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Emergent governance practices in the University of Malawi following reform implementation from 1997 to 2013

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by

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ABSTRACT

Higher education reform is an international phenomenon and one that greatly impacts on the form and function of Universities in society. I set out in this study to investigate the University of Malawi's (UNIMA) experiences with governance reforms after observing that no comprehensive study of this process had been undertaken following the implementation of these reforms from 1997. I used Bhaskar's Critical Realist Theory as my main theoretical framework because my intention was to understand the mechanisms from which such reforms emerged: the emergent governance practices and properties enabling or constraining governance reforms in UNIMA. I employed Archer's Social Realist Theory in my research design and interpretation of the results, which entailed that I focus on issues of structure, culture and agency in UNIMA governance.

I have established that the governance context in UNIMA in 1995 at the time the reforms were being considered was one that promoted the continuation of the status quo because the Malawi Government's vested interest then was to exercise great control over UNIMA at system, institutional and disciplinary level of governance due to the political imperatives of the time in Malawi. However, this situation was frustrating to many in the University as it greatly impeded academic freedom. Furthermore, in 1995 the University relied heavily on Government's financial structures. When these were subjected to structural reforms under the influence of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the early nineties the impact seriously undermined the University's revenue base and threatened to challenge further the realization of the University's objectives. This prompted changes in the administrative and academic governance structures and culture intended to improve utilisation of the available limited resources as well as to broaden the University's revenue base.

The governance reform measures that were introduced were mainly influenced by New Public Management (NPM) ideologies. Most of the reforms intended to transform the administrative structures and culture were successfully implemented. The study revealed that this was enabled by the interests of those operating at disciplinary levels who were frustrated by the previous constraining governance context and who viewed such reforms as bringing about the self-governance they lacked. However, the majority of the reforms that were mainly targeted at academic restructuring were resisted because they were construed as contradictory to the interests of those in the academy particularly those concerned with matters of academic freedom. The study further revealed that the academic reforms were constrained by a lack of agency for change management and weak leadership at the top senior level of the University. In addition, there have been delays in amending the UNIMA Act, which should have catalysed some of the reforms, a scenario that has perpetuated many aspects of the institutional level of governance.

Consequently, compared to the situation before the reforms were introduced, governance in UNIMA at the time of reporting manifested two scenarios: (a) an elaboration in governance practices at systems level where Government machinery exercises control and at enterprise (college) level where faculties and academic departments operate promoting cultural morphogenesis, or changes at the level of ideas, beliefs and values, which in turn is exerting pressure on governance practices at institutional level; and (b) morphostasis, or lack of change, at institutional levels of the governance exacerbated by the lack of amendment of the UNIMA Act and weak leadership. The findings have also led to uncertainty regarding the unitary nature of the University. There are fears that once the UNIMA Act is amended the four colleges forming UNIMA might break away to become separate universities.

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Higher education governance systems have over the years undergone reforms particularly in the eighties and early nineties and Malawi has not been spared. In the literature one observes that numerous investigations have been conducted to explain the driving forces behind these reforms; the actual reforms that have been undertaken or attempted to be undertaken; and the extent to which higher education governance practices have been moulded by such interventions specific to the Universities, countries or regions of interest to researchers. For example, Clark (1983) has researched and reported about governance reforms that have taken place in American and European Universities; Neave, Frans & Vught (eds.) (1994) have carried out a comparative study about the higher education governance reforms in the three continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America; Mok (2003) and Kai (2009) have investigated higher education governance reforms that have been initiated in Asian Universities; George (2006) and Harman & Treadgold (2007) have investigated governance reforms in Australian Universities. In the continent of Africa, Assie-Lumumba (2006), Adesina (2006), Sawyer (2004) and Aina (2010), among others, have carried out studies on governance reforms. There have also been some researchers who have studied the higher education governance reform specific to the Sub-Saharan African region, such as Teferra & Altbach (2004) and Zeleza & Olukoshi (2004). However, little is known empirically about the experience of higher education governance reforms specific to Malawi.

In 1995, the University of Malawi (UNIMA) engaged the services of the Malawi Institute of Management (MIM), a Government consulting firm, to recommend to it reform measures that could be introduced in the governance systems in the University. The reform measures

were adopted by the UNIMA Council in 1997. These reforms have been implemented gradually over the years but there has never been any comprehensive empirical study that has been conducted to understand the driving force behind the reform; the actual reform measures that were recommended and the ones that were eventually implemented. As a result, little is known empirically about these reforms, let alone the impact they have had on governance practices in the University. Most fundamentally, nothing is known regarding the mechanisms that have enabled or constrained the implementation of governance reforms in UNIMA.

I have come across a study that was conducted by Gawa (2006) on the governance reforms that were introduced in UNIMA following the implementation of MIM recommended governance reform measures. However, the study was specific to reform measures that led to the outsourcing of non-core business services in UNIMA. It compared the cost of providing services such as catering, security and maintenance of both infrastructures and ground services by the University before the reform was initiated with the cost of the provision of the same services after private providers took over. The study was limited to the cost benefit analysis of the implementation of this particular reform. The study was done in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Master's Degree in Business Administration in UNIMA. Apart from this study I have not come across any other scientific study conducted on the governance reforms which were initiated in UNIMA in 1995.

Of interest to note in most of the investigations carried out in the field of higher education governance reforms is the diversity in the research approaches used by various researchers and hence the explanations offered. This study investigates shifts in governance practices in the University in Malawi following the implementation of governance reforms from 1997 to 2013 using Critical Realism and Social Realists theories. The former is used as a Metatheory

to inform what constitutes knowledge claims in this study (ontology); how such knowledge can be accessed (epistemology) and the potential limitations in knowledge generation (judgemental rationalism). The latter is employed in the design of the study as well as in the interpretation and reporting of the findings. The actual data collection was conducted from June 2013 to November of 2013 in the University of Malawi where I had previously served as a Deputy Registrar. However, preparatory work of the research work started in March 2011.

1.1 About the University of Malawi

It is important to note that up until 1996 Malawi had only one public University, the University of Malawi (UNIMA). According to 2006 UNIMA Calendar, the University was created through a provisional Act of Parliament of 1964. The idea that Malawi should have a University was conceived soon after the country got its independence in 1964. In the same year the educational needs of the country were surveyed by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the then British Inter-University Council on Higher Education Overseas (BIUCHEO). This led to the founding of the University in October 1964 under the University of Malawi Provisional Council Act of 1964, which was later replaced by the University of Malawi Act of 1974. Teaching in UNIMA started on 29th September 1965. It started with 90 students due to limited infrastructure, academic and administrative staff (UNIMA Calendar, 1998). As of 2013, enrolment in UNIMA both in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes was approximately 8000 students spread out in its four constituent colleges located in different geographical areas.

UNIMA has at the moment four campuses: The Chancellor College which is in Zomba about 292 kilometres away from the capital of Malawi; The College of Medicine which is in

Blantyre 320 kilometres away from the capital of Malawi; The Polytechnic which is also in Blantyre; and the Kamuzu College of Nursing which has two campuses one is located in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi and the other campus in Blantyre. UNIMA had a fifth campus (Bunda College) but it broke away to form a separate University in 2012 and is known as Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources. All four campuses are coordinated by a Central Office situated in Zomba where the Vice-Chancellor and the University Registrar are based. Since its inception, the University has not undergone any comprehensive governance reforms similar to those reported on here. The governance reforms that were initiated in 1995 and implemented gradually from 1997 were therefore unprecedented.

1.2 Research goal and objectives

My main research goal for undertaking this study was to investigate the emergent governance practices in UNIMA arising from the implementation from 1997 to 2013 of governance reforms. The key research question this study wanted to answer is: What are the emergent governance practices in UNIMA arising from the implementation from 1997 to 2013 of governance reforms and what has enabled or constrained them? Specifically, the study sought to get answers to the following questions:

i) What were the objectives of the reforms in the governance of UNIMA?

ii) What specific reform measures were introduced in UNIMA governance practices through the implementation of the MIM recommendations between 1997 and 2013?

iii) What are the emergent governance practices arising from the implementation of governance reforms in UNIMA and what enabled and constrained them in the period between 1997 and 2013?

1.3 Rationale for the study

There are several studies that have been conducted in the field of higher education governance policy and practice as noted in section 1.1. From my findings through the literature research conducted, the majority of these studies have examined changing roles of the Government and higher education relationships in the wake of global trends (for example, Clark 1983; Neave, Frans & Vught (eds.), 1994; Mok 2003; Sawyer, 2004; Zeleza & Olukoshi, 2004; Adesina, 2006; Assie-Lumumba,2006; George, 2006; Harman & Treadgold, 2007; and Kai, 2009). Such studies agree that governance changes in higher education have been enabled by many drivers in the global economic and political spheres some of which are: Globalization, Neo-liberalisation, Internationalization and Entrepreneurship. These global trends featured most prominently in the eighties and early nineties and are discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Accompanying these trends have been ideologies such as the New Public Management discussed also in Chapter Four which pushed for the infusion of private sector governance practices in the public higher education sector. This study expands on the studies conducted in the higher education governance field arising from some of the above observed global trends and it therefore contributes to a growing field of study.

Part of what motivated this study was the realization that the majority of the studies that have been carried out in the field of higher education governance have examined higher education governance reforms from the perspective of American, Asian, Australian and European Universities. Fewer studies have been done in the African higher education governance sector and, more crucially, in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, of the few studies undertaken and reported about in Sub-Saharan Africa most of them have been done in South Africa especially during the post-apartheid era (for example, Cloete & Bunting, 2000; Hall &

Symes, 2005; Weinberg & Kistner, 2007; McKenna, 2012; Maistry, 2012; 2014). This study therefore contributes to the research on sub-Saharan higher education reforms.

Given that there are varied experiences of reforms due to differences in the structural and cultural dynamics of regions of the world (Vaira, 2004), this study provides a forum for revealing the experience of higher education reforms in the wake of global economic trends from the perspective of one Southern African country, Malawi.

An additional contribution specific to this study is that it grounds itself in a Critical Realist orientation and takes a Social Realist Theoretical approach in its investigations. In this respect, this study takes further the scope and breadth of these theories in the social sciences and argues that the realist position, discussed in depth in Chapter Two, allows for a move beyond the documenting of multiple experience of governance reform, to the tentative identification of the mechanisms constraining and enabling its emergence. This study also challenges the 'taken-for-granted' perspectives and assumptions regarding governance reforms in UNIMA in the absence of a comprehensive study, thereby creating scientific knowledge about higher education governance from the perspective of a public university in Malawi.

1.4 Thesis Road Map

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter Two introduces the theoretical perspectives that underpin this study. It argues that in science, any quest for knowledge must start from a philosophical premise regarding what would warrant valid claims about the social world. It therefore explores different schools of thought that have provided frameworks for approaching the quest for knowledge creation and thus justifies the choice of the Critical

Realist Theory as the Metatheory grounding the ontological and the epistemological premise of the study. The chapter also argues that the pursuit for knowledge must take cognizance of the theories that pre-exist, implying that in social research it is important to utilize knowledge already generated in order to access knowledge of the unknown. In this connection, the chapter introduces Social Realist theory as the main analytical and explanatory framework used in the study.

Chapter Three describes the research methodology utilised in this study. The chapter explains the design of the study. That is how the study moved from the known to the unknown. Specifically, the chapter explains how data was collected, how the research participants were identified and sampled, how data was analysed and interpreted using Social Realist theoretical frameworks of morphogenesis, analytical dualism and institutional configurations developed by Archer (1995) and explained in Chapter Two. The chapter also explains how fallible knowledge creation can be and reflects on some of the practical measures that were undertaken in the study in collecting, analysing and interpreting the data to ensure that the results of this investigation are credible.

Collier (1994:50) has argued that: 'we can't have an explanation until we know what is to be explained'. This underscores the importance of understanding the objective existence of the phenomenon first before one embarks on a project of investigating it. In Chapter Four therefore, I present my findings regarding the concept of higher education governance as understood in this study according to the literature search. The chapter begins from the premise that social research must begin from an ontological position regarding the object of the phenomenon being investigated. In this regard the chapter attempts to answer the question I have reconstituted from Bhaskar (1998), namely: What must the structure of higher

education governance be like for scientific knowledge to be possible? What follows later in the chapter is an attempt to find out what is known about higher education governance from the current literature. The chapter specifically defines higher education governance in the context of this study. It also identifies concepts that have informed higher education governance practice as presented in the literature as well as presenting governance structures that seem to have characterised University governance. Models that have been developed as theoretical underpinnings for higher education governance practice are interrogated together with the trends that may have possibly conditioned them globally as well as particular to Africa.

Chapter Five is dedicated to locating UNIMA's governance configurations in the period before the governance reforms were initiated. The chapter reports on the findings regarding the events and what was experienced regarding the UNIMA governance period before the governance reforms were initiated. Using Archer's (1995) morphogenetic theory in this chapter I interrogate the constitutive particles of structure, culture and agents within the domain of the actual that created the context of UNIMA governance in 1995 when the reforms were being initiated. In this chapter I also present my findings regarding the objective of the governance reforms; that is, the intention the corporate agency had in entertaining this project in 1995 mindful that in social realism, it is people's intentions that mediate either morphogenesis (change over time) or morphostasis (a lack of change over time) (Archer, 1995).

In Chapter Six I present my findings regarding the reform measures that were adopted by the Council of the University of Malawi (UNIMA) arising from the Malawi Institute of Management (MIM) Report. In this chapter I interrogate the constitutive governance

practices that formed the essence of the governance reforms in UNIMA. I also examine the reform measures that were eventually implemented and those which were not implemented and the reasons attached to each from the perspective of the research participants. In this chapter I also reflect on the extent to which the governance reform measures proposed in UNIMA have drawn from the NPM ideology. An argument is finally advanced in this chapter that the implementation of governance reforms in UNIMA has by and large brought about unintended consequences. These are perceived in the form of emergent governance practices and are presented in Chapter Seven.

In Chapter Seven I therefore interrogate the emergent governance practices in UNIMA as well as their enabling and constraining mechanisms in the period between 1997 and 2013. Conclusions are drawn in Chapter Seven regarding the emergent governance context of UNIMA in 2013.

Chapter Eight summarises key findings of the study. It also highlights lessons to be learnt from it as well as the unique contributions the study is making in the field of the higher education governance reforms. The chapter also identifies possible areas for future research.

As is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, it is important to note that the term ‘reform’ in this study is used interchangeably with the term ‘change’ and takes the dimension of the definition offered by Badat (2009:456) to refer to the substantial changes with considerable impact on the existing dominant social relations within higher education and the wider social relations in the polity, economy and society. In Social Realist terms ‘reforms’ could as well in this regard refer to the process leading to the elaboration of the governance context in the higher education.

Chapter 2
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical perspectives that underpin this study. In science, any quest for knowledge must start from a philosophical premise regarding what would warrant valid claims about the social world. There are different schools of thought that provided frameworks for approaching the quest for knowledge. Lincoln & Guba (2000) categorised these schools of thought into five groups namely positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism and participatory theory. It would appear though that positivist and post-positivist theories seem to have been the major broader divide. Positivism was the first to dominate research enquiries whereas post-positivism and the other categorisations arose as the critique of the former.

Positivists generally believe that reality exists as 'objective', 'out there', and independent of those who created or observed it. Knowledge can thus be accessed through distanced and independent investigation. It is assumed in this philosophy that the natural world is constituted by fixed empirical regularities that are closed to change (Cruickshank, 2010). Experimentation is the best approach in accessing such knowledge because it is believed that constant conjunctions of events are scarcely ever found outside laboratories. While the above could be true in the natural sciences, Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen and Karlsson (2002) and Bhaskar (1998 and 2008) have observed that this cannot be correct in the social sciences because unlike in the natural sciences, inquiries are undertaken in an open environment that is stratified and amenable to change.

Post-positivists believe that reality cannot be understood in such an objective, fixed way as that demanded by the positivists. Many post-positivists understand reality to be a construction of the mind. It does not exist 'out there.' Reality is a construction of individuals through their interaction with the social world. In this regard, reality is understood to exist but in multiples in any given context (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

When I examined all the above ontological positions, or views of knowledge and how knowledge can be accessed, against the objective of my study I favoured Critical Realism because it is believed to be the best understanding of the way the world actually is. It is important to note that my aim in this research project is to study a social phenomenon: the University of Malawi's (UNIMA) governance practices. My main research goal is to investigate the emergent governance practices arising from the implementation of the governance reforms in UNIMA in 1997. From this goal, it was imperative to begin my investigation from the premise that there is reality regarding UNIMA governance that is beyond that which is experienced and this aligns to Critical Realist philosophy.

Besides, a search for knowledge, what I am looking for needs to be grounded in an appropriate research philosophy that assists me to understand the phenomena I am investigating. From my literature search it appears that the Critical Realist perspective is the most suitable philosophical approach to use in my study. Before I demonstrate how Critical Realism is aligned to my research aim and the most appropriate approach for this study, it is important to note that the whole essence of science as a relevant means of accessing knowledge has in the past been under attack.

Feyerabend (1975) has argued that science does not contain any attributes to make it superior in informing knowledge. He did not believe that any institution or persons possessed the moral grounds to prescribe how knowledge can be accessed, as doing so would restrict the knowledge that would emerge. Feyerabend's (1975) theory was grounded in ethical consideration regarding liberties that individuals have. He advocated that individuals should enjoy freedom to exercise whatever they wanted including deciding how they wish to search for knowledge.

Feyerabend's (1975) understanding of human freedom has however been found wanting. As Chalmers (1999) has observed, freedom should not be viewed from a negative angle, that is, free from constraints, overlooking the positive aspects of it, which is the degree to which individuals have free access to the means with which to achieve their desired end. It would appear from Chalmers's (1999) argument that Feyerabend's (1975) thesis overlooked the fact that individuals are born into a society that pre-existed them and is full of features that they do not have any choice but to use (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 2008). As such, in any pursuit of life endeavours, including the search for knowledge, one will need to utilize tools that pre-exist, suggesting that in scientific investigation, one must take cognizance of the theories that pre-exist.

2.1 Critical Realism

According to Harvey (2002), Critical Realism is an elision of two terms, each of which is important in understanding Bhaskar's contribution to the philosophy of social science. Bhaskar first addressed 'realism' which he described as transcendental realism. In this school of thought Bhaskar refined the positivists' idea that knowledge is grounded entirely in sense certainty. Positivists such as Kant, according to Harvey (2002), had earlier argued that claims

about reality are claims about things or objects that can be experienced. Kant had further argued that there is always *a priori* knowledge about reality, suggesting that our judgment about what we experience is always filtered through the knowledge that existed before us. While Bhaskar did not quarrel with Kant's philosophy, he felt that Kant's idea of reality was putting the cart before the horse. That is to say, Kant was trying to explain what he had not described. Bhaskar (1978) argued that before one can talk about knowledge of the world, or knowing a social phenomenon, it was imperative to know first the form of that world or social phenomena as an object of knowledge. In Collier's (1994:50) words: 'we can't have an explanation until we know what is to be explained'. This implies that before one embarks on a task of understanding the world or its social phenomena, it is imperative that one comprehends first the objective existence of such an object or social phenomenon. The understanding being that one must comprehend the constitutive components of that phenomenon (Danermark *et al*, 2002). The fundamental contribution that Bhaskar made in transcendental realism according to Harvey (2002) therefore, was to focus the attention of scientists on the following ontological question in their pursuit for knowledge: 'What must the structure of the world be like for scientific knowledge to be possible?' (Bhaskar, 2008:13).

The search for knowledge must therefore begin from the conceptualization of what the world is first. This is what Danermark et. al. (2002) refer to as conceptual abstraction; that is finding the means of extracting the constitutive components of a phenomenon. As far as Bhaskar (2008) is concerned the social phenomenon has a stratified nature. By this Bhaskar meant that nature was layered hierarchically into the levels of the empirical, events and the real and that scientific investigation must take cognizance of this structure of the world. Knowledge of the world in this regard, or of a phenomenon within it should therefore involve observing or

understanding what is experienced at the level of the empirical and the events that generates what is experienced at the level of the actual. It should also go beyond by digging into the deeper layers or underlying properties or causal mechanisms at the level of the real that make an object behave the way it does naturally (Collier, 1994; Harvey, 2002; Danermark et al, 2002 Bhaskar, 2008). The precise way in which Bhaskar (2008) described the level of the empirical, the actual and the real that comprise reality is discussed further in section 2.1.1.

After dealing with transcendental *realism*, Bhaskar (2008) addressed the other word in the term 'Critical Realism', which he described as having taken the form of *critical* naturalism. In this second project according to Harvey (2002), Bhaskar first attempted to address the question as to whether it was possible to come up with laws that could account for society and human behaviour in a systematic way, as is the case in the natural sciences. This was a particular concern considering that society was an open environment which could never be duplicated in a closed laboratory setting.

In this regard, Bhaskar (2008) argued that the social world was differentiated in the sense that there exists in it transitive knowledge which is knowledge created through social interactions which science has generated through scientific inquiry and intransitive knowledge which was embedded in societal structures and mechanisms. The pursuit of knowledge should therefore focus on accessing the intransitive – that is the knowledge of mechanisms. In this connection and consistent with his transcendental mind-set, Bhaskar addressed the question of: 'what properties do societies and people possess that might make them possible objects for knowledge?' (2008:23). Here, according to Harvey (2002), Bhaskar critiqued the works of philosophers such as Emille Durkheim, Max Weber and Peter Berges and this critique

culminated in his proposition of the Transformational Model of Society/Personal connection (Harvey, 2002).

Before I elaborate on Transformational Model of Society/Personal, it is important to explain what these three philosophers had argued about the properties of society. Durkheim's philosophy was built around the belief that society was a by-product of powerful institutions (reification of society) working on people by transforming their everyday life. Put simply, people were what they were because it is the society that shaped them (Bhaskar, 2002). Weber's philosophy on the other hand was premised on the philosophy that it was people's activities that reproduced the society. By this it was argued that society was an aggregation of people's activities (reification of people). Unlike these two philosophers, Peter Berges took a middle line approach by theorizing that society was an outcome of both society and individuals' dialectical activities (Bhaskar, 2002). That is, society preceded people and was in turn re-shaped by their actions. Bhaskar therefore building on the above diverse philosophies argued that society was neither the antecedent nor the by-product of people's activities (Collier, 1994; Bhaskar, 2002; Harvey, 2002). Neither was society an outcome of the combination of both.

To Bhaskar (2002), society provided the necessary conditions for activities of humans. That is, society provided the enabling and the constraining mechanisms for the activities of humans. Since humans were endowed with reason, or a reflective mind, depending on the situations presented to them by emergent properties of their interactions with societal structures, they could alter their material conditions through their own interaction as humans as well as through interacting with the structures they inherit (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 2002, Harvey, 2002). In so doing, society gets either elaborated or regenerated.

In this connection, Bhaskar concluded by arguing that society was both the ever-present condition and continuously reproduced product of humans' activities (Collier, 1994 and Harvey, 2002). Hence, explaining the Transformational Model of Society/Personal connection which states that 'society stands to individuals ... as something that they never make, but that exists only in virtue of their activity' (Bhaskar, 1998: 42). This is the position that this study takes regarding UNIMA governance context.

If we were to look at an organization as a form of society, the Transformational Model of Society/Personal developed by Bhaskar leads me to approach this study from the perspective that UNIMA governance is both the ever present condition and continuously reproduced product of humans' activities (Harvey, 2002). In this regard, the governance reforms that were initiated in 1997 were meant to transform the pre-existent governance structures. From this understanding it follows that because UNIMA is peopled, its structure is the ever-present condition that is continuously being reproduced by humans' activities and hence a scientific enquiry of its structure must take a historical perspective as advanced by Critical Realists.

Critical Realism is grounded in three theses: ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationality (Groff, 2004). I now engage with each one of these in turn and demonstrate how Critical Realism underpins the theoretical framework of this study.

2.1.1 Ontological realism

Ontological realism, according to Bhaskar (2002), is premised on the transcendental realist understanding that there exists a world independent of our mind, perception and activity. Applied to a scientific study, this presupposes that any scientific research must begin from

the basis that objects of scientific investigation have 'real' properties independent of our knowing and potentially 'out of phase' with actual patterns of events (Bryant, 2011). By 'real' it means objects of nature have cause or effect. They have a distinct and independent existence that can cause people to act or behave in ways they would otherwise have not acted had it been that those entities were absent.

According to Bhaskar (2008) and Bryant (2011) 'real' properties must therefore be analysed as tendencies because they can be unexercised; exercised but unrealized; or realised and experienced, implying that there are some 'activities' beyond our present knowledge that generate events that make things happen which scientists must aim at identifying. What is experienced is not all that is to be known about the world. Rather, Bhaskar (2008) believes that there are the causal stimuli for particular events to happen that generate what is experienced. These are, according to Bhaskar (2008), the properties that make an object what it is and what makes it behave in the manner that it does. These are 'a way of acting of a thing' (Bhaskar, 2008: 42), implying that if these properties did not exist, the phenomenon or object would not acquire its natural state of 'being' (Groff, 2004:17). These are also considered as natural tendencies in the sense that they are there whether they are known or remain unknown to us.

Expounding on the foregoing, Groff (2004:17), understood Bhaskhar to have in this regard claimed that ontological realism:

> ... is the general belief that in the natural world there are processes or events that occur and entities that exist without human intervention. Likewise, the social world is neither an intended outcome, nor can it be reducible to, the thoughts or actions of individuals.

From this understanding, reality is conceived to be stratified into the domains of the empirical, the events and the real. What is observed or felt is the domain of the empirical (Groff, 2004) and is the emergent properties of some 'events', they themselves being emergent properties of underlying causal mechanisms as they are not irreducible to them. There is therefore a causal link between what is observed or experienced, the events catalysing them as well as the generative mechanism for such events.

These generative mechanisms are the underlying causal mechanisms at the domain of the 'real.' They are considered to be entities because they are not empirically easy to access but are responsible for the changes that occur. These entities according to Collier (1994) and Bhaskar (2008), are in excess of their manifestation. This is why Danermark et. al. (2002:56) have pointed out that generative mechanisms must be conceptualized in terms of "tendencies, liabilities and causal powers inherent in the object but not reducible to it."

Collier (1994) elaborated on the concept of tendencies using an example of a batsman and his talent to hit the ball. I would like to use a similar example to illustrate the notion of tendencies. Serena Williams is a world class American tennis player renowned for her talent of hitting hard drives on the ball when she is on the tennis court. However, while this talent is inherent in her, when she is sitting back home not playing tennis, the talent remains unexercised. Similarly, when on the tennis court Serena Williams can make a hard drive on the ball but it may land beyond the tennis surface. In this respect, the talent has been exercised but unrealised because it has not hit the target. This is how tendencies in their natural setting ought to be conceptualised from the realists' point of view. According to Bryant (2011:70): "Here the point to be borne in mind is that objects are always in excess of

any of their local manifestations, harbouring hidden volcanic powers irreducible to any of their manifestations in the world."

	Domain of the real	Domain of the actual	Domain of the empirical
Mechanisms	•		
Events	•	•	
Experiences	•	•	•

Table 2.1: An illustration of how stratification is conceptualized from realist perspective (from Bhaskar 2008)

According to Collier (1994), Table 2.1 means that in the domain of the empirical there are only experiences; that is the world as we observe it in multiple ways. However, what we experience emerges from few events that have been actualised or triggered. The domain of the actual therefore contains the events that have been actualised and are being experienced. But there may be other events that remain unactualised and are nonetheless 'real' and may emerge as events under other conditions. Furthermore, the actualised events and multiple experiences all emerge from the activation of mechanisms at the level of the real. The above Table also portrays that nature is stratified in a horizontal manner. The lower explain without replacing the higher (Collier, 1994:48), implying that scientific work should progress from the known to the unknown and in that way science would help to deepen our knowledge of nature (Collier, 1994; Bhaskar, 2002; 2008; Danermark et. al., 2002).

The importance of Critical Realism in the context of this study is that it guided me on how I should approach my study. It demonstrated to me that it would be imperative in this study to begin by interrogating the constitutive practices and ideas that form the social phenomenon

known as higher education governance. That is to describe what higher education governance is all about and the form it takes as a social phenomenon in the domain of the empirical. Description according to Archer (1995:27) "is a mental conception of the being". Critical Realism thus helped me to begin my investigation by first carrying out an abstract conceptualization of the constitutive properties that render higher education governance its objective existence as an object of social enquiry. The manner this was done is described in the methodology chapter, Chapter Three.

Critical Realism philosophy also assisted me to understand that when approaching my study I should not be carried away in thinking that what I may observe in document search or hear from my research participants is all that there is to know about UNIMA governance. For the outcome of this study to generate new knowledge, it must not only interrogate events that explain the experiences but move further into deeper layers of social events where structures and mechanism or mechanisms[1] operate – that is, my study needs to move into the domain of the 'real' that generates a phenomenon. This entailed that I take an approach in my study that moves me from what is knowable about UNIMA before and after the MIM governance reforms (transitive knowledge) to begin to tentatively identify the intransitive mechanisms from which UNIMA governance emerged. The premise being that 'real' properties that constitute UNIMA governance exist but remain unknown. The process whereby I move from a description of the experiences (empirical), the multiple events of UNIMA governance (actual), to the identification of the mechanisms at the level of the real regarding higher education governance is described in detail in Chapter Three.

[1] In the context of Critical Realism according to Danermark et. al. (2002), structure is used to refer to constitutive properties of an object whereas mechanism is something which is efficacious.

The notions of a layered ontology and generative mechanisms mentioned in the preceding sections have however received criticism. Kivinen and Piiroinen (2004), operating from a pragmatist perspective, observed that the idea that there is a world existent outside of humankind's conception is useless unless fleshed out with such qualifiers as: for whom, when, and under which conditions (Kivinen & Piiroinen, 2004). These authors argued that there is nothing knowable out there which is independent of linguistic description such that ontologies should be construed as a language that helps make sense of what is happening and not something abstract[2]. Secondly, the authors further argued that in social science it is hard to pin-point particular generative mechanisms as responsible for an event because there are constellations of causal mechanisms. In this connection, any attempt to gain knowledge through investigating the generative mechanisms is of no use, according to them, as it will not result in narrowing down to specific causal mechanisms. However, these arguments by pragmatists are problematic from Critical Realists' perspective because as Danermark et. al. (2002) put it, they reduce science to knowledge about what is already known or observed.

I believe Kivinen & Piiroinen (2004) here present strong arguments worth serious consideration and I revisit them towards the end of Chapter Three when I discuss the limitations of this study. But be that as it may, Danermark et. al. (2002:20) have observed that ordinarily in life, we often hear such insights as: 'something is going on below the surface' or 'there must be something else behind this', whenever a phenomenon occurs. This is common in my own society in Malawi, particularly when people are puzzled with a phenomenon that has just occurred and is just beyond their comprehension or description. By asking these questions, they are asking transcendental questions; that is, they do not only want to understand what is experienced but they are acknowledging, whether knowingly or

[2] The term abstract is used here to mean something divorced from reality and not something inherent in the object as described by Critical Realists.

unknowingly, that there are events beyond what has been experienced that can help to explain that phenomenon. This is where the scientific approach of Critical Realism is useful. Critical Realists therefore inspire social researchers to understand and describe phenomena before they can explain them. This is why both Collier (1994) and Archer (1995) argue that you cannot explain something that has not been identified.

Furthermore, the ontological premise advanced by Critical Realists above has also received criticism from Kemp (2005) who has argued that beliefs about the stratified features of the social world by Critical Realists are merely philosophical as they are not grounded in a successful scientific inquiry. This, according to Kemp (2005), is unlike similar claims made by Bhaskhar regarding Physics and Chemistry which were preceded by a successful scientific inquiry. In Kemp's (2005) view the omission of testing the ontological premise through experimentation as was done in Physics and Chemistry renders ontology as a weak guide to social science inquiry.

However, from the studies that have been carried out so far in social science using the ontological premise of Critical Realism, the results have been credible. Implying, the theory does provide a reliable scientific premise for social science research. To many researchers in social science, Critical Realism is used as an under-labourer. Meaning, it allows researchers to apply other theories in the course of their investigation, which in my view re-affirms the firm theoretical base it claims to have.

In the context of this study the ontological realism provided me a descriptive framework for understanding higher education governance in general and UNIMA governance in particular through the literature search. Furthermore, the ontological framework assisted me to apply

Social Realist theory in attempting to extricate the dispositional properties that account for the emergent governance practices in UNIMA after implementation of governance reforms from the analysis of the data I collected through the observations and interviews I conducted. This helped me to pinpoint the conditioning mechanisms for UNIMA governance to be what it is at the time of this thesis. Admittedly, there were a constellation of causal mechanisms that I had to identify and undoubtedly my success in this regard has been partial. However, through the methodology of retroduction (Danermark, et. al., 2002) which is elaborated on in Chapter Three, I was able to hone in at least on some of the particular generative mechanisms that can tentatively be identified to have been responsible for UNIMA governance practices.

As indicated in section 2.1 Critical Realism is grounded in three theses: ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationality (Groff 2004). What I have described so far in this section is the first thesis, ontological realism. I now wish to turn to the second thesis in section 2.1.2, epistemological relativism in the pursuit of demonstrating why I chose Critical Realism as the study's Metatheory.

2.1.2 Epistemological relativism

Bhaskar's (2008) epistemological relativism thesis rests on the question of how knowledge is accessed; that is, having established the structure of the object under investigation (the ontological premise), scientists must be able to explain it. This is why Archer (1995) has argued that ontology, the nature of reality, must inform the methodology. We should resolve ontology and therefore find a way of explaining it, which is methodology. Epistemological relativism is therefore about the *how* of the phenomena. Furthermore, epistemological relativism admits the fallibility of humans. The understanding being that while Critical Realists take the position of ontological realism, as discussed in section 2.1.1 above, they also

accept that our knowledge of this world is always partial and fallible. They thus accept that at the level of epistemology, or knowledge of the world, relativism is inevitable.

This is the case because according to Critical Realists knowledge claims are 'socio-historical artefacts' which are produced and not discovered. Furthermore such claims change over time (Groff, 2004). According to Bhaskar (2008), knowledge creation does not have to start from scratch. No researcher enters a study as a tabula rasa: a researcher always brings knowledge to the creation of new knowledge. This is the knowledge that is given to us through social transmission as *transitive knowledge*. This transmitted knowledge is then reproduced or partially transformed using the cognitive tools at our disposal. Knowledge generation therefore is the outcome of transformation of existing ideas and not the production of new ones.

By this it is claimed by both Groff (2004) and Collier (1994) that Bhaskar avoided two fallacies that underpin many scientific explanations: The first being the idea that knowledge is passed on to us by the world (ontic fallacy) which was the preoccupation of many social scientists of positivist persuasion and the second being the view that what we know about the world is the world (epic fallacy). This in a way is to suggest that we do not have to assume that the transitive dimension is the same as the intransitive dimension. This does not mean however that Bhaskar completely dismissed ontological and epistemological fallacies. As clarified by Bryant (2011), what Bhaskar did in the thesis of epistemological relativism is to enlighten us to avoid mixing questions of '*what*' with questions of '*how*' and vice versa in scientific research.

Viewed from the foregoing, with epistemological relativism, Critical Realists encourage social researchers to use transitive knowledge of that which they are investigating, that is knowledge of the world, to access the intransitive dimension. Stated differently, the Critical Realist perspective inspires social researchers not to be complacent by thinking that all that is there is what is already known, nor to be arrogant about what knowledge had been produced beforehand. Researchers should utilise their experience from the transitive dimension to interrogate what is in the intransitive dimension. That is to say, they should find out what is not known about the world from what is already known.

Epistemological relativism, in this study, is about building from the knowledge already available in literature in the form of theories or transitive knowledge to investigate UNIMA governance, while conceding the partial and fallible nature of the attempt to identify the intransitive mechanisms. In section 2.2 I present the methodological framework (analytical and explanatory frameworks – pre-existing knowledge) that guided data collection, data coding, data analysis and interpretation of the findings in this study. Groff (2004) agrees with this approach as she considers theories as analytical tools that help scientists to understand, explain and make sense of events in the world. It is from this premise that this study utilizes Social Realist Theory as both the analytical and explanatory framework.

Critical Realism in this regard, illuminated the research methodology approach that I took in this study. As Archer states: 'Ontology informs methodology – ontology without methodology is deaf and dumb; methodology without ontology is blind; only if the two go hand in hand can we avoid a discipline in which the deaf and the blind lead in different direction, both of which end in *cul-de-sacs*' (Archer, 1995:28). This demands a movement

from the relativist realm of epistemology - what we know, towards the realm of ontology - what *is* it to be known.

A problem emerges from the first two theses expounded in section 2.1.1 and section 2.1.2. If there is reality outside of human experience (ontological realism) but we are fallible and partial in our conception of this reality (epistemological relativism), then how do we ensure that what we have to say as researchers has any merit? This issue is addressed by the third thesis of Critical Realism which is judgmental rationality.

2.1.3 Judgmental rationality

According to Bhaskar (1998), the third thesis of Critical Realism is judgmental rationality. Bhaskar in his arguments regarding judgmental rationality, cautions us to be mindful that the choice of which theory to use should be based on or be in accordance with reason or logic, indicating that not all theories are useful when understanding a phenomenon. Some theories are better than others in their explanatory value in relation to the object under investigation. In this regard, Bhaskar (1998) urges social researchers to choose theories in their studies through a reasoned approach that must be determined by the logic of the research question. By this it is implied that there are several theories available to us. Our choice of which theory to use should be determined by the research question. In my view Archer (1995:27) drives this point home succinctly when she argues that: 'different ontologies furnish different regulative principles about the methodology appropriate to do the explaining.'

