being labelled as poor or not and what that label means for the situation of food insecurity amongst people.

³ Neomalthusian thinking is a way of thinking that was introduced by Thomas Malthus. He argued that population tends to grow faster than food production, which leads to food scarcity.

*Poverty and income security*⁴

Devereux (2001:507-513), a development scientist, describes that living in poverty is combined with the problem of income insecurity. Uncertainty and vulnerability are two core aspects of the problem, because the situation for most of the poor is extremely unstable. There are three levels on which income insecurity is measured: on macro-level, which is national, on meso-level, which is regional and on micro-level, which is individual and on households. Focusing on the household level, several studies (Devereux 2001) have shown that the poor facing food shortages are forced to trade off short term consumption needs against longer-term economic strategies. When there is a positive income shock, long-term strategies will be used, while during a negative income shock, people fall back to the short-term cheaper solutions (Devereux 2001:514-515).

The effectiveness of improving income security depends on the local context. Frank Ellis (2007:6-8), also a scientist in development studies, states that there is no blueprint for facilitating a better income. In his research among households in sub-Saharan Africa he demonstrates that families are in different positions to access income resources and that the income of rural households shows great variation. Seasonality is one of the reasons for this; another is the problem of good measurement. The opportunity to get a job depends on ones skills, for example technical skills and the followed education, and on ones gender (Ellis 2007:8-10). Abdulai and Crolerees (2001) agree with the 'no blueprint to development' statement and show with their research in Southern Mali that those who are born in a poor society, with agriculture being the only form of income, have less opportunity to establish greater income security than those who are also born in a poor surroundings but live closer to local markets. They can also participate in the non-farm business. Tschirly and Weber (1994), have a more economic approach. They have done research in Mozambique and state that income security depends on the ups and downs of the local market and by the possession of land. A study in Ghana showed that employment was frequently a matter of 'know who' and not 'know how'. This involves a complex network of familial, ethnic and religious contacts (Chant and Jones 2006:193). They show that income security is not just about economical access or geographical location, it is also about the social relations people have. These examples all demonstrate that the local circumstances influence the income security of the poor.

To conclude this section, Ellis argues that many studies show that education is a great facilitator for more income security, also confirmed by statistics of the World Bank (2010). With education coming to rural villages, the trainings are likely to have a relatively large impact on the ability to diversify income resources (Ellis 2007:27). But this optimistic view of education has its counterarguments.

⁴ This paragraph is written by Leanne

Poverty and education

One of the most used strategies to eradicate poverty, besides giving money, is providing people with education. Education is seen as a contribution to development as it is one of the opportunities humans get to expand their freedoms in life, and therefore escape poverty (Sen 1999). Critics from sociological and educational front argue that the way education is implemented in developing countries is not adjusted to indigenised knowledge and culture and imposed by external actors (Dei 1998, Crossley and Holmes 2010, Diawara 2000). Indigenous knowledge is *'the process of learning and sharing social life, histories, identities, economic, and political practices unique to each cultural group'* (Owuor 2007:23). This is relevant in the context of education, as in the western education systems, because it reflects, according to the educational scientist Owuor, *'the uniqueness of ways that specific societies make meaning of the world and how such forms of knowledge address local problems and solutions that are context specific'* (Owuor 2007:23). According to him and other educational scientists, in the western education system, there is no room for adjustment to local knowledge and values, and to the understanding of the culturally embedded nature of meaning making (Crossley and Holmes 2010:210). Diawara (2000) says that it is only through contact with local knowledge that they can acquire the insights which are today of prime importance for the questions of developmental politics (Diawara 2000:366).

Anthropologists could contribute to the debate about education as an instrument of development as their methods are suitable to form a holistic framework on how education changes society. Thus, while other scientists are talking about if the form of education fits into society, anthropological research could give insight in what education does to people, how it changes their worldviews, their self esteem, and their social relationships.

Explanations are present about why access to education is opposing a problem to students in developing countries. The Indian economist Tilak (2001) found at micro level investigations that poverty is predominant among the illiterates and it is almost a non-existent phenomenon among the educated households. Besides poverty keeps many children from schools, which means that opportunities to develop, like knowledge, practical skills, social networks, will not come on their path (Tilak 2001:18). This is because parents cannot pay school fees and need children to work. In addition, the lack of much school infrastructure, such as teachers, distances and absence of pull factors explains low or non-school participation (Tilak 2001:17). As Buchmann & Hannum (2001) explain: *'Governments in developing countries face substantial barriers – severely limited economic and organizational resources, a lack of legitimacy, and peripheral status in the world system- in their attempt to shape educational opportunities or to boost school demand'* (Buchmann & Hannum 2001:80). As a consequence the government might implement national exams for example, but may be too weak to create stable and effective

educational institutions (Buchmann & Hannum 2001:81). In conclusion, practical aspects of education form a big challenge in developing countries for macro institutions as the government or even in international level, but also on micro level as families do not have access to school.

In short, research into education as an instrument for development is done by sociologists, educational studies and economist, but again these scientist have not paid any attention to a) the cultural restraints that hold back development which could be facilitated by development and b) the question what the availability of education does with society, thus in what way meaning making of people changes because of the presence of education. In the empirical chapters more attention will be paid to how this process works, thus how education gives people the idea that they have a chance on development and which other factors are involved. One of the examples that can be given about the first point made is a research of Lloyd & Gage-Brandon (1994) who found that older siblings are taking over some of the responsibilities of the parents as they provide economic resources for their younger siblings. Another example is that of Parish and Willis (1993) who found that in Taiwan, early-born siblings receive less education, while later born receive more. These examples show that cultural expectations or structures restrain specific people from developing, as the older siblings have fewer resources to invest in themselves, because they are responsible for the development of their siblings. Our research will focus more on these social or cultural expectations from parents and other family members towards our research population.

Understanding Malawian dynamics

Context

Malawi and its context of poverty⁵

Malawi is a country characterized by poverty and food insecurity. In the Human Development Index, which is based on three indicators; health, education and living standards, Malawi is ranked as a country with very low human development, on the 170th place of the 186 countries that are measured (HDR 2013:18). Also according to their Millennium Development Goals report of 2004 at least 39 percent of the population lives off less than 1\$ per day (Government of Malawi MDG Report 2003). A nutrition fact sheet from 2006 shows that malnutrition has been endemic in Malawi and that there has not been a significant change over the years (Government of Malawi 2006). Zooming in on the specific context where our research takes place, there is a threat of a stressed situation concerning food security because of the aftermath of a bad rainfall season and also poor harvests in the season of 2012/2013 (Malawi Food Security Outlook 2013:1).

Factors of history, geography and politics combined, make poverty reduction in Malawi an enormous challenge (Ellis et al. 2003). For thirty years after independence in 1964, the country was ruled by Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda whose government pursued policies consciously biased toward supporting the estate sector in agriculture, promoting a handful of nonagricultural private and parastatal businesses, and creating a small and highly educated middle-class elite rather than expanding education and opportunity for the majority of citizens (Ellis et al. 2003). In the aftermath of this leadership, the United Democratic Front began to try to facilitate change, but the processes involved are inevitably slow, uneven, and complicated (Ellis et al. 2003). Malawi produced a Poverty Action Plan (PAP) in the mid-1990s that set out various poverty reduction goals, but this document never achieved any purchase on actual policy or expenditure decisions (Ellis et al. 2003:1496).

No research has been found on how the people themselves experience the circumstances they are living in. Questions that remain unanswered are: ‘when are people defined as poor?’, ‘what are important opportunities to overcome poverty?’ and ‘what constraints do people face improving their livelihood circumstances?’.

Applying the theory of Devereux (2008) to the specific situation in Malawi, or even on a smaller scale on the situation in the Chiradzulu district, we can conclude, based on the numbers of poverty and food insecurity, that poor citizens are trapped in poverty and food insecurity. Ninety-seven percent of the people in Chiradzulu district, where our research takes place, have

⁵ This paragraph is written by Kiki

an income less than 1USD a day (Kamanga, Vedeld and Sjaastad 2008:1). As Devereux (2008) argues: poverty at national and household levels contributes to baseline levels of malnutrition and infant mortality so high that these indicators become 'normalized', blurring the boundaries between chronic food insecurity and food crises (Devereux, 2008:27). This means that the context in which our research takes place is a context of 'normalized' poverty and food insecurity.

As food prices in rural Malawi rise seasonally rise as soon as farmers' granaries are emptied (Devereux 2008:27), access to the market where food can be obtained is a key instrument not to suffer from hunger. But as 97 percent of the population of the Chiradzulu district has an income lower than 1USD per day, the chance they have access to nutritious food of which the prices are rising in the most severe period, is little. Access to food plays a key role in poverty alleviation in our research region. Again there is no research found about the meaning of development in the context of Malawi. For our research it is our goal to give insights on the process of improving livelihood circumstances in relation to opportunities and constraints in life.

Malawi and its context of education⁶

Education in Malawi has a formal system which follows the 8-4-4 structure: eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of university-level education (World Bank 2010:13-14). In the Chiradzulu district between forty percent and fifty percent of the people has completed primary school and between five percent and ten percent has completed secondary school (World Bank 2010:227). After that only 35 on the 100.000 inhabitants follow technical education (World Bank 2010:123) and only 0,3 percent of the students of available age can follow higher education (World Bank 2010:149).

According to Chimombo (2005:168-171) there are different reasons why the school drop-out is a major problem in Malawi. The Ministry of Education has tried to push 'education for all', but in many places this has worked counterproductive. Parents think that no material benefit can come from education and keep their children home to work. Poverty is an additional reason for keeping children home, because parents need all the extra income they can get (Tilak 2001:18). Early marriages of young girls around fifteen is another factor, as are limited resources and dilapidated school buildings. Kadzamira and Rose (2003:501-502) on the other hand show that education can improve economic and agricultural productivity in Malawi, like the theory of Sen (1999) which sees education as a way to escape poverty. Kadzamira and Rose (2003) found in the research that education has a positive effect on the development in the country. For many households are too poor to pay tuition, therefore a case is often made for the

⁶ This paragraph is written by Leanne

public provision of education. This has happened in Malawi, where the government introduced free primary education (FPE), with the underlying thought of education as a way out of poverty.

Our research has taken place on a vocational school therefore extra attention will be paid to this form of higher education. The Technical, Entrepreneurial, and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) system in Malawi is highly diverse and uncoordinated. The quality of the education is affected by the funding of the school. In most places this quality is very poor and students do not always find a job after participating (World Bank 2010:118-119). According to the World Bank (2010:xlix) for those who followed technical education the income increase with 196,3 percent. This looks like much but it is not much more than after following secondary education (137,6 percent) and almost nothing compared to the income increase after following higher education which is 449,1 percent.

The vocational school we've been to has around 220 full time students. These students come from different social backgrounds with various geographic locations, family structures and religions. One prevailing element however is the presence of poverty. This doesn't mean that all the students are at the same level of poverty, for some live in a better environment than others, but it means that they all know what poverty is and that they want to improve their lives. With this incentive they came to the vocational school, some because they were sponsored, others because they saw an advertisement and applied.