In the context of this study, as indicated in section 2.1, I utilized Social Realist Theory particularly the morphogenetic framework as my analytical and explanatory framework. As indicated in Chapter One, my research question is: What are the emergent governance

practices in UNIMA arising from the implementation from 1997 to 2013 of governance reforms and what has enabled or constrained them? The Critical Realist framework as explained in the preceding sections inspired me to navigate the theoretical landscape mindful of the above research question and led me to choose Social Realist Theory as my main analytical and explanatory theoretical framework to guide my study. In section 2.2 I introduce this theory and demonstrate why it was chosen.

2.2 Social Realism

As will be recalled from the discussions in the previous section, Critical Realism provided the ontological anchorage to this study. Critical Realism thus offers the Metatheory for the study. It is to Social Realism, which is entirely compatible with Critical Realism that I turn for the study's analytical and explanatory framework. In this section, I present Margaret Archer's (1995, 2003a; 2003b) Social Realist Theory from the perspective of the key concepts of morphogenesis, analytical dualism and institutional configuration and their situational logics as applied to my research topic.

2.2.1 Morphogenetic perspectives

The morphogenetic perspective is an explanatory programme which Archer developed aimed at linking the description (ontology) and explanation (practical theory) of social phenomena (Archer, 1995). Essentially, the morphogenetic perspective is premised on analytical dualism (discussed in section 2.2.3) and advances the notions that there are internal and necessary relationships within and between social structures; causal influences are brought to bear by social structures on social interactions. Furthermore, there are internal and necessary relationships within and between cultures; causal influences are brought to bear by culture on social interactions. Causal relationships between groups and individuals at the level of social

and cultural interaction elaborate upon the composition of social and cultural structures (Archer, 1995). Advancing from Bhaskar's philosophy that objects of nature were stratified and multi-layered, Archer (1995) further argued that society was a composition of the components of structure, culture and agents.

2.2.1.1 Structure

Social Realists consider structures as the material resources that form a society. For Archer (1995), structures are the material resources such as wealth, sanctions and expertise that govern human relations in society. In this understanding, all human actions revolve around the relations agents have with material resources at their disposal. According to Archer (1995; 2003a), structures predate people (agents). Society involuntarily places agents into structures that pre-existed them. Mutch (2004) added that these resources are not provided in abundance; that is, to the level that they exceed their requirements. Because of this, material resources involuntaristically place some agents into privileged positions whereas others are placed in a disadvantaged position. The limited supply of material resources thus determines the positioning of people in society (Mutch, 2004).

Giddens (1979) broadened the definition of structure by arguing that structures are the sanctioning aspects of a social system. This is the centrality of power - the capability agents possess to attain their will even at the expense of other agents (Giddens 1979:64). Giddens (1979) also defined structures as collective properties in society. Resources are thus 'bases' or 'vehicles' of power which comprise structures of domination, drawn upon by parties to interaction and reproduced through the duality of structure" (Giddens 1979:69). Structure also includes the existence of memory traces about how things are to be done (said or written) held by social actors – agents. They are social practices that agents organize through

the recursive mobilization of their memories as well as the capabilities agents possess that enable them to produce or reproduce social practices (Giddens (1979:64). Giddens in all the above definitions was however criticised for having failed to acknowledge that structures in the context of the morphogenetic theory involve relationships (Porpora, 2013). Furthermore, Archer (1995) criticised Giddens for having conflated the notion of structure, culture and agency. Archer (1995) had argued, as discussed in section 2.2.3 that there is need to analyse these separately to know the influence of each in the configurations of societies.

In the context of the morphogenetic perspective therefore, structures are examined as contexts that influence human behaviour in relation to the material resources such as wealth and power at their disposal at a particular time in point. It is the limited supply of material resources that determines the positioning of people and the various roles they play in society (Archer, 1995; Mutch, 2004) and by extension the organization. That is why, according to Porpora (2013), in the morphogenetic theory we also examine structures as the relationships between social actors and social positions in a given time. It is for this reason that in the context of the morphogenetic theory the understanding is that for agency, depending on their placement in a society, structures enable and constrain their activities.

In the context of this study the structures that were my concern were the governance relationships (sanctions and power distribution in UNIMA) before and after the MIM reform implementation at systems and institutional level on one hand and at institutional and disciplinary level on the other hand. (The categorisation of governance into systems, institutional and disciplinary levels is described in section 4.2 of Chapter Four). Specifically, I was interested in knowing how decision-making was arranged in UNIMA. That is how decisions that relate to administrative, financial and academic matters in UNIMA were

organised. I was equally interested in understanding the bases of power; that is, where such powers were derived from. These were important because of the perceived symmetrical and internal relationships they seem to possess in relations to governance in general.

2.2.1.2 Culture

According to Archer (1995), culture comprises theories and beliefs that a society holds at any particular given time. Porpora (2013), expounding on Archer's (1995) definitions, argued that culture is what is collectively produced by agency but which guides individual actions of person or agents in society. Therefore, according to Porpora (2013), culture is the values people hold; the ideas people have about what is good or bad for them in a given society at a given point in time but collectively produced by the society.

In this regard, according to the morphogenetic theory culture has an objective existence (Archer 1995); that is although it is collectively produced by agency, at some point it escapes its producers and acts back upon them. This is why culture is considered to have relative autonomy in the sense that it has emergent powers, independent of people. Its components exist autonomously and relate with one another to act back on the people. In the context of this study culture is examined in relation to the ideas, beliefs, principles and ways of doing things perceived to characterise governance in general.

2.2.1.3 Structure and Culture

According to Archer (1995) and Mutch (2004), both structure and culture are relatively enduring. According to Archer (2003a :262):

> Structures and culture impinge upon us without our compliance, consent or complicity. The structures into which we are born and the cultures which we inherit mean that we are involuntarily situated beings. We have become English speakers before we can decide what language we would like to speak, and no other can then become our mother- tongue.

It is this relative endurance of structure and culture and the fact that it creates the situation in which we are involuntaristically placed that gives the society its state of being (Archer, 1995). Put simply, structures are the objective parts of the society whereas culture is the subjective part of the society (Porpora, 2013). Together Archer (1995) refers to them as the 'parts' of the society in relations to the 'people'. In Critical Realist' terms structure and culture could be construed as the constitutive properties of the society. They are the essence of the society.

Most fundamentally, because resources are not provided in abundance and not all people can also hold similar beliefs and ideas at a given point, the supply of material resources and the differences in opinion that people hold determines the positioning of people in society and mediates their social relationships. In turn, according to Archer (1995; 2003a; 2003b) and Mutch (2004) both structure *and* culture shape the society. But structures and culture do not act as hydraulics according to Archer (1995; 2003a). For structure and culture to be efficacious, that is to have the effect of shaping the society, they must stand in relation to agents' actions or intentions. The question to ask here is how is this done?

2.2.1.4 Agents

Agents are people operating as social beings. In morphogenetic theory, people are stratified using analytical dualism into persons, agents and actors, on the basis of how they participate in the social interaction in society (Archer, 1995; 2003b; Mutch, 2004). As persons, people

can be construed as biological entities (humans) emergent from but not reducible to their material constitution (Archer, 1995). For example, I, Tarsizius, can be analysed as a biological being that can fall ill and hence require medical facilities in society to support my life. According to Archer (2003) however, in Social Realist terms a person is defined as the continuous self-conscious of an individual human being - the 'I'. Self-consciousness is the essence or the unique aspect of people.

Persons acquire the identity of *agents* when their self-conscious enables them to relate with structure and culture not as individuals but as collectivities. Through involuntaristic placement, structures predispose persons to particular collectives, that is, for example, either as males or females, or middle class or the workers and sharing similar life chances in the form of privileges or lack of them. In this regard, persons as agency become social beings and they are always referred to in plural (Archer, 1995; 2003; Mutch, 2004). From the above example, the mere fact that I have embarked on this research study, Tarsizius as a researcher shares similar experiences with other social researchers pursuing PhD studies by research. Therefore, there are issues that affect research students as agents that inevitably will affect Tarsizius not as an individual but as a PhD research student.

Furthermore, agents are also stratified into two sub-groups as corporate agents with power and influence, and primary agents who do not possess such powers and influence – basically as subjects (Mutch, 2004: 433). According to Archer (2003b) all agents are initially involuntaristically placed within primary agency. But, we are not primary agents in all our doings. In some of what we do we are not primary agents. It is therefore argued that through their reflexivity, a phenomenon described later in section 2.2.1.5, and situational placement, agents develop power and capacity to influence changes to their situations. Not all agents

develop these capacities, those that do as collectives, are considered as having corporate agency and those who do not possess or develop such capability have primary agency.

These placements are not rigid. Similarly, through self-consciousness as individual human beings we also develop capacities as individual persons, which enable us to occupy certain roles in the society. In this regard, persons are considered as social actors. Extending the same example I used about myself as Tarsizius, when I complete my studies I can be employed as a supervisor of postgraduate students. In this regard I shall belong to a category of influential agents of supervisors for PhD programmes such as at Rhodes University. That is to say, I will form a category of agents known as corporate agency with a degree of influence and power over my postgraduate students. But, at the moment I am a PhD research student that means I am in a group of primary agents. Basically, as primary agents, we as research students are subject to the direction and guidance of our supervisors. The degree of agency as possible primary agents is enabled or constrained by status because even within this category there would be variability. As a doctoral student, for example, I have far more agency over my research than I did as an undergraduate student.

Again as Tarsizius, where I am working at the moment in Malawi, I am a project coordinator of the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST). One may want to study the role of a project coordinator in a new University. She or he would not in this regard be interested in the role holder, but the role itself.

In summary therefore, Tarsizius, depending on the interest of a particular researcher, can be analysed as a human being who can love and be loved (person) or as part of PhD students' supervisors (corporate agency) or as part of PhD students subject to the direction of

supervisors and the rules of the University (primary agents) or as a project coordinator within the role he plays at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (actor). This is a simplified way of illustrating how a person can be analysed according to the concept of agency in the morphogenetic theory.

The analysis of agents in this manner is important because it is understood in morphogenetic theory that persons, depending on how they are analysed, have an objective existence with emergent powers. That is to say, people will behave differently as persons (with biological needs), or as agents (either as collectives with power and influence or without power and influences) or as social actors (performing a particular role in society). In morphogenetic theory however, the concern is mainly on people as agency because it is only when they act as collectivities or as social agency that they become socially efficacious – that is they can engage in activities that will impact on the society and hence become an interest for social researchers (Archer, 1995). It is in the foregoing context that UNIMA stakeholders were examined in this study. However, it is important to elaborate my understanding of what I mean when I say it is only when agents act as collectivities or as social agents that they become efficacious.

2.2.1.5 Structure, Culture and Agents

According to Archer (1995) both structures and culture relate to agents. That is to say, there cannot be social systems without people (agents). For Archer, this does not entail that people create social structures, a research error that she characterises as upwards conflation (Archer, 1995; 2003b), where power is accorded to agency without an acknowledgement of the constraining and enabling effects of structure and culture. Nor does it mean the reification of structures such that without them people will not exist, a research error that Archer

characterises as downwards conflation (Archer, 1995; 2003b) - where power is accorded to structures without an acknowledgement of the role of agency in reinforcing or changing such structures. It is rather to say that structures and culture predate agents and create the necessary material conditions for the sustenance of them.

According to the morphogenetic theory building on Critical Realists' persuasion, what is observed about society is part of the story. There are always generative mechanisms in the form of historical antecedents that shape society. Society as we experience it is thus an emergent product of generative mechanisms at the level of the real, which in social science has historical antecedents. Social researchers should therefore be interested to know about such histories since they account for events and what is experienced in a given society at a given point in time. This means that in UNIMA, before the initiation of the reforms there were structural and cultural properties that conditioned UNIMA governance, and which predated the governance reforms that were initiated in 1997. These historical antecedents in the structural and cultural domain of UNIMA governance context are an important concern within this study and I examine them in detail in Chapter Five.

Secondly, according to Archer (1995; 2003a; 2003b), agents as actors are involuntarily introduced in a society that had already been predetermined by others that have been there before them. According to Archer (1995), this means that structure and culture offer agents the material and ideational resources for carrying out (or constraining) their individual freedoms/projects or group projects. In the context of my study, within the context of UNIMA governance prior to the reforms, these were the material and ideational mechanisms that enabled and constrained agents in UNIMA period before 1997, which I consider to have led the governance reforms to be initiated.

Thirdly, according to Archer (1995; 2003a), agents have a reflective mind, which gives them the power to condition structures and culture. It is pointed out that through reflexivity agents have reasons for their action. Furthermore, agents are endowed with the natural capability to 'explain' their actions or behaviour and the reasons they attach to their conduct. Having a reflective mind therefore implies that human beings can justify their actions or inactions or behaviours (Archer, 1995, 2003a). According to Giddens (1979:57), agents' reflective minds enable them to discursively articulate or rationalize their actions or behaviours in the context of existing knowledge (known rules), which also incorporates unconscious elements of motivation or the unacknowledged conditions of actions.

According to Archer (1995:283), reflexivity is fundamentally what makes persons conscious beings. They are the essence of agency. Without reflexivity we cannot talk of persons as social beings according to this understanding. In this perspective, reflexivity becomes a causal power because it has cause-effect in the sense that it influences the behaviour of agents in the social world. Actions of agency emerge from the 'internal conversation' (Elder-Vass, 2007), which is a catalyst for the regeneration or elaboration of a given society. Through reflexivity, agents inhabit tendencies that have the potential to alter the context they inherit and within which they operate. This means that agents, through the process of internal conversation and as they relate with other agents as well as the parts of the society (structures and culture), would find reasons to alter their material and ideational resources, a process which is referred to as social conditioning (Archer, 2003a). It is this process, according to Archer (1995; 2003b), that brings about emergent properties of structure (structural emergent properties) and culture (cultural emergent properties) which eventually leads to

transformation known as elaboration or the perpetuation of a society's given form known as regeneration.

Fourthly, Archer (2003a) argues that the structural emergent properties and cultural emergent properties have the effect of transforming agents. What this means is that the effect of the structural emergent properties and cultural emergent properties predisposes agents to an altered situation to which they react differently through their reflexivity and self-consciousness. Agents who view the altered situational context as providing them with some gains (enabling) have the tendency of wanting to perpetuate that situation whilst agents who find the changed context dissatisfying (constraining) tend to work towards altering the same. In this regard, 'Frustration and gratification are therefore the basic affective responses to constraints and enablements' (Archer, 2003a:264). This process also conditions agency or personal emergent properties and leads to either the elaboration of a given society, which is known as morphogenesis, or to regeneration of a given society, which is known as morphostasis. Furthermore, in a given society the emergent properties of structure and culture also act on agents thereby transforming them through a process Archer (1995) referred to as double morphogenesis.

The above understanding helped me inquire into the situation that existed in UNIMA in 1995 when reforms were being initiated. It also helped me to answer the following research question: What were the objectives of the reforms in the governance of UNIMA? In Chapter Five, I analyse the conditions at the point prior to the reforms, including the intentions of the agents. In the process I identify a disjuncture. It is this disjuncture that I thought can explain why UNIMA embarked on governance reforms of the nature it took and hence my ongoing curiosity during my undertaking of this study because this disjuncture was unknown to me at

the time I was embarking on this study. The point to stress here is that whatever the intentions the UNIMA agents had in 1995, it emerged from antecedent interactions the former had with the parts (structural and cultural properties). Thus some properties of the parts were enabling and some were constraining of the full realization of agents' 'projects'. Drawing on the Critical Realism under labouring this study, it was clear that there were some frustrations with the status quo and these acted as causal mechanisms that triggered the need for change. This culminated in what are known as governance reforms which are the concern of my study.

The processes that took place, however, might not have produced the intended outcome as understood by the agents. This is so because, according to Archer (2003a), unconscious motives operate outside the range of agents' understanding that account for the unintended consequences. In most cases, according to Archer (1995), the unintended consequences result in contexts that are out of synchronicity with the intentions of agents, a phenomenon referred to as emergent. An elaboration of the notion of the emergent is necessary at this stage.

2.2.2 Emergent properties

Emergent properties are by definition changes or interruptions that occur in social settings with irreducible causal powers (Corning, 2002). By irreducible it is meant that emergent properties have features not previously observed in the system. It also means that while emergent properties can be traced to their originating components, they are irreducible to it. Emergent properties, according to Corning (2002), suit what Aristotle described as the whole which is over and above its parts and not just the sum of the total. Elder-Vass (2007:28) elaborates this point when he explained that emergent 'is the idea that a whole can have properties (or powers) that are not possessed by its parts'. Corning (2002) stressed that an

emergent phenomenon should not be confused with a resultant. A resultant can be traced from its component parts because a resultant is an outcome of a complex sequence of events, while an emergent is not.

A good example of an emergent, given by Corning (2002), is that of water. When constituent atoms of hydrogen and oxygen are chemically combined, they produce a third substance known as water with its own properties different from and with separate properties to both hydrogen and oxygen. In this regard, water becomes an emergent phenomenon with its new levels of reality. Corning (2002) further elaborates on emergent by differentiating it from synergy. According to Corning, synergy arises from the interaction of two or more agents or forces whose combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects. An example of sand is given to clarify this point. If sand is combined, it will result in a sand pile. This means if one has seen sand, she/he can as well believe that one has seen the sand pile, which is not the case with an emergent property (Corning, 2002).

According to the morphogenetic theory, while agents can condition structures and culture depending on their actions or intentions, the outcome does not always align with the initial intentions of agents as there are always variations or differentiations, which are explained as emergent properties. Interestingly, according to the morphogenetic theory by Archer (1995), it is these emergent properties that are responsible for the elaboration of social structures and culture.

In the context of this study it is acknowledged that UNIMA agents may have had objectives that they intended to achieve when they were introducing the governance reforms in 1997. On the basis of the arguments being advanced now, it is possible that there were unintended

consequences of the governance reforms that were initiated in 1997 which are not easily accessible. That is why the focus in this study is on investigating these emergent governance practices in UNIMA. An understanding of these emergent governance practices in UNIMA and their enabling and constraining mechanisms helped me account for the form of the elaboration or regeneration of UNIMA governance in 2013.

For the morphogenetic theory to serve as a reliable explanatory tool for social research, it must identify specific properties within a given time and context within structure, culture and agency that can plausibly account for the elaboration or regeneration of the phenomenon being studied in society (Archer, 1995). Stated simply, morphogenetic theory must provide answers to what led to morphogenesis or morphostasis experienced at any given point in time. Admittedly, because a social phenomenon exists in an open system, such answers would be in the form of tendencies. For this process to be possible, the morphogenetic theory advances the notion of analytical dualism. That is the separate analysis of properties of structure, culture and agents mindful that properties of each have relative autonomy. The section that follows (2.2.3) examines this notion in detail.

2.2.3 Analytical dualism and morphogenetic cycle

According to Archer (1995), morphogenetic theory's analytical dualism approach stresses the point that the three emergent properties of structure, culture and agency must be analysed separately since each has its own properties and its cycles have relative autonomy and continuity and also because they operate in an open society. Secondly, structure, culture and agency must be analysed in phases as a cycle because they each can be out of synchronicity with one another and thus bring about different outcomes at different times, for example one

fostering elaboration whilst the other perpetuating regeneration at any given point in time (Archer, 1995: Mutch, 2004; Elder-Vass, 2007; Porpora, 2013).

In this regard, to understand social elaboration or regeneration (morphogenesis or morphostasis) of society, there is a need to analyse first, the context of society at a particular point in time, known in the Social Realist literature by the shorthand of T1 – which is the structures and culture that pre-existed the agents active during the study period and therefore formed the historical context of society into which all agents were involuntarily placed. For it is the involuntaristic placement which exposes different groups of agents to different opportunities which in turn provide the directional guidance to different groups of agents to entertain action or intentions of either sustaining the pre-existent context or altering it or doing nothing about it. An understanding of the conditioning of such a context therefore is important in the analysis of changes that may occur in a society (Archer, 1995: Mutch, 2004) and, in the context of this study, in UNIMA governance.

Equally important to analyse are the relationships that ensue with time as a result of the interactions between the parts on the one hand with agents on the other hand, as well as the internal and reciprocal relationships that emerge among structure, culture and agency as separate domains at the point of their intersection. This is the position referred to by Archer (1995) in morphogenetic cycle as T2 – T3. It is Archer's (1995) submission that within this intersection, emergent properties are observed in the form of first level emergent properties. The first level emergent properties so generated, which are out of synchronicity and thus not reducible to the original structures and culture, impact on agency differently which in turn also alter the original composition of agency.

Crucial in this morphogenetic cycle is Archer's assertion that at every cycle emergent properties of their own type (*sui generis)* are disposed in the register of society, and which either elaborate society's given form (morphogenesis) or preserve it in its given form at a given point in time (morphostasis) (Archer, 1995). This 'point in time' is known as T4.

It is through the separate analysis of the relative relations of structural, cultural and agential entities and their emergent properties over some specific space and time that enables social researchers to account for the changes that have occurred in a given society and at a particular point in time (T4) and attribute the change to either dynamics in the structural or cultural domain of a given social context. Ultimately, this is what I am aiming at achieving at the conclusion of this study to account for the emergent governance practices that shall have ensued in UNIMA after the governance reforms.

Figure 2a to c graphically demonstrates the morphogenetic cycles as per Archer's (1995) thesis.

A. Society:

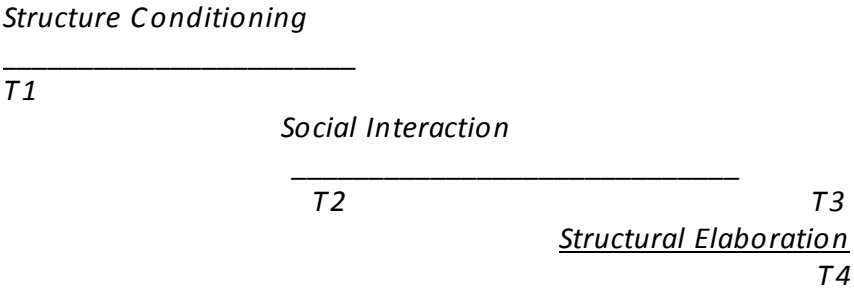

Figure 2-a: The morphogenetic cycle (Archer, 1995) depicting structural elaboration process

B. Society:

Culture Conditioning

_____

T1

Socio-Cultural Interaction

_____

T2 *T3*

Cultural Elaboration

Figure 2-b: The morphogenetic cycle (Archer, 1995) depicting cultural elaboration process

C. Society:

Socio-Cultural conditioning of groups

_____

T1

Group Interaction

_____

T2 *T3*

Group Elaboration

_____

T4

Figure 2-c: The morphogenetic cycle (Archer, 1995) depicting process for agency elaboration

Figure 2d to 2f is my mind-mapping representation of how this theory is applied in the context of this study. Figure 2d depicts UNIMA governance situation as I visualised it in the period before 1997. This is the period before the governance reforms were initiated. Figure 2e depicts the situation of UNIMA governance after the reforms were implemented – in the period between 1997 and 2013. The connecting points of the shapes represent the interaction of the governance reforms with the pre-existing structures, culture and agents. It depicts also the perceived view that the reforms might have had an influence on structures, cultures and agents in UNIMA, a view that would need to be investigated and detailed through the analysis. The pointed curves demonstrate the interactions of new structures, culture and agents with the old. It was assumed in this regard that the reforms were introduced to alter the

composition of the parts and the people in UNIMA with some intentions in mind. Therefore, the interaction hypothesized here is not restricted between the new and old structures, cultures and agents but it also involves internal interactions among new forms of structures, cultures and agents emergent from the above interaction, producing emergent practices in the form of governance practices unknown to me at this moment. It is this which forms the properties of UNIMA governance mind-mapped in Figure 2f. Figure 2f is what this study aims at revealing. This is either the elaborated or the regenerated situation of UNIMA governance context in the form of practices after the implementation of the MIM governance reforms. The process of revealing these emergent practices are discussed in Chapter Three and involve digging into the past, the antecedent historical events from 1995 (T1), through the implementation of reform between 1997 to 2013 (T2-T3) in order to make sense of the governance practices (T4) in 2013.

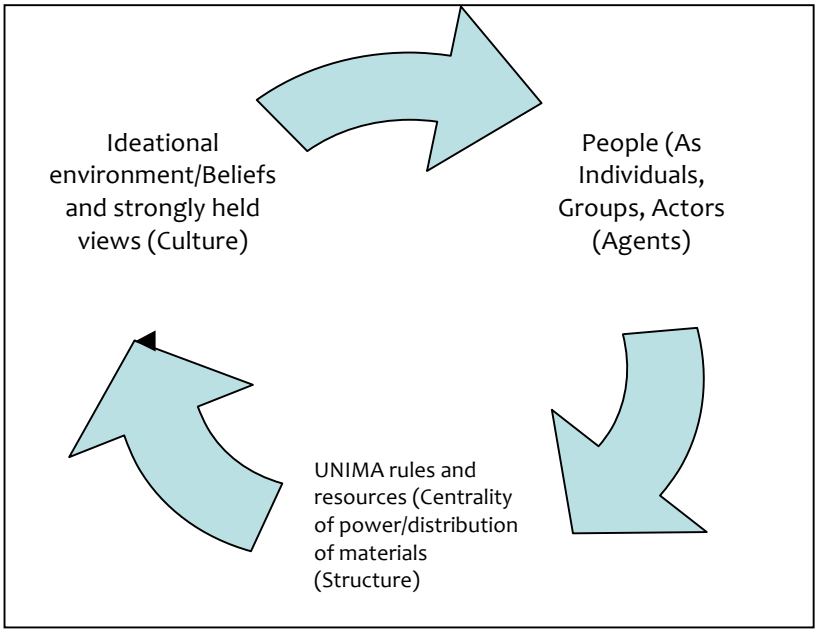

Figure 2-d: T1 UNIMA governance structures, culture and agents in 1995

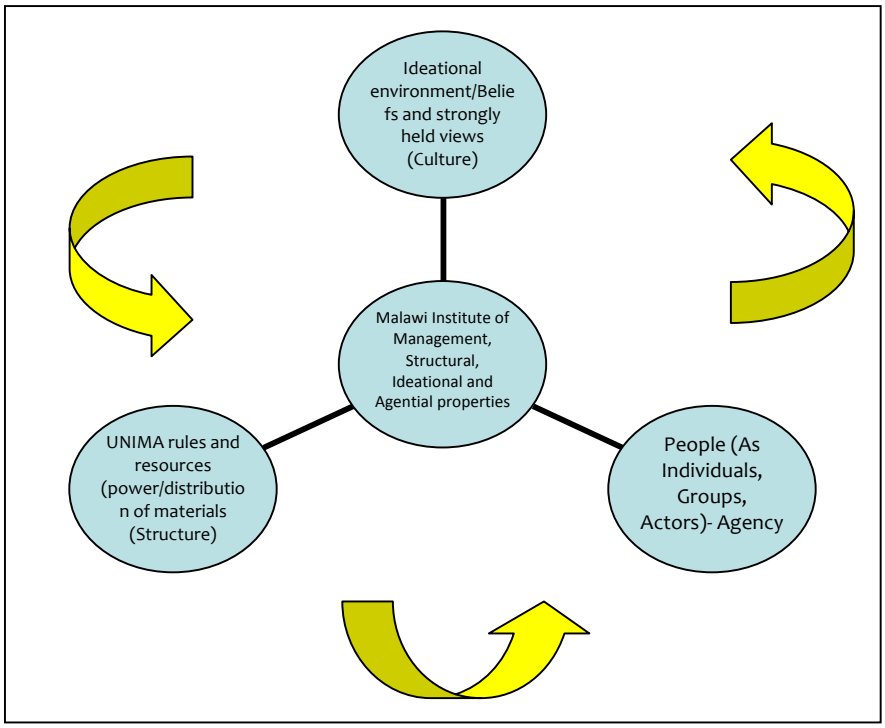

Figure 2-e: T2 – T3 (UNIMA governance period between 1995 to 2013)

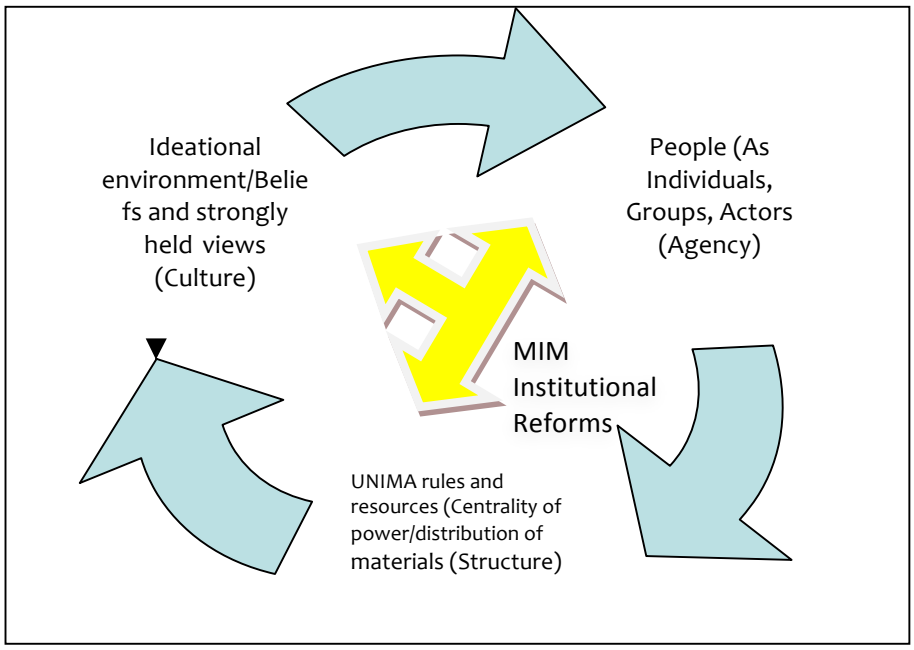

Figure 2-f: T4 UNIMA governance structures, culture and agents in 2013

In this study I am investigating the emergent governance practices in UNIMA, which is essentially the elaboration or the regeneration of UNIMA governance practices following the implementation of the governance reform measures. I was thus specifically interested to understand the conditioning governance practices in UNIMA because these are the ones that shaped the emergent UNIMA governance practices in 2013. I was also interested in analysing how structures and culture, both the pre-existing and the ensuing ones (emergent), have enabled or constrained agency to bring about the governance context at T4 namely the UNIMA governance context in 2013. The morphogenetic cycle therefore offered me the necessary investigative and explanatory tools in this research project. The concept of analytical dualism informed the approach I took as I examined UNIMA structures, culture and agents independent of each other and their relationship in the UNIMA period before and after the governance reforms. I also examined the deeper layers of historical antecedent events to make sense of what is experienced. The morphogenetic theory offered me useful tools to analyse and explain the emergent governance context that obtained in the UNIMA governance system of 2013. The theory furthermore enabled me to account for the morphogenesis/morphostasis that was observed in UNIMA governance system in 2013. There is thus a symmetrical necessary link between my research question and the Social Realist Theory.

2.2.4 Archer's Institutional Configuration and their situational logics

I relied upon Archer's institutional configuration model to explain the morphogenesis and morphostasis of structures and culture taking place in UNIMA. Archer (1995) theorized the various 'situational logics' that can predictably be anticipated to arise from the reconfiguration of institutional structures and cultural systems. It is argued that agents mediate the process of change due to the context in which they find themselves in the

institution, their vested interests and the degree of interpretive freedom they enjoy which enables them to weigh costs and benefits (through internal conversation) and find justification for any course of action they are to undertake (Archer, 1995, 2003a). Furthermore, existing institutional structural and cultural emergent properties provide the context within which agents' intentions and actions are realised. This context either enables or constrains agents' intentions and actions.

However, the context then gets shaped and reshaped by agents' intentions and actions is a continuous and a recycling process which, according to Archer (1995, 2003a); Mutch (2004); and Elder-Vass (2007), leads agents to manifest different behaviours at different times and contexts. These behaviours have been theorized by Archer (1995) to manifest different situational logics depending upon whether the emergent ideas or structures are construed as necessary complementarities or contingent complementarities or necessary incompatibilities or contingent incompatibilities to the vested interests of agents.

Table 2.2 summarizes Archer's hypothesis regarding how the process of institutional configuration and their situational logics works. I return to elaborate on this table in Chapter Three when I discuss its use as an interpretive/explanatory framework in this study.

Institutional/Ideational configurations determining morphostasis/morphogenesis	**Conditioning processes**	**Logical consequence**
Necessary complementarities	Mutually co-existing institutions or cultures are sustained despite incursion of new ideas/structures as a result of necessary institutional or cultural linkages that complement each other.	Protection
Necessary incompatibilities.	New ideas/structures create tension as constitutions of mutually co-existing institutions or cultures are not compatible to them.	Compromise
Contingent incompatibilities	Incursions (institutional or ideational) lead to configurations of society as they are at variance with the existing structures or culture of the organization	Elimination
Contingent compatibilities	Incursions (institutional or ideational) lead to configurations of society as they are compatible to the existing dominant/influential structures or culture of the society.	Opportunity

Table 2.2: Situational logic of social conditioning (Archer, 1995:218-245).

In this way, as new ideas and structures are introduced, they either reinforce or conflict with existing structures and cultures. This then generates a logical consequence on the part of agents. From the foregoing perspective, it can be inferred that what would provide generative

guidance for any course of action by agents would depend on whether the emergent governance context has been understood by agents to have provided the necessary complementarities or contingent complementarities or necessary incompatibilities or contingent incompatibilities to the situations agents find themselves in at different context and moment in time. In the context of this study, the above institutional configuration framework gave me the explanatory tools with which I interpreted the behaviour of the UNIMA agents in the evolving governance context as governance reforms were being implemented. The actual use of this framework as an analytical tool is discussed in Chapter Three.

2.3 Conclusion

This Chapter has introduced Critical Realism as the overarching theoretical framework underpinning the scientific assumptions and research practice in this study. It has demonstrated how the Critical Realism perspectives of ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationality (Groff, 2004) have framed this study, including the choice of the methodological framework used. The chapter has also presented Social Realism both as the analytical and explanatory framework of the study and demonstrated its alignment to the Critical Realist position. The ways the above theories have been used in the implementation of this study is what is known as the methodology, which is the focus of Chapter Three to which I now turn.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In Chapter Two I introduced the theoretical framework of this study by explaining that the researcher's view of social reality is fundamental in formulating assumptions about knowledge and how such knowledge can be accessed. I introduced Critical Realism as central to the assumptions made in this study and as a precondition for the knowledge to be generated in this study. Critical Realism was thus introduced as a *Metatheory*. As already stated, this study is premised on the firm belief that we live in an open society which is stratified. Science is about accessing knowledge of what is observed and identifying the structures and mechanisms that generate that which is observed or experienced. In this context, reality is embedded in the domain of the empirical, the actual and the real (that is, the generative properties).

This chapter builds from this premise to introduce the methodology I utilise to move from the transitive knowledge to accessing the intransitive knowledge about higher education governance in general and UNIMA governance in particular. It is important to clarify here that there is a distinction between research methodology and research methods. As described by Henning et al (2004:36), a research method is how in a study one goes about doing one thing, for example, how one goes about collecting data. A methodology on the other hand, is when several methods are employed together to complement one another to answer a research question guided by a philosophical perspective; that is how one went about the whole process of investigation to answer the research question. This chapter is described as a research methodology chapter because it is aimed at outlining the various methods that were

employed in order to answer the research question posed. Put simply, this chapter explains how I went about accessing knowledge both in the transitive and intransitive domains.

My research question is: What are the emergent governance practices in UNIMA arising from the implementation from 2006 to 2013 of the governance reforms and what has enabled or constrained them? In this regard I intend to investigate the new governance practices that have emerged in the University of Malawi as the outcome of the governance reforms that were initiated in 1997. But I do not tease out the new governance practices that have emerged in UNIMA and stop there. From my research question, I also interrogate the context of UNIMA governance both before and during the period I have indicated I am interested to investigate (i.e. 1997 to 2013) in order to identify the possible mechanisms that have enabled and or constrained the governance practices in UNIMA whether from within the institution or from outside. By context, from Chapter Two, I mean the role the governance structure and culture have played in the emergent governance context. Because of this, it was thus imperative to me to begin my study by delving first into the domain of the empirical.

In order to probe into the domain of the empirical I also needed to understand the meaning that is attached to the term higher education governance. In Critical Realism these are the constitutive components that give higher education governance its objective existence. This was necessary because according to Collier (1994) and Danermark et.al. (2002), science in Critical Realism must emerge from the known to the unknown. I cannot therefore claim to state that I would like to study UNIMA governance before I describe what higher education governance is all about. In social sciences just as it is in the natural sciences one must have an ontological base; that is a concrete understanding of an object one is investigating. More importantly, science aimed at establishing transfactual conditions must develop from the

concrete to the abstract and back to the concrete[3]. The first part of this chapter that is in section 3.1 is dedicated to describing the methodology I took to access the concrete in the transitive dimension; that is to conceptualise higher education as a social phenomenon.

In the second part of this Chapter, that is section 3.2 to 3.5, I demonstrate how I accessed transitive knowledge both in the domain of the empirical and the domain of the actual on UNIMA governance using Social Realist Theory; that is having understood what higher education governance as a social phenomenon was all about from the premise of what others have described it to be (the domain of the empirical), it was necessary to inquire from the premise of the actual what properties constituted higher education governance practices at UNIMA. I had to utilise the Social Realist Theory in this respect, which I have described in detail in Chapter Two, because according to the Critical Realist Theory 'under-labouring' (Archer, 1995) this study, knowledge creation does not have to come from scratch. According to Danermark et.al. (2002), for scientists most of this knowledge is in the form of theories. Consistent with the foregoing view, in the second part of this chapter I explain the research methods that I used guided by the Social Realist Theory in data collection, data coding, data analysis and interpretation. In this section, I also go on to describe the method I used to extract fundamental constitutive particles of UNIMA governance that enabled me to later on concretise the emergent governance practice forming the social phenomenon known as UNIMA governance in 2013 - which is the main objective of this study. I conclude this chapter in section 3.6 by acknowledging how fallible knowledge production can be. I do this by reflecting on some practical measures that I undertook when collecting, analysing and interpreting my data to ensure that the results of this investigation are credible.

[3] Concrete refers to the objective existence of a social phenomenon and the abstract the constitutive particles composing such phenomenon (Collier, 1994; Danermark et. al. (2002).

3.1 Conceptualization of higher education governance as a social phenomenon

In the context of this study, the first thing that exercised my mind when I embarked on my research was how to interpret what Bhaskar (2008:13) had meant when he asked: 'What must the structure of the world be like for scientific knowledge to be possible?' If science had to start from this premise in this study, it was imperative that I also begin my study from the same premise. In order to operate in the same mind frame as Bhaskar I rephrased the same question in my mind to read: 'What must the structure of higher education governance be like for scientific knowledge to be possible?' From this premise, and guided by Critical Realists' assertion that the social world is stratified (Bhaskar, 2008), I started my investigation by attempting to find out what is known about higher education governance for it to acquire its objective existence. This meant I needed to start from the known. I therefore began my investigation with a literature search. I examined literature on higher education governance. My literature search was broad yet specific. It was broad, in the sense that my literature search led me to study what has been written about higher education governance in America, Europe, Asia and the continent of Africa. Broadly as well in the sense that initially I read widely on the subject matter without specific focus. Later it was specific in the sense that, much as my literature search led me to explore the diversity of higher education governance practices, my focus narrowed down to gaining knowledge of exact constitutive properties that characterize governance practices based on the frequency with which they appeared in the literature. I also thereafter narrowed my reading to literature by authors who were frequently quoted by other authors.

I therefore examined the definitions of higher education governance contained in the literature I consulted particularly from the authors who were appealing to me as the main authorities in higher education governance going by the frequency they were quoted by other authors, in order to understand what higher education governance meant. This was followed by identification of concepts that inform higher education governance models, as they had been understood in the same literature. I followed this by sieving this data to isolate those concepts that I thought described practices which can be considered to have a symmetrical relationship with higher education governance; that is practices which from my literature search featured dominantly in almost all the literature irrespective of which continent, region or country the authors were writing about.

I also examined different governance models found in literature and again isolated the dominant models in literature. These enabled me to understand characteristics of higher education governance structures and mechanisms. Through the models I was able to discern the generative mechanisms for particular types of governance practices that I observed. The process was to a great extent what would be expected from any literature review informing a doctoral study. The distinction perhaps is that I was seeking, through the literature review, to identify possible generative mechanisms identified by other researchers in other contexts such that I could look for them in the study data.

The major challenge I experienced at this stage was that there is relatively limited literature specific to higher education governance reforms from an African perspective, which would have been more attuned to my study objective. If perhaps there is, it is not readily available in the libraries in the form of print or digital materials the way other continents' literature on higher education governance is. I was inclined to believe through my literature search that

there is a dearth of research work on higher education governance in Africa, particularly in the context of higher education governance reforms. This is why this particular study is relevant as it attempts to fill this observed gap. From the research data I gathered I was able to isolate properties which in my mind were able to answer the question: what must exist for higher education governance to be possible? I thereafter developed a framework from this review, which I used to examine UNIMA governance context. The results of my findings in this respect are presented in Chapter Four.

3.2 Accessing the context of UNIMA governance at T1

Having examined the properties that characterize higher education governance in general as they have been understood in the literature, the second step was to understand the context of UNIMA governance as conditioned prior to the reforms. Here again I used the morphogenetic framework. This led me to explore constitutive properties of structure and culture (the parts) of UNIMA governance period prior to the reforms of 1997. This was done because as Archer (1995) has argued, society is a product of past activities of agency as they interact with their structures and culture. Agents are born into a society that existed before them. Using the same argument, I worked from the premise that UNIMA governance reforms were at least partially context specific. The reforms emerged out of a given situation in time (T1), which perhaps was found constraining to some and enabling to others depending on the relative positioning of agents and on their personal and professional roles.

UNIMA corporate agency at T1 in this regard was positioned within this context, which was not of their making, known by the term 'involuntaristic placement' by Archer (1995). It is important to observe that Archer (1995) used the term involuntaristic placement as a presumption that people are born in a society not of their choice or making. However, in the

context of this study one might ask how this could apply as people choose to join an organization out of their volition. I would like to insist that involuntaristic placement as understood by Archer also applied in the context of this study because agents join an organization with limited knowledge about its structure and culture. Furthermore, the context of an organization is in a state of constant flux. Agents can only know a little about their organization from the domain of the empirical, but for them to know more about their organization, they need to delve into the domain of the actual. The domain of the 'real' is in fact beyond their reach. It is for this reason that the term involuntaristic placement in the context as understood by Archer (1995) is also applied in the context of this study.

Equally important to understand at this stage was the composition of agents in UNIMA at T1 and who initiated the reforms. It was imperative to know whose project the MIM reforms was and why the reforms were introduced because, according to Social Realism, any society always has an assertive group who develop, propagate and legitimize its ideology as beneficial to all (Archer, 1995). Similarly, according to the morphogenetic theory by Archer (2003a) for any change to occur it must be conditioned by agency. In this connection, I was interested to know the composition of corporate agency in UNIMA in the period prior to the reforms and their possible vested interests. In this respect, my interest shifted to answer the following question: what must have provoked the self-consciousness of Agency at T1 to opt for governance reforms? I relied mainly on document searches to access this data. In section 3.3.2 I describe this method in detail and how I utilised it. The findings at this stage, T1, were analysed and are presented in Chapter Five.

3.3. The context of UNIMA governance at T2 – T3

Having analysed the historical context conditioning the initiation of governance reforms in UNIMA, my focus then shifted to the investigation of the governance practices that were

proposed. This was done in two ways. First I carried out document searches by studying relevant documents and files I accessed at Central Office on governance. The way I carried this out and some of the documents I consulted are described in section 3.3.2. I also conducted an in-depth interview with eight sampled members of UNIMA. The way this was done and how the members of staff who were interviewed was sampled is described in section 3.3.3 and section 3.3.4. My aim here was to investigate what was experienced and what had occurred; that is to access data from the domains of both the empirical and the actual in UNIMA governance. My intention was therefore to access whatever useful data relevant to this study was embedded in these documents as well as from what people were able to tell me. I was able to gather materials and ideational resources that contextualised UNIMA governance from 1997 to 2013 to form the basis of my analysis. Before I explain how I collected data through document searches and interviews, it is important that I explicate the research framework that guided me in this processes.

3.3.1 Methodology used: Quantitative versus Qualitative research methodology

There are two commonly used methodological frameworks in research depending on one's research design: the quantitative and the qualitative frameworks. Quantitative research methodological framework most often emphasizes measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables but places less emphasis on the process of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This method usually concerns itself with data collection techniques that are distanced from the researcher. Unlike a quantitative research methodological framework, a qualitative research methodological framework is mainly preoccupied with understanding human behaviour from the perspective of social actors themselves with the aim of describing and understanding rather than trying to explain human behaviour (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

There is also another methodological framework that combines both frameworks above in one study known as the mixed research methodology.

From the insights offered by Danermark et.al. (2002), what should influence the choice of a research methodological framework should be the correspondence between the object of study, the assumptions about reality and how knowledge can be achieved. In the context of my study therefore qualitative research methodological framework was found to be the best suited to the investigation I was carrying out because I was studying an open society and I was interested in understanding UNIMA governance practices from the perspective of the social actors themselves. Some of the appropriate data collection methods used in a qualitative methodological framework are document searches and interviews which I describe in the two sub-sections that follow.

3.3.2 Documents search

My drive to embark on a document search was motivated by the strength of the arguments advanced by Stark & Torrance (2005), Bowen (2009) and Meyer (2001). Stark & Torrance (2005:35) argued that 'Documents can be examined for immediate content, changing content over time and the values that such changing content manifests'. Bowen (2009) argues that documents can be utilized in qualitative research to serve several purposes: they can be used to access data on the context of the phenomena under investigation; they can provide guidance to a researcher on the questions to be asked to participants; they can provide valuable supplementary information needed to gain more knowledge of the phenomena; and they can be a means of tracking chronological changes or developments to phenomena particularly where there are good records available (Bowen, 2009). According to Meyer (2001), documents can shed light into the historical roots of phenomena and illuminate the

constraints and enablements of a current phenomenon. They can also contain historical statements made by key people in the organization. Documents can save time during interviews because documents can provide ready facts that are needed in the study. Finally, Bowen (2009) observed that documents can also be an effective alternative to gathering information in circumstances where participants or the researcher have forgotten some details or in circumstances where it is very difficult to observe events. In the context of this study, which was examining a phenomenon that had taken place over time, it was necessary that a document search be considered as a data collection tool.

My document search began as follows: Firstly, I reviewed the Minutes of University Council meetings in the period before the governance reforms were introduced, down to 2000 because my focus here was mainly on interrogating the context of UNIMA governance period before the reforms were introduced and implemented in earnest. I was mainly interested in those minutes that discussed the University reforms. In this regard, I studied the following Minutes: Minutes of the 59th Council Meeting of held on 31st May, 1995 which considered the 1995/96 Financial Year's University budget. This is the meeting that mooted the idea of reforms in UNIMA. It is at this meeting that a subcommittee was established and mandated to come up with comprehensive recommendations on how the University was to overcome the anticipated challenges that had arisen from the event that had occurred in 1995 which I discuss in Chapter Five. I also examined Minutes of the 60th Council Meeting held in September, 1995. This is the meeting that received the recommendations from the sub-committee and mooted the idea to engage a consultant.

I also examined Minutes of the 63rd meeting of the University Council held on 19th December, 1997 where a Final Report was presented to Council by the Malawi Institute of

Management, which is the consultant that had been identified to carry out the functional review. During this meeting I noted that a Task force was set up to scrutinize the Report and guide Council on which reforms to adopt, the approach to be taken and the time frame for each phase of implementation. Furthermore, I studied subsequent Minutes of the 64th meeting of the University Council held on 6th February, 1998 which received, considered and adopted the final MIM governance reform measures the Task Force had finally settled on. It is at this meeting where the Council adopted the governance reform measures to implement. Finally, I examined the Minutes of the 66th meeting of Council held on 22nd January, 1999; the 67th meeting of Council held on 14th May, 1999; the 68th Meeting of Council held on 4th February, 2000 and those of the 70th Meeting of Council held on 7th April, 2000. I also reviewed Minutes of the Council's statutory subcommittees: Minutes of the University Senate, Minutes of the Finance Committee and Minutes of the Appointments and Staff Development Committee.

Furthermore, I examined memos from files particularly those that originated from the Chief Secretary to Government, the Secretary for Education and the Comptroller of Statutory Corporations. These three sources were very active in communicating the Government position on various aspects of public sector organizations' governance. I also examined files containing internal correspondences of Council to appreciate the exchange of ideas regarding UNIMA governance between senior management and the Chairperson of Council.

It is important to note that all these documents provided me with insights into the governance experiences and events in UNIMA prior to the implementation of the governance reforms in 1997. I was also able to gain insights into the extenuating events that preceded the reforms. This directed me to interrogate possible mechanisms at play that accounted for the decision to

embark on reforms. The Minutes gave me insights into the governance experiences and events in UNIMA prior to governance reforms in 1997. The files highlighted the motives agents had when introducing the reforms as well as their vested interests. Data collected also revealed who were the corporate and primary agents in UNIMA in 1995 and the practical measures they undertook to extricate themselves from the financial crisis that they were facing by 1995 (at T1, discussed in Chapter Five).

Secondly, I reviewed the MIM Report together with the Task Force Report, which came out in 1997 as the outcome of the consultants' work. The Report provided the directional guidance that formed the basis for governance reforms in UNIMA as it specified the structural defects that were impeding UNIMA's progress. The Report made recommendations on how UNIMA Council could resolve these. In this regard, the MIM Report assisted me to establish the governance context in UNIMA before the reforms were initiated. I noted that the Report was an outcome of the consultations that took place between the MIM consultants and UNIMA stakeholders because prior to this Report, the consultants had visited all the five campuses of UNIMA from where they interviewed UNIMA stakeholders including Council members themselves, selected members of senior management, academic and administrative members of staff and the representatives of support staff. The Report was compiled after this consultative process. The Report therefore reflected quite significantly the governance context of UNIMA by 1997 because it was preceded by a wide consultation process. The Report contained information about how UNIMA governance structures and culture were organised in the period before 1997 and how they were construed as failing the institution. The Report also gave me a good platform for identifying what other mechanisms could have been responsible for the initiation and adoption of governance reforms in UNIMA. From the document search I was able to relate

the context of UNIMA governance based on the findings with events that were occurring in the global context of the higher education governance setting from that data gathered during my literature search.

It is worth noting that apparently there were major policy shifts in higher education governance on the global macro-level at the time the governance reforms in UNIMA were being initiated such as Globalization and its antecedent theories and beliefs. It was important to reflect upon these as it was possible that these trends might have influenced the reform measures that were proposed in UNIMA. The trends that were happening in the global arena of higher education governance are discussed in detail in Chapter Four and are taken into account in this analysis of documents at T1, discussed in Chapter Five. This is central to a Social Realist analysis because, as Archer (1995) states, societies (organizations) are open systems and therefore what transforms or regenerates them could be cultural powers beyond what is locally experienced. I was therefore able from the MIM Report to discern the cultural underpinnings that influenced the MIM reform recommendations. It is important to indicate that from the Minutes of the 64th meeting of the University Council, the MIM Report contained all the recommendations that the Task Force had recommended which the Council finally adopted. However, as I later on discovered (and I discuss these findings in Chapter Six) not all these recommendations were implemented.

Thirdly, I examined the UNIMA Act of 1998 (the revised version of the law that created UNIMA and informed governance practices in UNIMA). This is the overarching structure that gave overt autonomy to UNIMA. It contains the sanctioning powers in UNIMA or legitimating governance mechanism. I noted that the 1998 Act was an Amended Act of the

1974 UNIMA Act and that it was the second amendment to the UNIMA Act after the provisional one of 1965.

Fourthly, I reviewed various documents and correspondences relevant to governance in UNIMA. I went through a Report produced by Chancellor College, which contained Academic Restructuring plans for the college which complemented what the MIM Report had recommended. The document contained the ideas of Chancellor College's corporate agents on their plans regarding how the college structures should be re-organised in response to the reforms measures Council had adopted from the MIM Report. In fact, this restructuring Report revealed the outcome of the college agents' internal conversations as they reflected on the impact of governance reform measures on the college governance.

The interest in all these documents reviewed was to access both data at T1 as well as the implementation experience of UNIMA governance reforms at T2-T3. Table 3.1 is a summary of the documents that I examined. This table does not contain all the files and documents I read; it only lists selected documents and files that pertained to the analysis and that are referred to in the thesis.

	Document Description	**Code**
1	Minutes of 59th Council Meeting of held on 31st May 1995	RD[4]1
2	Minutes of the 60th Council Meeting held in September 1995	RD2
3	63rd meeting of the University Council held on 19th December, 1997	RD3
4	64th meeting of the University Council held on 6th February 1998	RD4
5	66th meeting of Council held On 22 January 1999	RD5
6	67th meeting of Council held on 14th May 1999	RD6
7	Minutes of the 68th Meeting of Council held on 4th February 2000	RD7
8	Minutes of the 70th Meeting of Council held on 7th April 2000.	RD8
9	Minutes of the 158th Meeting of Senate held on 28th July, 2006	RD9
10	Minutes of the 163rd Meeting of Senate held on 18th April, 2008	RD10
11	Minutes of the 165th Meeting of Senate held on 12th August, 2009	RD11
12	Minutes of the 168th Meeting of Senate held on 13th January, 2010	RD12
13	UNIMA Acts of 1998	RD13
14	Preliminary Report on Academic Restructuring at Chancellor College (2008)	RD14
15	Publications Malawi Government Circulars Vol. I (January 1976 to February 1994)	RD15
16	Publications Malawi Government Circulars Vol. III (April 2000 to August 2002)	RD16
17	Publications Malawi Government Circulars Vol. V (January 2006 to May, 2008)	RD17
18	Publications Malawi Government Circulars Vol.VI (January 2007 to October, 2010)	RD18
19	Minutes of the 119th Finance Committee of Council held on 21st March,	RD19

[4] RD is an abbreviation for Research Documents and refers to the documents from Central Office searched and referred to in the thesis.

	1995	
20	Minutes of the 124th Finance Committee of Council held on 16th May, 1997	RD20
21	Minutes of the 126th Finance Committee of Council held 23rd January, 1998	RD21
22	Minutes of the 143rd Finance Committee of Council held 21st October, 2009	RD22
23	Minutes of the 149th Finance Committee of Council held on 29th February, 2012	RD23
24	Minutes of the 362nd Meeting of the Appointments Disciplinary Committee of Council held on 20th August, 1995	RD24
25	Minutes of the 374nd Meeting of the Appointments Disciplinary Committee of Council held on 11th September, 1998	RD25
26	Council Correspondence Vol. II (October 1976 to February 1984)	RD26
27	Council Correspondence Vol. IV (December 2003 to August 2006)	RD27
28	Council Correspondence Vol. IX (April, 2005 to February 2009)	RD28

Table 3.1: Some of the document reviewed and their coded names.

As shall be seen in section 3.6, it was easy for me to access the documents listed in Table 3.1 because at the time I was doing the document search, I was working with the University of Malawi's Central Office as the Deputy Registrar where most of these records are kept. Because of the nature of my work in the Registry, it meant that most of these documents were within reach, for example, the Minutes of Council and files that contained various governance correspondences. There was only one document, from Chancellor College, on Academic Restructuring that I had to obtain through an e-mail following a request to the College. Besides, because of the agency I carried as a Deputy Registrar it was also easy for

me to access all archived files I needed something that a researcher from outside UNIMA Central Office would not be able to do[5].

Due to the time lag that had elapsed between the periods the Malawi Institute of Management Reform Study was carried out (1995 to 1997) and the time the recommendations were adopted for implementation (from 1997 to 2013), it later proved useful that I reviewed these documents because they supplemented the data I collected through interviews. I observed that when I asked my respondents to recall the reforms they knew were introduced as a result of the UNIMA governance reforms, all of them were not able to exhaustively mention them. The document search thus added the information I would have lost if I had relied only on interviews. Furthermore, through the document search I gained perspective of the structural, cultural and agential properties that constitute higher education governance in UNIMA in ways that were not always forthcoming from the interviews alone. Document search also assisted in focussing when I was developing the interview schedule as I was able to design my questions in such a way that the interviews could serve to confirm or question what I had observed regarding UNIMA governance as well as to fill in any gaps arising from the documents search. I took notes of all the important data I collected in my document search and later kept a typed version for ease of analysis.

I also interviewed selected research participants. In section 3.3.3 that follows I explain how I designed the interview, as a data collection method and how the actual interviews were done.

[5] The issue of my position as Deputy Registrar and the implications of this for the research process is discussed in detail in section 3.6

3.3.3 Interviews

I designed my interview schedule based on the information I collected during the literature search and prior data I had gathered through the document search. I mention prior data because the document search was not time specific. I carried on with this throughout the study mainly to confirm what I heard as well as to fill in the gaps I noted. There are different types of interviews. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2007) have categorized interviews into structured and unstructured interviews. Other authors have divided interview types into open-ended and closed or structured and semi-structured (Titchen & Hobson, 2005). According to Cohen, et.al (2007), all interviews are designed on the premise that there is something about the phenomena that researchers do not know which they want to know. The main difference between structured interviews and unstructured interviews, according to Cohen, et.al. (2007), is that in the former researchers are aware of what they do not know and therefore design their questions in such a manner that they target to find out what they do not know. In the latter, the researchers are not even aware what they do not know and hence enter the field with an open mind to learn from it. In this study, I opted for the middle approach, which is the semi-structured interview. This was the case because I had partial information about the phenomenon under investigation but lacked a deeper knowledge of it. A semi-structured interview schedule was therefore most appropriate because it was flexible and therefore allowed me to gain an in-depth knowledge of the phenomena from the premise of partial knowledge. In this regard, I developed a few questions, which were open ended but based on the themes I was exploring as a guide, and I allowed the interview to shift from this guide as necessary.

During the interview, I inquired from my research participants to explain whatever they could recall about the MIM governance reforms; their views regarding the reasons why some reform measures were implemented and why others were not; what their experiences were with governance practice in UNIMA and finally, their general views about UNIMA governance as well as what they think should be the way forward for governance practice in UNIMA. The objective at this stage was to gather broad-ranging data from the domain of the empirical as well as the domain of the actual in line with the Critical Realism theory 'under-labouring' this study. The interview schedule is attached as an Appendix.

The motive behind interviews was to gain in-depth insight into governance practices in the UNMA from the perspective of UNIMA agents themselves. Since the focus at this stage was to access information about T2 – T3, I designed my interview schedule in such a way that the information gathered should move me from the level of the empirical, to the level of the actual. My research objective was to understand the emergent governance practices at the level of the 'real' and their enabling and constraining mechanisms. Interviewing selected UNIMA stakeholders using a semi-structured interview schedule provided me with dense data which moved me from the domain of the empirical to the domain of the actual and finally to the domain of the 'real.' To move from the domain of the actual to the domain of the 'real' I had however to use a process known as retroduction which I discuss in section 3.5. In section 3.3.4 that follows I describe how the participants in the study were sampled.

3.3.4 Sampling

It is believed that the quality of research is not only based on the appropriateness of a methodology applied to the research question but also the suitability of the sampling strategy (Morrison, 1993 in Cohen, et.al, 2007). Social research should aim at gaining an insight into

the standpoint that closely represents the views of the majority of the population. Ideally, such can be gained by interviewing or observing the entire population. But it is often practically impossible to attain this in social science. This is why social scientists rely on a small sample of the population to gain insight into the population. How this sample is identified is therefore central to the quality of the research (Cohen, et.al., 2007).

Meyer (2001), writing about sampling in qualitative research design, pointed out that sampling of cases to be studied ought to be guided by the desire for information richness. From literature, there are different sampling strategies that are used in selecting a sample in qualitative research study (Cohen, et.al., 2007). In the context of this study however, I used purposeful sampling. In this technique the sample is hand-picked by the researcher based on his or her judgment in relation to the research question. Often purposeful sampling is used to gain access to those that have special knowledge about a particular phenomenon under investigation (Cohen, et.al., 2007) and this is what I aimed at.

The sampling in this study looked at the length of time the respondents had been associated with UNIMA governance either as policy makers or as senior managers. These are the people who had more exposure (thorough enculturation) to what had gone on in UNIMA's governance and therefore were able to provide me with useful, rich and insightful views of UNIMA governance. The sampled participants were divided into two groups; the policy makers (Category A of the research participants) and policy implementers (Category B of the research participants). Category A people were serving or had served as senior administrative managers in UNIMA. These were people who through their experience could explain the course of action taken as they easily identify themselves with governance policies and what the governance reforms were all about. There were three participants that were selected in

this category because those who had met the criteria above were equally few. Again since I was going to engage them in deep and intense inquiry, the sampled size had to be limited. The sampled group and the positions they hold or held in UNIMA are contained in Table 3.2.

Category B comprised academic managers who were responsible for implementing policy. Those identified were mainly deans and heads of department. Also included in this category was one college registrar because college registrars by virtue of their roles in colleges are policy implementers. Category B participants were those who had experienced the reforms as policy implementers. They were in a position to hold a critical view about the reforms from a practical position. These were five in number and the positions they hold or held in UNIMA are contained in Table 3.3. To identify policy implementers, I reviewed the list of deans and heads of academic department in UNIMA from 1997 to 2013. In UNIMA deans and heads of academic departments are treated as senior managers as they are the ones responsible for implementing governance policy. From this list, I identified the longest serving deans and heads of department. These were people who I considered to have institutional memory to assist in providing information useful in this study. Kekale (1999) established that academic disciplines have a bearing on the perception of leadership and management roles in higher education. To make sure that those finally selected did not all come from the same disciplines, the selection also considered the academic disciplines in which the participants came from as shown in Table 3.3.

For both categories, I was able to select a total of ten research participants. I however finally interviewed eight of them as listed in Tables 3.2 and Table 3.3 because the other two were not available. One was out in the field for an extended period and the other one felt he could

not remember much about UNIMA governance reforms much as it was initiated and implemented during the period when he was serving in a senior management position.

	Description of the Research Participant (Role played in UNIMA)
A.	Had been in this position for twelve years by the time of the interviews. Was a member of the Steering Committee that interfaced with the MIM consultants during the preparation of governance reforms.
B.	Was a member of Council at the time MIM reforms were being initiated.
C.	Had served UNIMA in his current position for ten years by the time I was interviewing him.

Table 3.2: Profile of Research participants – Category A (Senior Administrative Managers)

	Description of the Research Participant (Role played in UNIMA)
A.	Served as Principal of a College and previously served as a head of department.
B.	Served as dean of a faculty and had served in this position for four years during the reform implementation period. Prior to this had served as a head of department on two occasions, each of two year duration.
C.	Had served in current position for 12 years at the time of the interview. Also actively involved in the implementation of the governance reforms from 1997 to 2013.
D.	Serving head of department for four years, served this position twice before.
E.	Serving as head of department. Prior to this, had served as dean of faculty for four years. Had also previously served as head of department for four years before became dean.

Table 3.3: Profile of Research participants – Category B (Senior Academic Managers)

In order to hide their identity when making reference to what they said, I have randomly allocated code numbers ranging from RP1[6] to RP8 to each research participant. Furthermore, I listed research participants randomly in Table 3.2 and 3.3 as they are not listed based on the

[6] RP is an abbreviation for Research Participant.

order of interviews and I avoided pronouns, which would reveal the gender of the respondents. I must stress that it is only the researcher and supervisors who can match the codes to actual interviewees. This I have done for ethical consideration. Due to the nature of this research, anonymity was necessary to encourage unrestrained disclosure of information by the interviewees. I must emphasise that these research participants are referred to in the rest of the Chapters that follows using the code number known to the researcher only and the use of gendered pronouns is randomly used.

When conducting the actual interviews I first phoned all potential research participants and briefed them on the objective of my study and the process I had followed to identify them to be my respondents. All those I contacted agreed to be interviewed. I followed this with an e-mail in which I confirmed our telephone discussion and the agreed date, time and venue for our interviews. In the e-mail I also attached a letter of introduction and a letter from my supervisor attesting to my studentship.

My interaction with the research participants was very fruitful. I managed to interview all my research participants on the given date, time and venue. All the interviews went on well and they took on average 50 minutes. Our discussions were engaging and I managed to penetrate in-depth into the subject as it was easy for me to negotiate my way into the intricacies of the subject under inquiry having worked for UNIMA before[7]. This in a way was a privilege in the sense that I understood meaning in the language being used which was helpful during the data analysis, interpretation and presentation of my findings. Each interview was tape-recorded on prior permission of the interviewees. The data collected during these interviews

[7] At the time of the interviews, I was no longer working for UNIMA. My position and its relation to the research process are discussed in 3.6.

as well as through the document search was analysed through the methods I describe in section 3.3.5 which I now turn to.

3.3.5 Data analysis

To begin with, the data collected was transcribed and coded. I used the morphogenetic theory to organise the data collected based on historicity of the events and experiences being described and using analytical dualism to identify the structural, cultural and agential properties of the events and experiences.

First to be analysed was data collected from the document search. Using analytical dualism I identified the social structures and cultural systems that prevailed in UNIMA. The data was thereafter arranged chronologically according to which data was relevant for T1 and T2 to T3, which is the period before and during the implementation of the governance reforms.

The focus on data analysis of structure was the identification of power relations in UNIMA and how decisions were made bearing in mind the framework of higher education governance developed in Chapter Four. These were decisions contained in some of the correspondences regarding material acquisition, management and distribution (including human resources and finances). I then analysed the data to assess the cultural systems that prevailed by examining the governance principles that were adhered to from the communications I analysed both prior to and after the governance reforms, that is, the key ideologies or beliefs which underpinned the observed governance practices based on the framework developed during literature review. I also analysed the data to assess how agents organized themselves and the composition of groups responsible for taking decisions and recipients of decisions regarding distribution of material resources in UNIMA period before and after the implementation of

the governance reforms. Danermark, et.al. (2002) have pointed out that it is social and cultural relations that matter in making a social object what it is. So, the social and cultural properties I focused on in the document search were those relations that were deemed necessary and internally related to the framework of governance developed in Chapter Four.

I then turned to an analysis of the data collected from the interviews. The premise of the analysis done here was Archer's (1995) morphogenetic cycle. It was assumed that existing structure and, culture in UNIMA before the reforms were introduced provided the context of UNIMA governance at T1. Introduction of the governance reforms was therefore treated as the infusion of new practices, and ideas into the existing UNIMA governance context perhaps to address constraints identified in UNIMA governance at T1. First to be analysed at this stage was therefore the MIM Report itself. I used analytical dualism again to identify properties of structure and culture, which were embedded in the reform measures. The governance reform measures were thus categorised into structural and cultural reforms. The focus on data analysis of structure was the identification of reform measures intended to influence power relations in UNIMA in terms of what and how decisions should be made and by whom. These were decisions regarding material acquisition, management and distribution (including human resources and finances). The focus on data analysis of culture was the identification of new ways of thinking and behaviours introduced into UNIMA through the reform measures intended to address the perceived cultural incompatibilities. Furthermore, for UNIMA governance reforms to be effective, it was assumed that they must have affected agents' intentions and actions in one way or the other (Archer, 2003a/b). In this connection, the reform measures were further analysed to assess the reform measures that impacted on UNIMA agents and particularly the various roles they played in UNIMA prior and after the MIM governance reform implementations.

The results of the analysis of the data related to the period prior to the implementation of the governance reforms were treated as the UNIMA context of 1995. Results obtained at this stage of analysis form the findings at T1, which are discussed in Chapter Five. Similarly, the results of the analysis of the data related to period after the implementation of the governance reforms in 1997 to 2013 were treated as UNIMA context at T2 – T3 of the morphogenetic cycle. Results obtained at this stage of analysis form the findings, which are discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

3.4 Emergent governance context of UNIMA at T2 to T3

The data obtained from the analysis described in the foregoing section 3.3.5 was subjected to further analysis using the process known as abstraction. According to Danermark et.al. (2002), abstraction is the process whereby a researcher places and interprets original ideas about the phenomenon in the frame of a new set of ideas – theories. The researcher picks out from the many features that characterize a social phenomenon those few things that could be considered as accounting for a phenomenon's state of being. The researcher in a way hunts from the many properties identified, the distinctive ones that best account for how a phenomenon behaves (Collier, 1994; Danermark et.al., 2002). What I did here then was to examine the findings in light of Archer's (1995) institutional configuration model shown in Table 3.4

Emergent properties	**Situation logic (Consequences)**
Necessary complementarities	Protection/integration
Necessary incompatibilities	Compromise/syncretism
Contingent incompatibilities	Elimination/competition

Contingent compatibilities	Opportunities/differentiation

Table 3.4: First order emergent properties (Structure/Culture) Archer (1995:218 and 303)

Under institutional configurations, Archer (1995) has philosophised how institutions would be organised when exposed to different circumstances she has referred to as complementarities and incompatibilities. Working out of these situational logics is part of sociocultural interaction where understanding the logics indicates the likely responses. The relations of incompatibility are when the logics are not harmoniously aligned, and can either be necessary or contingent. The relations of complementarity are where the logics are harmoniously aligned and these too can also be either necessary or contingent. 'Necessary' indicates the co-existence of internal forces, while 'contingent' is the introduction of systemic external forces potentially affecting the ongoing existence of structures and cultures.

According to Archer (1995), 'necessary complementarities' refer to the existence of internal and necessary structures that tend to reinforce one another in a given society and form the context (the parts) of the society. Necessary complementarities enhance stability in an institution or society as structures at different levels of society work towards serving one another. Archer (1995) gave an example of ancient Indian societies to illustrate this point. She argued that in ancient India, the caste system, religion, economy, education and kinship systems complemented each other thereby reinforced social cohesion in the society. In such a system, according to Archer (1995), although there was negative feedback from the section of the society that were dissatisfied with the status quo, and who were being discriminated against, the kinship systems constrained any actions to alter the societal context. Institutions in this regard experienced morphostasis. The identification of the necessary complementarities helps to explain the causal mechanisms that promote the status quo in a

given society. In the context of this study, governance practices in the period before the governance reforms were analysed to identify if there were any internal ideologies or structures that held the UNIMA governance context together and ensured its continuation. According to this thesis by Archer (1995), necessary complementarities create a situational logic of protection as the complementary structures shield the society from disruptive contingencies.

The same was done to identify any possible necessary incompatibilities. The UNIMA governance context at T1 was appraised with a view to identifying the internal and necessary structures which contradicted one another in UNIMA governance. According to Archer (1995), the effect of necessary incompatibilities is that social systems contradict each other and the advancement of a particular order threatens the endurance of the institution as it previously existed. To illustrate this point Archer (1995) uses the existence of bureaucracy and the taxation system. For bureaucracy to be sustainable it needs resources obtained through the tax systems. Yet, taxation is often resisted by societies because it extracts resources from the poor members of the society in order to advance the vested interests of the wealthy members of the society. However, bureaucracy and taxation are mutually reinforcing (i.e. necessary) because there cannot be the former without the latter. What is emergent in such institutions or society according to Archer (1995), is a situational logic of compromise or syncretism. Some members belonging to the under-resourced in the society are enticed with some privileges, which enable them to cooperate with the well-endowed members of the society. Coercive powers are used on members of their society to extract what their sponsors require from them. Archer (1995) predicted that in such situations compromise is held in balance by countervailing structural constraints. Morphogenesis takes place but not to the extent of disrupting the entire social systems. According to Archer (1995), there is systems

integration in societies that experience necessary incompatibilities. The UNIMA governance context at T1 was therefore analysed and interpreted in the light of this possible perspective as well.

Furthermore, Archer (1995) has philosophised how institutions would respond when exposed to contingencies that are either incompatible or compatible with the internal and necessary social systems. It must be recalled that the governance reform measures researched in this study emerged from the external forces. The UNIMA governance reforms were taken from a Report prepared by an external consultancy firm, the Malawi Institute of Management (MIM). The new structures and ideas the Report proposed were therefore analysed in the light of either being contingent incompatibilities or contingent compatibilities.

Contingent incompatibilities emerge when the society is infiltrated with new structures which are in conflict with the existing ones. This is the scenario where the existing structures and ideas in an organization which work towards promoting stability (morphostasis) in the social systems are challenged by the intervening structures or cultures meant to disrupt such stable social systems. In the light of this study, governance reforms which were adopted from the MIM Report were scrutinised to identify the measures that met the above description. Those identified were further analysed to observe their impact on UNIMA governance structure which was interpreted in light of the situational logic that Archer (1995) philosophized in the case of contingent incompatibility – that of elimination. It was my considered view in this perspective that the reform measures that were rejected would fall in this category and I sought to test this perspective in the analysis of the data.

Similarly, the appearance of contingent compatibilities could have been in the form of new ideas emerging from the MIM Report. Whether intended or unintended, it is Archer's (1995) understanding that the society can be confronted with new ideas in the socio-cultural context which tend to compete with the existing ones. This is where in the social-environment of an organisation there emerge new ideas that offer alternative ways of doing things which are construed as harmonious with or even better than what is prevailing. This I believed might have been the case in UNIMA with the proposed governance reform measures which were adopted, particularly those that were eventually implemented. In this case of compatibility, what ensues, according to Archer (1995), is the situational logic of opportunism. I therefore worked on the premise that some of the new ideas that originated from the MIM Report were viewed as opportunities to progress and were thus embraced by UNIMA stakeholders. My aim therefore was to identify such practices and interpret the governance context so created in the light of this situational logic emergent from contingent compatibilities

The results of my interpretations above permeate throughout Chapters Five to Seven and are reflected as the context of UNIMA governance at each phase of the morphogenetic cycle from T1 (UNIMA governance context by 1995) to T2 – T3 (UNIMA governance context period 1997 to 2013).