The students are spread over eight practical courses. The training periods range from four months to two years and are both theoretical and practical. 'The vocational school is a boarding school and its students follow a tight schedule: They get up around five, clean their personal area, get breakfast at seven, get morning classes from eight till ten and from half past ten till half past one, with a tea break in between. After lunch break they have another class from two till half past four, followed by sport from four till six. They get dinner and do evening studies and around nine they go to bed. This is the schedule from Monday till Friday, wherein they also have morning gatherings and club meetings. In the weekends the students have free time to go home and visit family, go to nearby villages for some shopping or stay at the school and relax. This schedule might look of high quality to the outsider, but the quality of the education is not that good. Teachers don't have all the knowledge they should have, they come late or don't show up in class and the place and materials are not enough. In this context students have to learn and dream about a future which is very difficult to achieve with this kind of low-quality education.

A pathway to development

Empirical chapter⁷

Youth tears

*'They say we are the youth, we are the leaders of tomorrow
I guess that's the lie, they don't tell us the truth
They don't give us the chance, our dreams fade away
We cry everyday, unemployment levels are high,
Poverty is everywhere, the youth are dying young
I ask myself why, was it a mistake
I was born in Malawi nowadays
Certificate diploma degree, they are ordinary papers,
Spending many years what's the reason for school
No sweet without sweat, where are the benefits,
I spend my time on books, more money on school fees
I expected to get some profits but all I have are losses.
I wonder am I a human, I am living without hope
I know I am not cased in my life
I need a scope looking for a better place
Suffering in many ways I need a better place
Somebody hear my voice'⁸*

The students at the vocational school in Malawi have one advantage that other adolescents don't have: they are receiving education. Nevertheless they are facing many struggles in life because of the poor circumstances they are living in. In the following chapter the results found in ten weeks anthropological fieldwork will be discussed. It reflects the worldviews of the research population, their beliefs and ideas, their worries and concerns in the context of development. As shown in the theoretical framework, it is thought that poverty is something that can be explained by studying social relationships (Green 2006). In contrast with that view is the idea that poverty should be seen as a result of the lack of (access to) economic welfare. In the following chapter I will pay more attention to the process of being poor. I will answer questions like: 'how does someone become poor?', 'who is responsible for poverty?', 'what factors are involved in the interrelation between poverty and development?' Factors that have a great impact on poverty according to the research population are the lack of education and food

⁷ This chapter is written by Kiki

⁸ Lyrics of the song Youth Tears by Phamuphamu, Lady D, Blessed I and Kbz, students of the vocational school (Appendix 2)

insecurity. The question is how enhancement in education and food security improves the livelihood circumstances of the students. As some scientists are arguing that education in developing countries is not doing any good because of its western principles or the lack of acknowledgement of local knowledge (Dei 1998, Diawara 2000 and Crossley & Holmes 2010), others are arguing that education is the facilitator of development (Sen 1981). Food security is another facet that is aimed at when discussing about development, as according to Haile (2005), food security gets people out of poverty and eradication of poverty gets people out of food security. Gaps in this knowledge are found when trying to answer questions from an emic view, like: 'how does education change society?' and 'which social structures form the basis for the persistent vulnerabilities people are exposed to?' The main question I will try to answer is: 'How are development and poverty interrelated and what other factors are involved?' The answer will be given from an emic view, which means that I tried to give the most objective image of the worldview of the research population on the subject of development and poverty.

Poverty: a burden of all

*'I'm sitting in the grass in front of the school with Rose, a twenty-one year old girl, who is telling me about her life in the past. 'When my parents died, our grandparents took care of us, they didn't treat us well. The rest of the family thought we only wanted to get advantage out of them, they yelled at us and ignored us. That's when my sister got in the trouble of marriage. She has two children now and is living in poor circumstances. I don't go to visit her often, because I feel pity for her. Every time I see her she tells me to study hard so I one day I can take care of her and her children and make their life better.'*⁹

Poverty is surrounding students in all facets of life. The example of Rose shows that she has to think about her responsibilities for herself and others which are related to development and foremost to escaping poverty. Her example is not eccentric, as all the students I have spoken to are concerned about poverty related issues, but most importantly it shows that poverty is a shared burden, based on social relationships. Green (2006) is talking about the local elites, governments and organisations that make the poor powerless by practicing power over them, but on a smaller scale, the students feel pressure from parents, siblings and villagers too, to create a way out of poverty. Social expectations or responsibilities put pressure on family members as there is a culture of family responsibility. Lloyd & Gage-Brandon (1994) found in Ghana that older siblings are taking over responsibility of the parents to take care of their younger siblings, the same system is found in Malawi, as is shown by the above example of Rose. It means that everybody in the family has the responsibility to share their means with the rest of

⁹ Interview with Rose at the 25th of April 2014

the family. Mary explains to me that it is hard for someone who received education to develop him- or herself as he or she has to take care of the other family members who are poor. The result is that the little benefit someone has when he or she is educated and gets a job, is shared with the whole family and leaves them again with almost nothing. The pressure of social responsibility shows that poverty is indeed not only about economic welfare as economists as Sen (1981) are pleading for, but it is also depending on social relationships where anthropologists like Green (2006) are standing for.

The idea of social responsibility is put forward more often by students during conversations as they feel obliged to pay their parents back for their investments in school fees. In a group conversation John says that students are not allowed to fail in class. He explains: *'because we are poor, in Malawi it is like, when a son or a child is educated, we have the duty to take care of the parents. So if we fail we cannot help them, when they are giving us money, they expect us to help them'*¹⁰. The quote shows the cultural layer that determines the expectations of children in a context of poverty, just like Bastiaensen et al. (2005) are saying; the presence of a cultural layer which determines social norms, also determines the expectations people have from others. Expectations in a context of poverty should therefore be placed in a holistic framework, through which the social connections can be explained. In the same conversation John also says that the parents expect too much of the students as it is hard to make the expectations come true, due to lack of employment opportunities. The students identify lack of employment one by one as the biggest concern. Ronald explains: *'Imagine, you are spending a lot of money here, we are staying here for two years here, then we are going back home again, you should be staying home again, it is a big worry to us, we will feel like we have just wasted our time. So we need employment as soon as we are finished with this school, so our school fees can be recovered'*¹¹. John adds that he is scared that if he does not get a job, his parents will tell him to leave the house, as he has nothing to provide them with. Again the social pressure students like John are expressing, is coming from a cultural background of social responsibility. Besides the lack of jobs, access to a job is depending on social networks, as Sharon, one of the alumni emphasizes. She says that she experienced that without friends or relatives working in a company, it is very hard to get a job¹². This is supporting the statement of Chant and Jones (2006) that employment is a matter of 'know who' and not 'know how'. In the case of Malawi it involves a complex network of mostly familial, but also ethnic and religious contacts which determine your access to the employment market.

¹⁰ Group discussion with CD1 class at the 19th of March 2014

¹¹ Group discussion with CD1 class at the 19th of March 2014

¹² Interview with Sharon at the 1st of April 2014

The social pressure and the general poor circumstances in the country result in insecurity amongst the students. The cultural layer of social responsibilities has its effects on the coping strategies of the students. Lisa says that people are trapped in poverty because of their lack of self esteem. Lisa: *'People are looking down on themselves because they are afraid they cannot manage to do something big, including myself.'*¹³ Here again the cultural layer is shown, which is the foundation of the regulation of society on which people base their social identities and perceptions about what is possible, normal and valuable in life (Bastiaensen et al. 2005:980). The process that is shown here is that students feel like there is a lot of pressure on them to perform well and achieve good results. Because of the pressure students start feeling insecure which has a consequence that they will feel like they cannot live up to the expectations people have from them. The possibility for them to escape out of poverty is depending on the social networks they are having, as these networks are giving them opportunities to find a job, but also constraints, as people expect them to share the burden of poverty. Poverty therefore is not only a consequence of the lack of economic welfare, a static situation in which an individual is in, as is believed in the contemporary debate. Poverty is part of a process, which finds its basics in the cultural layer of social expectations and responsibilities and has its consequences on the way students feel about their lives, as performing well is priority number one.

Food insecurity

Continuing on the idea that poverty is not a consequence of not having economic means to overcome it, but a result of social relations (Green 2006), students often subscribe food insecurity to mismanagement of organizations and cultural behavior. The way the students see it, the people in control, like the chiefs, the government, the organizations, they are having power over the poor, as the poor are depending on aid which they decide upon. An example of how the poor are powerless in unfair processes is given by Ruth, who explains to me that the government distributes coupons for cheap fertilizers to the chiefs, who are responsible to give the coupons to the people who need it the most. The chief however gives the coupon to the ones he wants. Ruth says: *'I can go there when I am rich and say; 'oh chief, I can give you this, this, this and this, so give me at least five coupons'. So the chief will be familiar with that. So they can write different names for one person and give them maybe five coupons. Thereafter they get something from this person'*¹⁴. This example shows the powerlessness students experience when they are trying to find a way out of poverty, as access to fertilizer coupons for instance are depending on the social relationships one has. Without having networks and economic means, it is hard to make things change.

¹³ Group discussion with CD1 class at the 19th of March 2014

¹⁴ Interview with Ruth at the 13th of March 2014

Sometimes food insecurity is hard for students to cope with. One of the strategies the students have experienced themselves is that parents would get them out of school in order to have enough money to provide the family with food. Mary says about this subject: *'We have been hungry at home too. Sometimes we eat only once a day, because food became too expensive or it was simply not available. During these periods my parents had to choose: send a child to school and eat less, or feed the family'*¹⁵. This quote shows the considerations people have to make on a regular basis about food, education and especially, how to escape poverty. It underscores the idea of Haile (2005) who argues that in a period of food insecurity, it is hard to maintain sustainable economic activities. She states that households in the absence of functioning safety nets and rural financial mechanisms will use short term strategies that ensure meeting the immediate food requirements of their families (Haile 2005).

However, only concluding that students are indeed facing food insecurity because of the lack of resources is not enough. During the fieldwork students explained to me why they are facing this insecurity and how they cope with it. The first reason is already named, as corruption of organisations and other people who are influential on the area of food security is seen as a big problem amongst the students.

The second reason according to the students is that people have wrong cultural habits. As said before, not much anthropological research has been done into the subject of food security, although it gives insights in the social relationships that influence the access people have to food, and it shows how people cope with food insecurity. During class meetings it was often said that during and after harvest season, many people started to celebrate and use food as an instrument to do that. For example circumcision with boys is done after the harvest season. *'When a child has grown, they take them to a certain place where they do the circumcision. Thereafter, the boy is coming out of that house where they celebrate. Then the family cooks a lot of food even buy new clothes and invite friends and relatives, they use a lot of resources, that is one way (of being food insecure)'*¹⁶, explains Ronald. Using plenty of food at the beginning of the harvest season will result in a lack of food at the end of the year, as people are not sparing the food so they can use it throughout the whole year. This will lead to food insecurity, but also to poverty, as food is also the instrument for people to obtain money to buy other basic needs with. Besides food is also the way to please ancestors. George explains: *'if there is drought, some people may say that the ancestors are angry, so we should prepare some other food for them so that they will be happy. They destroy, plenty, plenty of food'*¹⁷. Preparing food in already dry periods of the year means that harvest season is not yet to come, as harvest season follows after the rain

¹⁵ Interview with Mary at the 30th of March 2014

¹⁶ Group discussion at the 19th of March 2014

¹⁷ Group discussion with the CD1 class at the 19th of March 2014

season. This means that the general cultural superstition leads to even more food insecurity. Both of the examples underscore the importance of understanding local cultural dynamics before searching for explanations of food insecurity, as cultural layers are playing a big role in why food security is taking place. Not only does the holistic framework give insights on habits that enforce food insecurity, it also reveals coping strategies.

The third reason why food insecurity is happening according to the students is because people are lacking knowledge. During a group discussion students explain to me that they feel like people are facing food insecurity because they are lacking knowledge and therefore they are not able to manage their resources properly. Brian explains this to me during a conversation: *'Because of ignorance here in Malawi most people are quite poor. Maybe this man has up to 100.000 kwacha (pointing to his neighbour), but because he is ignorant he does not know how to use his money properly, maybe he misuses his money for drinking, smoking, going to prostitutes. So because he is ignorant, he does not think about his future'*¹⁸. This quote shows how Brian, and many other students, feels about people in the villages who are uneducated. He links the lack of education to being poor, because he believes, just like many others, that people do not know how to improve their livelihood circumstances. Because of this ignorance, and also because of the feeling that things won't get any better anyway, people simply use their resources for their own short term benefit. Brian also says in his statement that education or knowledge offers the skills to combat poverty. The way students cope with food insecurity is thus by taking action and get education. By receiving education the students believe they get the knowledge and skills to overcome food security. On a morning when I came into class, I heard Mary saying: *'I have two goals on this compass: the first one is to eat, the second one is to get education'*. Food security is part of the students' lives, education is a coping strategy, a means to become food secure. The students feel different and act different than others because of their education. Michael tells me during a conversation that he believes Malawian people don't have goals in their lives, once they have money they want to enjoy themselves by drinking beer in the expensive lodges, instead of facing their problems and come up with solutions¹⁹. Michael shows with this example that food insecurity is not only a result of not having the economic means to overcome it as Sen (1981) is arguing, but, food security, just like poverty, is about hope, about social pressure, about knowledge and most of all about power.

Why the country is not developing

Students feel like they are trapped in poverty. Although they are feeling lucky that they have access to education, education won't bring them a good future. Even if they have knowledge, it is

¹⁸ Group discussion with Agriculture class at the 13th of March 2014

¹⁹ Interview with Michael at the 28th of March 2014

still hard to find a job. Even if there is a vacancy, you still have to have the right connections or enough money to get the job. And even if you get the job, you still have to share your resources, with many family members. Although some scientists (Dei 1998, Diawara 2000 and Crossley & Holmes 2010) argue that education systems in developing countries are not facilitating development because they aren't adapted to the local systems, many students are grateful for the education they are receiving. Mary tells me that she is thankful to the British government for sending British learning books and other materials. She says that if Malawian children would have received education in English, the country would be the poorest country in the world. This is in contrast with the assumptions of Dei (1998) Crossley and Holmes (2010) and Diawara (2000) who are arguing that the Western system of education fails to reach its aims in African countries because of the lack of adjustment. But if it is not the form of education that is blocking development, than what is?

The following vignette shows my first experience with the dissatisfactions of the students.

*'On a morning in February I'm sitting with some students of CD1 in class. Only the girls are around, although it is past eight already. At once students come walking down from the hostels towards the school hall (which is next to our classroom). The girls jump up and start talking: 'we should go and support the guys, come on, it has started!' We run out of class and start asking the boys what is going on. They tell us they started a demonstration against the bad circumstances they are put in. Carol stands next to me and tells me I don't need to be afraid, the boys are angry; they are put out of their hostel to make room for new students while they have exams in less than a month she tells me. Another moment we are standing at the sports field, where Ronald comes at me and explains that the students are writing a letter, they demand more teachers, less practical work, more facilities like books, computers, access to internet, light bulbs in the classes and proper hostels. Then they start walking a march to the district commissioner, to tell him about the circumstances they are living in.'*²⁰

As the economist Tilak (2001) describes in his essay, there are many practical obstacles that stand in the way of effective education. The students feel like they are not taken seriously by the school staff and therefore search for some listening ears on a higher level. In the end they want to receive the best level of education they can get, as that is their chance to receive the knowledge they need to have to combat poverty. Thus the action they undertake to change their situation of poverty, is improving their education level, as that is the instrument they have access to. In one of the first weeks of the fieldwork, the students put up a demonstration, as described above, because they felt the circumstances at school became unbearable. The students

²⁰ Participant observation on the 14th of February

assemble and first start to march around the school. The incentive for the march is the fact that fifty new students are coming to the complex, while students are already sleeping with two in one bed. Besides this problem, one of the students explains to me that there already is a lack of teachers, and now that these new students are coming, students are afraid they will pay school fees for nothing. The students also are obliged to do daily tasks like working on the field, while the students feel like there is not enough time to study. The student tells me that it is not hard to find new teachers in Malawi; it is just that the salaries the school wants to pay are too low. Brian tells me during a conversation about his feelings about the education at school: *'The administration fails to provide resource materials like books; we need some instruments that can help us to learn practically. Of course there are novels, but that is not clear information, it is just for entertainment. So that is another issue, that does not encourage our education because you know students like us, we need books, because we do not have the money to buy laptops so we are depending on hard copies'*²¹. The concerns of Brian illustrate the lack of quality that the students are experiencing. They are afraid that their only way to create a way out of poverty, namely through education, will become an investment in nothing.

There are also external factors that decide upon the development of the country. As said before, in Malawi, aid organizations are common. Local elites and governments decide upon which organization is working with whom and for which price, as organizations are only having access to 'the people' when the chief, the Minister of Parliament or someone else with power, allows the organization to start the project. The power these elites have works two sided, on the one hand, organization fail to understand the social and cultural mechanisms that are the basis of local power distribution systems as Binns et al. (1997) argue. On the other hand, the elites receive power over the people because of their high status in projects through which they can regulate access to the means projects are offering, the same process as Bastiaensen et al. (2005) found in Cameroon. One of the teachers explains the problem of development in Malawi during class as follows: *'People in the communities are expecting handouts from the NGO in exchange for cooperation. In addition to that, there is a lot of corruption, people do not benefit from the projects, because there are only a few people who get a grip on the money. Ask yourself, how many NGO's are here in Chiradzulu district, for more than ten years they are working on projects. Do you see things improving? No because a lot of money stays in the hands of the wrong people. Ngo's are also facing the problem of vandalism and theft, for instance parts of boreholes are stolen'*²². The teacher's quote shows that indeed power positions determine the effectiveness of aid projects, besides the NGO's are facing many more problems like not understanding local dynamics. Because of the misunderstanding, people are able to steal from them, expect the NGO's to give them things

²¹ Groups discussion with the Agriculture class on the 13th of March

²² Class meeting on the 21st of March

instead of cooperating etc. Besides, NGO's are not always helping the right people, as Mary says that she could use some help too, facing financial problems to pay the school fees, but the organisations are only helping the very poor. This creates a dependency problem under the poorest people which leads to a halt of development. Rose explains: *'Many poor people are depending on organizations. They don't like to work hard and sweat; they feel like it is normal that organisations are taking care of them. Take for example the students here at school, they get a scholarship and of course it is good that they are able to go to school, but it also makes them lazy. They feel like they can play their poor act everywhere and then they will be helped by the organisations. Girls in the villages are doing the same, they wait until the organisations come around; in the meanwhile they stay uneducated and get many children. This leads to a lot of pressure on the resources this country has, as it creates overpopulation but also the government cannot use the money for developmental goals'*²³. The concerns of Rose illustrate the fact that development is not only about improving economic welfare, as is the consensus now, but development is also about understanding the implications of a project. As Rose explains, NGO's are almost seen as 'wrong' organisations because they make people poor. Thus simply concluding that economic welfare should be stimulated as Sen (1981) argues or that the billions of dollars going to African countries do not have the desired effect because of corruption is not enough, which is the argument of Moyo (2009) why development is not taking place, although corruption is without a doubt part of the problem.

The way students experience it, the NGO's are not working effectively as they are primarily focusing on their own goals, instead of searching for the needs the local people have. The following quote of John shows that students feel like their voice does not matter in NGO programs: *'The thing is that the donors who are giving us the money, they give us a project we have to do. They don't allow us to choose. They give us the money. We want you to build a school, but the problem is we don't have a hospital; still they will let us build a school'*²⁴. This quote shows that the students feel like they are not taken seriously or have a choice in the matter. Besides students experience that NGO's also try to change the norms and values the Malawian country has. During a group discussion the students say that it is unfair that donors are putting their aims above the needs of the people, for instance saying that they will give funding, if the Malawian government will allow homosexuality. George's reaction is: *'We don't need homosexuality'*²⁵. The reaction is given on the fact that many organisations now demand the allowance of homosexuality, while that is against 'God's nature', according to the students. These feelings show that students do not always feel like cooperating with projects as they do not listen to the locals, although the project

²³ Interview with Rose on the 25th of March

²⁴ Group discussion with the CD1 class on the 19th of March

²⁵ Group discussion with the CD1 class on the 19th of March

leaders argue that they are there to help them. The position of the students in this aid process is that although they argue that NGO's are often focusing on the wrong aims, are misunderstanding the context in which they are working and are helping the wrong people, they feel like they should be targeted by development projects. They are arguing NGO's should invest in them as they are facing struggles in paying school fees, receiving high quality education and develop themselves. Problems could be solved by investing in them, as will be explained in the last paragraph.

Social structures and the stagnation of development

From the view of the students, corruption indeed plays a big role in the stagnation of development, but there is more. They also feel like they are not able to make a change in the country, as they are just students. Ronald shows a clear consideration of his contribution to development for instance: *'I think, us, the youth of today, we can only create development by participating in small projects that are happening in our community. We don't have the capabilities, we don't have money and we don't have anything so it is very difficult'*²⁶. Thus although the students experience a lack of agency, they do take action to create development. Their action is following education and afterwards share the knowledge with their relatives and community members. But as argued before, lack of self-esteem also plays a great part in the lives of the students, as they feel that they cannot make a difference in the future, although there is much pressure on them to make change happen. Rose explains to me that many students do not feel like they have the power to change anything in their lives²⁷. The government for instance declares the youth as the leaders of tomorrow. The students, however, feel different about that statement. As Ronald is singing in his rap²⁸, he feels like the government is lying to him by telling him that he, part of the youth, can make a difference while in practice, the older generation stays in control. During a conversation with a few students, it comes forward that students feel like there should be more recognition of the capabilities of the youth. If organisations and Malawians want to bring about change, they will have to put more emphasis on the important role that the youth can play. As a new generation, they are the ones who can change ruling social structures. As Ronald puts it: *'These old people only bring more of the same, that won't bring about development'*²⁹. Ronald shows that development needs new ideas, which means that for these students development is not only about economic welfare but also about self-development and political recognition. Mary talks about the older people who are in the age of retiring but stay seated in their jobs. This has as a result that no jobs are available for the young people who

²⁶ Group discussion with the CD1 class on the 19th of March

²⁷ Interview with Rose on the 25th of March 2014

²⁸ Addition 1

²⁹ Group discussion with the CD1 class on the 19th of March 2014

graduate, who will try to earn money by prostitution for instance³⁰. In short, social and cultural structures are stagnating development in different ways. By putting more emphasis on the importance of understanding this process of the influence of social and cultural relationships on development, more insight will be present about the role development plays in the lives of the Malawian youth who are struggling to bring about change.