3.5 Interpretation of the findings: UNIMA governance context at T4

At this point it is important to remind readers that this study was undertaken to address the following research question: What are the emergent governance practices in UNIMA arising from the implementation from 1997 to 2013 of the governance reforms and what has enabled or constrained them? I have explained in section 3.3 how I went about identifying the emergent governance practices in UNIMA. I have also described in section 3.4 the process I

used to identify the enabling and constraining mechanisms in the UNIMA governance context. Having identified the emergent governance practices and their possible enablements and constraints, it was imperative to offer possible explanations that could account for the mechanisms so identified. In section 3.0 I stated that Critical Realism argues that science must move from the concrete to the abstract and back to the concrete. This is what I aimed at finally. In order to achieve this, throughout the analysis, I used the process known as retroduction.

Retroduction is a thought process whereby researchers after identifying the possible mechanism that is closely related with the emergence of a particular social phenomenon through abstraction engage in a thought process by going beyond their disciplines to seek any possible explanations that could account for the mechanism. After establishing the contingent connections, the researcher identifies from the many possible explanations the most plausible one which correctly describes the mechanisms by means of which, upon occurring or obtaining the phenomena in question is produced (Collier, 1994; Danermark et.al., 2002; Bhaskar, 2008). Having established the situational logics of UNIMA governance after the process described in section 3.4, I went further to seek the most plausible explanation for the phenomenon observed. I therefore went back to the literature to seek the most plausible account to explain the UNIMA governance context in 2013 at T4; that is to arrive at the concrete once again. This is what I present in Chapter Seven.

However, as researchers we are fallible and partial in our conception of the 'Reality' (see epistemological relativism in section 2.1.2). In section 3.6 I interrogate how I dealt with issues of epistemological relativism in this study. It is important to note that as a social actor (in Archer's terms) it was inevitable that I would bring my own experiences and perceptions

into this study. More so, because in this study I was investigating an organization in which I was initially a member of staff. In this regard, I may well have agency which could have affected the methodology used mainly in the way the data was presented to me during the interviews. This is why in section 3.6 I am compelled to present the ethical considerations I employed to avoid the most obvious biases that could have affected the credibility of the study.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted at UNIMA where I worked as one of the senior managers. This obviously meant that as a researcher I was studying my own organization and a familiar environment. Researchers that study their own organizations are referred to in literature as insiders (see, for example, Chavez, 2008; Baree, 2002: Labaree, 2002; Mercer, 2007). Insider status can bring great advantages, such as easier access (as discussed in sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3), but it can also have drawbacks as well. Baree (2002) has observed that 'insiderness' must be examined from four premises: the process of entering the field; the positioning of the researcher as an object and subject of the study; the shared and significant relationships between the researcher and the researched; and disengagement from the study. These are important ethical considerations that I had to address in my study in order to ensure the credibility of my findings and each of these four premises is discussed below.

According to Chavez (2008), researching one's organization has an advantage that one has quick and easy access to the community one is researching. This, according to Baree (2002), gives the researcher considerable pre-constructed knowledge about the community and facilitates data collection. Chavez (2008) for example, who had studied her own family, reported that her membership in the family made it possible for her to approach almost any

member of the family and even extended family relations about the study and this required little or no rapport building.

In my case the document search was done while I was still working at the UNIMA Central Office as the Deputy Registrar. In this role I had easy access to all the information that I needed in this study. Furthermore, I interviewed people who already knew me. I noted also that I was interviewing people on a subject they were all interested in. I observed this through the passion they had to support a project that was seeking at making sense of the governance processes in UNIMA and in particular at understanding the implementation of governance reforms in UNIMA. On this note, I am therefore confident that I had unprecedented leverage in my data collection of gaining in-depth input needed to carry out a study of significant value in its findings.

According to Baree (2002), building rapport in qualitative research is of utmost importance particularly when one examines this in relation to the positioning of the researcher as an object and subject of the study. Researching one's organization has an ethical dimension of positionality when the researcher is viewed against the researched. For example, the success of interviews as a data collection tool depends on the trust between the researcher and the researched. Where there is trust between the researcher and the researched there is an easy flow of information and data collected is of value. However, building trust is a process which I carefully managed. The process of interviews with my research participants was done at the time I had left UNIMA for the Malawi University of Science and Technology which is a newly established public university. When I commenced my PhD studies I had not realised that I would leave the institution prior to the data collection exercise. This ended up being advantageous. It meant that I was entering the interview data collection stage in some senses

as an outsider because I no longer had institutional power in the form of a management position, an agency which could potentially have compromised data collection and analysis.

Furthermore, I also mitigated my familiarity with the organization by carefully selecting my research participants. In this regard my choice of who to interview was based on a scientific model. I therefore used Spradley's (1979) framework sourced in Babbie & Mouton (1998) to select the participants to be interviewed in this study namely: thorough enculturation of the respondents to the context under investigation; current involvement of the respondents to the issues that are a subject of the study and availability of the respondents. I observed that by following this framework, my attention was focussed on information gathering rather than who I could easily approach.

Much as the easy access presented above is an advantage in the data collection, it might equally pose as a challenge in reporting one's findings. According to Chavez (2008) and Williams (2009), researching one's organization can pose a challenge particularly when trying to hide the identity of research participants who readers may easily identify when reporting. In my case I maintained the confidentiality of my research participants by avoiding revealing their identity too much in Table 3b and 3c as well as by giving the respondents random code names. Besides, I have not during the course of carrying out my research revealed to anyone in UNIMA the people I have interviewed. To the research participants, I did not also reveal to them who else I had interviewed or was going to interview. Thus, my reporting of my findings has been made knowing that I was not jeopardising the identity of any one of my research participants.

I also used reflexivity in the reporting stage to avoid my own partial understandings of the UNIMA context from encroaching into my data interpretation. According to Mercer (2001), the more familiar one is with the community the easier it is for one to lose objectivity. It is possible for one to filter what one sees and observes through one's own biased position and to inadvertently suppress the participants' voices. I overcame this by adhering to my research frameworks of Critical Realism and the morphogenesis. I let these frameworks guide each and every step during data collection, data analysis and reporting. Most importantly, I adopted a careful self-reflexivity at every stage of my interaction with my participants as well as during the data analysis and interpretation by always reminding myself that I was studying social actions and social relations and not myself or my views of what transpired in UNIMA.

3.7 Conclusion

In this Chapter I have demonstrated how my research was designed. I have also presented the research methods and the data collection tools I have used in this study guided by Social Realist Theory. I have also discussed how data was coded, analysed and interpreted using Social Realist Theory as well as how causal mechanisms were identified using the method of retroduction. I ended this Chapter by reflecting on some ethical issues that I took into consideration when collecting, analysing and interpreting my data. In Chapter Four that follows, I present my findings regarding the concept of higher education governance as understood from the literature search and used in this study. As emphasised in Chapter Two, Bhaskar (2008) argued that the search for knowledge must begin from an understanding of the constitutive structures that give a social phenomenon its state of being. This is what I intend to achieve in Chapter Four.

Chapter 4

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.0 Introduction

Collier (1994) interpreted Bhaskar's fundamental question, 'What must the structure of the world be like for scientific knowledge to be possible?' to mean that we cannot investigate what we do not know. Consistent to this, in Chapter Three I argued that in the context of this study it will be important to begin my investigation by addressing the following question: 'What must the structure of higher education governance be like for scientific knowledge to be possible?' In this chapter I attempt to answer this question. The aim of this chapter fundamentally is to find out what is known about higher education governance from the literature. The chapter is divided into five sections. I begin by examining definitions of higher education governance in section 4.1 based on literature search. This is followed by identification of concepts that inform higher education governance practice. In section 4.2 I examine in brief the governance structures that seem to characterise University governance through which autonomy and accountability is manifested in higher education governance practice. In section 4.3 I interrogate models that have been developed as theoretical underpinnings for higher education governance practices. These governance models, which seem to emerge from global trends in the economic and political spheres, are taken to be amongst the conditioning mechanisms for higher education governance practices. The global trends are discussed in detail in section 4.4. In section 4.5 I continue my examination of the trends shaping higher education governance practices but now specific to Africa according to the literature. Section 4.6 concludes the discussion of the literature.

4.1 Higher Education Governance defined

There are various definitions of governance that have been offered in literature. Neave & van Vught (1994) for example, defined governance as matters concerning how organizations are

directed, controlled and held to account. These authors were mainly concerned with the loci of power between the State (Government machinery or agencies) and institutions of higher learning in regard to agency that makes critical policy decisions on important matters affecting the higher education sector. In Social Realist terms we would refer to as the corporate agency in the higher education sector. Neave & van Vught (1994)'s construction of governance therefore presupposed that governance was about issues of control in the higher education sector.

Harman & Treadgold (2007) defined governance as ways in which higher education systems and institutions are organized and managed. In their definition it would appear that the authors were looking at first, the institutional structures within which important policy decisions are made. Second, the authors were developing a definition that captures the implications of decision-making structures and processes on the existing relationships among various stakeholders in institutions of higher learning. In a way, one can discern an orientation in this definition towards looking at governance in higher education from the perspective of control and decision-making.

Vidovicha & Currieb (2011) defined higher education governance as dealing with issues of relationships and matters of trust. Their definition in my view underscores what should be the ultimate aim of governance which is to ensure that there is an organizational culture in an institution of higher learning that promotes syncretism, that is, the sinking of the vested personal and disciplinary objectives so that there is harmony of purpose in an organization. This can be attained if matters of autonomy (which are at the heart of academe as I shall discuss later) and accountability are properly balanced in a higher education system.

From the foregoing definitions and the literature on higher education governance more broadly, it is clear that definitions and concerns about higher education governance converge around issues of autonomy and accountability. Autonomy and accountability are however contested terms as they either complement each other or are in tension with one another as is observed in the proceeding sections.

4.1.1 Autonomy

According to Saint (2009:6) 'Autonomy is the power to govern without outside controls.' In higher education, autonomy is viewed from three levels: individual freedom of academics; institutional freedom or self-governance of academics, and institutional autonomy (Neave & van Vught, 1994; Saint, 2009).

4.1.1.1 Academic freedom

Academic freedom, which is also referred to as intellectual freedom (Tapper & Palfreyman, 2002), is the liberty accorded to scholars in Universities to carry out their core business without interference (Taiwo, 2011; du Toit, 2007). It is pointed out that ideas regarding individual academic freedom have their origin from the German Humboldtian reforms of higher education in the 19th century. During these reforms, freedom of teaching (*Lehrfreiheit)* and freedom of learning (*Lernfreiheit*) were advanced as the constitutive principles of academic freedom for modern research universities (du Toit, 2007; Graham, 2013; McLendon, 2003). It is reported by du Toit (2007) that when the principles of individual academic freedom were exported to American and European Universities from Germany, emphasis was placed primarily on freedom of teaching and extended to include freedom of academics to comment on secular matters in the secular world which were even outside one's area of expertise. It would appear that these same ideas have been exported to African

universities through colonialism. Teferra and Altbach (2004) argued that most African universities were designed in structure and ideology (culture) along the lines of their colonial masters. UNIMA is one such example.

It would appear however that ideas underlying academic freedom may have their origin in religion much earlier than the German Humboldtian reforms of higher education of 19th century. Graham (2005) has argued that medieval universities were associated with Monks who perceived universities as places for the development of the minds of youths to prepare them for salvation. Liberal arts in this regard were emphasised (Maton, 2005; Graham, 2005) and this included a focus on critical thinking and freedom to deliberate.

Important ingredients of academic freedom have therefore been concerns regarding how key institutional goals related to teaching and research are developed (Hellawell & Hancock, 2001; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2002; du Toit, 2007); that is to what extent University structures and cultures act as enablements for the involvement of academics in decisions affecting teaching and research. In teaching, emphasis has been placed on the need to have structures that promote coherence of intellectual identity where inputs of an individual tutor have to be balanced with methods of pedagogical delivery such as tutorials, seminars or lectures. In research, this has emphasised the need to ensure that there are structures that facilitate synergy in research efforts. Research activities have therefore involved organising agents in small groups under the leadership of a senior academic (Hellawell & Hancock, 2001; Tapper & Salter, 2004).

4.1.1.2 Self-governance

Self-governance is defined as the belief that in institutions of higher learning such as universities, there are important decisions that can only be competently taken by academics alone or under mandatory advice of them because of their expertise and commitments (du Toit, 2007; Taiwo, 2011). The collegial system of University governance is a good example of self-governance. According to Tapper & Salter (2004), the essence of collegiality is in the self-contained character of the colleges in which academics admit their own members; create the context within which their members fulfil their academic, social and cultural needs; and self-govern as independent corporate bodies with access to financial resources.

According to du Toit (2007) and Taiwo (2011), it has also entailed that structures for decision-making that relate to the work of academics such as the syllabus of a course, individual staff appointments, the admission or graduation of individual students, standards of academic performance, and the detailed allocation of resources between competing usages within a department or faculty are designed in such a manner that enhances the role of academics as corporate agency. From a Social Realist perspective, self-governance suggests a situational logic of protection or integration where social systems that support teaching and learning complement, rather than compete or contradict each other (Archer, 1995). Admittedly, these ideas have in the 1990s been a source of conflict in University governance and so are of interest in this study.

To begin with, the challenge to self-governance in modern public universities has been that most universities do not enjoy financial independence. The majority of them rely on their Government subsidies for funding. That is to say, there are contingencies that exert pressure on the social cohesion in universities emergent from reliance of universities on external

sources of funding. Furthermore, even when they wish to raise financial resources on their own through tuition fees, universities have to do so through governance councils that are typically not dominated by academics (Tapper & Salter, 2004); that is, the governance structures that prevail are characterised by weak positional autonomy (I discuss this phenomenon in detail in section 5.2 of Chapter Five). It is for this reason that Saint (2009) argued that in assessing higher education's institutional autonomy, it is imperative that cognizance of issues of the size and composition of higher education governing bodies (particularly how different stakeholders are represented) is not overlooked. Equally important is the need to assess how key decision makers are appointed in institutions of higher learning and who they are (that is the compositions of corporate agency) as well as the decision-making structures in the organization.

Another contradiction that has been observed regarding self-governance is where it has been construed to mean that academics should be the only group to undertake all the key operations including management of all finances, audit, estates in addition to taking all the academic decisions in Universities (Graham, 2005; du Toit, 2007). The dynamics of modern Universities, particularly emergent from economic imperatives of the time, as shall be discussed later in this chapter, have demanded that in addition to teaching and learning, modern universities also have to be concerned with the professional manner in which issues of finance, audit, estates, *etc.* are managed. Self-governance in this regard has in some instances meant that in addition to the Vice-Chancellor, other senior managers who are not academics, or not primarily so, are incorporated into University management, a process that has changed the structure of University management of modern times. This has brought about emergent properties in higher education governance as managers other than academics are making important decisions affecting universities (Weinberg & Kistner, 2007; Shore, 2010).

Self-governance increasingly means matters that are important to academic functions remain the preserve of bodies such as Senate with the rest of University functions taken on by non-academic structures. In a way, this would also release University leadership to concentrate on the core academic business of the University rather than spread out their efforts, although ultimately the Vice-Chancellor retains the overall responsibility of all the functions.

Further to this, du Toit (2007) has pointed out that self-governance does not necessarily guarantee individual academic freedom, having observed that there are possibilities in self-governance where some powerful academics can stifle, discriminate, exploit, abuse or exclude other academics in their scholarly work. This is why du Toit (2007) argued that when it comes to self-governance, it is safer to look at it in respect of academic professionalism within a discipline. Implying that self-governance should be seen from the perspective of how one joins the academic profession and gradually progresses to the higher ranks of professor; it should also deal with concerns for professional conduct; academic peer review of colleagues' academic work, and defined as the amount of control peers have on each other as regards the core business of the University of teaching and learning, research and outreach (Dobbins, Knill& Vögtle, 2011). Power distribution amongst academics should therefore not only be about taking control of management functions in an institution (Tapper & Salter, 2004; Hellawell & Hancock, 2001). Related to this issue of self-governance is the issue of institutional autonomy.

4.1.1.3 Institutional autonomy

Institutional autonomy in higher education has traditionally meant the treatment of higher education institutions in society as a separate establishment, distinct from other sectors of society in the way they are governed and managed (du Toit, 2007; Hellawell & Hancock,

2001; Tapper & Salter, 2004). If there is an issue in higher education governance that has preoccupied many analysts of higher education governance judging from the literature (for example, Clark, 1983; Neave & van Vught, 1994; Graham, 2013; Teferra & Altbach, 2004), it is the relationship between institutional autonomy and what has been described as Government or State interference.

Saint (2009) has defined institutional autonomy by subdividing it into two parts: overt autonomy and latent autonomy. According to this author, overt autonomy refers to governance structures such as the legal frameworks that influence the institution's capacity to manage itself. For example, almost all public universities in Africa have structures in the form of laws or national policy documents that govern their operations. Of course, overt autonomy is considered to be positive autonomy because it provides legitimacy to decision makers but this again also depends on how overt autonomy is practiced. Overt autonomy in institutions of higher learning are such governing structures as charters or Acts of Parliament that provide the legal structures within which higher education institutions function. They are also the legal frameworks within which important decisions are taken. These are the governance structures that enable or constrain universities to realise their full potential and these can impact significantly on the core values of higher education such as academic freedom or self-governance.

Latent autonomy, according to Saint (2009), refers to structures that are not written explicitly into legal documents but have the same effect of influencing the institution's capacity to govern itself. Unlike overt autonomy, which can be both an enablement and a constraint on the institution's core values, latent autonomy influences governance in negative ways in the form of interference. Here, interference in governance may originate from outside, for

example, the State, through Government circulars or from powerful agents in industry or politicians. It may also emanate from within the institution such as from intimidating management, powerful academic staff unions, and militantly strong student bodies or from a particular source of international assistance that a given University depends on. These agential constraints can stifle innovation, promote rent-seeking behaviours (systems of obtaining economic gains at the expense of the institution) that politicize the functioning of institutions in negative ways, and act as mechanisms that constrain its ability to fulfil its academic project. Equally, latent autonomy is crucial particularly when it comes to mediating change in higher education as shall be seen in this study. My concern in this study is how both overt and latent autonomy have featured in the governance context of UNIMA in the period before and after the governance reform implementation.

4.1.2 Accountability

According to Saint (2009:7), accountability is the 'clear assignment of responsibility for efficient use of resources to produce results and mechanisms whereby this performance can be monitored.' Accountability is manifested, for example, through stakeholder representation in governing boards, audit reports, external examiner systems and various reporting mechanisms instituted by overseeing bodies of higher education institutions to monitor compliance. Kai (2009:40) has defined accountability as meaning 'justification of an activity.' According to the same author, 'accountability in higher education is a concept related to efficiency, effectiveness and performance evaluation. It demands that institutions prove by effective means that their institutions have attained the predetermined results and performance' (Kai, 2009:40).

Saint (2009) further suggests that accountability can be sub-categorized into external and internal accountability where the former refers to monitoring measures put into place by

outside agencies such as the State and the latter monitoring measures put in place by agencies within the institution such as governing councils or boards or internal quality assurance structures. Accountability can also be by function. This is when activities such as teaching, research or administration in higher education institutions are given formal structures of reporting on how they should be carried out and even funded accordingly, such as performance monitoring mechanisms in research whereby an institutions' research funding is linked to the number of publications coming out each year.

According to the literature (for example, Ferlie, Musselin & Andresani, 2008; Shore, 2010; Tapper & Salter, 2004; Clark, 1998; Neave & van Vught, 1994; Teferra & Altbach, 2004), demand from the State for accountability in public higher institutions has increased in the 21st century. In the years before this and particularly in the medieval period universities are believed to have enjoyed greater institutional autonomy because the secular State had not yet emerged and authority was relatively dispersed among the main social actors in the society such as the Church, Civil Society and the University (McLendon, 2003). It is believed that the emergence of the State replaced the medieval informal social organization of the thirteenth and fourteenth century. Secular authority emerged which pitted the balance of power between the Church and the State in favour of the latter (McLendon, 2003; Graham, 2005). Universities started losing their supranational quality and were increasingly viewed as being in service to the provincial and political interests. Issues of autonomy and self-governance started receiving serious redefinitions (McLendon, 2003; Graham, 2005). The role of universities as self-regulated institutions underwent significant reforms to reflect the social demands of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (McLendon, 2003; Viara, 2004; Graham, 2005).

In the nineteenth century the modern State began to mediate the interests of the society. In this connection, higher education institutions have been seen as playing an important role in the social development of the country. The State has in this regard increased its oversight role over universities (Ferlie, et.al., 2008). Accountability from the foregoing premise has in some countries taken the form of total control (Neave & van Vught, 1994; Teferra & Altbach, 2004) to the extent that some Governments have exercised their countervailing powers to ensure that higher education institutions serve the public in the most effective and efficient manner (Ferlie et.al., 2008). Accountability has also been in the form of 'steering from a distance' (Ferlie et.al., 2008; Shore, 2010) where the State has created structures of control such as financing mechanisms that have linked Government funding to the attainment by universities of certain set goals of the State (Tapper & Salter, 2004).

The rapid increase of State demand for accountability in public higher institutions in the twenty-first century has also been because the higher education subsystem has grown so big and become too expensive to maintain using public resources. In this connection, the State has in some countries designed measures that have forced higher education institutions to adopt in order to be guaranteed public funding such as the need to balance applied research with basic research (Ferlie et. al., 2008). In addition, the growth in the size of universities has made them politically visible and economically strategic which inevitably has demanded that Government's oversight role be enhanced (Ferlie et. al., 2008).

Additionally, as shall be discussed in section 4.4.1, as a result of the mechanism of Globalization, teaching and research have evolved into commodities rather than being understood as public goods such that traditional notions of academic freedom, self-

governance and institutional autonomy have had to undergo serious redefinition (Ferlie et. al., 2008; Badat, 2009; Shore, 2010).

Matters of accountability in this regard have had an important bearing on higher education governance because they have impacted on the institutional autonomy of universities. For example, it has been found that the emergence of Higher Education Councils, to oversee higher education institutions in place of direct State control, has enabled higher education institutions to exercise a great deal of autonomy in their governance, particularly where such Councils have been composed by individuals with vast experience in higher education institutions (Ferlie et. al., 2008). On the other hand, 'audit regimes' established as accountability mechanisms have on occasion been accused of working towards transforming higher education institutions to be subordinate to the State through mechanisms of surveillance (Welsh, Ross & Vinson, 2010). Performance indicators introduced as accountability mechanisms have also been accused of serving as monitoring mechanisms (surveillance) for aligning higher education institutions' cultures and structures to those of the State and in the process undermining the role of the University and the autonomy of the agents within it (Maistry, 2014).

My conclusion from the foregoing discussion is that there has been an internal and symmetrical relationship between higher education governance with properties of autonomy and accountability. This means matters of autonomy and accountability are very important properties in any discussion of higher education governance. It is for this reason that autonomy and accountability foregrounds my investigation of UNIMA governance particularly as they relate to the periods before and after the implementation of the governance reforms. Since the study is guided by Social Realist theory, the investigation

seeks to understand the interplay of autonomy and accountability in the new governance structures, culture and agency introduced through the governance reforms in UNIMA. In other words, the focus in this study is on how autonomy and accountability have manifested in the UNIMA governance context (structures and culture) in the periods before and after the implementation of the governance reforms. The section that follows examines in detail how matters of accountability and autonomy have featured in the higher education governance broadly to underscore the argument being advance that there is an internal and symmetrical relationship between higher education governance and properties of autonomy and accountability.

4.2 The manifestation of Accountability and Autonomy in higher learning institutions

Clark (1983), after studying higher education governance structures in the United Kingdom and the United States, established that higher education governance is exercised at six levels of authority, namely: at the department, faculty, college, multi-campus, the State or municipality, and finally at the national level. For the purpose of this study, based on the higher education governance landscape in Malawi, as shall be noted later in Chapter Five, these six levels have been collapsed into three: The systems level, the enterprise (institutional) level and the disciplinary level.

According to Clark (1983), the systems level is where one finds Government machinery most often in the form of Ministries of Education. This level is where policy issues and decisions concerning all levels of education in a country ranging from basic education (primary) and secondary to tertiary level are made. But as shall be seen later, in some instances, the State has not restricted its role to policy making only, but it has extended its mandate beyond

policy. Here, State agencies function as corporate agents while leaders of higher education institutions function as primary agents.

According to Clark (1983), below the system level is the enterprise level also known as the institutional level. At this level one finds University governing bodies. It is here where trustee authority is manifested or corporate agency operates. Some people are appointed to play the role of corporate agents and exercise some degree of ownership of higher education institutions on behalf of the general population of a country, state or region. Hence matters of representation, composition, size and legitimacy of decisions of governing bodies matter a lot at this level. Existing alongside these bodies, according to Clark (1983), are bureaucrats that comprise expert managers who derive their powers from explicitly defined positions and normally perform coordinating roles. University Vice-Chancellors are found here and become part and parcel of corporate agency in matters of decision-making.

Below the enterprise level is the disciplinary level where the core business of higher education takes place. It is at this level where one finds the professoriate, the collegial rulership or faculty.

Harman & Treadgold (2007) have further simplified how higher education governance has manifested by arguing that what prevails in higher education governance structure is simply the 'academic core' and 'shell.' The academic core comprises the faculty, school or department that controls both teaching and research and is surrounded by a broader University environment encompassing students, and support services that complement teaching and research. The 'shell' on the other hand comprises active administrative cadres that help to attract faculty, students and resources. The 'shell' is also responsible for

infrastructural development. The 'shell', according to Harman & Treadgold (2007) is the most conspicuous aspect of a University.

While various categorisations of governance structures are available, beyond those outlined here, the point to stress is that these structures are mechanisms of control and accountability and in the process are meant to safeguard autonomy at various levels of higher education operations, which in essence is what gives higher education governance its state of being.

It is important at this stage to recall that one of the research objectives is to explicate emergent governance practices in UNIMA. To facilitate my understanding of governance in UNIMA it was important to extract from the literature, theories that have been developed in the literature on the higher education governance that explain different models of how issues of autonomy and accountability are exercised.

4.3 Higher Education Governance models

There are various models of governance in higher education that have prevailed over the years and in different regions of the world. Here I only discuss the ones that are prominent in the literature. Graham (2005) believes that policy makers and researchers have developed governance models based on particular education system's conceptions of what an 'ideal University' should be, particularly its role. Such conceptualisations, it must be acknowledged at the outset, have undergone numerous revisions.

4.3.1 The collegial model

According to Graham (2005), the oldest University as we know it today was founded on religious grounds and it is the model that prevailed in the first universities in Europe and has

been referred to in literature as the collegial model. Education was believed to be advanced in pursuit of knowledge not for its own sake but to attain salvation. Universities were viewed as places that developed priests who would in turn help people to turn to God. The role of the University was therefore mainly teaching with an aim to develop professionals well-grounded in knowledge and theory. Universities were subsequently also meant to develop the minds of professionals such as lawyers and physicians (Maton, 2005; Graham, 2005). In the collegial model of governance emphasis is placed on critical inquiry and autonomous learning (Shore, 2012). This model it would appear also influenced early higher education governance practices in Europe and Africa. The prevalence of this model in African Universities was as a result of colonization (Graham, 2013; Teferra & Altbach, 2004). It is worth recalling that most African countries, particularly those of sub-Saharan Africa were colonized by Europeans.

The collegial model therefore views universities as an elite sector that operates independently of the State (except for funding) and exercises great autonomy in its management and governance. In this model, academics are considered as:

> ...producers, users and owners of an esoteric knowledge whose quality or costs cannot be assessed or controlled by 'profanes' (public authorities, members of the civil society, etc.). Academics therefore receive a monopoly from the State to exercise their function. The State agrees to protect them from the external influences, as long as the academic community implements norms, values and practices preventing an abusive use of their knowledge.
>
> (Ferlie, et.al, 2008: 327)

In this model, the governance principles of academic freedom and autonomy are emphasized a great deal. Concern for academic freedom leads to the State in some countries being

restricted to funding higher education only, leaving the scholarly business to the professoriate. According to Tapper & Palfreyman (2002), the following features manifest themselves in the collegial model: academics organize themselves as a coherent intellectual body that values input from individuals and complements each other; research flourishes through the continuous exchange of ideas among intellectuals; hierarchical authority is limited to intellectual prowess and not status; intellectualism is viewed as the very foundation of a successful academic life; there is respect for differing and divergent points of views and there are decentralized structures of governance that facilitate participatory decision-making.

Institutional autonomy is also paramount in the collegial model and is concerned with the relationships that exist between the professoriate, internal higher education leadership and the external State and non-State players. Such relationships revolve around matters of the independence of the professoriate from internal and external controls as well as authority recognition and boundaries (Henkel, 2007). Specific issues that feature for example, are how universities and the State mediate on matters relating to: the definition of the institutions' missions and vision statements, setting admissions standards, setting degree requirements, determining course content, setting student faculty ratios, establishing new degree programmes, reviewing existing programmes, eliminating existing programmes, adding or discontinuing existing academic departments and offering full fee paying courses (Wang, 2010). It is important to observe that in this model, University governance puts a premium on individual academic freedom and institution's self-regulation.

The collegial model of governance has been lauded by Hellawell & Hancock (2001) as the most favoured style of governance particularly in academic faculties and departments even in modern universities. In a case study conducted in United Kingdom by Hellawell & Hancock

(2001) on the changing role of the academic middle manager in higher education, it is reported that nearly all the interviewees in that study mentioned collegiality as the most effective form of decision-making for higher education as it resonates well with the belief in shared ideas.

From my analysis, in a collegial governance model structural and cultural systems complement one another such that there is morphostasis in the overall institutional governance context. From a Social Realist perspective in the collegial system of governance one notices properties of structure and culture to be necessary complementarities and hence fostering a situational logic of protection in the University landscape. Such protection of core values and systems in the collegial governance model may be desirable in many cases but can also potentially be a mechanism working against transformation or wider social inclusion.

According to Hellawell & Hancock (2001), the collegial model of governance has tended to permit vocal and articulate academics to sway the decision-making process in favour of their personal 'agendas', or what Archer (1995) calls 'agents' personal projects', some of which are negative and at variance with the goals and aspirations of the institution. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of a University as an 'ideal University' under the collegial model could not be sustained in the second half of the 20th century. There emerged research oriented institutions and practical and technical education oriented institutions (Maton, 2005; Graham 2005) that challenged the viewing of the University as being run purely from the collegial model of governance because other stakeholders were emerging with interests in higher education governance. In addition, whereas the research oriented universities were viewed as communities of scholars where scientists would primarily be engaged in education for the generation of knowledge (Graham 2005; 2013); that is pursuit of knowledge for its own sake,

there gradually appeared new ideologies that viewed higher education institutions as places for skills development which emphasised a practical and technical education orientation. Pursuit for knowledge was understood in the context not for the sake of it but to resolve challenges affecting the society. Emphasis was thus placed on practical knowledge that imparts transferable skills (Maton, 2005; Graham 2005).

Added to this, the changing role of the State in the early 1980s to 1990s is also believed to have played an important role in redefining the collegial model of higher education governance. For example, Ferlie et.al. (2008) noted that the State began to play an important role in mediating the interests of the society to the extent that the State started to get interested in matters of defining of institutions' missions and vision statements in the higher education sector. The State became interested in determining the goals of higher education systems to ensure that higher education institutions were complementing State efforts in their social and economic development endeavours. Higher education institutions were increasingly required to be accountable to the State agencies. Additionally, Henkel (2007) noted that the advent of democratic principles also meant that the academe had to be seen to be responsive to the felt needs of the society. This necessitated that:

> the ideal of academe as a sovereign, bounded territory, free by right from intervention in its governance of knowledge development and transmission, be superseded by ideals of engagement with the societies in which academic institutions are 'axial structures', whose work is important to Government's, businesses and civil society.
>
> Henkel (2007: 98)

The above situations in Archer's (1995) configurations of situational logics could be described as the emergence of contingent contradictions in the institution's social systems. It

is important to note that emergent from this has been a movement towards the State-centric model of higher education governance.

4.3.2 The State-centric model

According to Clark (1983), George (2006) and Neave & van Vught (1994), the state-centric model combines state bureaucracy and faculty authority. In this model the State exerted greater control on higher education systems through its education ministries. This model dominated higher education governance in Europe and Africa in the 1990s (Neave & van Vught, 1994). In some cases the State, for example, became responsible for the setting of University goals, students' admission policies, curriculum, degree requirements, examination systems and the appointment and pay packages for staff. On the receiving end, the professoriate exercised collegial authority particularly through Senate by ensuring that the 'how' of the academe remained solely their preserve. It would appear that under the state-centric model therefore, matters of academic freedom sat side by side with those of political control. It is this 'unholy matrimony' that may have catalysed the many tensions that have characterized higher education governance practice under this model.

According to Teferra & Altbach (2004), African Universities, particularly in the post-independent era before democratization, largely manifested the state-centric model of governance. Saint (2009), for instance, observed that most Sub-Saharan African Universities had the head of state as the Chancellor of the University to ensure that there was State control on higher education. The head of state therefore was the one that appointed the University's Vice-Chancellor and members of the University governing councils including its chairperson. Such appointments according to Aina (2009) had serious implications for State and higher education relations as the academy viewed senior managers as political appointees. It also

had significant implications on the matter of University autonomy as Universities were treated as extensions of State institutions (Aina, 2009).

In my assessment of the literature, the state-centric model enabled systematization in the higher education sector which is contrary to the cultural practices favoured in the universities. The state-centric model therefore created tensions in universities as it contradicted the wishes and desires of the academe. There appeared within the same period another model that balanced the role of the State and that of higher education institutions. This is referred to in literature as the State-supervision model.

4.3.3 State-supervision model

The state-supervision model is one where the Government still plays a role in the governance and management of higher education institutions but at more of a distance (Clark, 1983) using intermediary bodies such as National Councils for Higher Education and other legislative tools. Each University is provided space by the State to exercise process authority such as to determine its admission policies, curriculum, the appointment and dismissal of staff and the determination of degrees programmes. However, when it comes to matters of substantive authority, it is the State that has the final say (Clark, 1998; Neave & van Vught, 1994; George, 2006).

The post-apartheid era governance of higher education in South Africa is a good example of the state-supervision model (Hall & Symes, 2005). In South Africa, Hall & Symes (2005) observed that the first democratically elected Government of 1994 inherited a higher education system that perpetuated racial divides in the country and which had to be changed. In order to propel economic growth and address social injustices in the South African higher

education sector, the new Government introduced legislations through the 1997 White Paper and the Higher Education Amendment Act of 2000 that empowered the State, through the National Council on Higher Education, to exercise a supervisory role over the South African higher education sector. Institutional autonomy of higher education institutions were therefore limited to the matters of process authority as the State through various accountability mechanisms determined the overall policy direction of higher education. Through this legislation all Universities in South Africa were subjected to quality assurance processes of the Council on Higher Education while 'academic freedom' was enshrined as a right in the country's Constitution. This model of governance created synergies in the structural and cultural institutional set-up which created a situational logic of syncretism in the governance context. Alongside this state-supervision model has also been the corporate model of governance that has obtained currency particularly in Europe, Australia and Asia.

4.3.4 The Corporate model or neo-liberal model

The corporate governance model, it would appear, came about as a result of the redefinition of nation states arising from political and economic trajectories of the late 1980s to early 1990s. Ferlie et.al. (2008), writing about Europe, linked the transformation experienced in higher education governance from the 1970s to the 1990s to the redefinition of the role of the nation-state generally. He argues that the period between 1940 and 1980s was primarily one of the Welfare State. The State was preoccupied with meeting the needs of society and this precipitated the expansion of the public sector to provide goods and services to meet people's demands. In this period higher education sectors were characterized by 'massification' in universities. As a result, the higher education sector expanded due to increased demand for higher education. As the public sector expanded to meet the demands of the public, the

cascading effect was strong management in the public sector (Clark, 1998; Neave & van Vught 1994; George, 2006).

Correspondingly, this is the same period in which higher education enjoyed relative autonomy in terms of its governance (Kai, 2009). However, the economic downturn of the 1980s, coupled with the ever-expanding public sector, meant that the State could no longer afford to manage the entire public sector. This meant that the role of the State was reduced to cut down on cost as well as to respond to the then economic trends that called for smaller State machinery (Clark, 1998; Neave & van Vught 1994; George, 2006). The drive to reduce the cost of the public sector resulted in reduced funding from Government to the higher education sector. This unfortunately happened at the time when there was increased demand for places in higher education. Such developments posed serious challenges in the management of higher education and heralded a turn-around in higher education governance thinking (George, 2006; Ferlie et.al, 2008). The ensuing crisis foreshadowed the spirit of value for money in the public service delivery and chaperoned the emergence of the corporate model of governance in higher education (George, 2006; Ferlie et.al., 2008).

The corporate governance model has been associated with the following governance practices in higher education institutions: decentralization of management; the adoption of business culture in the management of higher education institutions; the introduction of performance indicators as monitoring tools for compliance in finances, student numbers and research outputs (which are viewed as important indicators of success); creation of extra-governmental agencies to supervise particular issues of higher education; broadening sources of income for institutions away from heavy reliance on Government sources; and the call to education institutions to provide educational and research services in a cost-effective manner with

universities asked to have clear goals and exercise flexibility. This has also entailed that higher education be more responsive to market demands rather than operate as ivory towers (Deem & Brehony, 2005; George, 2006; Harman &Treadgold, 2007). From this model of governance emerged significant morphogenesis in the governance of higher education sector across continents.