A bright full future: what does bring about change?

According to the students there are many concerns and constraints that stagnate development in Malawi, nonetheless there must be some hope to be found that development will come around. The hope for change is found in the way students feel like they need to do things differently than their parents. One main aspect in life in which the students differ from their parents is that the students are following education. With their background, education is the best option one can choose to try to improve livelihood circumstances. One of the main problems at home is that parents are not able to manage money in- and outflows, which has lack of food, clothes and other basic needs as a consequence. Michael tells me about his family at home and how he will change the behaviour he is used to it in the future: *'I will spend the money I have on purposes that I thought of with my own knowledge. I will not use the money to drink beer; I will use it for good purposes. I will use the money only for necessary activities. In my family, the money was spent in the wrong way. My father was not working; he was a farmer while my mum was working as a nurse. My father, as head of the family, decided where the money would be spend on. He made the decisions. So when my mum received money from her job, she had to give it to my dad and he took the money to go out and drink beer or to have sexual contact with other women. He also bought unnecessary materials sometimes'*³¹. This quote of Michael illustrates the frustration of students about assets being spilled and the ignorance of people. They see money and other assets as a way to improve their education and therefore improve livelihood circumstances, while the older generation is simply ignoring the fact that there is a way to improvement. Thus by using the assets they have to receive education, the students feel like they matter, as they have the means to help people surrounding them.

According to the students, development will not come around while waiting. They feel like the only way the environment they are living in will change is by creating development themselves, thus starting small and locally. They say that it is important for them to be actively involved with development projects in their own villages. Although the role they describe themselves is quite humble, they do see themselves as the facilitators of development. When I ask Mary about her idea of development, she says: *'You know the donors should go straight to the*

³⁰ Interview with Mary on the 27th of March 2014

³¹ Interview with Michael on the 28th of March 2014

youth. For example they should come here to the school and talk to one or two students of every class. They can give us an amount to spend and we will use it properly'³². Thus the students feel like the only way development will be achieved is by taking action themselves, as they are responsible too. Paula feels like she needs to be a role model for the children in her village, where there is no electricity, no schools and no proper houses. By showing these children the advantages of education, thus receiving knowledge, improving agriculture and hopefully getting a better job, they will be motivated to go search for access to education too. Now these children are just staying at home, waiting until some organisation comes around³³. Having a role model is exactly what Michael also identifies as missing, as most people from villages who get rich disappear to the cities, where life is good. As a consequence nobody in the village sees the benefits one can get from receiving education. Students see education not only as a mean for themselves to improve their lives; they can also be an example for others which will improve the lives of others too. So far the action students undertake to stimulate development is by following education, but their aim is to take more action in the future to improve livelihood circumstances, not only for themselves but also for others.

The students don't feel like they are the only ones who can do something to create development. However, the lack of trust in the government is showing through the solutions as Michael says that: *'Every Malawian is responsible for development; people need to participate in the development projects that are available in their communities. If they do that, they can make it. We cannot rely on the higher classes to create development. They are only stealing money from the country instead of developing it'*³⁴. This quote shows a feeling of distrust and having no support from the actors that should create development like the government and NGO's. This sentiment is a general feeling amongst the students. Nonetheless, they keep hope that a new government will put a halt to corruption and start investing in infrastructure, education and businesses, because without the availability of jobs, students can study as much as they want, but there are not enough employment places, which means that poverty will strike again. Mary sees potential in the NGO's who are investing in youth clubs and gatherings, which leads, according to her, to development. Although, she adds, that the youth cannot mobilise development themselves as they need the resources of the NGO's to work out their solutions³⁵.

To conclude this section it is important to understand that these students are subject to a world full of corruption and inequality. They grow up in a surrounding of poverty, where all the hope is set on the one or two children who receive education who are supposed to 'give back' the

³² Interview with Mary on the 27th of March 2014

³³ Interview with Paula on the 22nd of March 2014

³⁴ Interview with Michael on the 28th of March 2014

³⁵ Interview with Mary on the 27th of March 2014

investments the parents did in their children (Chant & Jones 2005). There are dreams to live up to, but the reality makes it hard to make these dreams come true. As Ronald puts it in his song³⁶ the youth feels the pressure of becoming something and make a difference, as they are the leaders of tomorrow. But how can they become the leaders of tomorrow when they are being subjected to lies and when there is no place in society for the ambitious youth? Unemployment rates are high, investments in education results only in losses as there is no place for the educated in Malawi. Still there is some hope present under the students as they get taught to be creative and create development by themselves. When nobody is there to offer them a hand, they know that the only way to change something is by being entrepreneurs themselves, just as Awogbenle and Iwuamdi (2010) found in their research. They are being the change themselves by undertaking action. For now it's 'only' the action of following education, but later on, they will expand their knowledge, be a role model and create a better future for themselves and their relatives.

³⁶ Addition 1

Freedom through education

Empirical chapter³⁷

Throughout time anthropologists have added social and cultural issues to the dimensions of poverty and development (Kottak 2011). Escobar (1991) stated that anthropologists emphasized that local cultures are an important part of understanding development problems. Abdulai and Crolerees (2001) found that geographic location influences ones poverty situation and Green (2006) shows us that poverty is not just about economic assets but more about social relations and power divisions. With these anthropological views the meaning of poverty and development is changed. In the following chapter I will show the views of the technical students from the vocational school on poverty and development and how they try to become free of poverty. This will be outlined in themes as income security and education. Creating more income security is a major challenge for many of the students. Living in Malawi for them is about vulnerability and uncertainty, as good jobs are hard to find and poverty keeps coming in, which is also found by Devereux (2001). I will discuss how the students try to solve these problems, mainly through the means of following education at the vocational school. Problems and solutions given by the students and dealing with social responsibility, like taking care of one's family, will be shown. At the end the question 'who is responsible for development?' will be answered and the students show what they do to establish a better future in Malawi.

As this is a complementary research, this chapter will differ from the previous empirical chapter in that its research population and focus is different. Where Kiki in the previous chapter focused on food security, with Agricultural and Community and Rural Development students as her research population, in this chapter I will focus on income security with technical students as my research population. With this focus on income security I show that being income secure is about social relations and not only about your education level. Income insecurity means vulnerability and unpredictability and is intertwined with problems around development and poverty. With technical students as research population I add the importance of learning practical skills because this can mean for the students that they have a small step forwards towards a life without any poverty. These skills mean for them that they at least can do something to escape poverty, even though they have to start very small. Besides this new information, there is also some overlap in the two chapters, but this will make it possible to analyze parallels in the collected data.

³⁷ This chapter is written by Leanne

The influence of poverty

Living in poverty has its consequences for the students at the vocational school for it has a big influence on the meaning they give to life and to the chances they have in life. The following sketch gives an insight in this influence of poverty as it describes a visit to the home village of one of the students:

After a small walk we arrive at her village. The houses stand close to each other and are small and simple, build of stones. The roofs are made with wood and straw. Some chickens walk around and some children are playing in the cornfields. A couple of older women are sitting in the shadow of the houses, one of them is making a fire and it looks like she's going to cook something. Roza introduces me to two ladies, her mother and grandmother. Both don't speak English very well so we just smile friendly at each other. Then we enter her house. It's very dark inside but it's nice and cool. They have a carpet on the ground to sit on, a small table with some food products, and the room is separated with a curtain that divides the living area from the sleeping area. The house doesn't have any electricity, that's very rare in these villages, and to get water they walk ten minutes to the closest borehole. We sit down on the carpet and talk about her living situation. Her dad left them and took all the money they possessed so they had to move away from the city to the countryside. Her mom doesn't have any work, her little sister goes to preschool and they have to take care of their grandmother too. Her brother has a job so he pays for her school tuition. Her family has big expectations of her because she can follow some education so she must be the one to take care of them in the future³⁸.

Powerlessness

According to Sen (1981) poverty is defined by access and entitlements: the poor are poor because they don't have access to political power, and therefore they don't have access to economic growth. When we take this theory and reflect on the lives of the students, a clear correlation exists. As in the story above, Roza and her family had to move to the countryside because they didn't have the money anymore to live in the city. Now they miss out on opportunities of finding a job, so they miss out on opportunities to earn some money. It's a vicious circle, one very hard to get out of. This story shows that the context is also of influence on the meaning of poverty. Roza tells me that: *'We are not that poor. We have my brother to loan me some money, and we have enough food, although it is much of the same, most of the times. And we have a house and some small clothes'*³⁹. At the same time she says she misses the time she still lived in the city with her dad still by her side. *'When we lived in the city we had a bigger house and*

³⁸ Participant observation and informal conversation with Roza on the 8th of March 2014

³⁹ Interview with Roza on the 8th of March 2014

*I could listen to music, watch some movies and have fun in my free time. Now I'm bored or I have to help out my mom when I'm not at school'*⁴⁰. This shows that she constantly experiences poverty, but at different levels at different stages in her life. It is like Abdulai and Crolerees (2001) show with their study in Mali. They found out that in a poor society with agriculture as the main form of income, the place where you live influences your living standards. Those who lived closer to a local market or near a city had more income variations and therefore more change at establishing a better life. Lilly, a student of the Salon and Hairdressing class explains that poverty at the countryside can be different then poverty in the city: *'In rural areas you're rich when you have a bicycle; in the cities you are rich when you have a car'*⁴¹. Mark, a student from the fundamental class, tells about the people at the countryside: *'They don't have enough social services, no food, no clothes, so it's quite some things that pull them down. So mostly they don't go to schools, they tend to get married so early, they invite themselves in some bad behaviors like drinking because maybe they are desperate. They don't understand life'*⁴². This because people in the villages just don't have access to things that could improve their living situation, and break with poverty. He considers himself lucky to have the opportunity to go to the vocational school.

Besides that poverty means not having access to economical sources, it's also about social relations (Green 2006). It's about the people you know, and for the poor, it's especially about the people you don't know, that determine your position and possibilities to find a way out of poverty. Hanna, a student from the Salon and Hairdressing class, has a father with a low status job and a mother who is unemployed. They live in a township and their social status is low because her father does low paid work and they live in a small house. Hanna calls herself lucky that she got sponsored by an NGO and now has the opportunity to follow vocational education, but after that, jobs are still difficult to find because she doesn't have the right connections.

Cultural layer of poverty

Besides economical and social meanings of poverty there is also a cultural aspect that influences the thinking about poverty of the students. Adrienne, a student from the Salon and Hairdressing class, tells me in an interview that *'having many children can mean that one is poor. Not only because taking care of many children is expensive, but also because it's a traditional cultural believe that one should have many children. Family planning is taught at schools, but the poorest cannot afford to go there'*⁴³. Here poverty is embedded in a cultural system. Bastiaensen et al. (2005) elaborate on the fact that there is a cultural layer present that is part of the regulation of society. It's the base of people's social identities and their norms and values. The fieldwork

⁴⁰ Interview with Roza on the 8th of March 2014

⁴¹ Interview with Lilly on the 28th of March 2014

⁴² Informal conversation with Mark on the 26th of February 2014

⁴³ Interview with Adrienne on the 26th of March 2014

shows, in line with this theory that it is not relevant to come up with a major idea about what poverty precisely is, but that the most important element of poverty is that it is defined by its context and the social players involved. What poverty means for the youths among the vocational school means differs. Like dealing with poverty for Mark, who has lost both his parents and gets supported by an organization to pay for his school fees, means: *'I need to learn some skills because I need to learn how to earn some money and take care of myself. Nobody else will take care of my basic needs, it's just me'*⁴⁴. Dealing with poverty for Esther, a student from the Salon and Hairdressing class, has a totally different meaning: *'my parents have some money so they can pay for my tuition, but that's a big investment for them. That's why they expect me to do well in school and find a good job. They pressure me and keep reminding me of my responsibility to take care of them and of my younger siblings'*⁴⁵. A lot of the students told the same story as Esther, with parents putting their children under pressure to succeed and take their responsibility. This last meaning of poverty doesn't come out of the blue as Lloyd and Gage-Brandon (1994) had similar results in the families they researched where the older sibling shared the economic responsibility with his or her parents over the younger siblings.

What's clear from all the stories of the students and the different theories in the theoretical framework is that poverty cannot be defined in one simple way. It's a complex problem, different for every single actor involved.

Constrains to development

To know about development and constraints to development it is important to experience the lives of the students with your own eyes and talk to them to hear out their opinions. In this I follow Clifford Geertz who stated that the most important feature of development aid is the local knowledge (Fisher 1997). Like poverty, development is a multilayered concept in which different scientist give different meanings to development. In this paragraph, it's not important which definition would be the best, it's about what the students see as constrains to development, both at the national level, as at the personal level. These constrains are relevant to the students because these are at the same time obstacles for the students in their search to a life without poverty.

Corruption

Okafor (2011), who did a field study in Nigeria, identifies corruption as the problem that has robbed the country of establishing a stable economic position. These corruptions had cost the country billions of dollars and robbed the youth of any chance of establishing a good future

⁴⁴ Interview with Mark on the 26th of March 2014

⁴⁵ Interview with Esther on the 24th of March 2014

(Okafar 2011:362-365). This is confirmed by the students in Malawi who identify corruptions as the first constrain to development. This corruption causes directly and indirectly many problems for the students. It begins with corruption at the national level. Ben, an accountancy student explains to me: *'It is a very good game, politics, but players who are playing politics in Malawi are dirty players of which the game is not good. At times, this people they just go into politics for earning money, not for the sake of the citizens'*⁴⁶. Many students feel like Ben and lost faith in the government. Famous in Malawi is the cash gate scandal whereby politics, including the president, stole millions of kwachas (the local currency) from the national reserve. The students feel like this money is wasted and should have been invested in them, in the youth and education. This is in line with Dambisa Moyo (2009), who wrote that corrupt governments are one of the biggest reasons why aid in Africa doesn't have the desired effect and should therefore stop. In Malawi most political actors only want to enrich themselves, so these moneys, which could have been used to support the poor, are now in the hands of the already richest people of the country. Besides this money being wasted the corruption also causes opportunity problems because old men dominate the political area, and younger people don't stand a chance of accessing. They want to, but they don't have a say in how to develop the country. This corruption makes them feel powerless and discouraged. Nevertheless it's important to create your own vision, Lilly argues: *'We should not be carried away by those politicians and think for ourselves'*⁴⁷.

Then there is corruption at the regional and local level which causes problems with development aid. These corruptions directly affect the students. Some of them are sponsored by NGO's for which they are very grateful. Like the example of Botswana in the theoretical framework, this is a positive outcome of donor aid and some prove that NGO's can help bring about change. Unfortunately, donor aid effectiveness isn't flawless. As it also depends on the local context, corruption happens again. Everything in villages goes through the chief, including aid from NGO's. Her, at the receiving side of the aid, the problems arise of corruption as the chief most of the times only benefits those close to him. Hanna tells: *'Because of our low status we had no connections with the chief in our villages so every time he had something to share, we didn't get any'*⁴⁸. It is as Green (2006) wrote that poverty is about power over the poor and powerlessness, and Hanna and her family are definitely powerless. Bräutigam and Knack (2004) underscore this in their article about development aid in Sub-Saharan African countries, where they found that the aid effectiveness depends on the local context.

⁴⁶ Informal conversation with Ben on the 8th of March 2014

⁴⁷ Interview with Lilly on the 10th of March 2014

⁴⁸ Interview with Hanna on the 12th of March

Income insecurity and educational problems

Creating more income security forms another major problem for the students at the vocational school. Education can be helpful to create a more stable income but there are several problems that accompany the issue of education for the students. A selection of the students is being sponsored, another selection does pay for the tuition, but their families have low paid jobs, otherwise they would have gone to a better school, to follow higher education. Here, in the problem of poverty, lies the problem of following education. As Tilak (2001) shows in the theoretical framework that poverty in households keeps many children of school and receiving knowledge which can make them establish more income security in the future. The students going to the vocational school are most of the times the lucky ones from the family, but with this come expectations and responsibilities, which I will talk further about in the next paragraph.

Another problem the students have with the education they get is the low quality it has. The students at the vocational school constantly complain about this and not without a reason. The following story will illustrate this:

It's a quarter to nine in the morning on a Wednesday. I'm waiting in the Salon and Hairdressing classroom for the teacher. It's warm and the room is small. Since last week thirteen new girls joined the class, creating a total account of twenty eight students in one class. Everybody has to share a chair because there's not enough space. The girls are talking loudly together while they wait, and I start a conversation with Esther. Soon, the subject comes again on complains the students have. She tells me about the low quality food (much of the same), the low quality classes (we always have to practice), the overfull housing arrangements (sleeping with two persons in one bed) and the commitment of the teachers (always late and little knowledge). While we talk and wait, her last point is confirmed: half an hour late the teacher finally arrives to start the class, as is her second point, because her group has to go outside and practice for themselves while the teachers teaches the newest group some theory.⁴⁹

This vignette underscores what Tilak (2001) and Buchmann & Hannum (2001) state: practical problems are main reasons for young people in Malawi not to go to school or to downsize the quality of education. Mark confirms: *'The level of education at vocational schools is miserable'*⁵⁰. Students see these problems around them and it affects them; they get discouraged. Ben explains: *'We want a good future, but to get it we can only do it ourselves and that is hard'*⁵¹. To change the conditions on the vocational school they created a demonstration and marched to the

⁴⁹ Participant observation and informal conversation with Esther on the 26th of February 2014

⁵⁰ Informal conversation with Mark on the 11th of March 2014

⁵¹ Interview with Ben on the 24th of March 2014

head office with their complaints. There was some discussion, but in the end the students don't have much power and not much did change.

On top of this, solving the problem of finding a stable job to secure some income is not only about getting good education or having the perfect technical skills. Chant and Jones (2006) demonstrate with their study in Ghana that employment was frequently a matter of 'know who' and not 'know how. When it comes to creating more income security social status has a role to play. Esther explains: *'When your dad is the manager of a company, you know for sure you will get a job. You don't work hard, you have poor grades, and you still get that job because your dad doesn't want you to suffer. That's why we are suffering. We don't have people who are competent for the positions that they are holding'*⁵². For most students this means they are in a tough position because they don't have these social connections. For those who do find a job the rewards are discouraging. Ben, who is already 29 and has experience with working, tells: *'Most people in Malawi they get a job as means of security, improving their living standard. But when somebody is employed nothing is changing, they tend to wonder, what is it that happens with the money, not knowing that somebody is working from Monday to Sunday, but earning little'*⁵³. This means that most young people end up at badly paid jobs, just to earn some money. Lilly explains that you can mainly do small jobs, like farming, driving minibuses (the public transport in Malawi), carry luggage at airports, clean houses, sell second-hand items and go begging for money. This is not a strange development. The theory of Devereux (2001) that those who live in poor, uncertain contexts are forced to trade off short term consumption needs against longer-term economic strategies is applicable to many situations among these youths in Malawi.

Finally, students experience problems within the household. Many families have issues, like the first story about Roza already showed. Her father just abandoned them, taking all the money and left. Evelyn, one of the teachers at the school tells me: *'When my father got his pay-check, he would spend it all on beer and got angry with my mother. She got enough of it and left him but the money she had was scarce and it was difficult to take care of her four children. Now one of my brothers became like my father. He drinks and steals our money'*⁵⁴. This shows that problems within a family can form major barriers to development for the students. Others like Mark and Francesco don't even have parents anymore because of diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria, so they live with other relatives who also have to take care of their own children. These constraints, also identified by Bankole et al. (2004), are limiting the chances these students have in society. In the next paragraph I will discuss what ways they find to still develop their personal lives.

⁵² Interview with Esther on the 24th of March 2014

⁵³ Interview with Ben on the 22th of March 2014

⁵⁴ Interview with Evelyn on the 19th of March 2014

Solutions to development

'Who is responsible for development?' That's what I asked the students at the vocational school. This question mainly got two reactions: the government and/or the youths. The students all agree on the fact that the government has to improve their policies for health care, education and economic growth, in order to give Malawian youths a better chance in society.

But, as we've see, the government is corrupt, so the students think that they should take responsibility themselves. Marlisa, a student from the Textile and Design class, told me that *'many youths in Malawi are lazy. Malawi wouldn't be poor, Malawi isn't poor, the youths are just lazy. We at the vocational school, we have responsibilities to take care of our families'*⁵⁵. Lloyd and Gage-Brandon (1994) had similar results as in the families they researched the older sibling shared the economic responsibility with his or her parents over the younger siblings. So the students do have the responsibility not to be lazy and take care of their families. This responsibility can be though and holding students back in developing themselves because every little thing they earn must be shared with family, but at the same time it's culturally obliged and social to take care of the parents and siblings. Below I will discuss the solutions the students came up with that are important to them, and show what actions they take in trying to get ahead in Malawian society by following training at a vocational school.

Income security through education

*'Some companies will maybe ask for somebody with three of four years of experience, but when you've been to this well recognized school they will consider hiring you. You also have the chance of acquiring loans from the bank. They only fund young people who are graduating this school'. (Samuel). It's Monday morning and the students are sitting in the dining hall, listening to a speech from the head of the school. I'm sitting between them. Samuel goes on about the great opportunity that the students can go to this school and that they have to work hard. He continues: 'out of the skills one can create a business. Whatever course, think creative and start up your own business. Make a difference when you go back to your communities. Our country needs well trained technicians. The only way to development is to invest in vocational training. Create your own vision and create targets. You're the next entrepreneurs of Malawi.'*⁵⁶

The fragment above shows that students are constantly being motivated (or pressured) to be serious. They have to work hard and find a job/set up a business after succeeding school. Samuel views education as a facilitator of development, in line with Sen (1999) who says education expands freedoms in life and can help escaping poverty. While the students aren't always as

⁵⁵ Interview with Marlisa on the 15th of March 2014

⁵⁶ Participant observation during the morning gathering at the 26th of March 2014

positive as the principle is, they do believe in the value of education as facilitator of development. As Mark says: *'We need to develop ourselves because there are many people, mostly youths, who are just at home. If you do something with this people, maybe learn them some skills, they can become independent. With that spirit I think we can develop ourselves'*⁵⁷. That's why he works hard at school to accomplish a better life, it's his duty to do so, he explains.