In Australia for example, George (2006) and Harman & Treadgold (2007) observed that the adoption of corporate governance principles by universities brought about less Government intervention in higher education governance with institutions encouraged to have a lean governing council with a composition that had more independent members than those from within, especially from the private sector with some possessing financial and commercial skills. This was necessitated by the change of thinking in Australia that viewed members of governing councils not as stakeholders who were in council to protect their interests but as trustees who should protect the assets of the institutions and interests of the main stakeholder, which is the Government. In the same thinking, Government's funding of institutions of higher learning was viewed not as benevolence but as an investment from which it must get returns (Deem & Brehony, 2005; George, 2006).

In addition, corporate governance has also resulted in shifting roles for Vice-Chancellors so that they serve as Chief Executives of their respective universities. In Malawi I observed through the literature search that the Vice-Chancellor of UNIMA was treated by Government as a Chief Executive and enjoyed similar benefits as those applicable to Chief Executives of other public sector institutions.

Further, corporate governance has also seen deans and heads of academic department assuming executive leadership roles in their respective faculties and departments. This has been reflected in the manner they are being appointed as well as how their tenure is managed. Corporate governance has also resulted in the expansion in the scope of University missions and goals from the traditional way of knowledge generation for its own sake to knowledge for value adding (Deem & Brehony, 2005; George, 2006; Ferlie, et. al., 2008; Shattock, 2002; Maistry, 2012) thereby influencing changes in the roles of agencies in the organization. From the foregoing, it can be concluded that corporate governance has influenced significantly the structural and cultural morphogenesis of universities.

Critics of the corporate model have argued that rather than limiting the role of the State in the governance of higher education institutions, corporate governance has enhanced it. For example, Shore (2010), commenting on his experience of corporate governance in New Zealand Universities, observed that corporate governance has intensified State intervention through a complex funding formulae and a network of new intermediary bodies. He cited Government funding of universities through what are known as 'strategic investments' as having compelled Universities to embark on applied research, at the expense of basic research which is known to lead to profound scientific discoveries. Furthermore, Shore (2010) also pointed out that the competition for research funding had fuelled institutional rivalry and brought about internal divisions among universities in New Zealand. He stated that the adoption of corporate governance had led to a shift of the attention of University managers from traditional academic pursuits to begin defining their University missions in terms of its commercial interests and entrepreneurial output, with focus being placed on political and economic value adding.

Similar sentiments have been expressed by Weinberg & Kistner (2007); McKenna (2012) and Maistry (2014) commenting about South African higher education. They observed that governance practices ushered in by corporate governance had undermined the role of academics in the sense that they no longer were at the helm of policy formulation as policy was now being directed by the demands of value adding and cost containment. According to Weinberg & Kistner (2007), professional administrative cadres have taken centre stage in influencing policy direction at the expense of their academic colleagues. McKenna (2012) and Maistry (2012) have observed that this trend has influenced the construction of the University particularly when it comes to matters of staff development and performance assessments in South African Universities. For example, McKenna (2012:9) argues that 'If staff development is perceived to be a set of managerial processes foisted on academics by a group of 'outsiders' who are not themselves academics and who are oblivious to institutional and disciplinary context, it cannot hope to be a driver of institutional transformation'. Maistry (2012) argues that the focus on national and global competitiveness, at the core of the neo-liberal project, is in tension to calls for research that takes local contexts and communities into account. Maistry argues that the logic of the University in this model of governance makes management, including middle management such as heads of department, 'complicit' in the 'alienating, market-driven University' (2012: 515). Consequently, the notion of 'University of culture' – (traditional University with a focus on knowledge generation and the development of critical minds) is said to have gradually waned and in its place a 'University of excellence' – where attainment of certain pre-set standards of control such as enrolment figures, research outputs, and number of publications has taken centre stage (Lynch, 2006; Weinberg & Kistner 2007).

It is sentiments such as these that led Shore (2010: 26) to conclude that corporate governance has meant that:

> University management teams… not only arrogated to themselves the role of 'speaking for the University'; increasingly, they now claim to be the University, and relegate staff, alumni and students to the role of 'stakeholders' – along with students, parents, industry and Government .

Shore has described the above scenario as a discursive turn, which represents significant shifts in power relations of New Zealand Universities. Harman &Treadgold (2007) commenting on Australian Universities' experiences noted that the limiting of the size of the governing boards to smaller numbers that exclude key stakeholders such as students and professors, has failed to value shared governance (which I describe in section 4.3.5), a critical aspect for the success of the academe in terms of the collegial model.

Finally, corporate governance is criticized as having impacted negatively on academic work particularly for those academics that have occupied senior management positions. For example, in a study conducted by Harman (2002) in Australia on the impact of corporate governance among deans and heads of academic department, he found that the corporate model resulted in major changes in work roles and in the social and educational backgrounds of those who occupy these posts. Harman (2001) also found that deans and heads occupying management positions were spending more time on administrative work at the expense of their academic work. This resulted in less academic publishing on their part when compared to their colleagues. In this regard, the corporate model impacted on the role of agency as heads of department and deans gradually began assuming the role of corporate players, thereby reducing the number of primary agents. According to Archer (1995; 2003b)

whenever the number of corporate agents expand at the expense of the primary agents, who are reduced in number, the society undergoes morphogenesis.

Furthermore, by leaning on neo-liberal thinking the corporate governance model has also resulted in silent colonization of both academics and students in universities according to Giroux (2002) and Lynch (2006). Research is undertaken in the spirit of its economic value and academic programmes that are perceived as of low economic value to the students are being side-lined despite their importance to the development of students' minds.

4.3.5 Shared governance model

According to Shattock (2002), Dearlove (2002), shared governance is a system of governance where *de jure* of either governing body or academic body is seldom exercised and instead a sense of common purpose is nurtured in universities. According to Brian Taylor (The Chronicle of Higher Education: July, 23, 2009), shared governance is premised on principles that no one person should arbitrarily make important decisions in universities absent of the advice of key constituents. Decision-making should not be simply a function of making decisions by consensus through committees but that various stakeholders should participate in well-defined parts of the process. Shared governance also recognises that certain constituencies should be given primary responsibility over decision-making in certain areas. In this respect, Taylor (2012) has defined key constituents to imply academics. In his support for shared governance, Taylor (2012:12) has argued that:

> A University is unlikely to succeed without the cooperation and active engagement of its academics; and centralisation of decision-making to the exclusion of academics is likely to

> reinforce academics' natural tendency towards a stronger allegiance to their discipline than to their institution and to foster academic alienation from institutional strategy and objectives.

Of interest to me based on the discussions in the preceding sections of the different governance models is how issues of autonomy and accountability are mediated in the process through which governance structures, culture and agency undergo morphogenesis. The collegial model emphasised structures and culture that promote individual and institutional autonomy, which means that academics should be accountable to themselves or to bodies in which they are the dominant players. The State-centric model is on the other extreme where Government structures and its agencies determine the direction of the University and what it should be pre-occupied with. In the state-supervision model governance oscillates within governance structures of the State and of universities each playing defined roles. The State being pre-occupied with the promotion of the 'what' of the academe – the mission, goals and objectives of the University, while the academic institutions are essentially concerned with promoting their vested interest in the 'how' of the academe, (how to go about teaching and learning). In the corporate model, it is as if the State should not play any significant role; University governance structures, practices and agency must be enabled in such a manner that they be conditioned by the cultural practices emergent from the dynamics of the free market. In the shared governance model emphasis is on mutual respect when it comes to University governance.

Equally important to observe from the foregoing discussion is how the underlying notion of an 'ideal University', which is the realm of culture in Social Realist terms, has influenced the above models. One cannot fail to notice that under the collegial model of governance a University is viewed more as a research institution where the independence of academics is

seen as a catalyst for knowledge generation. However, it appears that under the other models discussed, universities are little by little losing that position and rather being constructed as being responsible for preparing a skilled labour force to develop the economy. It is for this reason that Shore (2010) criticised features of corporate governance as being neo-liberal, enabling universities to pursue multiple objectives, a phenomenon he described as transforming higher education institutions from being universities and becoming multiversities beholden to many stakeholders, including the State.

Over time the conceptualisation of universities has undergone morphogenesis. Emergent from such transformation have been various governance practices that resulted in the development of the models of governance discussed in the preceding sections. This is consistent with Archer's (1995) morphogenetic theory which theorises that because of their relative autonomy in the regeneration of structural, cultural and agential properties brings about emergent properties that behave as causal mechanisms that can explain the morphogenesis (or morphostasis) of institutions. As can be recalled from Chapter Two, the interplay of various structural, cultural and agential mechanisms generates emergent properties some of which are completely out of synchronicity with the existing structural, cultural and agential properties. It can thus be concluded from the foregoing discussion that various governance models presented in the preceding sections are emergent from the interplay of structural, cultural and agential governance practices. All the models that have emerged and been discussed so far have however involved shifting balances of University autonomy and accountability either within structures of the higher education institutions themselves or between the structures of higher education institutions and outside State agencies and the market. It is also important to observe that these models were not necessarily discrete or happening at entirely different points in history, but rather the higher

education system has been characterised by continuous shifts between the various models portrayed here.

Of interest to this study is how these shifts in governance models have manifested themselves in the UNIMA governance practices period before the initiation of governance (T1), all the way through the period when the governance reforms were being implemented (T2 - T3) and the causal mechanisms responsible for the emergent morphostasis or morphogenesis of governance system in UNIMA by 2013 (T4).

4.4 Events that have shaped Higher Education Governance models

The major developments highlighted in the foregoing section have underlining causal powers. According to Critical Realism, what is experienced is an outcome of events, which in turn emerge from particular mechanisms (Bhaskar, 2008). A review of the literature reveals that a number of complex events have occurred in our society that could help to explain the developments experienced in higher education governance discussed in section 4.3. In the sections that follow, I focus on mechanisms that repeatedly emerged in the literature I have consulted, though all the time bearing in mind the Critical Realist caution about the partial and fallible nature of knowledge.

The issues that repeatedly emerge in the literature as mechanisms underpinning shifts in higher education governance are globalization, which is defined and elaborated upon in section 4.4.1 and its associated discourses of neo-liberalism discussed in section 4.4.2. Most reforms in governance in the public sector in general appear also to have been shaped by New Public Management (NPM) ideas which I discuss in section 4.4.3. NPM ideas appear also to have emerged from neoliberalism and globalisation so the division of the discussion

into these three segments is largely for ease of reading. Equally significant and discussed in the sections that follow are discourses of internalization and entrepreneurship particularly their link with globalization and how these too have shaped current higher education governance practices. Since society exists in an 'open system' (Danermark et.al., 2002), there is a constant interplay and relationship between mechanisms. The identification of individual mechanisms as entirely separate entities as being discussed here is largely an analytical device of the researcher.

4.4.1 Globalization and its associated discourses

Globalization is a discourse that has been associated with the emergence of global networks and communities of practice as a result of which knowledge is easily accessible almost anywhere by almost anyone (George, 2006). Globalization remains one of the main underlying causal mechanisms of most of the economic and political developments that have shaped the higher education governance landscape in the last decade (George, 2006). According to Armstrong (2007), the significance of globalization in higher education is associated with the desire by many nation-states to increase skills in their students to enable them to be competitive in the globalized economy and to generate funds for University's sustenance in the period of reduced funding.

Globalization in higher education has also led to reforms in higher education aimed at realigning institutions to better serve the knowledge based, hi-tech economy and help increase the production of goods and services which should compete favourably on the international market (George, 2006). The process of realigning higher education institutions in this direction has led to an enormous shift in higher education governance models. For example in Singapore, Mok (2005; 2010) notes that globalization has led to shifts in higher

education governance from interventionist governance practices (state-centric model) where the state dominated all aspects of higher education governance and management to what has been described as a 'deregulated state model' or state-supervision model which is characterised by decentralization and deregulation.

According to Vaira (2004), forces of globalization catalysed political and economic reforms in Africa through mechanisms of foreign aid and grants. Vaira (2004) has argued that western nations capitalised on the weakened state of economies of less developed countries to propagate their political and economic ideologies. Developing nations were 'coerced' through Structural Adjustment Loans, Sectoral Adjustment Loans and the Structural Adjustment Programmes to adopt structural transformation of their political systems and economies along the institutional archetypes dictated by the North. Structural Adjustment Programmes are macroeconomic reforms introduced by the World Bank and IMF and applied to developing countries to solve short-term structural constraints that inhibited them from participating favourably in the free world market (Williams, 1995). These institutional imperatives and archetypes were carried to developing nations by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, extremely powerful multinational agencies (Vaira, 2004) and they have also affected the higher education landscape in Africa. For example, it was noted by Altbach, Reiseberg & Rumbley (2009) that globalization accorded higher education institutions worldwide with new opportunities for study and research by driving the need for technological development.

Advances in technology and communications brought about by adherence to the principles of globalization have enhanced international cooperation, led to a rise in networks and improved sharing of scientific information on the global level. However, for African Universities it can

be argued that such trends have done the opposite in some cases. Zeleza & Olukoshi (2004) have argued that adherence to the principles advanced under globalization has isolated African Universities and undermined their autonomy by emphasising Information, Communication and Technology (ICT). African Universities have failed to invest in ICT to the level the developed countries have done (Zeleza & Olukoshi, 2004). Many Sub-Saharan African Universities have failed to sufficiently invest in ICT because Structural Adjustment Programmes (a concept I shall discuss in a later section) eroded their financial muscle (Altbach, et.al., 2009). This is evidenced by the static total participation rate (the ratio of University enrolment to the overall number in the age group that should be in universities) experienced in Sub-Saharan African in the higher education sub-sector which has remained at 5% in 2005 compared to 17% for other developing countries and 66% for developed countries by the 1990s (SARUA, 2008). Besides, African countries that have attempted to invest in ICT have been constrained by the ever-rising cost of the bandwidth. It is believed that the above scenario has impeded African Universities' participation in the cyber world (Zeleza & Olukoshi, 2004). Consequently, African Universities have not benefitted as much as their counterparts in Asia and Europe from globalization. It is thus important in this study for me to interrogate the extent to which globalisation has been a mechanism in the shifts in governance reforms in UNIMA.

As observed earlier, knowledge of the world or a phenomenon involves identifying the underlying properties or causal mechanisms that make a social object behave the way it does (Harvey, 2002; Bhaskar, 2008). Development of the particular governance approaches discussed in the previous section could not have come about without underlying generative mechanisms. It would appear from the literature that underlining globalization in the context

of higher education governance trends has been economic and political imperatives, such as neo-liberalism, to which I now turn.

4.4.2 Neo-liberalism

Neo-liberalism is a catchphrase that has been associated with all that is problematic with the rampant consumerism experienced in the 1980s and beyond. In the context of this study neo-liberalism is used to refer to a theory of both politics and economic practices. It is premised on the belief that human well-being can best be realised by appealing to individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework (Harvey, 2005; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Giroux, 2009). This would demand that there be strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. As further argued by Harvey (2005), from the foregoing the State should create and preserve institutional frameworks by guaranteeing the integrity of the money supply and the provision of security of property through defence, policing and legal structures. The State should also develop regulatory frameworks to enable markets to function properly (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

The State should in this regard, not directly participate in the markets as doing so would distort it according to the logic of neo-liberalism, because the State lacks the required information to effectively regulate markets (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Giroux, 2009). It is further believed in this theory that markets left alone, would guide rational thinking (Harvey 2005; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Giroux, 2009). This is so because in neo-liberal thinking it is held that real knowledge is gained and true economic progress is attained from local knowledge that emerges from particular circumstances of time and place (Harvey, 2005).

Neo-liberalism has influenced a number of political and economic reforms globally. Harvey (2005) has associated political reforms that were initiated in the public sectors of Great Britain by Margaret Thatcher and in the United States of America by Ronald Reagan and in China by Deng Xiaoping, three powerful and influential nation-states, to have emerged from the neo-liberal philosophy. In the field of higher education neo-liberal thinking has revolutionised the role of the higher education from being viewed as a 'public good' to being treated as a 'commercial commodity' tradable on the international market (Giroux, 2002; Lynch, 2006). One notable movement or ideology that may have come about as a result of neo-liberal thinking and is highlighted quite extensively in the literature as having provided the framework for institutional public sector reforms, including in higher education, is New Public Management (NPM).

4.4.3 New Public Management

NPM is said to have evolved from the blending of economics and management theories (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002; Olssen & Peter 2005). Specifically, NPM is believed to be a hybrid of neo-liberal economic principles of public choice, transaction cost, property rights theory and principal-agent theories on one hand (Olssen & Peter, 2005) and the scientific management movement's set of administrative reforms based on ideas of professional management and high discretionary powers on the other (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). According to Olssen &Peter (2005), neo-liberalism embraced the public choice view of the free market and advocates the introduction of external levers and internal targets on the market that would strengthen compliance. It has also embraced Transaction Cost Economics as neo-liberalism is concerned with introducing sets of institutional arrangements in a particular market context that would maximise benefits and minimise operational costs. NPM is also premised on the belief that private sector

business ideas and practices are superior to those of the public sector and should therefore be imported into the public sector to improve efficiency (Deem & Brehony, 2005). Neo-liberalism institutionalises aspects of self-interested human behaviour as it relates issues of entitlement to scarce commodities, systems of exchange and the rules governing terms of transfers in the commodity market which are important in Property Rights Theory. Finally, neo-liberalism embraces Principal-agency Theory's concern for compliance and control in a hierarchical work environment as a panacea for facilitating clear and accountable management functions (Christensen & Leagreid, 2002; Olssen & Peter, 2005).

It is argued that NPM ideas have come about through the blending of the above economic principles with principles of managerial supremacy (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). It is further argued that by mixing economic and managerial principles NPM has placed great emphasis on the role of free markets and public control as hallmarks of public sector reorganization. This has meant that service delivery be subjected to dynamics of the free market while at the same time managers of public organizations be placed under the control of political authority through performance management systems. It is through such blending that has seen an emphasis in public sector re-organizations being modelled on aspects of decentralization, devolution and delegation of power to enable greater discretion on the part of managers that run public sector organizations (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002; Olssen & Peter, 2005). These are some of the issues that are interrogated in my examination of the UNIMA governance reforms.

Champions of NPM have considered it as both a movement and an ideology (Hood, 1991; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). A movement because, as Birnbaum (2000) has observed regarding higher education reforms, at every moment of the life cycle of public sector

organizations there have been new ideas that have been presented as universally applicable quick-fix solutions to address the challenges being faced which have with time faded but left a mark on society. NPM ideas could as well be one of those ideas that have come and faded, considering the manner NPM was popularized particularly by public sector reformers who obligated Governments to adopt it in the early 1980s and how eventually the ideas were discarded by some Governments in the 1990s.

NPM can also be described as an ideology because of its hegemonic inclination towards beliefs (Deem & Brehony, 2005). NPM has thus been described as a framework of general applicability for organizing Government capacity to deliver public services. Its advocates have argued that NPM is a universal agenda that has succeeded public administration and transcends across different contexts, organizations, policy fields, levels of Government and countries in solving the management tribulations in the public sector (Hood, 1992).

In this study, NPM ideas are examined in the context of either being contingent contradictions or compatibilities to the existing UNIMA governance practices. As can be recalled from Chapter Three, contingents are cultural or structural practices that emerge externally in a given society that either conforms to or contradicts existing structural and cultural practices (Archer, 1995).

In most European countries NPM types of public sector reforms have evolved gradually in response to critical problems that have affected the state machinery (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). The growing popularity with NPM type of reforms among Governments in these countries is believed to have mainly been triggered by apathy within public sector services especially; in Social Realist terms this would be seen to be a result of the reflexivity

by agency to their involuntaristically placed constraining socio-cultural systems. In Europe for example, it is argued that there was a steady realization (in Social Realist terms, agency reflexivity) that delivery of service by the public sector was inefficient and in many cases ineffective; the public sector was becoming costly and compromising quality; the public sector was seen to be facilitating undue influence by employees, especially professionals at the expense of the public they served (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). It became increasingly obvious that if the above problems in the public sector were not going to be checked, it would eventually bring about undesirable growth in the tax bills, leading into declining standards of public services and eventually creating dissatisfaction among the electorate (Hood, 1992). It was in this conceptualisation of the problem that NPM took hold.

NPM is grounded in a number of doctrinal components. Here, I mention six that are relevant to this study. The first component is hands-on professional management, implying that the manager at the top must be given clear and evidently discretionary powers (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002) in Archerian terms (1995) this would bring about change through increasing corporate agency. In Australian higher education where NPM ideas have been adopted, this has led to shifts in governance authority from the professoriate towards the University governing boards with compositions that resembled those of the private sector (Harman & Treadgold, 2007). This has meant universities having governing boards chaired by persons appointed by the State but asked to function more or less as the head of a private sector corporation. Similarly, Vice-Chancellors have assumed the role of the Chief Executive Officer despite there being fundamental differences between a company board and a University governing body (McKenna, 2012; Taylor, 2012). In some cases, universities have opted to recruit Vice-Chancellors from industry rather than from within the academe. There has also been proliferation of new executives in universities such as Executive Deans and

Executive Directors of Institutional Planning, Student Affairs, Infrastructure, Quality Assurance etc. This means higher education institutions have experienced an expansion in corporate agents. Taylor (2012) has noted the challenges with this: Board members appointed from outside much as they were acknowledged as bringing new ideas and orientation to the University business, have tended not to possess adequate information of the institution. Furthermore, because of their lack of understanding of the academic culture, many of them have opted for short-term agendas which have not pleased most of the higher education stakeholders (Harman & Treadgold, 2007; Taylor, 2012).

In the United Kingdom, where NPM ideas also featured as result of Margaret Thatcher's public sector reforms (Deem, 2004), there have been similar shifts in governance authority from the professoriate towards University governing bodies. The justification for extending the reforms in the public sector in general to universities in particular was based on the premise that public universities are part of the public sector so that measures aimed at controlling the overall national spending should not exclude public universities since they too receive most of their funding from the State. A major development aligned to this thinking in the United Kingdom was the merging of public universities and restructuring of polytechnics which catalysed the infusion of business practices in the public universities (George, 2006; Clark, 1998; Shattock, 2010).

The second point is that NPM advocates the formulation of well-defined goals, targets and indicators of success, most significantly in quantitative terms (Hood, 1992). It is envisaged that accountability and efficiency would be evident where goals and objectives are clearly stated (Christensen, 2001; Lane, 2000), a phenomena that has implied that Universities formulate strategic plans covering periods of 5 to 10 years with clear objectives that are

measurable to guide their operations. In some countries, universities have been forced by the State to develop strategic plans as a regulatory requirement for example in Namibia, Mozambique and Ethiopia (Saint, 2009) and more recently in South Africa.

Similarly, at national education sector level, national education plans have been developed to provide frameworks within which higher education institutions should operate. For example, in Malawi in 2006, the Government developed a National Education Sector Plan which outlines three key areas higher education institutions must aim to address which are: increased access and equity, quality and relevance and governance and management with focus on broadening sources of revenue for the sector (Malawi Government National Education Sector Plan, 2006).

Like any contingencies, as would be expected according to Archer (1995), insistence on strategic thinking in universities has not however been received without criticisms. This has ranged from questions being raised as to whether by insisting on strategic planning universities are not increasingly being forced to subject their academics to behave like 'schizophrenic scholars' based on the multifarious goals Universities are required to pursue (Shore 2010), to legitimation claims of whether or not what is being witnessed in higher education governance landscape does not mean the demise of Universities as knowledge producers (Barnett, 2000).

The third point to note about the NPM is that components of its framework give great attention on output controls rather than on process (Hood, 1992). In higher education, emphasis is being placed on accountability monitoring measures by State agencies such as: the number of students graduating from each programme; the number of publications per

faculty member per year; and the amount of resources being generated through research and consultancy activities in universities (Shore, 2010; Maistry, 2012; McKenna, 2012). This has seen the creation of regulatory bodies such as National Councils for Higher Education to oversee the implementation of Governments' policy plans by higher education institutions. It has also led to the creation of Quality Control bodies by the State to monitor compliance by universities in certain areas of management such as enrolment trends (Hall & Symes, 2005).

Fourthly NPM emphasises a shift to the disaggregation of units in the public sector (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). The idea has been that 'small is better than large'. Small not in the sense that units of universities are required to admit fewer students than before but small in the way University units are organised and managed. Here, organizations have been re-organized into smaller units focusing on specific activities to which they have relative advantage over other similar units. For example, the reforms that were implemented at the University of Makerere in Uganda led to faculties creating smaller and focused units (centres of excellence) to carry out specific objectives (Mamdani, 2007). Large faculties such as those of social sciences that embrace a cross section of disciplines have been broken into specialised units such as a 'Centre of Commercial Studies'. Such centres have introduced professional programmes and reviewed their existing academic programmes to better respond to market demands and therefore be able to attract full-fee paying students in addition to Government subsidised students (Mamdani, 2007). Reforms of this nature in higher education have seen an expansion in student enrolment and a corresponding emphasis on value for money at the expense of imparting knowledge for its own sake (Lerner, 2008). They have however been criticized as having watered down academic standards as the orientation of universities has been shifted from research and knowledge production to vocational

training thereby undermining the very purpose of a University (McLeandor, 2003; Lynch, 2006; Lerner, 2008; Mamdani, 2007).

The fifth component of NPM has been a move to greater competition in the public sector (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). In this regard, where services have to be secured from the open market, modes of acquiring such services have taken the form of open tendering so that those that are willing and able to offer the sought after services with great efficiency have been preferred rather than those that are not able to demonstrate the same agility (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). The implication of these reform measures has seen redefinitions of higher education institutional boundaries to encompass private sector players. This supports those that have argued that higher education institutions are gradually moving away from being bounded territories free by right from interventions towards becoming comparable to the commercial industrial sector (Mok, 2002; Harman & Treadgold, 2007; Henkel, 2007; Mamdani, 2007).

The final component of NPM that has had a marked effect on higher education has been the greater prominence placed on parsimony in resource utilization (Hood, 1992). In implementing this aspect, universities have opted for outsourced services to external companies for many facets of University support services such as catering, gardening, security, maintenance, cleaning, printing and photocopying. It has also involved universities opting for part-time staff or short contract staff instead of full-time employees. In some instances, staff members have been retrenched with the aim of doing more with fewer staff members (Lerner, 2008). While retrenchment of tenured staff members or use of contract staff might be appropriate in some organizations, in the higher education and particularly for teaching positions, this practice has been shown by Harman & Treadgold, (2007) to affect the

quality of higher education. It has been noted from experience that academics require long-term investment in training and experience, to enhance their expertise.

This emphasis on discipline and parsimony has also led to a broadening of the higher education resource base through attracting third stream income to supplement their resources (Badat, 2009) or by requiring students to make some contributions towards their education in the form of increased tuition and introduction of user fees for some services which were previously provided for free, a phenomenon that has been described as 'cost-sharing' (Johnston, 2004). Experiences in higher education from countries in Africa that have introduced student loan schemes as a result of adopting cost-sharing measures under the rubric of NPM reforms, such as Ghana and Ethiopia, show that the measures have had their own unintended consequences ranging from administrative concerns of defining who is a needy student, to low levels of loan repayments (Yizengaw, 2003; Atuahene, 2009).

It would appear that NPM has also brought about unintended consequences in sectors other than higher education. It is argued that the transformation of public sector organizations through NPM has in general led to excessive rule-bound, hierarchic and thus inflexible governance practices which have resulted in deleterious consequences on the performance of public sector employees (Hood, 1992; Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). NPM reforms have also been accused of corroding the character of public servants and undermining public service motivation. It has been argued in the literature that it has brought about restructuring of public organizations that have made public sector employees perpetually fearful of job losses as they no longer see their organizations as stable entities where they can build lifelong careers (Lerner, 2008). NPM reforms are also said to have enabled corrupt practices in the

public sector organizations (Tambulasi, 2009) because they have undermined a sense of commitment to an institution or its project.

Viewed from a Social Realist perspective it can be concluded that the NPM reforms have been exogenous contingent properties that have been introduced in public sector organizations such as public institutions of higher learning with the intention of transforming their structures and agency to be compatible with neo-liberal ideas in the domain of culture. In Africa, the introduction of NPM type public sector reforms has been associated to a large degree with the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Williams, 1995). One issue to observe is that where NPM reforms have been introduced in higher education, the outcomes have not corresponded to the intentions of the reformers (Christensen, 2001). In this connection, as Archer (1995) has argued, unintended consequences are the bedrock of emergent practices which explain morphostasis or morphogenesis of a particular social system. It is in this regard that I examined whether NPM ideas had an influence or not in the governance reform measures recommended by the MIM Report and introduced in UNIMA in 1997 or not. I assessed whether NPM ideas played a role in reshaping the UNIMA governance context and with what consequences.

4.4.4 Internationalization

Another mechanism that repeatedly emerges in the literature underpinning shifts in higher education governance is internationalization. This is defined as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural and global dimension into the purpose, function (teaching, research and service) and the delivery of higher education' (Knight, 2006:18). Internationalization has been touted as one of the most significant policy responses to

globalization by higher education institutions (Altbach et al., 2009). Internationalization has thus led to the reconfiguration of higher education structures to position higher institutions in the global market for students and research. The following were the emergent features of internationalization in the higher education landscape in the 1990s according to Jowi (2009): the prevalence of diverse players (private and foreign) in both teaching and research, increased mobility of students and staff across nations and continents, curriculum reforms aimed at both preparing students to compete favourably on the international job market as well as credit transfers to facilitate easy mobility of students from one country or region to the other and the growth of international and regional higher education networks.

A recent global survey conducted by the International Association of Universities (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014) indicated that internationalization is pursued worldwide to fulfil five different objectives, namely: to improve student preparedness; internationalize the curriculum; enhance the international profile of the institution; strengthen research and knowledge production; and diversify faculty and staff. It also found that that there are variations across continents as to the reasons why internationalization is pursued. For example, it established that most African Universities pursue internationalization policies primarily to strengthen research and knowledge production. In Europe the motives go beyond this. Internationalization is advanced mainly to improve student preparedness to compete on the global market; to internationalize the curriculum and hence increase student mobility and; to enhance the international profile of the institution.

The Bologna process is one example of internationalization initiatives. The Bologna process aims to harmonize quality assurance policies and qualifications throughout Europe. It endeavours to promote transparency, student and staff mobility, students' employability and student centred learning (Kwiek, 2004; Keeling, 2006). Furthermore, the Bologna process

seeks to integrate higher education institutions in Europe into one common higher education area. It has an advanced common degree structure and qualification framework and attempted to create research synergies which the majority of the signatories to the process have adopted (Keeling, 2006). A number of universities in Europe have restructured their higher education systems in the wake of the Bologna process. Along these lines there is also the Lisbon process that seeks coherence in research policies. The Lisbon process developed strategies for increased public support for research. It is a framework that conditions how research and development in Europe should be undertaken (Keeling, 2006). Furthermore the Tuning project was also developed and designed with the aim of catalyzing synergies in academic programme development and delivery within the European region (Haug, 2001).

The formulation of a common qualification framework is premised on the NPM focus on outputs rather than process. As long as the student has attained certain credit levels, it is accepted that they have acquired a certain degree of skills and competencies that would enable them to seek alternative University place or employment anywhere within the European Region. NPM ideas of doing more with less underlie the thinking behind the Bologna process, the Lisbon process and the Tuning projects as all of the above strategies seek to harness expertise available within the region to work on common agendas that would benefit from the concentration of the 'best brains' within the region for refined outputs (Keeling, 2006).

It would however appear that there have been notable disjunctions between the policies adopted under such processes and the imperatives of globalization. Whereas globalization is understood to be promoting greater diversity in the higher education sector, the Bologna process, the Lisbon process and the Tuning projects seem to be pulling the strings in a different direction by introducing measures aimed at harmonization in higher education

sector in Europe (Kwiek, 2004; Keeling, 2006). By commenting on the Bologna process and other processes associated with it such as the Lisbon process and the Tuning projects (Haug, 2001) in this way, I am not claiming that the above process have had direct impact on the UNIMA reform measures but I highlight them here as an example of the wider impact that NPM has had on higher education reforms. I hereby articulate why in this study of the UNIMA governance reforms, NPM ideas have received serious scrutiny.

4.4.5 Entrepreneurship

Tied to both neo-liberalism and internationalisation is entrepreneurship which has also featured highly in higher education as a result of globalization. Entrepreneurship is about transforming universities from a traditional way of operating where the State was the main financial provider to beginning to operate and function as business enterprises on the service supply market (Clark 1998). This has been accelerated by neo-liberal economic thinking, already discussed earlier. It has also been facilitated by the classification of higher education as a tradable service under the General Agreement in Trade and Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (Knight, 2006). Entrepreneurship has involved universities diversifying their sources of revenue away from sole reliance on Government funding to third stream financing in order to mitigate the effects of reduced funding from the State. It has also entailed universities commercializing some of their services. This has resulted in universities creating and running business units outside their traditional functions of teaching and research; universities exercise patents on research undertaken by their staff members and the introduction of market driven academic and professional programmes thereby inculcating a business culture among all actors in the academic institution (Clark 1998; Knight, 2006).

The rise of the entrepreneurial spirit in universities has arguably been underpinned by NPM ideologies as well (Mok, 2002). Restructuring in higher education of the type described above has however been criticised as having eroded the character of public higher education and negatively impacted on quality by moving universities away from being social institutions concerned with knowledge generation as an end in itself towards treating universities as an industry which should adopt market imperatives including borrowing terms applicable in industry (Mok, 2002; Harman &Treadgold, 2007).

In Africa, Makerere University in Uganda is considered to be a good example of a University that has embraced an entrepreneurship spirit, according to Mamdani (2007). The Makerere University is said to have from 1990 embarked on a process of reforms guided by the World Bank's belief that higher education is primarily a private good rather than a public good under the Structural Adjustment Programme (Mamdani, 2007). Publicly funded students were construed as liabilities to the institution and privately funded students as net assets (Mamdani, 2007; Saint, 2009). The reforms led to devolution of decision-making to faculties which led to them assuming financial and administrative autonomy. It also encouraged competition within and among faculties, institutes and departments; the introduction of market driven courses and programmes among other developments and the introduction of a full fee paying category of students.

The UNIMA reforms were introduced through an external consultant at the time when these ideas about an entrepreneurial University were gaining popularity. These ideas were thus considered to be potential mechanisms in the UNIMA governance reform process and the analytical process sought to identify whether this was indeed the case and, if so, to what extent.

4.5 Other drivers of higher education governance trends

It is evident from the discussions so far that globalization and its related forces have acted as important mechanisms from which higher education governance reforms have emerged. However, this should not make us overlook other forces at the macro level that also have emergent properties and powers in higher education governance reforms, particularly in Africa. In the section that follows, I briefly examine some of these forces.

4.5.1 Economic and Political Challenges unique to Sub-Saharan Africa

It is important to note that while it has been observed in the review of the literature that globalization, internationalisation, entrepreneurship and NPM were some of the properties that have revolutionized higher education governance across continents, particularly in Asia, America and Europe, in the Sub-Saharan Africa there were other forces over and above these that the literature suggests account for the state and the direction of higher education governance in the region.

4.5.1.1 Colonial System

Most of the countries on the continent of Africa were, in the mid to late 19th century, colonized by western nations such as Britain, Belgium, France, Germany, and Portugal. These colonial masters, according to Teferra & Altbach (2004), introduced their own systems of education in the colonies. Questions have been raised as to the relevance of such education systems to the development needs and aspirations of most African countries (Assie-Lumumba 2006).

4.5.1.2 One Party System of National Governance

The political trajectories of the emerging nationalist movements characterised in some instances by the one party system of governance and dictatorship have had serious effects on academic freedom in many higher education institutions in Africa, particularly those of East and Southern Africa (Aina, 2010). Riley (1992) has argued that most statesmen who took over power from the colonial rulers were able to appeal to nationwide support because they had promised that the newly-independent states would reverse the economic marginalization that the colonial system had introduced. However, by the late 1980s it became apparent to most people in these independent States that although independence had resulted in local leaders taking over from colonial rulers, there was no commitment on the part of the new rulers to improve the livelihoods of ordinary people who were in the majority (Riley, 1992). Poverty and destitution had worsened instead of improving. It is further argued by the same author that such disillusionment by the local populace with economic marginalization perpetuated by their new leaders gave impetus to civil society to get organized politically and challenge their leadership.

Universities became the bedrock of many such movements. Academics and students emerged as strong critics of the new leadership in Africa. Evidence in this regard is argued to be abundant in Southern Africa (Omari and Mihyo, 1991; Kerr and Mapanje, 2002). The impetus in this respect has been 'if the University cannot uphold human values and maintain high standards of human decency in all facets of its affairs, it is difficult to think of any other institution in these countries that will' (Omari and Mihyo, 1991:74). Besides, Teferra & Altbach (2004) have observed that national governance under one-party systems in Africa has impacted on the governance of universities. They observe that politics of one party system in many Africa countries has meant that the State President assumes the role of the

University Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellors in many of Sub-Saharan African States have been appointed by the State President either directly or on the recommendation of the Council. This as noted in section 4.3.2 had serious implications for State and higher education relations and undermined the autonomy of universities in Sub-Saharan Africa (Aina, 2009).

4.5.1.3 The Debt Crisis

Another force that seems to account for the state and direction higher education governance has taken in the Sub-Saharan Africa is the debt crisis. Immediately after Sub-Saharan African countries attained their independence from the colonial masters, almost all of them embarked on public projects with heavy reliance on foreign financing. Many of these projects were established with good intentions to expand the industrial base of the countries' economies and social infrastructures with a view to generate income and improve export production (Greene and Khan, 1990; Dwivedi, 1994). Some were undertaken in response to the development model of the time which emphasized industrialization or modernization as the engine of economic growth. The understanding then was that development was supposed to begin with industrialization that would come about through an injection of capital from the Developed World to the 'Underdeveloped' countries. Industrialization would in turn lead to economic growth. Initially, it was believed, economic growth would benefit a few capitalist individuals and with time, through the 'trickle-down effect', it would benefit the entire society (George, 1990; Dwivedi, 1994). Such industrialization was funded mainly through external borrowing. It would appear that the 'trickle-down' theory was an illusion rather than a practical approach to development (Dwivedi, 1994). Whilst economic growth under the 'trickle-down' effect had led to prosperity in the West, albeit with greater divisions between

the rich and the poor in such economies, in the majority of the societies in Sub-Saharan Africa it did not bring about the purported improvements in the standard of living of the majority of the people (Dwivedi, 1994). Instead, as Dwivedi (1994:9) pointed out, 'poverty, disease and hunger had either worsened or remained unaltered.'

The debt crisis was equally exacerbated by external borrowing used to finance militarization of many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa expanded its volume of external debts to strengthen their security institutions. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, by 1985, 20 per cent of Third World debt was due to arms purchase, especially from the poorest countries in Africa (cited in George, 1990). Arms purchase has also been associated with corruption, meaning not all the moneys that were borrowed were spent on military equipment. For example, Feinstein (2011) has argued that the arms trade has accounted for 40 per cent of the corruption that has taken place in all world trade. Repayments of these debts has negatively affected African economic capacities and led to reduced funding to sectors such as higher education.

4.5.1.4 Role of World Bank and International Monetary Fund

The neo-liberal economic forces of reforms which were initiated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to 'correct' some of the structural challenges majority of African countries were facing as a result of debt crisis, brought about funding policies that privileged basic education at the expense of higher education on the basis that the former was perceived to have a higher social return on investments than the latter (Johnson, 2003; Adesina, 2006). This created serious funding gaps in the higher education sector. For example, Bloom, Canning & Chan (2006) observed that between 1985 and 1989 the World Bank was allocating 17 per cent of its worldwide education-sector spending to higher

education. But from 1995 to 1999, the proportion allotted to higher education declined to just 7 per cent. Higher education in Africa suffered as a result of this reduced funding.

According to Williams (1995), the World Bank introduced the Structural Adjustment Loan and the Sectoral Adjustment Loans in the 1980s. Both the Structural Adjustment Loans and the Sectoral Adjustment Loans were created to force developing countries to adopt development policy dictated by the North. The IMF for its part introduced the Structural Adjustment Programmes and later the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility among other facilities which brought about many unintended consequences such as worsening the poverty situation among the already poor people (Dollar & Svensson, 2000), privatization of state owned companies (Ramamurti &Vernon 1991), and privatisation of state owned natural resource endowments (Njeru, 2013).

Through IMF policies for example, it is argued by Kandoole (1990) that the Malawi Government was forced to introduce cost-cutting measures in public service deliveries. The reduced funding resulted in the deterioration of infrastructure in institutions of higher learning due to inadequate funding; brain drain of highly qualified academic staff members who felt they were being lowly valued as their salaries were deliberately kept low; inadequate teaching and learning resources such as books, laboratory materials and equipment as funding could only manage to pay salaries of staff (Kerr and Mapanje, 2002). Structural Adjustment Programmes also brought about cost-recovery measures that led to the introduction of user fees resulting in the introduction of tuition fees in public universities; and a reduction in food and accommodation subsidies to students (Saint, 2009). The reduction in subsidies according to Assie-Lumumba (2006) was a common feature in many Sub-Saharan African universities

and is believed to have precipitated violent reactions on University campuses from students and strikes by both staff and students which led to University closures.

Furthermore, according to Kandoole (1990), under the Structural Adjustment Programmes the Government of Malawi was forced to introduce a cash budget system as an expenditure control measure designed to limit Government domestic spending to domestic revenue collected. The cash budget system according to Mnyanga (2005) led to inadequate funding to UNIMA which resulted in inadequate teaching and learning materials, delays in curriculum reviews, low staff retention and delays in implementation of the academic calendar as the University could not open on the agreed date and was sometimes forced to break for a longer period in between semesters than planned. The above are unique features to the higher education landscape in Africa.

To sum up, it can be argued that underlying all the above forces on higher education governance are political and economic imperatives. In Critical Realist terms, one could conclude that political and economic considerations have created both enabling and constraining conditions for higher education governance which explains the morphogenesis that has been experienced in the higher education sector. There is evidence in the literature that suggests that higher education practices that have taken place in Sub-Saharan Africa emerged from these political and economic mechanisms (Vaira, 2004; Mamdani, 2007; Saint, 2009; Altbach. et.al., 2009). This study concerns itself with one particular case of governance reform, UNIMA, and therefore this study has interrogated the extent to which such mechanisms were at play in this particular context.

4.6 Conclusion

I have in this chapter defined higher education governance as it has been deliberated in the literature. I have also described what I have identified from prior research as some of the constitutive properties of this social phenomenon and in doing so I have looked at the higher education governance models that have emerged over the years which have informed governance practices. The chapter presented macro-level events that could reasonably be considered to be causal mechanisms contributing to the emergence of the morphogenesis that has occurred in higher education governance over the years. Building from the presentation in this chapter, in the next chapter, Chapter Five, I report on my findings regarding the state of the UNIMA governance period before the reforms were introduced. This is the context of UNIMA governance at T1 of Archer's (1995) morphogenesis theory.

As will be recalled from section 2.2.1.5, it was argued that Critical Realists are of the view that what is observed about society is part of the story. There are always generative mechanisms in the form of historical antecedents that shape society. Collier (1994) and Bhaskar (1978) have argued that social researchers should be interested in knowing about such histories since they account for events and experiences in a given society at a given point in time.

Chapter 5

T1 – THE STRUCTURAL, CULTURAL AND AGENTIAL CONDITIONINGS PRIOR TO REFORM

5.0 Introduction

Archer (1995) explained that structural and cultural systems predate what humans encounter, as discussed in Chapter Two. These are materials such as wealth and power (sanctions and expertise) as well as doctrines, theories, beliefs and ideas that enable or constrain agents' projects. These structural and cultural properties are intended and unintended consequences of past actions of agents' interactions amongst themselves as well as with the structure and culture that preceded them in turn. Such structures and cultures have objective existence, in the sense that they have causal powers or the potential to exert influences, which are either exercised or remain unexercised depending on the activities of agents. In a Social Realist perspective this concern with the structural and cultural mechanisms conditioning the context prior to a particular event enacted by a particular set of agents is known as T1 of the morphogenetic cycle. In the context of this study, the governance reforms that were introduced in UNIMA in 1997 were made in a situation of prevailing structures and cultural systems. These had objective existences as they had causal influence on the activities of agents before the reforms took place. This chapter is therefore dedicated to locate UNIMA's governance configurations at T1 – the period before the governance reforms were initiated.

The aim is to describe the events and what was experienced regarding the UNIMA governance period before the governance reforms were introduced. The analysis of the UNIMA governance at T1 presented in this chapter is done using Archer's (1995) morphogenetic theory and interrogates the constitutive particles of structure, culture and

agents of the pre-governance reform period by utilising the analytical dualism. According to Bhaskhar (2008), events and their manifestations in nature are emergent from underlying causal mechanisms in the domain of the 'real.' In the process of interrogating the aspects of structure, culture and agents, attempt is also made to explicate through abstraction the possible causal mechanisms that help to explain why the governance context was as it was in the period before the MIM governance reforms in 1997. I end this chapter by presenting my findings regarding the objectives of the governance reform measures that were introduced in 1997 mindful that in social realism, it is people's intentions that mediate either morphostasis or morphogenesis.

5.1 The Parts: Structural and cultural properties in UNIMA pre-dating governance reforms

Archer (1995) defines structure as the material composition of the society. She identifies power and wealth distribution as the essence of structure in society. Although the analysis of structure in this study is based on Archer's morphogenetic theory, I employed the framework developed by Clark (1983) graphically summarised in Figure 5.1 to delineate the power relations in the UNIMA governance period prior to the time governance reforms (T1) were introduced. As readers will recall from section 4.2, Clark (1983) established that higher education governance is practiced essentially at three levels: at systems, enterprise and disciplinary levels as depicted in the Figure 5.1. These are the same levels at which I interrogate the UNIMA governance period prior to the MIM reforms.

Systems level - National Government and Politics

Enterprise level- Governing Board and Bureaucrats (Vice Chancellor)

Disciplinary level - Personal rulership (Professorial)

Collegial rulership

The guild

Figure 5.1: Structure of higher education governance (adapted from Clark 1983)

Based on the information contained in the MIM Report (MIM Report, 1997) and correspondences that I analysed from files obtained from the University's Central Office contained in files (RD15 and RD18), it was evident that UNIMA was under the control of the Government of Malawi in the period prior to the introduction of the MIM governance reforms. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MOE&C) now the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST)[8] was responsible for the entire education systems in Malawi from the primary to secondary and tertiary levels including the University of Malawi (UNIMA). In a memorandum dated 3rd July, 1981 from the Secretary to the President and Cabinet[9], contained in file RD15, the Government recognised UNIMA as an organization under the statutory control of the Ministry of Education. UNIMA was reporting to the Ministry of Education governance wise and it is the same Ministry that controlled UNIMA by determining the policy direction UNIMA should take on matters affecting the academic administration of UNIMA. For example, in 1988, Government through the Ministry of

[8] The Ministry of Education is one Ministry in Malawi which has had its name changed frequently to reflect the additional responsibilities it has been assigned in addition to Education.

[9] Secretary to the President and Cabinet in Malawi is the highest officer in the Malawi Public Service. This title was changed to Chief Secretary in 2004.

Education and Culture directed that the admission of students to undergraduate programmes should be done based on quota system. Under this system of admission each District of the then 24 districts in Malawi were guaranteed 10 spaces to fill in UNIMA, Malawi's only public university at the time. As one would recall from section 4.1.1.2, determination of who to admit in Universities is an important aspect of higher education autonomy (Hellawell & Hancock, 2001; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2002). That the Government of Malawi came up with such a policy underscores the degree of control the State had on UNIMA.

It would appear that Government control on UNIMA started when the University was being developed. According to Ian Michael who was the first Vice-Chancellor of UNIMA in 1964 when it was being founded and who has published a number of articles on his experiences in UNIMA, the University was highly controlled by the Government so much so that he commented that it would have been better if it was located within the Ministry of Education rather than developed as an autonomous institution (Michael, 1978). Michael (1978:478) summed up his experience by citing the response he received in a conversation with one senior Government official as follows:

> Can a government possibly be said to 'interfere' in an institution for which it is responsible? The government is, by definition, responsible in the last resort for everything which happens in the country. It cannot 'interfere' in anything.

The genesis of UNIMA therefore conforms to what Teferra & Altbach (2004) had observed regarding the role of first nationalist leaders in the creation of higher education institutions as reported in the literature review in section 4.5.1.2.

Furthermore, the correspondences contained in RD15 and RD18 attested to the fact that UNIMA was not only under the statutory control of the Ministry of Education and Culture in the pre-governance reform era, but it was also under the direct supervision of the Comptroller of Statutory Corporations especially in management matters. It is important to note that in Malawi all government companies are supervised by the Government Department of Statutory Corporations which is headed by a Comptroller and this department is under the Office of the President and Cabinet. By this arrangement UNIMA was obliged to adhere to all Government policies as issued from time to time by the Department through memorandums. An analysis of the prevailing law governing UNIMA, that is the UNIMA Act, shows however that there is no provision in the Act that empowers the Comptroller of Statutory Corporations to exercise powers over the University. An analysis of some of the policy issues arising from the Comptroller of Statutory Corporations show that UNIMA was however obliged to adhere to Government's directives indicating that UNIMA did not enjoy autonomy in the period before the reforms.

For example, UNIMA employees, just like any Government employees, were required, based on a memorandum dated 18th April, 1993 contained in RD15 from the Secretary to the President and Cabinet, to seek permission from the Office of the President whenever undertaking any foreign trip, be it official or private. One of the objectives of UNIMA, according to the UNIMA Act (RD13), is to make provisions for the dissemination of knowledge. Ordinarily, forums such as seminars, workshops and conferences particularly international ones are best suited for this. Asking researchers to seek permission to attend such forums can be detrimental therefore to the advancement of knowledge. Equally, UNIMA was required to seek prior approval from the Comptroller of Statutory Corporations before carrying out the following actions: amending the terms and conditions of service

governing its employees; appointment of staff members from outside the country; appointment or dismissal of senior staff members; sending staff members for further training outside Malawi; embarking on major contracts for works or procurement of goods and services beyond a certain threshold; undertaking new infrastructural projects and sale of major capital assets. These restrictions are contained in a memorandum dated 4th August, 1989 from the Comptroller of Statutory Corporations (RD15). This means that despite UNIMA being established as an autonomous corporate body under the 1974 Act of Parliament it was essentially treated as another government department. According to the Act it is the UNIMA Council that is empowered to perform the above roles and not central government agents.

In addition to the above, in the pre-MIM reform era the State President of Malawi was the Chancellor of UNIMA. According to Michael & Mnthali (1971) ; Michael, (1978) UNIMA as an institution grew through personal face-to-face interaction between him and the first State President of Malawi, Dr Hastings Banda in the early 1960s. It appears that because of this, according to RP2, the then Head of State personally took a number of important decisions affecting the University such as the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor, recruitment of college principals, promotion of professors and the appointment of some expatriate staff members. These are functions that should have been taken by UNIMA Council, according to the Act.

An example was given by RP2 on how one of the Principals was appointed by Dr. Hastings Banda as an example of Government control over University functioning. The public was informed about the appointment at a graduation ceremony by the Chancellor, who was the Head of State, and it took the appointed person by surprise too as he was not consulted before

hand. He later learnt that members of UNIMA Council were equally taken by surprise by the announcement because they were not consulted either prior to this announcement being made. The UNIMA Act requires that appointments of Principals should be undertaken by the UNIMA Council. In terms of the UNIMA Act, the Chancellor was only responsible for the appointment of the governing board – the UNIMA Council - and approving the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor on the recommendation of the UNIMA Council. Kerr & Mapanje also attest to how the then Chancellor of UNIMA, Dr. Kamuzu Banda, used to exercise control of UNIMA through State agents and thereby 'severely restricted the University's autonomy' (2002:73). Similar trends have been reported in Sub-Saharan Africa (Teferra & Altbach (2004).

It was interesting to note nevertheless that as much as the State machinery exercised control on UNIMA, Parliament, which is one of the important State organs in the country, did not seem to exercise a similar level of control on the University in the pre-UNIMA governance reforms era. Parliament appears to have restricted itself to allocating financial resources to UNIMA. From the numerous documents I analysed, there was no evidence of any direct reference on any matter by UNIMA to Parliament. Neither was there any reference on follow-up mechanisms from Parliament to monitor the spending of funds allocated to UNIMA. This underscores that the executive branch of Government was the main corporate agent that influenced the governance of University in the period under review - T1. During the pre-UNIMA governance reforms era, there was no State organ that operated between the State and UNIMA such as a national council for higher education. As such, the controls described above were direct.

At the institutional level (enterprise level) the UNIMA Council, which was appointed by the State President, was the only one empowered to exercise governance control of UNIMA based on the UNIMA Act. For example, the enabling Act of the University before the governance reforms were initiated (UNIMA Act, 1974) gave the following powers to the UNIMA Council:

> The Council shall be the governing body of the University and shall be responsible for the management and administration of the University and of its property and revenues, and, shall exercise the general control and supervision over all the affairs of the University including its relations with the public.
>
> (Part III section 10 of the UNIMA 1974 Act).

This meant that at the institutional level the UNIMA Council had the legal mandate to govern and manage the University in ways it felt fit. This notwithstanding evidence from the documents searched (RD15 and RD16) as well as from what a research participant (RP2) told me, such powers were in some instances superseded by Government agents as observed in the preceding paragraphs. Perhaps the key point to note here in the case of UNIMA is the fact that the whole Council was appointed by the then State President, Dr. Banda and hence probably deferred to his wishes.

According to the same Act, the Vice-Chancellor was the principal academic and administrative officer of UNIMA but under the control and direction of the UNIMA Council. The Vice-Chancellor was supported by a Central Office that served as the secretariat of the UNIMA Council and coordinated the affairs of the entire University. The Central Office comprised the University Registrar and the University Finance Officer. Both officers were also direct appointees of the UNIMA Council (RD13). Since the UNIMA Council was

appointed by the State President and all principal officers were direct employees of the same Council one can appreciate how the State machinery was exercising its agency in UNIMA's governance. Indeed, according to the Minutes of the University Appointments Committee and the Senate (RD17 to RD 21), it was apparent that important decisions usually associated with the collegial rulership highlighted in Chapter Four such as the determination of appropriate staff establishments (that is how many staff members should an academic department hold); the recruitment of some academic staff members such as teaching and research staff; the actual selection of students; and the approval of curriculum were all done at the Central Office and were all subject to the approval by the Council.

An examination of the UNIMA Act showed that the manner in which Government agents behaved in matters of UNIMA governance was in contradiction with what the Act specified. This appears to have been enabled by the one party political system that Malawi experienced during this period. Dr. Banda ruled Malawi as a personal estate when he was made life president in 1971 at the Malawi Congress Party's annual convention. His style of rule became more apparent in the early 1990s (Kerr and Mapanje, 2003). Dr. Banda led Malawi independence from British colonial rule in 1964 and ruled the country as a single-party dictatorship under the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) up to 1993. During his reign as the President Dr Banda created a hegemonic system of governance in which he was revered as a semi-God (Chirambo, 2004). The one-party system of governance suppressed people's freedoms including academic freedom (Kerr & Mapanje, 2002). The manner in which Dr. Banda and his Government behaved meant that the political systems permeated into UNIMA governance context to the extent that even Government agents took advantage of this to direct UNIMA affairs and suppress any dissent (Kerr & Mapanje, 2002). Dr Banda died in 1997. In such a context one could not expect the University to enjoy a significant degree of

academic freedom, self-governance or institutional autonomy, the fundamental ingredients of higher education governance established in Chapter Four.

At disciplinary level, according to the MIM Report (1997), UNIMA was operating a federal structure with five colleges[10] below the Central Office. This arrangement was sanctioned by the UNIMA Act. Given the way UNIMA was controlled one cannot fail to speculate that there might have been fears that having five colleges operate as separate Universities would have compromised direct control of Government over higher education institutions. It was therefore found safe to have all these colleges under one Council.

All five colleges were situated in different geographical locations as described in Chapter One, again suggesting strong political intervention/planning to curb united action by the different entities. Each of the five colleges was under the direction of a Principal appointed by the UNIMA Council. The Principal took direction from the Vice-Chancellor. Each college had either a faculty or faculties headed by a Dean or Deans who reported to the Principal. The Dean was however appointed by Faculty members from amongst themselves. Below the Faculty were academic departments headed by Heads of Department who also were appointed by the departmental academic staff and from amongst themselves. It was thus at the faculty and departmental level of UNIMA governance that leadership was decided upon by agents other than those of the State.

Having a Principal appointed by the Council and Deans and Academic Heads of Department appointed by faculty members operating in one college, created its own contradictions in UNIMA's governance. As noted by RP7, the mere fact that Principals were directly

[10] UNIMA had five campuses up to 2012 when one of them was delinked to become a separate University.

appointed by Council marked them in the perception of faculty members as owing their allegiance to Central Office whilst, Deans and Academic Heads of Department who were appointed by show of hands by faculty members were seen as part and parcel of the faculty and thus representing the interests of faculty members. The Head of Department reported to the Principal on administrative matters and to the Dean on academic matters. This too might have been deliberate to ensure that on governance matters, departments were well aligned to the wishes of the establishment. Structurally therefore, an academic head, dealt with the Principal rather than the Dean on matters relating to staff. A Professoriate existed in UNIMA at T1 but was embedded within the department with no macro-level governance power.

An analysis of the Minutes of Senate (RD9 – RD11) revealed that Senate was responsible for all academic policy matters including coordination of research centres. However, the major academic policy decisions made by Senate were subject to the approval of the Council (MIM Report, 1997). For example, from the Minutes of Council (RD6 and RD7), Senate decisions relating to the introduction of new academic programmes, curriculum reviews and appointment of external examiners were recommended to the UNIMA Council for approval. There were also occasions when some academic decisions were made by the Government and not Senate. For example, Classics and Greek language studies were introduced in UNIMA following a directive of the then Head of State, Dr. Hastings Banda (Kerr & Mapanje 2002). Similarly, political science as a subject was not permitted to be taught in UNIMA because it was construed by Government as implanting rebellious views among students (Kerr & Mapanje 2002).

This is in contrast to Saint's observation of sub-Saharan Universities whereby such decisions were made by Senate without reference to bodies such as Council (Saint, 2009). Such

practice is also in sharp contrast with the preference of many academics as observed by Hellawell & Hancock (2001) who argued that academics prefer that academic decisions be decided upon by academics themselves. In many ways, my analysis of issues of structure in UNIMA governance at T1 echoes this summary by Michael (1978:468):

> In the day-to-day life of the University the sudden intervention of the President, of a minister, or of a senior official, usually concerning a single matter considered out of its context, became more and more frequent. Such interventions were not invariably damaging; their intentions and their consequences were sometimes good. But they disturbed the efficient running of the University because they represented the arbitrary incursion of the personal and a disregard of the formal. It was extremely difficult to explain to those in authority that these incursions were undesirable even when benevolent.

However, research participants RP3 and RP4 confirmed that academic operations such as how teaching and research were to be managed were left to the discretion of faculties and academic departments consistent with what George (2006) and Neave & van Vught (1994) had observed to be the case in State-centric governance models. In as far as governance at faculty and academic departments were concerned therefore, faculty and departmental governance structures possessed minimal agency in terms of impacting on major academic and administrative policy decisions of UNIMA but had strong agency in the '*how*' of the academe to the extent of determining the delivery of their academic programmes.

In Chapter Four, section 4.1.1.3 institutional autonomy was presented as a key property of higher education governance. Institutional autonomy arises from the belief that in institutions of higher learning such as Universities, important decisions can only be competently taken by academics alone or under the mandatory advice of them because of their expertise and

commitments (du Toit, 2007). These are mainly decisions that relate to the work of academics such as deciding the syllabus of a course, staff appointments, the admission or graduation of individual students, standards of academic performance, and the detailed allocation of resources between competing usages within a department or faculty (du Toit, 2007). That this was lacking in the UNIMA governance period before UNIMA governance reforms is evident enough that the governance institutional configuration that existed in the UNIMA period before the UNIMA's governance reforms were introduced undermined institutional autonomy and conformed to what Neave & van Vught (1994) described as the state-centric governance model.

You will recall from the beginning of this section that Archer (1995) defined structure as the material composition of society. She identifies power and wealth distribution as the essence of structure in society. In the foregoing paragraphs the discussion has dwelt on my findings of governance structures at T1, the period before UNIMA reform, from the perspective of power relations within UNIMA, using Clark's 1983 framework. I now want to focus my attention on UNIMA governance structures during the same period from the perspective of wealth distribution.

From my analysis of the pertinent UNIMA Council Minutes (RD1 to RD6), it is evident that the Government of Malawi was the main source of financing for UNIMA. According to the MIM Report (1997), in 1995 Government funding to UNIMA for operations was 93 percent, 3 percent was from students' fees and 6 percent from other income generating activities. Furthermore, financing of faculties and academic departments was through Central Office. This is apparent both from Minutes of Finance Committee of Council (RD19 – RD21) and Minutes of Council (RD1). From the analysis of the Minutes of Council (RD1) it was

ostensible that colleges were required annually to submit and defend their budget estimates to Central Office for the latter to submit the same in a consolidated form to Government through the University Finance Committee of the UNIMA Council. Minutes of the University Finance Committee RD19 - RD23 revealed that once the budget had been approved, colleges were allocated funding by Central Office based on a formula known as full-time equivalent student (FTE). Decisions as to how funding would be apportioned to non-academic departments, such as the Central Office itself, were not clarified in the documentation.

According to the MIM Report (1997), this manner of distributing Government approved budget to UNIMA colleges by Central Office masked internal distinctions of individual academic departments. For example, academic departments offering laboratory based science programmes which by the nature of the programmes demanded that they be allocated more resources to procure laboratory materials were disadvantaged because most of them did not have the low overheads or the large numbers of students found in humanities programmes. The MIM Report (1997) concluded that budgeting in the UNIMA period prior to the reform implementation was characterised by an incremental approach and hardly reflected the strategic direction of each individual college (MIM Report, 1997: 21).

As per Archer (1995), the institutional context provides directional guidance which predisposes different agents to various courses of action depending on their position relative to the resources. From the above findings it would appear that in as far as decision-making in UNIMA was concerned, the governance structures prior to the MIM reforms advantaged State agencies and disadvantaged faculties and academic departments. In other words, the governance context was not favourable to the advancement of the interests of academic freedom and self-governance in UNIMA at faculty and academic departmental levels (du

Toit, 2007). A further analysis of the relationship between State agencies (the Chancellor, Council members and principal officers in UNIMA) and faculty and academic leadership in the period before the governance reform was implemented reveals that the relationship was symmetrically linked, implying, one could not explain the UNIMA governance without invoking this relationship. Be that as it may, it is important to stress that this relationship though internally and necessarily related, was characterised by contradictions or incompatibilities; a conclusion echoed in the writings of Michael (1971; 1978) and Kerr & Mapanje (2003).

The fact that Kerr & Mapanje (2003) and RP2 reported that many students and academic staff were resigning from the University shows that the governance context was not conducive to their interests. According to Archer (1995), necessary incompatibilities are circumstances where in a given society one finds internally and necessarily related structures which are not compatible with each other. This entails that the operations of some structures threaten the endurance of the institution because there are structural contradictions within the system. In the context of these findings therefore, the operations of State machinery in the governance of UNIMA during the pre-MIM reform era had the effect of threatening the endurance of governance systems in the University. Kerr & Mapanje (2003) underlined the fact that the governance structure in UNIMA in the 1980s was severely restrictive and led to the exodus of academics and students who could not conform to the dominant ideology. Furthermore, according to Archer (1995), necessary incompatibilities create a situational logic of elimination or compromises. This is the case because the structures are linked to such an extent that the existence of subordinate agencies (primary agents) depends on the power of the powerful agency (the corporate agency) in a manner that operations of primary agency are often impinged by actions of the powerful agency. Primary agency in this regard has no

choice, according to Archer (1995), but to leave or become compliant. The high level of resignations contributed to the brain drain that was experienced during this period. Those who stayed did so for other reasons but certainly not because they were satisfied with the institutional governance as shall be noted later.

According to Archer (1995), in a situation where there are contradictions between internally and necessarily related institutions (such as the one revealed in this section about UNIMA governance structure) there is potential for change. This is because 'Structural contradictions represent obstructions to certain institutional operations and these translate themselves into problem-ridden situations for the agents associated with them' (Archer, 1995:230). Archer indicates that there would always be an incident that would be a precursor to this.

True to the above observations, according to the Minutes of the 59th meeting of the UNIMA Council which was held in May 1995 (RD1), a decision to engage MIM consultants was taken by members after observing that the 1995/96 budget was not adequate to take care of all the UNIMA's annual requirements. These Council Minutes (RD1) suggested that during this meeting the University Management proposed to Council for consideration a budget of K109 million for the 1995/96 financial year[11]. The UNIMA Council had however learnt that the Government was ready to provide only K84 million of the required sums which was about 82 percent of the required expenditure. The UNIMA Council had observed, according to these Minutes (RD1), that based on the available resources from Government for the 1995/96 financial year the University was likely to face a financial crisis.

[11] The currency in Malawi is known as Kwacha and abbreviated as 'K'. At the time of this MIM Report, the Malawi Kwacha was trading at 1 United States of America Dollar to approximately 400 Malawi Kwacha.

According to the same Council Minutes of the 59th meeting (RD1), one of the College Principals during that meeting suggested that to mitigate the low funding, the University should reduce its student intake that year to correspond with the finances it would receive. It is also important to indicate that when presenting the 1995 budget estimates to Parliament during the budget session, the Minister of Finance announced the devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha that year by 50 percent (Government of Malawi Budget Statement, 1995) under the influence of the IMF. It is therefore no wonder that it was feared that the already reduced funding was going to be seriously undermined by the devaluation of the currency. The UNIMA Council therefore resolved as the Minute below shows to engage a consultant to assist it in coming up with measures that would mitigate this situation.

> Council agreed that there was need for the University to have a consultant to examine the current financial problems of the University and suggest ways and means of generating income and also areas where the University could exercise economy and have some savings.
>
> (RD1)

UNIMA relied heavily on Government financing structure in the period before UNIMA governance reforms were introduced. Table 5.1 below shows the sources of funding for the UNIMA period between 1990 and 2009. As can be observed from this Table on average over 90 percent of the UNIMA expenditure budget came from Government. What this means is that UNIMA's expenditure budget was contingent on Government's structures. Such vulnerability by UNIMA had the potential of exposing corporate agency in UNIMA to a fragile financing situation in the event that the latter had reduced its funding, which was the case in 1995. As I explained in Chapter Three, where there are internal and necessary structures in an institution that contradict each other as the case was in UNIMA from what I have described above, contingencies disrupt the thin bonds that tie the institution together

(Archer, 1995). The negative feedback that ensues from existing structural and cultural systems is one that promotes mobilization of resources to counteract the contingency (Archer, 1995). In the context of UNIMA therefore, the reduction in Government funding invoked the causal mechanisms of elimination. In such circumstances, according to Archer (1995) contingent incompatibilities have the potential of disrupting a highly integrated social system. It creates situational logic of protection which calls for strategic mobilization of resources to counteract the threat imposed by the occurrence.

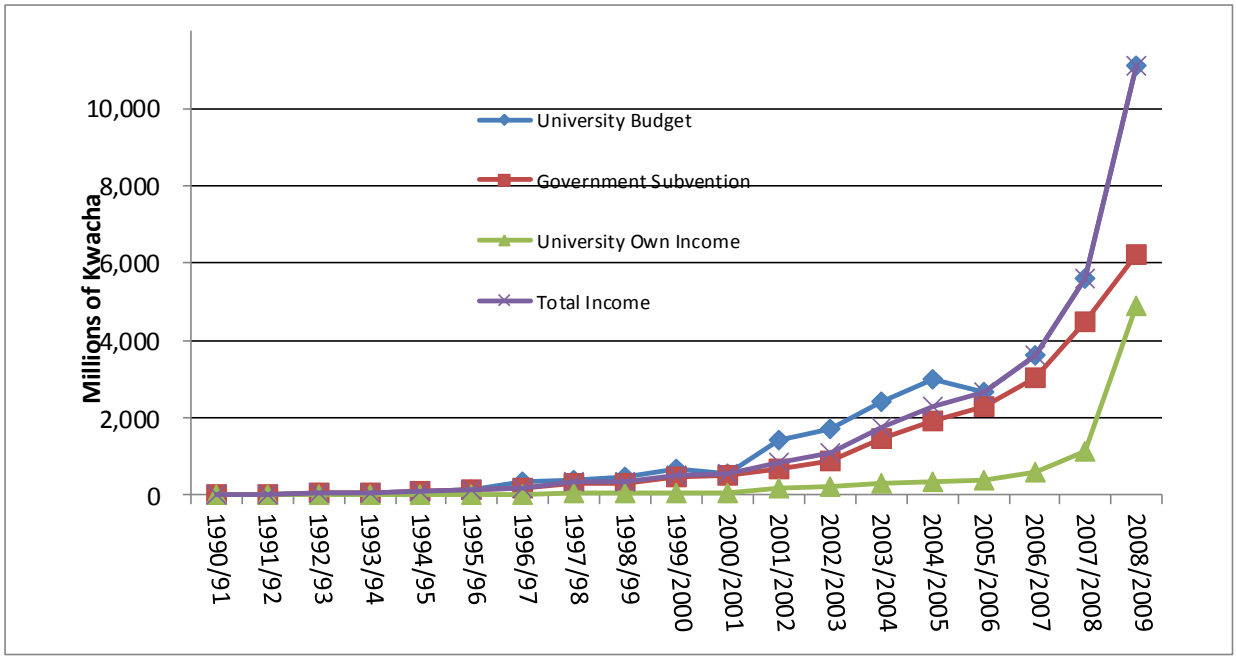

Figure 5.2: UNIMA funding for the period 1990/91 - 2008/2009

From Table 5.2 , it is also evident that Government funding to UNIMA started to reduce from 1995. The trend continued up to 2009. Retroduction of the situation suggest that this was not of UNIMA's own making but had necessary links with economic events that were happening at the same time both nationally and globally. What is experienced in the realm of the actual is often an emergent from the way of doing things or the natural behaviour of a social object

(Bhaskar, 2008). Adamolekun, Kulemeka & Laleye (1997) argued that the Malawian Government was in the 1990s forced to adopt the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the International Monetary Fund. These were strict fiscal disciplinary policies that had to be applied by the Malawi Government in order for it to access foreign aid and loans. By 1994, the Malawian economy was facing serious problems arising mainly from huge debts it had accumulated from international lending agencies (Kandoole, 1990). As a consequence, the Government introduced a cash budget system as an expenditure control measure designed to limit Government domestic spending to match domestic revenue collected. This system forced Government to reduce most of its funding to public sector institutions (Kandoole 1990). It also meant that the flow of funding from Government to public sector institutions became erratic. For example, funding began to be dispersed on a monthly basis rather than on quarterly (three months in advance) basis as was the case before. The result was that during some months, public sector institutions would receive less than the expected amount (Kandoole, 1990). This scenario included UNIMA (Mnyanga 2005). The cash budget thus was a contingent incompatibility on UNIMA core functions. However, the above situation emerged from the confluence of multiple mechanisms.

As can be recalled from section 4.4.1, globalization was a major driving force behind many structural reforms experienced in the higher education sector of the World between 1980 and the late 1990s. Makerere University was cited as a good example (Mamdani, 2007; Saint, 2009) of higher education reforms under the pressures exerted by economic exigencies of globalization. There is a link therefore between economic and political reforms that were taking place in the global environment and what was occurring in public sector organizations in Malawi in the early 1990s. The concept of organizational *allomorphism* developed by Vaira (2004) is insightful in understanding this link. According to Viara's (2004) conceptual

framework, public sector organizational changes experienced in the 1980s to 1990s were induced by political and economic global dynamics. It is argued by Viara (2004) that the global politics and economy is regulated by the powerful States of the North. They design institutional imperatives and archetypes to which organizations of the World must conform. These imperatives and archetypes are reproduced, objectified and legitimated and carried across all the continents of the world by powerful multinational institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. Developed countries are coerced to adopt them through dynamics of international competitiveness. Developing countries because of the economic dependence on the developed world are in turn thus forced to adopt them as they are tied to foreign aid or grants. The archetypes are also forced on developing countries in the form of penalties such as economic sanctions if they are not adhered to. However, because these archetypes are introduced by nation states with their own structure, culture and social judgement, they are adapted by nation states to suit their local situation. They therefore become allomorphic institutional structures because much as they are subjected to further interpretation under local structural dynamics, they still contain a residual pattern or form which can easily be discerned. The national allomorphic institutional structures so created are then forced on local institutions through coercive policy-making mechanisms (Viara, 2004).

Assie-Lumumba (2006) observed that the Structural Adjustment Programmes were responsible for many higher education reforms that took place in Africa because the Structural Adjustment Programmes had led to the introduction of cost-recovery measures which in turn led to the introduction of user fees, high tuition fees and reduction in food and accommodation subsidies to students among many other in African Universities. In Malawi, Kandoole (1990) observed that the Structural Adjustment Programmes forced the Government of Malawi to undertake a number of public sector reforms including the

introduction of a cash budget system which resulted in reduced funding inflows to UNIMA. The reduced funding, according to Mnyanga (2005), undermined the capacity of UNIMA to deliver in the late nineties.

5.2 Culture: The role of Culture in UNIMA pre-dating governance reforms

Having examined the structural properties underpinning governance context in the period before the MIM reforms were initiated, I now, following Archer's analytical dualism, turn to a consideration of the cultural domain. Cultural systems are doctrines, theories, beliefs and ideas that define what is possible and what is not possible in a social system. It is the domain in which reside views of how things ought to be done in society (Archer, 1995, 2003; Giddens, 1979). It is important to note that cultural contexts emerge from the interplay of structure with agency. Archer (1995) has argued that the degree of concentration of material influence has an impact on the cultural domain because it predisposes agents to various courses of action. This means that the structural tensions in a social system can translate into problem-ridden cultural situations which are characterised by cultural tensions.

From abstraction of the data, it was evident that UNIMA's cultural context was characterised by fear and dependency on Government structures. Because UNIMA relied solely on Government financing structures, it meant the ensuing culture was one of dependency. RP2 stated that in those days Dr. Banda was 'not just the Chancellor but everything'. No major decision would be made without his approval. Even the decision to have all University students reside on University campus was his own under the pretext that it was through this that the University would train a disciplined cadre of graduates (RP2). However, this policy restricted the number of students UNIMA could enrol (MIM Report, 1997) because UNIMA could only admit the number of students it was able to provide bed spaces to much as the

other institutional infrastructures were enabling for accommodating more students (MIM Report, 1997).