Awogbenle and Iwuamdi (2010) show in their research that because of the lack of jobs in many African countries the youth use the entrepreneurship strategy more and more to create a better future for themselves. This process is also visible with the students at the vocational school. At the vocational school the theory lessons are simply miserable for the students of the technical classes. Their main learning objective is the obtaining of practical skills so one at last can 'do something'. Marlisa tells that this is how they can take their responsibility: by working hard at their classes and after that try to find a job or set up a business. This way, she wants to be an example for other youths.⁵⁸ Of course there are strings attached to this, like the students don't have the money to begin or they don't have the social access to get ahead, but they take every little bit of education they can get. Some education is always better than no education at all as this is their only chance of improving life. Farah, the teacher of the Salon and Hairdressing class, tells: *'When I follow education, I have the hope that someday and somewhere I'll have a good job, it's my plight to work hard'*⁵⁹. Education thus brings hope to people at the vocational school. Ben agrees with the value of education but for him it's about knowing how to handle money and learning to work hard. Other students are even more positive about the value of their followed education, in believing that it will create more income security. Adrienne tells me: *'What Malawi needs the most is education so youths can have self development and open up a business, a small one'*⁶⁰. She wants to open up her own salon in a big city. Start little and expand the business while she is earning money. Then she can have a good life and help her relatives by supporting them with monthly amounts of money. That's what she wants do to improve Malawi, in line with Awogbenle and Iwuamdi (2010). Francesco, a student from the fundamental class, takes this even a step further by arguing that *'education is the key to the countries prosperity and failure to offer education makes it very difficult for one to get rich'*⁶¹. He wants to open up his own shop and maybe, after receiving some money have his own company wherein he can hire other students so they too have a job. A small talk I had with an ex-student from the Salon and Hairdressing class proves that it is possible to open up a small shop. She did this in a township nearby the school. She's glad she had this opportunity that many of her peers didn't have, but to really

⁵⁷ Interview with Mark on the 20th of March 2014

⁵⁸ Informal conversation on the 27th of March 2014

⁵⁹ Interview with Farah on the 27th of March 2014

⁶⁰ Interview with Adrienne on the 26th of March 2014

⁶¹ Interview with Fransesco on the 19th of March 2014

escape poverty, you have to get higher education, she tells me.⁶² Her shop is small and it's still difficult to make it until the end of every month.

To improve education in Malawi the students think that following higher education should be made easier. They are thankful for the vocational trainings but it's not enough. Francesco: *'So as far as the six months course is concerned, I think it is not enough. I like to pursue to go further with my education; I would like to at least have a degree because just to have a certificate here in Malawi, it's not good enough. The people who are having certificates are many compared to the ones having diplomas or degrees. So for you to get a good job, it's not easy. Unless you maybe have somebody in that organization that can help you, but otherwise it's quite impossible.'*⁶³

Although there are many constraints, the students still have hope for the future and want to work hard. NGO's do help in villages and in providing education. The spreading of this aid to different sectors and places should be decided upon by local people who have knowledge of the social and cultural context and have knowledge of where the need is the hardest, like Binns, Hill and Nell (1997) argued. Ben explains: *'the only problem with some donations is what we call tide aid, whereby they give you the money but you have to use it in a certain sector. Yet, maybe in that sector things are just okay, while you have problems in another sector'*⁶⁴. When the students were to decide upon the aid then most of the money would go to the youth, education and to creating jobs.

A better future

The education the students get doesn't make them entirely free of poverty, but it does give them hope and the motive to not let their lives be defined by poverty. With the knowledge they have about dealing with money and family planning, and with their technical skills they have an advantage over other youths. These young people can be an example for others as they don't let poverty take away their spirit. They take their responsibility in creating development, now the government of Malawi and other citizens, have to that too. Like Mark, who is a huge fan of Bob Marley, said: *'there is a certain song: liberation of Africa. It is encouraging the African people to liberate themselves so that they are free. They have to develop a sense of development and work together. They have to feel free from poverty and we can only accomplish that in harmony with each other: one love.'*⁶⁵

⁶² Interview with Johanna on the 2nd of April 2014

⁶³ Interview with Francesco on the 19th of March 2014

⁶⁴ Interview with Ben on the 22th of March 2014

⁶⁵ Interview with Mark on the 20th of March 2014

The leaders of tomorrow

Conclusion

The aim of our research in Malawi was to understand how students perceive the world they are living in. It is a world full of inequality, lack of access to basic needs, corruption, powerlessness, development and aid programs and a spark of hope. Deriving from this situation we formulated the following main question: *'How do poverty and development correlate with each other in the lives of Malawian adolescents who are following education at a vocational school in Malawi?'* Our main findings are that the youths are using education as an instrument to stimulate development, since that is the only mean they have access to in order to change their situation in a surrounding of mistrust of the government and corruption. Besides, poverty is kept alive by social relationships that determine the access to escaping strategies.

We chose to execute this research amongst the youth of Malawi, and specifically youth that is receiving education, as they are the ones who are the 'changing' generation and who have a future ahead of them. In order to answer the main question we conducted a complementary research by splitting the research group in two. The value of complementary research is that we were able to compare the views of different research groups and therefore create a full understanding of the views and actions of the students at the vocational school. Leanne did research amongst the students who are following 'technical courses' and Kiki did research amongst the students who are following 'business courses'. The students themselves explain that the business courses are of a higher level and more theoretical, while the technical courses are meant for the students who want to receive practical skills. This has led to different perspectives. We also divided our themes in food-and income security. We focused on these two themes because food security and income security oppose a challenge for Malawian development. Kiki focused on food security and Leanne on income security. This research design leads to insights on how students differ or overlap in their visions on development, while living in a context of poverty. In our empirical chapters we have already linked the theories about development and poverty to our findings in the fieldwork. In the concluding remarks we will highlight the most important findings in order to answer the main question and show the discussion around the main themes and the contribution of anthropological insights.

Discussion and future recommendations

This anthropological research on Malawian youth and their ideas about development in a context of poverty, contributes to the current debate about the challenges of development (programs), by giving anthropological insights. Development and poverty received much attention from different scientific disciplines, but anthropological research into these themes

has stayed behind. Economists for instance, plead for the stimulation of economic welfare in order to create development in developing countries (Diawara 2000, Moyo, Sen 1981), through political involvement, modernization processes or putting a halt to corruption. Educational scientists have pleaded for the failure of education as an instrument for development as adaptation to the local context stayed behind (Crossley and Holmes 2010 and Dei 1998).

Although these insights are valuable for the understanding of development, these insights are incomplete. As the anthropologist Geertz (1997) argues, local knowledge is the most important feature of development aid. It means that the ideas and perspectives of the local people involved need to be the main focus of development research. This way development aid can fit better to the needs of the local. Thus anthropology focuses on economic development but it also adds social and cultural issues (Kottak 2011). This is exactly what Green (2006) does when she argues that poverty is not a static condition in which someone is captured, but it is considered to be a consequence of social relations and it is foremost about power and powerlessness (Green 2006). The poor are powerlessness as local and national elites, governments and development institutions have power over them to recognize and define them (Green 2006:8). Although Moyo (2009) argues that corruption is the main problem of the stagnation of development, her economic insight does not give an answer to why corruption is present. Only through ethnographic research the anthropologists can show a difference between what people say they do and what they actually do (Harris 2004).

In the future, more anthropological research should be done into the field of poverty, poverty eradication, development projects and especially the social relationships that create or maintain unequal access to resources. Although our research to these themes could be a starting point for other scientists, some critical notes must be placed. First, the research is done in English and not in Chichewa, which could have influenced the way students were able to express themselves. Nonetheless, we hope that we have shown that anthropological research is necessary to understand the social structures that underlie poverty. Besides as the youth are seen as the leaders of tomorrow, we also hope that it has become clear, that this generation has its own views and ideas about the future of the country, a generation whose voice is not often heard. Secondly, it is of importance to do long term research, since we experienced that there was too much information available to capture in ten weeks of fieldwork. Besides the story of poverty should be heard from different kinds of angles, from the unschooled who are subjected to the power of the elite, but also from the elite, who are afraid that if they won't push away the poor, they will be taken over by them. At least we have shown that anthropological research can make a contribution to the contemporary aid projects and the public discussion about development (aid), as it shows the story of the people, told by themselves, instead of the story of the outsider.

Poverty

Social relationships underlie the process of development in the Malawian society. The students explain that their parents expect them to achieve high results in their education, as they have the responsibility to take care of their parents when they get older. Besides siblings also carry the responsibility for each other, which means that they contribute to each other's development. Business students explained that they start feeling insecure because of the pressure on them and they feel like they cannot live up to the expectations people have from them. This feeling of responsibility underscores the idea that culture is indeed a determining factor when it comes to family expectations (Chant & Jones and Lloyd & Gage-Brandon 1994). This means that everybody in the family has the responsibility to share their means with the rest of the family. Amongst the technical students, there is a bigger emphasis on the environmental circumstances that make poverty hard to overcome. For them poverty is not only about social expectations, but also about the place where you live (rural or urban). They experience that the geographical location also has an influence on the poverty level. These students saw living on the countryside as a disadvantage as it offers fewer opportunities to find a way out of poverty in comparison to the life in the city, where there is more access to education, jobs and other social facilities. Abdulai and Crolerees (2001) found similar results in Mali, where they found out that in a poor society with agriculture as the main form of income, the place where you live influences the living standards.

The way the business students explain poverty, the people in control, like the chiefs, the government and the organizations, are having power over the poor, as the poor are depending on aid which they decide upon. Powerlessness and having power is part of a vicious circle as your social status determines in which layer of the society you are living in. Being poor means not having access to the right social relationships that will give you the opportunity to get out of poverty, as social relationships determine who has access to development means and tools and who does not. This is exactly what Green (2006) is describing when she argues that local and national elites, governments and development institutions have the power to recognize and define the poor and determines when poverty matters, thus who gets access and who is kept outside. Although this feeling of powerlessness has partially a different source amongst the two groups, the action that must be undertaken to overcome poverty is, according to all the students, to gain skills and knowledge.

Development and its constraints

Creating development in Malawi is hard to accomplish, because the students feel like they are trapped in poverty. All the students explain that they don't have faith in the Malawian government, since corruption is a big problem at national level. Although the students have the

right to vote in the Malawian democracy, they don't feel like money is invested in the right goals. Besides they don't have the opportunity to get involved in politics as the youth is excluded from the political process. This corruption is not an isolated phenomenon, as Okafor (2011) argues that other African countries have the same problems because corruption robs the youth of any chance of establishing a good future. At a smaller scale, students say that corruption takes place at NGO's where the receiving people are putting the money in their own pockets instead of using it for the aimed goals. Brautigam and Knäck (2004) underscore this assumption with their research in Sub-Saharan African countries where they found that aid effectiveness depends on the people receiving it.