Furthermore, the University could not visualize any developments on its own as per a memorandum from the Office of the President and Cabinet dated 4th August, 1989 contained in (RD15). UNIMA had to seek prior approval of Government such that even the decision to create a College of Medicine under UNIMA had to be made by Dr. Banda. He donated the first premises of the College by handing over his official guest house to accommodate the programme team for the creation of that new College. Furthermore, according to RP2 it is believed in UNIMA that most of the infrastructure that was built in the 1980s to 1990 in UNIMA was built under Dr. Banda's direct intervention, either from resources he personally sourced from donors or through his Press Trust, the State Company he had established and controlled himself. According to the MIM Report (1997), the responsibility for sourcing funds for development projects in UNIMA was in the hands of the Chancellor.

Furthermore, as observed by Chirambo (2004) and Newell (1995), the culture of fear engulfed Malawi as a result of Dr Banda's one party system. This confirms what Teferra & Altbach (2004) had also observed regarding the situation of Sub-Saharan Africa where the national governance under one-party systems in Africa impacted negatively on the governance of universities. It is the same fear that has been observed to have permeated throughout UNIMA governance context and thus undermined the autonomy of the institution. Government was able to dictate decisions on the University through memos that mainly emanated from the Chief Secretary and the Comptroller of Statutory Corporations because the one-party political system had introduced a culture of fear among agency in Malawi that enabled this to happen. According to documents RD26 and RD27 even mundane decisions in

UNIMA governance were subject to the approval of Government agents. There were a lot of memos that I reviewed in this study arising from UNIMA managers to Government which were meant at seeking directions on various mundane matters. Interestingly, most of them were concluded by the following statement: 'I remain Sir your most obedient servant', 'Sir' in this context referring to either the Head of State or the Chairman of Council. Michael (1978); the MIM Report (1997) and Kerr & Mapanje (2002) all refer to the culture of fear dominating UNIMA in the 1980s and early 1990s.

RP2 explained that during this period, T1, as a result of the one-party political system many students and academic staff members particularly from Chancellor College were arrested for holding what were construed as contrary views from those of the State. Those who did not want to oppose things merely conformed to what was going on. Archer (1995) argues that in situations of the above nature containment is held in balance with syncretism – that is the sinking of differences so that there is a resemblance of unity in the society. The end result is that there is morphostasis of a society. However, according to Archer (1995) the sort of stability that prevails is temporal as it can be disrupted by powerful contingent occurrences either legitimizing one set of ideas or completely eliminating the rival ideas.

Both structural and cultural contexts exert directional guidance to agents in the sense that they predispose agents to rewards and penalties for every intention or action they take or omit to undertake (Archer, 1995; 2003). This is the case because according to Archer (1995), structural and cultural properties do no act as hydraulics for agents but they are conditioned by actions and omissions of agents, implying that those born in a resource rich environment will find reasons to perpetuate their situation or improve it whereas those in a disadvantaged situation will find motives for escaping from such a situation. In similar vein, people born in

a resource endowed situation would carry a different agency to those born in resource deprived environments. In the pursuit of protecting or improving their inherited context, structures and culture become in this regard both enabling and constraining depending on the agency's position on the defence of vested interests. Agency, through the process known as reflexivity which I defined in Chapter Two operate within these enablements and constraints to meet their projects, a process which leads to either the elaboration or the regenerating of a given society. The sections that follow examine the composition of UNIMA agents' (various UNIMA stake holders) in the period before the reforms were introduced and their role in the regeneration and or elaboration of UNIMA's structural and cultural context at T1.

5.3 The People: The role of Agents in UNIMA pre-dating governance reforms

According to Archer (1995), the distinguishing feature of agency in interest groups is their degree of articulation and organization. I explained in section 2.2.1.4 that corporate agency is active and able to express itself as well as mobilize resources to attain their desired goals. According to the University Act of 1998 (RD13) and numerous Minutes of Council (RD1 to RD6), by 1995, institutional governance was in the hands of powerful agents in the UNIMA Council. The Chairperson of the UNIMA Council was appointed by the State President together with two other members from outside the University. The composition of Council furthermore had four senior Government officers who served on it as ex-officio members. The UNIMA Council had two ex-officio members who were appointed by Council from industry or other interest groups. The Vice-Chancellor and College Principals were also members. The University Registrar was the secretary to Council (RD13). Council therefore had a combination of politicians, senior academics, senior Government officials and representatives of industry on its membership. All together there were fifteen Council (agents) members. Of these, three were political appointees (the Chairman and two other

members); six academics, (Vice-Chancellor and the five College Principal), four Government officials and two representatives from industry – totalling fifteen. In terms of representation between academics and non –academics therefore, the UNIMA Council had 40 percent academics and 60 percent non-academic members or a ratio of 1:3.

According to Maton, (2005) espousing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of field forms, decision-making in higher education institutions is a function of dynamics between the positional autonomy of agents and their relational autonomy. The former refers to the composition of academics in decision-making bodies in relation to other players from outside the academe whereas the latter refers to the principles pursued in decision-making whether there is heavy reliance on inward looking principles or principles emanating from external sources such as industry or politics. In this regard, according to (Maton, 2005:697) Bourdieu argued that if agents occupying positions in a field such as governing councils that originate from or primarily locate from other fields such as industry the field exhibits relatively weaker positional autonomy (PA-). On the other hand, if agents occupying positions in decision-making bodies such as governing councils originate from or solely are from within the field in higher education, the field exhibits relatively stronger positional autonomy (PA+). This explains perhaps why much as academics by nature of their training and professionalism are very articulate and vocal, in UNIMA they were not able to exercise much leverage in determining the governance context compared to the UNIMA Council because the Council exhibited weak positional autonomy. It must be noted that the UNIMA Council formed the corporate agency of UNIMA going by the UNIMA Act.

Furthermore, the dominance of the majority players in the Council from outside UNIMA, who also possessed political agency meant that the Council had the leverage of

superimposing ideas drawn from economics and politics at the expense of those from inside the academy. According to Maton (2005:264):

> if ways of working, aims, practices, and measures of achievement within higher education are drawn from other fields such as economic or politics it indicates relatively weaker relational autonomy (RA-). Where the field's principles look inwards to its specific activities such as academic excellence it exhibits stronger relational autonomy RA+).

Based on the governance structures that existed in UNIMA in the pre MIM governance reform era as discussed already, it is no wonder that agency in the UNIMA Council exhibited weak relational autonomy which RP2 believed had a detrimental effect on academic excellence, an observation echoed in Kerr & Mapanje (2002).

From Council Minutes, before 1994 the chairperson of the Council was John Tembo who was then a very senior, powerful and influential cabinet minister. According to Kerr & Mapanje (2002:78) John Tembo was a de facto life chairperson for the Council until the multi-party election in 1994. It is only after 1994 when Malawi assumed democratic principles of governance after Banda's regime lost a referendum to perpetuate one party rule that UNIMA had a person other than a cabinet minister as chairperson of Council. From the foregoing, it is not surprising that the governance culture in UNIMA predisposed primary agency to being subordinates of the ruling regime. Kerr & Mapanje (2002:73) asserted that:

> After independence (in 1964) President Banda, who established a repressive one-party state, severely restricted the University's intellectual autonomy through modalities of censorship. Some academics and students went into exile; others conformed to the dominant ideology; others resisted it furtively.

At Senate level the composition was different. The University Act of 1998 (RD13) and Minutes of Senate (RD9 to RD11) show that by 1995 Senate was chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and had Principals, Deans and Academic representatives as its members. In essence, Senate was comprised of academics only with none of its membership coming from outside the University. According to the UNIMA Act, Senate was the highest academic making policy committee in UNIMA. An initial perception is that in as far as academic decision-making was concerned Senate reflected strong positional autonomy. However, this must be viewed within a specific context. To begin with UNIMA had five colleges. Senate was therefore composed of representatives from these five colleges. From the perspective of faculty or department, one should note that there was still weak positional autonomy because decisions at Senate level were carried out by a body whose composition had the majority of its members outside the particular needs and wishes of any individual college or faculty. The scenario above indicates that by 1995 colleges and faculty did not have strong agency in both management and academic decision-making in UNIMA because their representation as individual colleges or faculties was limited. In other words, faculty and academic departments were isolated. In addition, according to the UNIMA Act, all important decisions of Senate were subject to the ratification of Council. This means, Senate could not realise its strong positional autonomy as a result of the above structural constraints. Besides, as already demonstrated in section 5.1, UNIMA relied on Government financing structures. This is the same Government we have observed whose economy was subsequently under the direction of IMF. In so far as Senate's decisions had any financial implications, its relational autonomy was therefore very weak. It can thus be concluded that faculty and academic departments had weak agency from all perspectives of autonomy.

Finally, the need for alternative ideas was there but the mechanisms through which such alternative ideas could be expressed were also limited. Staff members in the UNIMA period before the governance reforms were initiated were not unionised (RD16). Staff members were not allowed by the political structures of the one party state to form unions or associations through which they could express their dissatisfaction with what was going on. So, the rest of the agents in UNIMA were not voluntary adherents of ideas emanating from corporate agency (Archer, 1995), but they were constrained by lack of organizational structures within which they could articulate their concerns, implying that at T1 there was little academic freedom for academic agents.

According to Archer (1995), a monolithic form of social organization allows superimposition of elites' ideas on the rest of the population. UNIMA at T1 was characterised by conjunctions between structural morphostasis and cultural morphostasis that disposed UNIMA agency to a constraining context. The UNIMA governance reforms emerged from the above context.

5.4 Objectives of the UNIMA governance reforms

I set out in this section to present my findings regarding the espoused objectives of the governance reform measures that were introduced in 1997 because in social realism, according to Archer (1995), one of the most differentiating characteristic of people is their intentionality; that is the capacity of agents to entertain projects and design strategies to accomplish them (Archer, 1995). The term projects stands for 'any goal countenanced by social agents, from the satisfaction of biologically grounded needs to the utopian reconstruction of society' (Archer, 1995:198).

Intentions of people do not just come from nowhere. From the morphogenetic theoretical perspective grounding this study, it is believed that through involuntaristic placement, agency is introduced into pre-existing structures and culture that are both enabling and constraining. Since agents are endowed with reflexivity, they entertain projects that are either enabled or constrained by a given context at a particular time (Archer, 1995). As established in the preceding section, it was Council that saw the need to introduce the governance reforms in UNIMA. In this section my focus is on addressing the following ontological question: what provoked the self-consciousness of the Council's agency at T1 to opt for the MIM inspired reforms? It is imperative to know the vested interests of this corporate agency in introducing change because morphostasis (regeneration of society) or morphogenesis (transformation of society) is conditioned by agency (Archer, 2003a/b), that is to say, for events to be actualised they must affect the projects of agents. 'For anything to exert the power of constraint or enablement, it has to stand in a relationship such that it obstructs or aids the achievement of some specific agential enterprise' (Archer, 2003a:5).

From interview data, it seems that the reason why the MIM governance reforms were introduced was to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of University functions so that more students could be admitted. In other words, it appears the reforms were meant to address internal inefficiencies in governance practices that were constraining expansion in students' enrolment in UNIMA. This was confirmed by all research participants. It appears that the corporate agents had realized that the governance systems in UNIMA in 1995 (at T1) were not operating efficiently and effectively, that is they were constraining their intentions to expand students intake. Indeed, RP2 indicated that management was worried that although Zambia had the same population as Malawi, University intake in

that country was higher than in Malawi. RP2 also observed that Botswana had a population of less than two million people but had more students in higher education than Malawi which by then had a population of ten million people. Efficiency has varied meanings in different disciplines. In the context of this study the term is used to describe a situation where it was recognised that there were structural and cultural constraints that impinged on optimal utilization of existing capacity of the UNIMA to satisfy the vested interests of its corporate agency. The interview data makes clear that UNIMA governance reforms were therefore introduced to find the best mix of structural and cultural practices that can enable the University's corporate agency to attain their intentions.

It is important to note that at the time of initiating the governance reforms, UNIMA's enrolment figures were the lowest compared with many countries within Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, the World Bank had found that between 2003 and 2008 UNIMA's enrolment was 51 per 100,000 inhabitants, as compared to Sub-Saharan African countries' enrolment that averaged 337 per 100,000 inhabitants (World Bank 2010). This report (World Bank 2010) nevertheless acknowledged a significant improvement in University enrolment in Malawi compared to its previous situation, indicating how poor participation rates must have been previously. It is submitted that the main objective of the MIM reforms according to these findings was to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of doing business in UNIMA so that more students could be admitted.

5.5 Conclusion

In as far as governance is concerned at T1 in UNIMA, it can be concluded that the context was constraining by 1995, which predisposed UNIMA stakeholders to a situational logic of elimination. The situation was amenable for alteration because of the tension that emerged

from this disjunction. I have shown that while the internal governance context was characterised by tension emerging from morphostasis of the parts, the external context of UNIMA was vulnerable to economic and political external forces emerging from the morphogenesis at the global or macro structural levels. The above contradictions predisposed UNIMA agents to a situational logic that necessitated change. The change was however mediated by the desire of UNIMA corporate agency, Council, to expand the University's intake.

Having established the objective of the UNIMA governance reforms initiated in 1995 against the constraining governance context, my next task was to know the constitutive properties of these UNIMA governance reform measures. From an ontological perspective in this context, my interest was in knowing the constitutive governance practices that characterized the UNIMA governance reform measures. For Critical Realists, such as Bhaskhar (2008), this is the form the phenomenon took as an object of social inquiry. Understanding of these proposed practices and ideas generated by MIM would also offer insights into whether indeed the governance reforms were designed with the above cited objective in mind or not. This is the purpose of Chapter Six to which I now turn.

Chapter 6

T2 – T3 – STRUCTURE, CULTURE AND AGENCY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORMS

6.0 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present my findings regarding the changes that were adopted by the Council of UNIMA from the Malawi Institute of Management (MIM) Report. It describes the experiences of UNIMA with governance reform measures from T2 to T3 of Archer's morphogenetic cycle. In Chapter Five I interrogated the structural, cultural and agential conditionings of UNIMA governance at T1, the period before the reforms were introduced and argued that this period was characterised by conjunctions between structural and cultural morphostasis. This internal institutional configuration created a situational logic of elimination in the structural domain of UNIMA governance which confronted UNIMA's corporate agency in 1995.

While this was the case internally, I also argued in Chapter Five that externally, there were structural and cultural forces that were working towards reshaping the governance context in UNIMA, particularly being exerted from political and economic changes that were impacting on public sector institutions globally. I argued that it is this vulnerability to the external political and economic mechanisms that predisposed UNIMA agents to a situational logic that necessitated change. I showed in Chapter Five that change in UNIMA was precipitated by the reduced funding that was experienced as a result of the Government of Malawi's adoption of fiscal structural reforms emanating from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

In this Chapter I explain the practical measures UNIMA's actors took. I particularly take note that the interventions introduced took the form of governance reform adopted from the Consultancy Report which the MIM had produced. I thus in this chapter interrogate the constitutive practices that formed the essence of the governance reforms in UNIMA.

6.1 Governance reforms measures introduced in UNIMA between 1997 and 2013

I employed the morphogenetic framework to analyse the governance reform measures the Council adopted from the MIM recommendations. In presenting my results I utilise the framework developed by Clark (1983) graphically summarised in Figure 5.1 of Chapter Five. From the analysis of the data, it was evident that the UNIMA Council adopted the reform measures mainly at two levels of the higher education governance hierarchy. First, there were reform measures that were adopted by the Council which were intended to condition the structural properties of governance at the systems level. These were few in number and I present them first in section 6.1.1. Secondly, there were reform measures which were adopted by the Council meant to shape the governance structure, culture and agency at enterprise level of the University and these are presented in section 6.1.2. In Table 6.1 I summarise all the reform measures that the analysis reveals were adopted by the UNIMA Council in 1997 based on the MIM Report.

	Reforms at System (Governance) levels
1.	Government to articulate policy for education sector in a holistic manner
2.	Establish a specialist department in the Ministry of Education to be in charge of Higher Education
3.	Depoliticise the Office of the Chancellor and the appointment University Council members
	Reforms at Enterprise/Institutional Governance levels
1.	Outsourcing of non-core functions of the University
2.	Deconcentration to enable line managers at college level to have decision-making authority, hire their own staff; Principals to exercise executive leadership at college level and Registrar and Finance Officers at colleges to be responsible to the Principal and not to the University Registrar
3.	Decongestion of Central Office making it lean and making it to concentrate on policy and strategic issues
4.	Colleges should justify their budget to government and disbursement of funds should be made straight to colleges
5.	Vice Chancellor should play the role of Chief Executive
6.	Deans to become executive
7.	Merging of academic departments
8.	Rationalization of academic programmes
9.	Phase out unpopular programmes
10.	Minimize programme duplication
11.	Freeze excess staff establishment and transfer some positions to departments of critical need
12.	Reduction in the size of Senate
13.	Selection of students should be based on classroom space and not bed spaces
14.	Selected students should be in two categories: Government sponsored and self-sponsored
15.	UNIMA to increase enrolment of students in areas of scarce expertise such as medicine, accountancy and architecture
16.	Increase the enrolment of female students
17.	Diploma programmes should be phased out
18.	Staff houses owned by the University should be sold

Table 6.1: Recommended reform measures adopted by the UNIMA Council in 1997

6.1.1 Governance reform measures adopted by UNIMA Council in 1997

The Council adopted some recommendations from the MIM Report (1997) that compelled Government to introduce new governance structures at systems level; that is, in the higher education sector as a whole which were important to the sector but lacking in Malawi. It almost seems pretentious to imagine that the Council could adopt reform measures that would compel Government to react to its findings. From the perspective of the morphogenetic theory, this may not be an unusual contingency considering the composition of the Council as described in section 5.3 of Chapter Five. It can be inferred from this that the presence of both Government and UNIMA corporate agency in the Council provided an enabling environment for a combined agency that mediated the transformation of governance structural and cultural properties in both directions, at systems (governmental) levels and at the enterprise level. Through the Council, it is contended, structural and cultural governance properties of Government were able to interact with those of the University via agency. In the process of such interactions, either intended or unintended emergent governance properties were produced that can explain the transformation of structures and culture in both directions (Archer, 1995). As shall be noted later in this section, this interaction also had the effect of transforming Council's own agency.

It is important to recollect that if there are strains or congruence in the second level of emergent properties of structure and cultures at the institutional level (Archer, 1995) that is, if past and present actions of agency relate in a manner that there are either constraints or congruence in their relationship with the Structural Emergent Properties and the Cultural Emergent Properties, the net impact can have far reaching consequences beyond the institution. This potentially was the situation in the Council where emergent properties of agency arising from the varied membership of the Council (political, government and the

university) when reacting to the MIM findings provided the directional guidance that had an effect on the entire system of higher education governance in Malawi and hence explains these reforms that were adopted at systems levels.

The investigations of the MIM Reforms (1997) revealed that there was no specific policy guidelines for higher education in the Malawi Government to which the University could relate to, implying that there was no clear articulation of a framework that governs the relationship between Government and public universities in Malawi. The MIM Report (1997) had observed that the overarching national policy documents that existed in the country in 1995 mentioned higher education in passing without any comprehensive statement in them worthy of the term 'national higher education policy'. It appeared therefore to the Council that this was an opportune moment to indicate to Government the gap that was there in higher education governance structures in Malawi for Government to correct. Secondly, Council also agreed that Government should establish a separate department within the Ministry of Education to be responsible for higher education affairs in the country (MIM Report, 1997). Considering how big the secondary sector was in Malawi, the Education Ministry it appears was not sufficiently managing higher education issues. The above scenarios were in sharp contrast with what prevails in most countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa where there is clear articulation of the relationship between higher education institutions and Government in the form of national policy blue prints as well as separate government departments specifically responsible for higher education governance issues (Saint, 2009). The above reform measures were therefore intended to correct these observed gaps in the higher education sector in Malawi to ensure that there was an articulation of higher education governance policy at systems level supported by a robust institutional structure within the Ministry of Education that would provide the platform for the formal Government and UNIMA relationship.

It is not however clear as to how these decisions were communicated to Government because there was no correspondence in the files I consulted at Central Office which showed that Government was formerly approached to consider adopting these recommendations. Furthermore, none of the research participants were able to recall that the Council had come up with these recommendations although these governance reform measures appeared in the Report that the Council adopted in 1997. There is a record of discussions in the Council Minutes, particularly those of the 60th Meeting of Council document (RD2) that reveals that Government was requested to make commitments with regard to the reform measures which were being proposed. But these were confined it would appear, to financial commitments. Judging from the composition of the Council as outlined in section 5.3 of Chapter Five, it is possible that these decisions therefore were taken by the Government representatives on the Council. If this was the case then it is worth noting that this is consistent with Archer's morphogenetic theory which explains that through mediation of agency, structures, culture and agency get reshaped and this accounts the transformation of societal structures.

Although it took a long time, there is evidence that these measures were finally implemented by Government. For example, Government introduced a separate directorate within the Ministry of Education responsible for Higher Education which I believe was in response to the recommendation the Council had made. Furthermore, in 2006 the Government developed a National Education Sector Plan in which higher education policy plans of the Malawian Government were outlined. In this policy document, Government acknowledged the significant role that higher education can play in the national development of the country and it outlined strategies the Government would take to ensure that higher education assists it to achieve its national development objectives. In the same document Government expressed its

commitment to revise the Education Act in order to facilitate the establishment of a Commission for Higher Education (Malawi Government, 2006). It also outlined its policy objectives for public universities to achieve. The Education Act was revised in 2013 and in the same year the Government established the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). In my view, all these developments happened in the higher education governance sector in Malawi as a result of University Council's decisions of 1997.

These recommended reforms had the potential of increasing State influence on UNIMA and can be considered to be within the state-centric model of governance although they were advanced as mechanisms for catalysing greater autonomy of UNIMA from direct State control.

Furthermore, the Council adopted a recommendation that stated that the Head of State should cease to be the Chancellor and instead a prominent member of Malawi society should take up this role (MIM Report, 1997). When one recalls that the one-party system suppressed UNIMA autonomy and interfered with academic freedom as reported in Chapter Five, it cannot be doubted that a recommendation of the foregoing nature would be proposed. Interestingly, what was being proposed above is what prevails in many higher education reforms in Universities in Sub-Saharan Africa (Saint, 2009) where the State President has ceased to be the Chancellor. Related to this, the Report which was adopted by the Council also recommended that the appointment by the State President of members to serve on the Council should not be based on political patronage. People should be selected based on their position in society in relation to the interest of UNIMA's development needs (MIM Report, 1997).

The Council's recommendation to Government to remove the State President from assuming the office of the Chancellor met structural resistance. The draft amended Act that was presented to the Ministry of Justice included this recommendation but the final Bill that was presented to Parliament by the Minister of Education (and which eventually became Law) maintained the previous clause. The clause had been reinstated that indicated that the Head of State was to serve as the Chancellor of the University.

There was, however, a new clause in the revised Act that was introduced to enable the Head of State to choose another person in the event that she/he did not want to serve in the office of the Chancellor (UNIMA, 1998 Act). This seems to have been a compromise. With regard to the latter recommendation regarding the appointment of the Council members, I noted with interest from the Minutes of the Council that the composition of Council changed. Some prominent members in society started serving on the Council other than full-time politicians. There was a mixture of members appointed to the Council by the State President ranging from prominent retired civil servants, successful business and professional people to retired prominent academics but not active politicians. For example, between 2010 and 2013, the Council has been chaired by retired professors from the University. In addition, in 2010 of all the three Council members that were appointed by the State President, in addition to the chairperson, were retired UNIMA employees. This is in sharp contrast with the situation before these reforms were adopted whereby it was prominent active politicians that took turns in chairing and being members of the Council. It is important to note that among the membership of the Council is the Secretary for Education who serves as an ex-officio member. In Malawi, the composition of the governing boards is the responsibility of the appropriate responsible Ministry. A recommendation is made by the responsible Ministry through the Department of Statutory Corporations to the State President who approves such

recommendation. As previously observed, the mere fact that the Secretary for Education carries with her or him a double agency, as a Government employee and as a Council member at the same time means that she or he is strategically positioned to influence change in both directions, that is, Government and the University. This underscores Archer's (1995) assertion that agency mediates structural and cultural transformation in society.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the majority of the reform measures the Council adopted in 1997 aimed at conditioning the governance structures at systems level were implemented by Government. However, such implementation has had both intended and unintended consequences, as is discussed in Chapter Seven. In the section that follows, I consider recommendations adopted by the Council aimed at reforming the enterprise level of governance.

6.1.2 Reform measures adopted by UNIMA Council at Enterprise level of governance

The focus of my analysis reported on in this section was largely based on the interviews conducted with the research participants. My research participants were asked to tell me which governance reform measures they could recall were adopted by the Council in 1997. The position that I took was that the reforms that would be mentioned by the majority of the research participants had objective existence. Meaning, such reform measures had causal effect in the governance reforms in the University considering that I was interviewing my research participants fifteen years after these reform measures were adopted by the Council. The reforms that had frequent and extensive mention were understood to have had significant import on the governance reforms undertaken in the University. I thus ranked the reforms that were mentioned to have been adopted by the Council based on the frequency with which they appeared in the responses I got from the research participants. The summarised results appear

in Figure 6.1. While this is a fairly crude measure of importance, as it is difficult to determine discrete counts of mentions of each issue within the interview data, this allowed me to identify which issues needed further analysis. Those reforms whose frequencies were particularly high were subjected to further analysis to understand their importance in the governance reforms in the University.

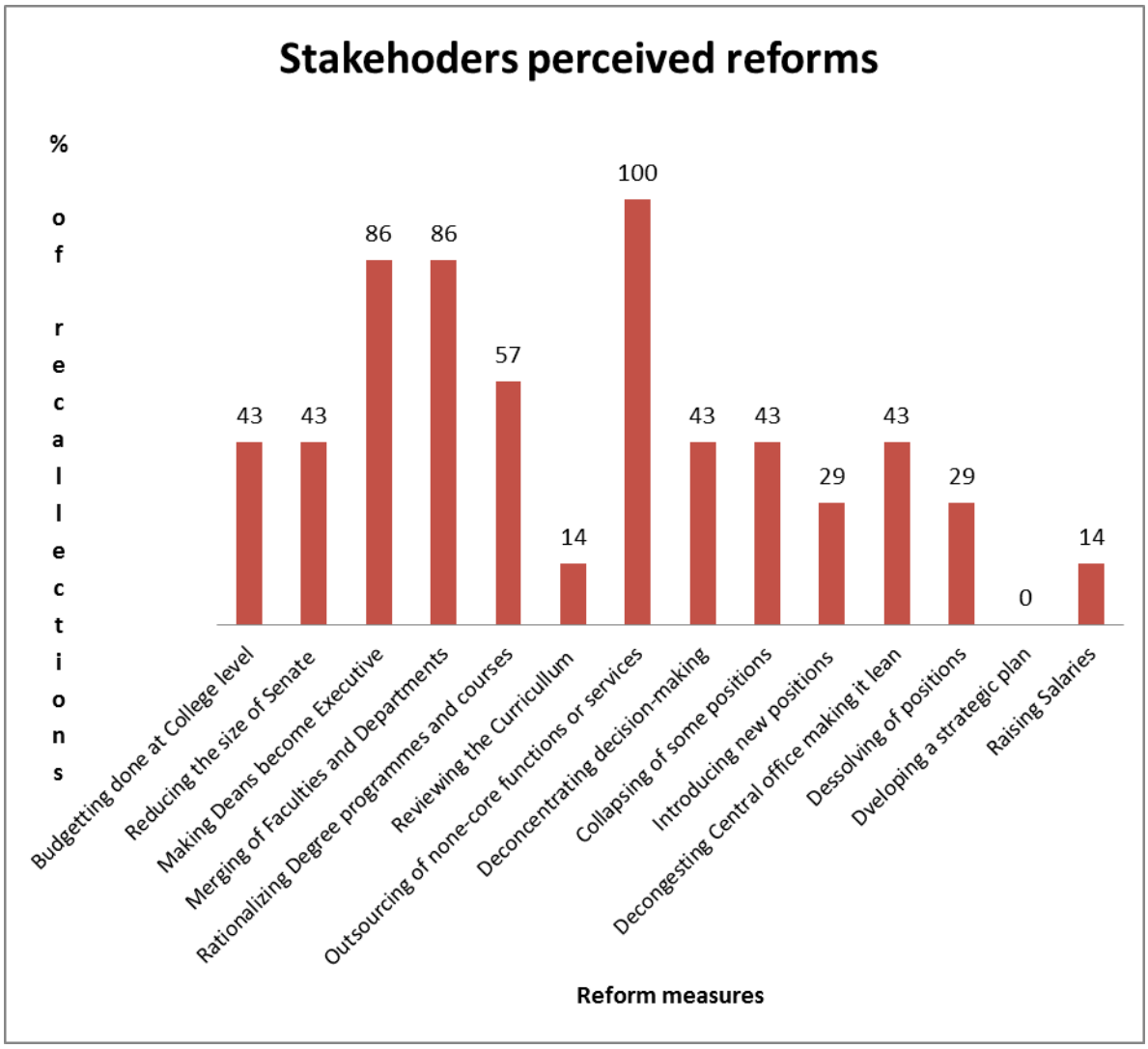

Figure: 6.1: Stakeholders' perceived reforms

From the results obtained as shown in Figure 6.1, I noted that the reform measure that was recollected by all the research participants numerous times was the outsourcing of non-core services. Furthermore, when asked as to which reform measures were successfully

implemented in the UNMA all the research participants also mentioned the same outsourcing of the non-core services (see Figure 6.2 below). When I examined the schedules of the services to be outsourced in the University I noted that the following services were earmarked for outsourcing: catering, cleaning, gardening, maintenance and security (MIM Report, 1997).

It is necessary to recall from Chapter Four that underlining outsourcing of services in the higher education sector has been the New Public Management (NPM) idea of greater prominence placed on discipline and parsimony in resource utilization (Hood, 1992). According to Harman & Treadgold, (2007) in implementing this aspect of reforms, universities have opted for outsourced services in many facets of University support services such as the ones cited above. In the University outsourcing of non-core functions was recommended for three main reasons according to the research participants and the MIM Report (1997). First, all the research participants concurred that outsourcing was adopted to ensure that the University concentrated its energy and financial resources towards the core business of the University which according to the University Act (1998) are: teaching, research, consultancy and outreach services. Second, according to the Report (MIM Report, 1997) outsourcing of non-core functions was justified after it was observed that the University's wage bill was high because the institution had too many staff members especially in support services. It was argued that this scenario was crowding out the main players in the University business (academic staff members) as the institution was failing to appropriately reward them due to the high wage bill and thus contributing to the brain drain. It was therefore envisaged that outsourcing of the non-core services would enable the University to retrench the majority of its support staff to pave the way for salary increase for the remaining core staff (MIM Report, 1997). Third, it was highlighted by the MIM Report

that the presence of a large pool of support staff were skewing the student-staff ratios in the University when compared with other universities in the World thereby creating the impression that the University had excess capacity. Outsourcing of non-core services was therefore adopted by the Council as a strategy to correct these anomalies.

All the research participants agreed that outsourcing of non-core services was justifiable. Two of the research participants (RP3 and RP8) confirmed that outsourcing of non-core services enabled the University to reduce its staff numbers and hence costs. This finding also serves to confirm what Gawa (2006) established that outsourcing on non-core services at UNIMA reduced the cost to the University of providing such services. Research Participant (RP5) stated that outsourcing of non-core services in the University had enabled managers to concentrate on providing support to teaching and research services as the retrenched staff members were perceived to be '… a bother to everyone and really everyone wanted to do away with them'

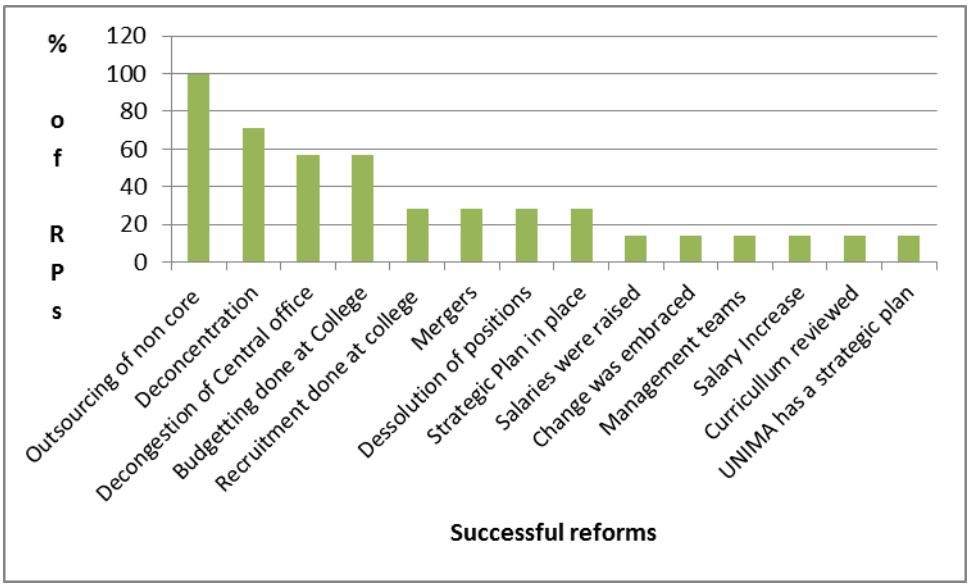

Figure: 6.2: Stakeholders' perception of successful reforms

Various reasons were advanced by the research participants for the success of the implementation of outsourcing of non-core services in UNIMA. Research Participants (RP1 and RP5) ascribed the success of this initiative to Government's commitment. It is noted that Government supported the process of outsourcing by providing training to all the administrative staff that were charged with the implementation of the policy prior to the implementation of outsourcing of the non-core functions. RP1 recalled that there was also political will at the systems level in Government. He stated that it was felt that with the advent of the multi-party system of Government in Malawi, support staff members in the University (who were the first category of staff to be unionised) became difficult to manage as they were regularly involved in industrial disputes with their employer and hence the need to reduce its size to minimise an unnecessary management problem. In addition, both RP1 and RP5 attributed the success of outsourcing of non-core services to the financial support Government provided. Retrenchment entailed financial resources which the University on its own could not afford from its budget. The Government therefore provided the required extra financial resources needed for paying-off all the retrenched staff members. As a result of this, all the support staff members who were identified to be retrenched were laid-off. The non-core services such as catering, maintenance, grounds management and security were advertised and assigned to private service providers.

While this outsourcing of non-core services can be seen to be a logical emergence of multiple mechanisms as outlined in the previous chapter and was indeed referred to as a positive outcome by all the research participants, it can also be viewed through a broader NPM lens. There is much literature that is critical of the economic logic underpinning such reforms and shows how the NPM model of outsourcing non-core processes has significant human consequences (Balfour and Grubbs, 2000; Lerner, 2008).

The Council also introduced an income generating measure by introduction a high fee paying cohort of students in public universities. By 1995 the UNIMA students were already paying a modest contribution to their tuition. The Council decided in 1997 that all the undergraduate students should contribute more to their tuition than was the case previously when students were only contributing about 2 percent (MIM Report, 1997). A decision to increase students' tuition fees in this regard reflected the desire of the Council to shift the perception of students to see themselves as life-long beneficiaries of their education. This position is in line with the corporate model of governance which, as discussed in Chapter Four, advocates for the importation of economic imperatives into the governance of universities.

On implementation, the above reform measure resulted in the Council categorising undergraduate students into two groups. Category A comprised those students whose tuition would largely be paid by Government (subsidised fees) and who were to contribute a rather increased sum towards their tuition but who were to be provided with accommodation and meals by the University – known as residential students. These were to be selected based on merit, that is, high performance at the O-level certificate stage. Category B comprised students who would pay higher fees than students in Category A and find their own accommodation and provide for themselves in terms of meals. These were known as non-residential students. They would be selected on merit but after the selection of Category A students was completed. The idea was that this arrangement would allow the University to generate more money from tuition while expanding the intake. This reform operated on the assumption that the demand for University education among Malawian youths was inelastic and that an increase in the 'price' of University education would not impact severely on the number of students applying and attending. This thinking was backed by the other

assumption that since the University was previously selecting students based on bed space which limited access of school leavers to the University, this latter category of students would be willing to pay more because they would appreciate the opportunity given to them through this new policy. Otherwise, they were destined not to make it to the University if it were not for this policy change. In other words, the students would view this decision as a necessary contradiction to what prevailed before in the sense that although they were disadvantaged, this policy offered them an opportunity to obtain a University education. It would appear that indeed the assumptions made were correct as the policy was tolerated.

In order to avoid some Government sponsored students from being barred from accessing University education because of the increase in tuition fees, the Council agreed that the student-means-tested or a needs-based loan scheme should be enhanced and transferred from the University to another specialist unit to manage it. Before this, the scheme was managed by UNIMA. These loans were to be restricted to the Category A students only. The understanding was that those who were to be selected under Category B had the financial capacity to support themselves.

According to Johnson (2003:404), cost sharing is premised on the assumption that: 'costs of higher education in all countries and in all situations can be viewed as being borne by four principal parties: (1) the Government, or taxpayers; (2) parents; (3) students; and/or (4) individual or institutional donors.' In this regard, where Government was not able to adequately meet all the demands of higher education financing, it was imperative to involve parents, students and philanthropy to supplement the financing (Johnson, 2003). This is what happened in Malawi after it was realised that State funding to the University was declining. However, it would appear that the focus was mainly on sharing costs between Government

and the student/parent as I did not find any measure that was focussed on tapping from philanthropy.