Simply saying that a country is not developing because of corruption doesn't give a complete picture. The way the business students experience it, the NGO's are not working effectively as they are primarily focusing on their own goals, instead of searching for the needs the local people have. As their teacher explains, power positions determine the effectiveness of aid projects and NGO's do not understand the local dynamics. This underscores the argument of Binns, Hill and Nell (1997) who state that the implementation of development projects has failed, because the program leaders have failed to understand 'the complexities of the socioeconomic and cultural contexts in which indigenous livelihood and production systems function' (Binn et al. 1997:1). All the students agree on the fact that because of this misunderstanding, the power elites gain is becoming more as they receive power over the poor because of their high status in projects through which they can regulate access to the means projects are offering, the same process as Bastiaensen et al. (2005) found in Cameroon. But where the business students feel like they should be the ones to receive aid from NGO's, most of the technical students are already being sponsored by NGO's, though they think it's not enough.

Another problem identified by all the students is the lack of good quality education. The students do feel that they are the lucky ones because they receive education, but this lucky feeling drove away as they followed their classes. Tilak (2001) wrote that a lot of problems with education are practical problems, which is underscored by all the students, who identify the lack of good teachers, the lack of good learning material and the lack of good shelter as negative impacts on the quality of education at the vocational school. These problems stand in relation to poverty problems as there is not enough money to provide a better school. Almost all the business students don't get a sponsorship and have trouble paying their school- and examination fees which is a big burden on them and their parents. The government doesn't invest any money or help creating a better quality education program as it's too weak to help, like Buchmann and Hannum (2001) explained.

Ingrained cultural habits also play part in the way development processes take place. The business students told that the lack of self- esteem of students is build on a culture of

hierarchy in which the rich stand above the poor and the old stand above the young. Besides there is a culture of social pressure which burdens them with the idea they must perform. They feel like there should be more recognition of the capabilities of the youth. Because of the lack of recognition and trust in the knowledge and skills of the younger generation, the older generation keeps determining the pathway to development, while the youth stays home unemployed.

Food- and income security

The technical students explained that in order to create more income security, more job opportunities should be created. The things they learn are mostly technical skills, which could help them find a job, the problem is that there aren't any jobs. The jobs that do exist are very low paid jobs and exist of piece work, both kind of jobs are short term and not able to solve the problem of income vulnerability and insecurity for they don't provide a long term, stable income. This underscores the statement of Devereux (2001) that people who are living in insecure circumstances need to trade off short term consumption needs for long term economic strategies. Besides, finding a job is not only depending on the amount of education you've received but, as Green (2006) showed before, it's also about social relations. Both the technical students as the business students underscore the importance of the social relations. They argue that it is important to approach your connections, since it is through connections that you get a job. More often than not, having connections is more important than having knowledge. This highlights the theory of Chant en Jones (2006) that job opportunities are about 'know who' and not 'know how'. We can state that income security is depending on several factors: the social connections one has, the skills one has and the economical and geographical aspects like the ups and downs in the local market and the distance to the city or markets (Tschirly and Weber 1994, Abdulai and Crolerees 2001).

The business students argue that the social status someone has, determines how food secure someone is. Having access to food security means that someone has the right social relationships that make it possible to enter the process of being food secure. Besides, in a highly agricultural country, the business students explain that food security also means having economical assets, as everything can be traded for food. In this context it is important to understand the local dynamics concerning access to food, as we have shown in the empirical chapters that food security is highly depending on power relations. Thus it is not only as the economist Sen (1981) argues that political entitlements ensure economic welfare, but poverty and therefore food security, is depending on social relationships, which are fluid (Green 2006). The way students act upon the fact that they are living in a environment of food insecurity, is

primarily by following education as education is the (only) mean they have access to become food secure.

A short addition to the link between food security and income security is that the business students explained that food security in an agricultural dependent country as Malawi means that someone has enough food to use food also as an economical asset. In short, food security means having enough food to maintain yourself and your family. Income security, however, does not necessarily mean that one has access to enough food as market failures make people in the city, who are depending on the markets, vulnerable for food insecurity. It is therefore that many business students share their knowledge about agriculture which they learn at school, with their parents and other relatives in order to upgrade the yields and upgrade the income in return.

How to create development

Despite of all the limitations that stand in the way of development, personal development among the students is still possible. Facilitators in this process are NGO's who were put down as corrupt before. Although this is true in most cases, many technical students still get their sponsorships for the vocational school from NGO's. They feel like NGO's can be helpful, but it depends on the village where the help is offered and on the people in charge of accepting this help and spreading it. All the students think that, to better facilitate development, the aid should go to the youth to follow education to find good jobs, and that the local population should decide where the aid can go to. Now the need of aid is decided upon by outsiders who don't have a clear view of the needs of the local people and the social context in which this aid is given. Binns, Hill and Nell (1997) emphasize this as they found that aid effectiveness depends on the knowledge of the giver of the socioeconomic and cultural context.

In the end, the responsibility of creating development lies in different hands. The technical students identify the government as the main responsible for the trouble in the country, thus logically; they think the government is also responsible to clean up the mess they've made. All the students lack trust in the government, but hope that it will improve, because the government is at a position in society where it is able to make a change. This stands in contradiction to the students who have a lot less power. Nonetheless, all the students feel like they themselves are above all responsible for their own development, as they have lost faith in other institutions. Like the culture stimulates them to take responsibly of their family (Lloyd and Gage-Brandon 1994), they also take the responsibility over their own lives. For them, taking responsibility starts by following education. The business students feel like they need to do things differently than their parents. They want to start small and locally, follow education and afterwards share that information with their community members so they can bring about

change and be an example for others. The technical students want to start up with small and local businesses, which they prefer to do in the city where there is more chance at getting income. When they succeed they want to create employment by hiring other youths and in this way stimulate the economy in Malawi, like Awogbenle and Iwuamdi (2010) found that many youths in Africa become entrepreneurs and set up business.

In conclusion, there are a few remarks that should be made concerning the complementary nature of this thesis. The main differences between the research groups are: a) the business students identify poverty as a process of social pressure and expectations while the technical students experience poverty also as a consequence of geographical constraints; and b) both of the research groups use education as an action to overcome poverty but after receiving education the technical group wants to work in the city and expand their assets in order to support their family and create new jobs for the youth, while the business students want to share their knowledge in their rural village and employ family members in order to improve the livelihood situation in the village. The technical students are thus more focused on the urban area where income security is the aim, while the business students believe that they should develop the rural areas because they believe that agriculture should be stimulated in order to eradicate poverty. All the students agree upon the idea that: a) social relations determine how and for whom development takes place and b) corruption opposes a big challenge to development. Thus in order to create development the students all undertake the same action to find a way out of poverty, namely education, as this the only tool that is accessible and reliable in the process of development. We strongly agree with Green (2006) that development is not only facilitated by economic welfare, but is also depending in high degree on social relationships that determine access to resources.

Epilogue

It has been somewhat more than eight weeks now since Leanne and I came back from Malawi. Although it was a great experience, life in Malawi has touched me. Last week I received a message on my phone from one of the students who told me that they might not be able to make their exams on the 10th of June, the date that was set to make the exams. Without making the exams, the students won't receive their diploma's which means they won't be able to start working too. In the same week I receive a music file, it is a song made by another student. I used the lyrics of the song in the hope to give a clear insight in how the students experience life in Malawi. The song is about unemployment, hopelessness, putting much effort in school but not getting anything in return, the song for me is about a hard life. After writing me the lyrics, the student sends another message; he says that I can put in the text that I am writing that he is happy though.

Two days ago I received a new message; the student is telling me that the exams will not take place. They are not only delayed, they are probably cancelled. I ask what happened and what it means for the students. He answers that the teachers are telling the students to go out and find an attachment. After they did their attachment they need to go back home. Next year, they can come back to school, pay examination fees again, and cross their fingers that the examinations will go on by then. The student answers to me that it feels like he has wasted a year of studies. I ask him how it is possible that they paid for their examination fees in March already and now they find out that there is no money to buy the exams with. The student replies to me: *'They are just telling lies, that's part of life'*.

Bibliography

Abdulai, Awadu and Crolerees, Anna

- 2001 Determinants of income diversification amongst rural households in Southern Mali. *Food policy* 26:437-452

Awogbenle, A. C. and Iquamdai, K. C.

- 2010 Youth unemployment: Entrepreneurship development programme as an intervention mechanism. *African journal of business management* 4(6):831-835

Baro, Mamadou and Deubel, Tara F.

- 2006 Persistent Hunger: Perspectives on Vulnerability, Famine, and Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Annual Review Anthropology* 35:521-538

Bastiaensen, De Herdt and D'Exelle

- 2005 Exploring the politics of poverty reduction: how are the poorest represented? *World Development* 33(6):979-993

Binns, Tom, Hill, Trevor and Nel, Etienne

- 1997 Learning from the people: Participatory rural appraisal, geography and rural development in the 'new' South Africa. *Applied Geography* 17(1):1-9

Booth, David with Leach Melissa and Thierney, Allison

- 2006 Experiencing Poverty in Africa: Perspectives from Anthropology. Q-Squared Working Paper no. 25

Bräutigam, Deborah A., Knack, Stephen

- 2004 Foreign Aid, Institutions, and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 52(2):255-285

Buchmann & Hannum

- 2001 Education and Stratification in Developing Countries: A Review of Theories and Research. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:77-102

Castel, Vincent with Martha Phiri and Marco Stampini

- 2010 Education and Employment in Malawi. Working Paper Series no. 110. African Development Bank, Tunis, Tunisia

Carlsson, J., Somolekae, G. and van der Walle, N.

1997 Foreign Aid in Africa: Learning from country experiences. Nordiska Afrika institutet, Uppsala

Chant, S. and Jones, G. A.

2005 Youth, gender and livelihoods in West Africa: Perspectives from Ghana and the Gambia. *Children's Geographies* 3(2):185-199

Chimombo, J.P.G.

2005 Quantity Versus Quality in Education: Case Studies in Malawi. *International review of education* 51:155-172.

Crossley, Michael and Keith Holmes

2010 Whose knowledge, whose values? The contribution of local knowledge to education policy processes: a case study of research development Initiatives in the small state of Saint Lucia. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 34(2):197-214

De Boeck

1995 *in*: Booth, David with Leach Melissa and Thierney, Allison

2006 Experiencing Poverty in Africa: Perspectives from Anthropology. Q-Squared Working Paper no. 25

Devereux, Stephen

2001 Livelihood Security and Social Protection: A Re-emerging Issue in Rural Development. *Development Policy Review* 19(4):507-519.

Devereux, Stephen

2009 Why does famine persist in Africa? *Food Security* 1:25-35.

Dewalt, K.M. & Dewalt B.R.

2011 Participant Observation: a Guide for Fieldworkers, Altamira Press, Plymouth.

Diawara, Mamadou

2000 Globalization, Development Politics and Local Knowledge. *International Sociology* 15:361-371.

Ellis, Frank

1998 Household strategies and rural livelihood diversification. *The Journal of Development Studies* 35(1):1-38.

Ellis, Frank with Milton Kutengule and Alfred Nyasulu

2003 Livelihoods and Rural Poverty Reduction in Malawi. *World Development* 31(9):1495-1510

Escobar, Arturo

1997 Anthropology and Development. *International Social Science Journal* 49(154):497-515.

Escobar, Arturo

1991 Anthropology and the development encounter: the making and marketing of development anthropology. *American ethnologist* 18(4):658-682.

Food and Agriculture Organization

1996 Rome Declaration on Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action.
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.htm>, accessed on 24-11-2013

Fisher, William F.

1997 Doing Good? The politics and Antipolitics of NGO practices. *Annual review of Anthropology* 26:439-464.

Government of Malawi

2006 Nutrition Fact Sheet. Department of Nutrition, HIV and Aids.

Government of Malawi

2009 2008/2009 Country Status Report on Education', mimeo, produced with assistance from World Bank and UNESCO-BREDA

Green, Maia

2006 Representing Poverty and Attacking Representations: Perspectives on Poverty from Social Anthropology. Global Poverty Research Group and Department of Social Anthropology. Q-Squared, working paper no. 27

Haile, Menghestab

2005 Weather patterns, food security and humanitarian response in sub-Saharan Africa. *Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society B*. 360: 2169-2182

Harris, John

2002 The Case for Cross-Disciplinary Approaches in International Development. *World Development* 30(3):487-496

Human Development Report

2013 The Risk of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World.

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2013_en_summary.pdf accessed on the 1st of December 2013

Kadzamira, E. and Rose, P.

2003 Can free primary education meet the needs of the poor? Evidence from Malawi. *International journal of educational development* 23:501-516.

Kamanga, Penjani with Vedeld, Paul and Sjaastad, Espen

2008 Forest incomes and rural livelihoods in Chiradzulu District, Malawi. *Ecological Economics* 68:613-624

Kottak, Conrad Phillip

2011 *Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity*. New York: Mc Graw Hill

Lloyd, Cynthia B. and Anastasia J. Gage-Brandon

1994 'High Fertility and Children's Schooling in Ghana: Sex Differences in Parental Contributions and Educational Outcomes.' *Population Studies*(48):293-306.

Malawi Millennium Development Goals Report

2003 http://www.undg.org/archive_docs/5547-Malawi_MDG_Report.pdf accessed on December 1 2013

Mommersteeg, Geert

2013 *Kwalitatieve Onderzoeksmethoden: Achtergrond en Toepassing, college 3*. College in de cursus KOAT. Utrecht: Culturele Antropologie en Ontwikkelingssociologie UU, 19 November 2013

Moyo, Dambisa

2009 *Dead aid: Why aid is not working and how there is another way for Africa*. United States: Penguin Books

Okafar, E. E.

- 2011 Youth unemployment and implications for stability of democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of sustainable development in Africa* 13(1):358-373

Owuor, Jenipher A.

- 2007 Integrating African Indigenous Knowledge in Kenya's Formal Education System: The Potential for Sustainable Development. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education* 2(2):21-37

Parish, William L. and Robert J. Willis

- 1993 Daughters, Education, and Family Budgets: Taiwan Experiences. *Journal of Human Resources* 28(4):863-898.

Sen, Amaratya

- 1981 Ingredients of Famine Analysis: Availability and Entitlement. *The quarterly Journal of Economics* 96 (3):433-464.

Sen, Amaratya

- 1999 *Development as freedom*. New York: Oxford University

Tschirley, D.L., Weber, T.B.

- 1994 Food Security Strategies Under Extreme Adverse Conditions: The Determinants of Household Income and Consumption in Rural Mozambique. *World Development* 22(2):159-173

Tierney, Alison

- 1997 'Local concepts of development: women food sellers and fishermen in an Oxfam programme, Tabora Region, western Tanzania'. PhD thesis. London School of Economics.

Tilak, Jandhyala, B.G.

- 2001 Education and Poverty. *In: Education- A Way out of Poverty: Research Presentations at the Poverty Conference 2001*. Mia Melin, ed. Pp. 12-24. New Education Division Documents No.12. Stockholm: Elanders Novum AB

UN

- 2013 We can end poverty – Millenium Development Goals and beyond 2015
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, accessed December 2 2013

deWalt, K.M. & deWalt B.R.

2011 Participant Observation: a Guide for Fieldworkers, Altamira Press, Plymouth.

World Bank

2010 The Education System in Malawi. World Bank Working Paper no. 182. Washington USA

World Bank

2014 Education overview. Electronic document

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview>, accessed on January 13

2014

World Bank

2013 Education. Electronic document. <http://data.worldbank.org/topic/education>,

accessed November 26 2013

World Bank

2013 Ending Extreme poverty and Promoting Shared Prosperity. Electronic document.

http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/04/17/ending_extreme_poverty_and_promoting_shared_prosperity, accessed on December 2 2013

Appendix I: executive summary

Escaping poverty

In Malawi, the youths of the country are seen as the leaders of tomorrow, or at least, that is what the contemporary leaders are aiming at. They are growing up in a developing world, in a country where poverty is the norm, not an exception. A specific group amongst the youngsters is the boys and girls who are receiving education. Not the high quality education that the children of rich people are receiving, but education that is sponsored by many family members or NGO's, hoping that this child will find a way out of poverty. These students experience pressure from parents, family members and villagers who are pushing them to succeed and create a better environment, not only for themselves, but for everyone they are related to. This field of poverty and expectations to which the youth are exposed to forms the basis of our research, in which we answer the question: *'How do poverty and development correlate with each other in the lives of Malawian adolescents who are following education at a vocational school in Malawi?'* The research took place in the period from the 30th of January until the 14th of April at a vocational school in Malawi where students between the 18 and 30 are enrolled. The research was a complementary research in which Kiki did research among business courses with a focus on food security, and Leanne did research among technical courses with a focus on income security.

The main question must be embedded in the context of a world in which much effort has been done to create equal development. Firstly, billions of dollars are given to the Malawian government and many projects are put up by international and national organizations, yet people are still suffering. Since many Malawians depend on agriculture for their livelihood, food insecurity is a threat to all. A nutrition fact sheet from 2006 shows that malnutrition has been endemic in Malawi and that there has not been a significant change over the years (Government of Malawi 2006). Food insecurity is closely related to income security since many people depend on agriculture for their income. Income insecurity is therefore also a part of poverty in Malawi. We can see food- and income security as part of poverty. In turn, part of our field of interest is how poverty can be eradicated. This research will show that poverty is not only determined by actual income of food and money, but highly depends on social relationships and the cultural context of the country.

Secondly, the scientific opinions about what poverty is and how it can be eradicated have not reached a consensus. Many theories about poverty come from the science of economy, in which the basic principle is that economic growth needs to be stimulated in order to eradicate poverty. One specific theory, that has been very influential in the debate about development, is the idea that economic growth will be stimulated in countries where governments respond to the demands of their people by giving them access to the bundles of rights which include social

facilities (Sen 1981). The econometrist Moyo (2009) argues that all the money that is invested in Africa did not facilitate development, and therefore economic growth, because of corruption. Both of the statements are applicable in Malawi, as many of the poor do not have access to political entitlements, and the local, national elites and the government do not take responsibility for the country. Instead they are filling their own pockets with money from the donors. In contrast, poverty from an anthropological viewpoint depends on social relationships (Green 2006). Green (2006) argues that poverty is a consequence of social relations, in which the poor are powerless and are subjected to the power of local and national elites and the government. On top of that, the poor also depend on the development institutions, as they have the power to recognise and define the poor, and therefore determine when poverty matters (Green 2006:8).

The main argument of this thesis is that there should be more anthropological attention paid to the debate around the challenge of development in developing countries. While other scientific schools try to develop general theories about how development should be combated, anthropology could provide this section with emic views, which represent the world of the research population, instead of trying to make a blueprint for development. Our main findings are that the youths are using education as an instrument to stimulate development, since that is the only mean they have access to in order to change their situation in a surrounding of mistrust of the government and corruption. Other means to create development are hard to access because of this harsh environment. Besides, poverty is kept alive by social relationships that determine the access to escaping strategies.

More specifically there are a few remarks that should be made concerning the complementary nature of this thesis. The main differences between the research groups are: a) the business students identify poverty as a process of social pressure and expectations while the technical students experience poverty also as a consequence of geographical constraints; and b) both of the research groups use education as an action to overcome poverty but after receiving education the technical students want to work in the city and expand their assets in order to support their family and create new jobs for other youth, while the business students want to share their knowledge in their rural village and employ family members in order to improve the livelihood situation in the village. The technical students are thus more focused on the urban area where income security is the aim, while the business students believe that they should develop the rural areas because they believe that agriculture should be stimulated in order to eradicate poverty. All the students agree upon the idea that: a) social relations determine how and for whom development takes place and b) corruption opposes a big challenge to development. Thus in order to create development the students all undertake the same action to find a way out of poverty, namely education, as this the only tool that is accessible and reliable in

the process of development. This thesis underscores the idea that development is not only facilitated by economic welfare as many scientist and the contemporary public debate argue, but is also depending in a high degree on social relationships that determine access to resources.

Appendix II:

Lyrics of the song Youth Tears by Phamuphamu, Lady D, Blessed I and Kbz,

*They say we are the youth
we are the leaders of tomorrow
I guess that's the a lie
they don't tell us the truth
they don't give us the chance
our dreams fade away we cry everyday
unemployment levels are high,
poverty is everywhere
the youth are dying young
I ask myself why
was it a mistake I was born in Malawi
nowadays certificate diploma degree they are ordinary papers,
spending many years.
What's the reason for school
no sweet without sweat,
where are the benefits,
I spend my time on books,
more money on school fees
I expected to get some profits
but all I have are losses.
I wonder am I a human
I am living without hope I know
I am not cased in my life
I need a scope looking for a better place
suffering in many ways
I need a better place somebody heir my voice.*

Chorus: the youth the youth are crying the youth are crying every day, the youth are crying ee yeye.

*Many politicians use youth for violence
when they are in parliament
they don't consider us
they infringe our human rights*

*we are suffering every day,
we have nothing to say
would somebody tell me
where is the leader to us the right way
it hits me in my heart
to see children being abused in tea estate,
they are working as slaves,
girls are raped
there is no peace in their hearts
there is a life to be saved
in this universe others live in a reckless life
because of peer pressure
so many things they do they put their life in danger
having many sexual partners just for fashion,
nobody cares how they live,
they have no ambition
teenage pregnancies and getting married early
a lot of things to worry
we are really indeed crying
as time goes by discover you have the virus*

*Wanna be strong Africa like Abyssinia
but my independence is covered with myopia
it's there on my chest
its good if I take it out feel
like I am in and am aiming for a break out
greedy powers are crushing my humanity
a growing crisis indeed its growing politic
like a free man seeking for the liberty
don't wane we are rebel
but I am spitting out reality
crazy bad unemployment
deficient development
possessed with corruption
or thief subtraction
with u mama Malawi*

*why do you give yourself all these problems
I am sick of this nigga
I am fading up I am crying for justice
because I have things plenty times
now I am ready for action and check it out*

Chorus: the youth the youth are crying the youth are crying every day, the youth are crying ee yeye.

*That's why people are just going away
that's why the youth are just going astray
migrate from Malawi going to South Africa
they go to the UK instead of developing our country.*