Essentially, a means-tested or need-based loan scheme described above is introduced wherever cost-sharing strategies such as the introduction of high fees have been implemented (Johnson, 2003). The argument is that if this is not done, higher education participation would not be equitable. Students particularly from low income families would be prevented from accessing higher education (Johnson, 2003). However, experiences by some countries in Africa such as Ghana and Ethiopia is that such loan schemes have been beset by management problems particularly low repayment levels by students, which has made the sustaining of such schemes challenging. The schemes have also faced implementation challenges in these countries particularly how to assess the most deserving students (Yizengaw, 2003; Atuahene, 2009). Interestingly, the same trends were experienced in Malawi. To begin with, by early 2000, UNIMA was facing serious challenges in identifying needy students according to the Minutes of the Finance Committee of Council (RD20). A decision to have some applicants awarded the loans while rejecting others led to students' unrest according to records sourced from the Central Office. Eventually, the Council bowed to pressure and started awarding loans to all those that had applied for them. The 'means-test' was in a way abandoned in this regard. However, this was not sustainable as resources were insufficient to accommodate every 'needy' student. Correspondences (RD26) at the Central Office indicate that Government altered its policy and decided that the loan scheme should be managed by a private provider (in line with the MIM Report's recommendation), namely a firm that would be able to enforce the 'needs' test as well as be able to inject more resources into the scheme.

A commercial bank was identified. However, the private provider served only for a year and withdrew from the scheme because of structural incompatibilities surrounding the arrangements under which the loan scheme was to be managed. According to one Government official from the Ministry of Education I consulted, who was responsible for managing the scheme, Government had wanted the commercial bank to issue the loans but required the students to start repaying the loans after four years, that is, after graduating. However, the business practice of commercial banks could not accommodate such an arrangement. The Reserve Bank regulations governing operations of commercial banks in Malawi did not allow banks to lend out loans for repayments after four years as was proposed with the students' loans. This meant that the commercial bank could not proceed to administer the loan scheme. According to records at the Central Office (RD27;RD28), Government was therefore forced to assume the responsibility of administering the loan scheme once again after the commercial bank had abandoned it. Furthermore, although it was assumed that the non-government sponsored students would not require the loans, pressure mounted to extend the loans to them as well. At the time of writing this thesis, Government had just submitted a new Bill to Parliament to regulate the loan scheme which would enable all students in both public and private universities to benefit from the loan scheme if they meet all the requirements of the needs test. It remains to be seen whether the Government will have sufficient financial resources to accommodate students from both public and private universities as the experience so far has shown that this has not been possible even when the scheme was restricted to public university students only. Moreover, according to the Government official I consulted, at the moment the Government is failing to pay universities the amount owed to them by students who benefit from the loan scheme. If the Government is currently unable to release funding from the scheme to public universities, it is even more

unlikely to be able to do so when provisions are made for private University students to claim from the scheme.

From the foregoing, one can note that both outsourcing and the enhancement of cost and income generating measures by students were deliberate interventions by the Council aimed at configuring the UNIMA financial governance structures to contain expenditures. The measures, as can be observed, were equally intended to foreground a corporate culture of governance in the University, one that placed a premium on value for money in service delivery in line with NPM principles. In addition, there was an attempt as well to reconfigure the composition of agency in the University in the process.

Outsourcing was accompanied by retrenchment of support staff and, according to RP1 this also was aimed at checking the influence of this unionised cadre and redirecting the savings into salaries of the academic members of staff. Additionally, measures aimed at collecting more revenue from students through cost sharing were not only meant to inculcate a culture of valuing the benefit of one's education on the part of students, but they also had a corresponding conditioning influence on the agency students were to carry. There emerged categorization of students into residential and non-residential. Each of these had its own agency which had the potential to influence the way UNIMA was to manage them. For example, scheduling of classes had to be done mindful that not all the students were operating from campus. Similarly, these measures meant that increased numbers of students were admitted and this had implications for the delivery of programmes against the existing staff members the academic departments were supposed to have in view of the staff: student ratios that were being proposed. In concluding this section we should not lose sight of the fact that all these reform measures were emergent governance properties contingent from the

constraining financial context in the UNIMA period preceding the reforms (T1) outlined in Chapter Five and had far reaching cascading consequences at enterprise as well as disciplinary levels in the UNIMA governance context.

The second most significant reform measure the Council adopted according to the research participants was an attempt to shift the power distribution in UNIMA from the centre to the periphery to enable faculties and academic departments to assume more decision-making authority. According to the research participants, major decisions taken by Council in this respect were as follows: First, the Council agreed that the UNIMA Act should be amended to align itself to the new governance processes that were being adopted. It is important to observe that until this time the UNIMA Act had been revised only once in 1974. Second, the Council agreed that Central Office should be decongested through devolution of powers and made lean. It should reduce its concern on operational matters and focus on policy and strategic issues. The operational matters should be devolved to colleges. According to all the research participants matters such as the hiring of staff, staff discipline, budget formulation and staff payroll were to be removed from the Central Office to be undertaken by colleges. In this connection, principals of colleges and their registrars and finance officers at college level were empowered to assume executive leadership. Third, the University Senate was to devolve most of its powers as well and become lean in its composition. According to what RP1 and RP8 recalled:

> it was felt that maybe the clearing house of these academic issues should not be Senate but that work should be done by academic boards at college level, and if those academic boards did the work at college level a much leaner Senate would have very few issues to deal with. (RP1)

> …the Academic Board, it's like sort of a replica of the Senate, we should have such a Board like Senate, I can say Senate B at a college. (RP8).

The Council agreed that the University Senate should focus its attention on academic policy matters. Colleges should introduce academic boards to be chaired by the principal with membership drawn from faculty deans and heads of department. The college academic boards were to take over most of the functions of the University Senate such as approval of students' examination results, curriculum reviews and academic programme changes with regular reports submitted to University Senate to ratify (MIM Report, 1997).

The justification for this decision was that the academe would regain its rightful autonomy of self-governance if most of the academic functions of the University were to be decided upon at college levels where faculty and academic departments were operating (MIM Report, 1997; RP1).

It can be recalled from discussions in section 4.1.1.2 that the main feature of self-governance is that important decisions in universities can competently be taken by academics alone, or under mandatory advice of them because of their expertise and commitments (du Toit, 2007; 1996). These are mainly decisions that relate to the work of academics such as the syllabus of a course, individual staff appointments, the admission or graduation of individual students, standards of academic performance, and the detailed allocation of resources between competing usages within a department or faculty (du Toit, 2007). Therefore, by devolving most of the decision-making powers to colleges in the manner it was agreed and the creation of college academic boards, it meant that colleges would to a greater extent attain self-governance. However, the devolution of responsibilities can be interpreted quite differently.

Giroux (1992) makes the point that decentralization appears to increase academic power and freedoms but actually increases the bureaucracy and administrative responsibilities of academics.

Devolution of decision-making powers is one of the principles advanced in NPM reform measures. According to Hood (1992), NPM governance reforms have tended to emphasize issues of decentralization, devolution and delegation of power to allow greater discretion on the part of managers that run public sector organizations. It is grounded in the belief that if efficiency has to be improved and for accountability to be easily monitored, those that manage public institutions should be given great discretionary powers in resource mobilization and use (Christensen & Leagreid, 2002). Devolution in UNIMA was therefore adopted by the Council to ensure that there were internal efficiencies in the management of colleges as important decisions that affect the core functions of the University would be done with speed as well as reflect differences in the operating contexts of each of the five individual colleges (MIM Report, 1997).

Fourth, having devolved its operational functions, the Council directed that Central Office should now develop a strategic plan as a governance framework in its role of guiding colleges. One of the principles that the NPM reform framework advocates is the formulation of well-defined goals, targets and indicators of success, most significantly in quantitative terms (Hood, 1992). It is envisaged that accountability and efficiency would become evident where goals and objectives are clearly stated (Christensen, 2001; Lane, 2000). This compels universities to formulate strategic plans covering periods of 5 to 10 years with clear objectives that are measurable to guide their operations. In some countries such as Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa and Ethiopia Universities as earlier observed in section 4.4.3 have

been forced by the State to develop strategic plans as a regulatory requirement (Saint, 2009). The idea in UNIMA though was that Central Office would come up with pillars drawn from the National Education Sector Plan which would form University wide policy plans and objectives. Colleges would in turn develop their sector plans aimed at achieving the University's objectives.

From my findings (Figure 6.2), deconcentration, which in summary is what the above discussion has entailed, was found justifiable by the majority of the research participants. Similarly, most of these administrative measures that were proposed have been implemented. For example, according to the majority of the research participants, devolution of managerial decision-making was successfully implemented because Central Office was pressurised by both the Council and faculties and departments to take that route. It can also be deduced that with the advent of democracy it was extremely difficult that Central Office could justify most of the decision-making powers it held. It should be recalled from the findings presented in Chapter Five that it was the one party political system of governance that systematized centralization at T1. While this was possible then, with changes in systems of governance at the macro-level in 1994[12] such systematization was hard to sustain, particularly when the composition of corporate agency in the Council went through morphogenesis. Besides, according to RP1 and RP5 faculty were increasingly demanding openness and accountability in the way Central Office was managing its affairs so that holding onto more power at the centre was becoming unsustainable. In addition, RP5 indicated that devolution was enabled by adequate consultations and good communication that preceded its implementation. He also recalled that before the devolution of administrative and financial functions, college

[12] Malawi abandoned the one-party system of governance in 1992 following a referendum and adopted the multi-party system of government. This change heralded the proliferation of new political parties in the country and political freedom. The Malawi Congress Party lost the elections that were held later in 1994 to the United Democratic Party.

managers were called to several meetings with senior managers at central office where they were briefed as to what exactly the devolution was about. This was followed by a Memorandum from the University Registrar outlining in detail those activities which were to be devolved. RP7 underscored this point quite succinctly when he argued that: 'before you decentralize, make sure that the people who will be delegated to do that job are properly prepared because you don't delegate a thing to a person who is not prepared.' RP5 explained that devolution of managerial decision-making was also successful because it was attractive to colleges as it gave them the platform to take charge of their affairs.

The reforms were found attractive particularly to College Principals who were the agents in the Council pushing for this change. To understand this one needs to recall the background of the University's governance context at T1 as described in Chapter Five. Given the systemization that was there before the reforms, which subordinated most University agents, measures introduced to ameliorate them from such a constraining situation would certainly have been welcomed. Furthermore, from a morphogenetic perspective, the introduction of contingent compatibilities which align with the vested interests of agents create a situational logic of opportunism (Archer, 1995:226). In the context of this study, in the pre-reform period, decision-making was the preserve of few senior managers in the University. With the devolution of decision-making authority it meant that decisions would now be made within faculties and departments, hence the attractiveness of devolution.

Similarly, UNIMA complied with the Council directive to develop a strategic plan. This was done in 2004 when a plan was designed to run from 2004 to 2009. Information sourced from the Central Office (D25) revealed that this plan was not however successfully implemented

because of the lack of an implementation strategy as well as inadequate funding to finance some of the strategies outlined in the plan. RP8 observed that the plan was too ambitious.

RP8 explained that another strategic plan was developed in 2012 that built on the strength and weaknesses of the previous strategic plan. This plan has a five year implementation phase (2012 – 2017). Documents RD 25 indicates that the UNIMA Council has prioritised areas that it plans to focus upon. According to documents RD 25 Council has requested the University's management to follow suit by identifying areas they plan to implement in the short to medium term. It would appear that there are strong indications that the Council is poised to see this plan implemented. It is not known however whether this shall succeed as the problem of inadequate finances seems to continue and the membership of Council changes every two years.

Furthermore, Senate powers are yet to be devolved. This reform measure, I was told, is awaiting the amendment of the UNIMA Act. The amendment to the Act which was done in 1998 did not include provision for changes likely to enable Senate to be devolved to colleges. There are strong indications that once the enabling legislation is amended, this reform measure will be implemented. However, in my view once this is done, this might signal the disintegration of UNIMA into separate independent Universities as the College Senates (Academic Boards) is a significant embodiment of self-governance. At the moment, the existence of one UNIMA Senate, seems to serve as the main uniting mechanism for the University. Without it, the situation might be different. However, it would be necessary in future, once the Act is revised to enable the creation of academic boards, to test the above hypothesis.

There were other related measures that were designed to restructure governance at institutional level mentioned in the MIM Report (1997) that Council adopted such as recommending that the Vice Chancellor assume the role of the Chief Executive; the creation of a new position of the Deputy Vice Chancellor; devolving the responsibilities for managing research centres from the Central Office to faculties. However, these reforms were not easily recalled by the Research participants or where they were recalled they were only mentioned by a single participant. I did not therefore interrogate these any further. However, it should be noted that similar reforms are central to New Public Management ideologies. As with all the reforms outlined thus far in this chapter, there is the potential for both intended and unintended consequences and for ambiguity in understanding what these reforms indicate in terms of governance models. The designation of the Vice-Chancellor to 'Chief Executive', for example, can be interpreted either as a move away from the previous state-centric model of governance to a scenario where UNIMA was to gain more control over its own governance or could be seen to be a move towards a corporate model of governance in which the values of industry are imported into the academy.

From the above presentation it can be observed that reform measures planned at the institutional level of governance in the UNIMA were both structural and cultural and with implications on agency in their implementation. They were structural because the reform measures proposed fundamental reconfiguration of power relations between central office and faculties and academic departments whereby the former was shedding some powers and transferring these to colleges. The reforms were cultural in the sense that the changes in the power relations mentioned above impacted on the way of doing business in the University. For example, it meant that matters that previously would be referred to the Central Office were to be handled in the periphery which involved changing the mind-set of the stakeholders

in the UNIMA. Cultural systems are doctrines, theories, beliefs and ideas that define what is possible and not possible in a social system. It is also about how things ought to be done in society (Giddens, 1979; Archer, 1995, 2003a). Furthermore, all the above proposed changes in structure and culture affected and were also to be effected by agency through their mediatory role. Emergent from these changes were consequences for governance practices, some intended as described above and others unintended as shall be presented in Chapter Seven.

The third reform measure that had a significant presence in the interviews with my research participants and impacting specifically on structure, culture and agency at enterprise level is the merger of faculties and academic departments. The merger of faculties was an important governance reform measure that was agreed upon by the Council in 1997 as Table 6.1 can show.

According to the MIM Report (1997) which informed the Council's decision in this respect, merging of faculties and academic departments involved undertaking the following academic restructuring measures: Firstly, it was decided that diploma programmes should be phased out. It was observed that most of the various degree programmes in the University were of four-year duration but diploma programmes were of three-year duration. Council felt that it would be cost effective to phase out the diplomas and allow students to stay one more year and get a degree. In this way, there would be value for money spent as a degree carries more currency than a diploma. Additionally, the phasing out of diploma programmes would mean that entire academic departments that were servicing diploma programmes only would dissolve and the staff members concerned be integrated into other academic departments where their services would be utilised efficiently.

Secondly, the Council also decided that those degree programmes that were not popular based on enrolment figures should be phased out as well. Thirdly, the Council further decided that all academic programmes should be rationalized to minimise programme duplication and wastages. This also involved shifting courses from one department to another (MIM Report, 1997). For example, Chancellor College had language and literature courses taught by four different departments: English, French, Chichewa and Linguistics, and the department of Classics. It had been observed by the MIM consultants that lecturers in these departments when called upon to teach in another department were only willing to do so if engaged on part-time staff basis and with an extra remuneration. This was proving costly and wasteful. Besides, the presence of many small departments created a situation where there were more heads of department and since the headship role attracted extra compensation, it meant that this arrangement was also costly to the University (MIM Report, 1997). The Council agreed to require the college concerned to carry out a restructuring process. In the case of Chancellor College the expectation was that all the language courses and literature courses would be housed in two departments (MIM Report, 1997). In this way, the duplication of courses would be eliminated and there would be a more focussed approach to delivery of programmes as academic departments would benefit from synergies arising from pulling together of expertise within the same fields.

Fourthly, the Council agreed that there should be a broad assessment of appropriate student/staff ratios with a view to coming up with an appropriate cost-effective ratio (MIM Report, 1997). Accompanying this reform measure was a decision to freeze all positions found in excess after an appropriate staff-students ratio was agreed upon.

Fifthly, the Council decided that some programmes should share resources. For example, the Home Economics Department at Chancellor College was asked to share its human resources with the Department of Nutrition at Bunda College because the two departments were perceived to be offering programmes that had many similarities. In addition, Council resolved that the Law Faculty at Chancellor College should move to become a faculty at the Polytechnic to enable it to service the Faculty of Commerce which was also offering law courses so that its expertise should equally benefit that faculty. Kamuzu College of Nursing which had one faculty but two campuses: one in Blantyre and another in Lilongwe, was asked to close its Blantyre campus to minimise administrative cost overheads (MIM Report, 1997).

Of interest in all these measures is the ideology that seemed to have influenced these reform measures. It is evident to me from the literature review that underlining all the above reforms was again the NPM principle of greater prominence placed on control in resource utilization (Hood, 1992). Public institutions that reflect this reform principle have adopted strategies aimed at efficient utilisation of available resources (Hood, 1992). Among the measures adopted in universities under this ideology are the restructuring of academic programmes of the nature described above. However, such restructuring has also been described as eroding the character of public higher education by moving universities away from being social institutions concerned with knowledge generation as an end in itself towards treating universities as an industry (Giroux,2002; Mok, 2002; Lynch, 2006). Besides, this sort of restructuring has also the potential of infringing on vested interests in academic freedom.

There was mixed reaction from the research participants regarding whether these reform measures were successful or not. For example, RP3 confirmed that at her college two

departments were successfully merged. RP5 claimed that at another college restructuring of departments took place as a result of these reforms. RP7 confirmed that the process of merging departments commenced at yet another college amidst a lot of resistance from faculty members. While some departmental mergers did occur, in other colleges where restructuring was recommended the original departmental structures have remained intact.

When asked as to why there were positive changes in their respective colleges both RP3 and RP5 attributed the success to the approach their college management had taken in mediating the reforms. The decision was left to faculties and academic departments and as such, it was easy for them to agree and implement the Council's decision. According to RP1, the Home Economics Department at Chancellor College refused to share its human resources with the Department of Nutrition at Bunda College; the Law Faculty at Chancellor College refused to move to Blantyre and Kamuzu College of Nursing refused to close its campus in Blantyre. RP1 attributed this development to 'stubbornness' on the part of some faculties and academic departments:

> the colleges felt too big to respect what their Council had told them they thought they knew better when in actual fact in as far as governance is concerned it should have been Council determining the priorities for the rest of the University to follow because Council has a larger picture of what it wants to achieve, that was not done.
>
> (RP1)

RP7 felt that mergers of departments were not successfully implemented at her college owing to the strong agency in academic hegemony that most faculty members exhibited. '…there is always as they say in governance, ethnic hedging, this is my territory, you can't move me around' (RP7). She further attributed the failure of departmental mergers to a lack of agency

for change management at the senior leadership level in the University. RP7 believed strongly that decisions such as these required University management to engage faculty on a face-to-face basis to explain things and respond to questions for clarification rather than expect to achieve success through memos. Referring to University management, RP7 stated that:

> When the University is bringing in a change, don't leave it to the Principal, otherwise people think, they now blame the Principal but you are the bosses right, so come down and explain, this policy… engage staff, they will ask you questions but in the end, they will be satisfied as long as the principle is good.

RP7 cited a process in her department that led to the successful creation of a new department. She said first it took long to have the department created because of the manner in which college management was approaching the issue. However, when a new Principal came in, he sat down and discussed the merits and demerits of the proposed creation of the new department with faculty members and this worked, indicating that change was possible after direct persuasion.

Council also agreed that deans should assume executive leadership positions. According to the MIM Report (1997) which informed the Council's decision, it was agreed that appointment of deans should cease from being done at faculty level. As explained in Chapter Five, at T1, the dean was elected by the faculty members from among the faculty members by themselves. It was agreed by the Council that this practice must change. Positions of deans, when they became vacant should be advertised and interested candidates undergo an interview to be conducted by the College's Staff Appointments' Committee, which was dominated by the executive rather than faculty members and chaired by the Principal of the

college. Recommendations from this committee were to be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor who would make such an appointment. The appointment was to be on performance related four-year contract basis, renewable based on satisfactory performance to be determined by the Vice-Chancellor on the recommendation of the College Principal (MIM Report, 1997). The appointment was to be accompanied by an 'appropriate remuneration package'.

This reform measure is closely aligned to NPM principles which advocate that public universities just like any public organizations can be run in the same way as private sector organizations are run based on market imperatives including borrowing terms applicable in industry such as 'executive' (Mok, 2002; Lynch, 2006). But reforms of this nature have been criticized as contradicting the demands of the type of leadership the academy respects. In a study conducted by Harman (2002) regarding academics assuming managerial leadership roles, he established an observable pattern which indicated that many academics disliked the managerial roles which they had assumed because they were being done at the expense of their academic work. In fact, Harman (2002) observed that fewer publications were coming from academics in managerial positions when compared to those who were not. Furthermore, Harman (2002) observed that a social relations rift was emerging between academics who were serving in managerial positions and the rest of the faculty members, as the governance model shifted from a collegial one to a corporate one. Academic managers were being associated more with senior management than their colleagues and hence creating tensions in faculty and academic departments.

The decision to make deans executive received mixed reactions according to my Research participants. RP1 justified the Council's decision of making deans executive managers thus:

> I think the introduction of executive deans and executive heads of department is a must and it was a very good decision done in good faith and if it had been implemented I think could have improved the situation in the UNIMA. I am saying that because if the University of Malawi does not respect its procedures, system processes and so on it is largely because it has what I may call reluctant managers in the form of HoDs, in form of deans who do not want to take the difficult decisions that are expected of managers in an environment of financial austerity. You know when you have limited money thus the more reason we need to have managers who should be able to know what to say 'Yes' to and what to say 'No' to. But the majority of managers that are around in the University now do not have that kind of attitude…

RP7 justified the need to make deans executive by arguing that:

> I am for executive deanship, the reason why for executive deanship is that, the way things are now because we put each other in positions because of popularity context, the one who is popular, the one who will release us to do whatever we want, I can give an example that you find, I am Head of Department, a member of staff can go and teach at any University, can go wherever and I will have no idea, I don't think that's the way any institution should be run. So we should have at least a system where you know where your member of staff is, if they apply for holiday, that should be known and I thought the executive deanship or even headship brings that to the fore, people think they can go, get away with any, we are free range, can I say that! We are free range lecturers and I think it's only this University that has that kind of system…

Similar sentiments were also expressed by RP3 in support of executive deanship when she argued that:

> …currently in the University of Malawi people can vote for anybody into that leadership position not necessarily because the person is capable but they know that they will get what

> they want and in my own College what I have experienced over time is that many people want a weaker leader someone who will not caution them when they disappear on campus.

It is important to note here that the sentiments described above were shared by the research participants from both pools: policy formulators and policy implementers. To me the foregoing arguments, suggest that there is need in the UNIMA to have leaders at faculty and academic departmental level who have the leadership agency that exudes executive power. In the literature I consulted however, having a leader emerge from the peers is ideal. The selection of the dean in this perspective is on the basis of their academic credibility and the support for the dean is on the basis of him or her being the first among equals. The collegial governance assumes compatibility between the various structures, cultures and agents (Archer 1995). However, where there are incompatibilities, as seems to be the case in UNIMA, then the model of the dean being elected from within the peer group becomes problematic.

I noted from reviewing a memo that academic staff members from one of the constituent colleges had written to the Vice-Chancellor dated 11th December, 2012 (RD28) that such apprehension regarding making deans executive was gaining currency among union members in the University during what became known as 'the academic freedom fight' in 2012. During this period two of UNIMA's colleges were closed as a result of staff protests over one academic staff member who was summoned and questioned by the police over allegations that he had given an example in his class which was viewed by the 'authorities' to be a security threat to the country. The academic staff members protested and demanded an apology and a commitment from the then Head of State not to tamper with academic freedom. When this was not forthcoming staff members engaged themselves in a protracted

industrial action in the form of stopping teaching for over six months which greatly affected the academic calendar of the University.

The memo of 11th December, 2012 that emanated from the staff union after this event revealed that union members were opposed to making deans executive managers. In the memo the union members indicated that making deans executive would further undermine their academic freedom as the deans would cease to owe allegiance to the faculty and the academic project and instead owe allegiance to the appointing authority. Hence, they rejected this move strongly.

From a morphogenetic perspective, these variations in opinion regarding making deans executive reflect the directional guidance vested interests that agency provides in determining the course of events in an institution. According to Archer (2003:264), 'Frustration and gratification are therefore the basic affective responses to constraints and enablements'. Here, there was an attempt by the Council to change the structure of governance in the University by increasing the size of corporate agency through incorporating new members in the form of Executive Deans. It will be noted that the research participants who agreed with making deans executive viewed this move as a contingent compatibility to the existing structures of governance in the University as it offered an opportunity to increase the influential members of the corporate agency in the University. According to Archer (1995; 2003b), increasing the members of the corporate agency by reducing the size of primary agency can catalyse change. On the contrary, academic staff union members, including one of the research participants I interviewed, viewed executive deanship as a contingent incompatibility, an affront to academic freedom which is the vested interest of the majority of the academic staff members. Hence, this reform measure was vigorously fought and has not been implemented.

Based on the above findings it appears that the implementation of the Council's decisions to make deans executive has failed to materialise mainly because of strong agency in academic freedom exhibited by academic members of staff in the UNIMA. This is the scenario Bercher and Trowler (2001) described as 'territorial hegemony'.

One would be tempted to conclude here that the decision to make deans of faculty assume executive powers was premised on the social realist belief that agency is a catalyst for change management. This reform measure, as can be observed, was intended to catalyse a corporate governance culture in faculties and academic departments. By placing executive authority in the hands of the dean it was expected that she/he would be more accountable to the executive management rather that faculty members. It is a reform measure that is in line with the NPM principle of hands-on professional management, which implies that if accountability is to be achieved, responsibility for action should be given to the one on top rather than having it diffused. This could explain why in UNIMA, this decision by the Council was not supported by the majority of the academic members of staff who were not in leadership positions.

However, according to the research participants both the merger of departments and making deans assume executive leaders failed to succeed as planned because of weak agency in change management at the senior leadership level in the University. For example, RP1; RP5 and RP8 argued that these reforms would have succeeded if the top leadership in the University had developed an implementation strategy. RP3 and RP7 felt that leadership at the Central Office failed to communicate effectively, hence the failure to implement these reforms. RP6 was categorical when he put the blame on the office of the Vice-Chancellors for failing to own the reform measures.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented my findings regarding how UNIMA actors responded to the constraining governance context they faced before 1997. I have described the reform measures that were agreed upon by the Council. I have argued that these governance reform measures, which had implications on agency, were intended to shape the governance structure and culture in the University at system, institutional and at faculty and academic departmental level in some manner desired by the corporate agency that introduced them. I have also demonstrated that the majority of these reform measures were influenced by the NPM ideology.

From these findings therefore, I argued that the reform measures were meant to infuse a corporate culture of governance in the University. I must stress though that from the Social Realist perspective guiding this research work, the infusion of new structures, ideas and changing the composition and roles of agents as done in UNIMA through the governance reforms does not always bring about the intended changes. There are bound to be some unintended/emergent outcomes. This is the case because structures and cultures have the tendency to behave independent of each other during the process of their interactions as mediated by agency. Emergent from such interactions are properties that sometimes are completely out of synchrony with the intentions of the corporate agents (Archer, 1995). Could this have happened in the UNIMA as well? This is the question I interrogate in Chapter Seven that follows.

Chapter 7
THE ELABORATION OF UNIMA GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS?

7.0 Introduction

In Chapter Five I concluded that the reforms in UNIMA were implemented in response to a financial crisis and a constraining governance context. The reforms were to be achieved ostensibly through the introduction of what I have established to be corporate governance practices under the auspices of the New Public Management ideologies. In Chapter Six I presented some of these reform measures that were proposed and demonstrated that they were intended to impact on structure, agency and culture in the University's governance context. I also described the reform measures that were eventually implemented and those that have not been implemented. As Archer (1995) has argued, structure and culture tend to exhibit relative autonomy in the manner in which they behave and this impacts on the projects of agency differently. While structures and culture can enable the realization of the projects of agents, in some respects structures and culture can also impinge on agency's intentions.

As noted in Chapter Five, the intention of the University Council in introducing governance reforms in 1997 was to change the University's governance structures and culture in order to attain efficiency and effectiveness in the University's governance. Archer (1995) theorised that unintended consequences would have occurred as well in pursuit of this change. This chapter is therefore aimed at locating whether there were any unintended practices (emergent governance practices) that emerged from the implementation of governance reforms in the University of Malawi and their enabling and constraining mechanisms.

The chapter is subdivided into three sections. Section 7.1 describes the emergent governance practice in the University period after the implementation of the governance reforms in the University. This section in a way is a continuation of the presentations regarding my findings at T2 – T3 of the University governance context started in Chapter Six. In section 7.2 I analyse the enablements and the constraints of governance practice in the period under review. In section 7.3 I present the overall context of governance practice in UNIMA at the time and space when this study was being carried out. I conclude this chapter by presenting my interpretation of the above findings and what it means in regard to the governance context in UNIMA in 2013 – that is the governance context at T4.

7.1 The emergent governance practices in UNIMA

As can be recalled from section 2.2.2 of Chapter Two, emergent properties are by definition 'supervenient' properties with irreducible causal powers (Corning, 2002). By irreducible it is meant that emergent properties are objects whose powers depend on their underlying bases and are autonomous and yet have irreducible causal powers which give them their novel ontological form - that is, features not previously observed in the system. This further means that while the emergent properties can be traced to their originating components, they have unique features and are out of synchrony with their originating bases.

In the context of this study the infusion of new governance structures and cultures in the University were intended to bring about some desired governance practices that would enable the University to attain its objective of improving efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery and hence increasing productivity through increased intake of students, for example. While this was the case, it is acknowledged here that there were other governance practices that have emerged in the University which were not the intentions of the reformers. These are

novel governance practices precipitated by the governance reforms introduced in 1997 but which are out of synchrony with the original intentions of the corporate agents who introduced the University governance reforms. I present them in sequence based on the levels of governance they were observed after the analysis of the data. However, it is the emergent governance practices at the enterprise level which I discuss in greater depth consistent with the objective of this study.

7.1.1 Governance at system level (Government machinery)

My findings have revealed that systematization at systems level of UNIMA governance has intensified after the implementation of governance reforms. As can be recalled from section 5.1 of Chapter Five, governance practices in the period before 1997 at systems level were characterised by the concentration of decision-making powers in the hands of a limited corporate agents. The profile of these corporate agents led to the characterisation of UNIMA in the interviews as being more of a Government department than an autonomous institution. As noted in Chapter Six, the reforms introduced at systems level were meant to ensure that decision-making at this level was streamlined through having a separate structure that would be responsible for supervising the University from a distance while allowing the University the freedom to carry out its mandated functions alone.

However, the results have not all been as intended. For example, the Ministry of Education has strengthened its oversight role in the University's governance and management affairs rather than facilitating the devolution of decision-making powers as intended. RD16, RD17, RD18 all indicate that the Ministry of Education continues to take an interest in the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor; has influence as to who is to be appointed to the UNIMA Council; directs the admission policy; directs matters to do with staff remunerations;

and directly intervenes in both student and staff disputes. For example, in 2010 when the UNIMA Council increased students' tuition fees for its undergraduate students, the Ministry of Education wrote to the Vice-Chancellor to suspend the decision. In the same year, the Ministry directed UNIMA to establish degree and technician courses in mining engineering. It also directed UNIMA to carry out a curriculum review of its Geology degree programme according to information in (RD18). More recently, in 2013 the Ministry of Education queried the poor examination results in the University and demanded a report.

More seriously, I have observed that the Department of Statutory Corporations, a Government department that oversees the affairs of all State owned companies in Malawi, had significant influence in the governance of the University. While the role of the Ministry of Education in the University governance can be understood, being the responsible Ministry for Higher Education in the country to which the University ought to report, it is surprising to note why the Department of Statutory Corporations has taken an interest in determining governance practices in the University when they do not appear anywhere in the enabling Act. I observed in RD16, RD17 and RD18 at the Central Office that between 2012 and 2013 the Department of Statutory Corporations had issued numerous circulars to the University directing it on what to do on a number of administrative matters.

For example, in one circular the department instructed the University not to allow its members of staff to accumulate leave days (RD17), effectively forcing all the University staff members to go for mandatory annual leave. All University staff members have a prescribed number of leave days they must take per year. However, because the University had a number of closures occasioned by both staff and students disputes, the academic calendar has not been stable. This has affected the time staff members can go on annual leave and resulted

in the accumulation of annual leave days. While the directive about forgoing such leave makes economic sense, the manner in which this was done and the corporate agency involved in making such decision is an issue here because the University has its governing council which should have been the one to take such decision.

Furthermore, another circular from the same department in RD17 outlines the procedures University staff members should follow when proceeding on external trips such as conferences and workshops. In yet another circular, RD18, the department is determining salary increase levels for University staff members. These decisions imposed on the University by the Department of Statutory Corporations are outside of its mandate as the University Act empowers the Council to make such decisions.

It is thus unsurprising that one of the Vice-Chancellors of the University between 2009 and 2013 openly criticised Government agents for interfering too much in the day to day governance and management affairs of the University in his speech at the 61st UNIMA graduation ceremony held on 20th November, 2013:

> Why do some Government departments give directives to public universities instead of giving advice and guidance through the Council? Is it possible that Government does not understand how the University is supposed to be managed, or Government simply chooses to cross the line as it wishes? Whatever reasons might be given by Government, their actions impact negatively on the operations of the University, because people start asking questions as to who is responsible for what. Such questions result in answers that bring about confusion in the University.

It can be recalled that similar sentiments were expressed by UNIMA's first Vice-Chancellor in 1978 (See section 5.2 of Chapter Five). Examining the period between 1978 when these sentiments were first made and 2013 when almost the same words are repeated by a Vice-Chancellor creates an impression that State control has further been enhanced in the governance context of UNIMA period after the reforms were implemented rather than being minimised by the reform measures. Graham (2005:19) has argued that: 'If Universities are institutions of consequence, they must expect Government interference; freedom from such interference means that they are of no consequence.' Meaning Government interference should be construed as normal. But the interference Graham (2005) referred to was not of the nature and degree described here. Graham (2005) was referring to positive interference where the government has an intention of steering the University to meet specific national objectives. It can be concluded therefore that much as the Government adopted some of the governance reform measures the University had proposed targeted at the macro level as discussed in Chapter Six, the consequence of such adoption on UNIMA governance so far has largely led to enhanced systemization at the top level of leadership in UNIMA governance contrary to what the MIM Report had intended should be achieved. That is to say, there has been systematic regeneration in the governance context of the University which is out of synchrony with the original intentions of the reformers. As can be recalled from Chapter Three, section 4.3.4 critics of the corporate model have argued that rather than limiting the role of the State in the governance of higher education institutions, corporate governance enhances it (Shore, 2010). This finding therefore agrees with similar findings reported in literature regarding what happens when properties of the corporate model of governance are introduced in a governance system.

Overall, the emergent UNIMA governance to date shows a high level of systematization characteristic of the state-centric model described in section 4.3.2 of Chapter Four. In this model, the State exerts great control over higher education systems through its education ministries (Clark, 1983; Neave & van Vught, 1994; George, 2006).

In addition, the recommendations the Council adopted regarding the Chancellor of UNIMA not being a Head of State has not been adhered to by Government as noted in section 6.1.1, implying that political interference in the University's governance remains. In the state-centric governance model, the Head of State is the Chancellor of the University or is responsible for the appointment of the University Vice-Chancellor and members of the University governing councils including its Chairperson (Saint, 2009). Such appointments, according to Aina (2009), pose serious challenges in the relationship between the State and higher education institutions and has been observed to have significant implications on University autonomy (Aina, 2009). This continues to be the case in UNIMA in 2013. This explains why in UNIMA, as shall be shown in section 7.1.2 below, there are complaints levelled at the institutional level of governance that it is not acting in consonance with the wave of change.

7.1.2 Governance at institutional and enterprise level

At the institutional level, there is continued inclination toward business as usual in the wake of the devolution of decision-making to colleges. While a lot of Central Office governance powers have been devolved to colleges, the UNIMA Act as an overarching governance structure has not been amended, implying that the infusion of corporate governance ideas emerging from the reforms that have so far been implemented are taking place amidst a situation of morphostasis in the structural domain of the University' institutional governance

level and this has had unintended consequences in the University's governance as shall be shown in the subsections that follow.

In addition, the research participants were in agreement that the Central Office continues to operate as if it has not devolved its decision-making powers. Emergent from this situation is, as RP4 observed, resentment from faculties and academic departments against Central Office to the extent that the relationship that is there is characterised by tension. RP4 further stated that every time there is a memo originating from the Central Office, staff members react angrily to it.

At enterprise level, some departments have seized the opportunity offered through devolution of decision-making to colleges to go ahead and implement decisions they feel fit even though the devolution in decision-making has not necessarily empowered them to go that far. For example, RP1 reported that at the Polytechnic, an academic department, using the new powers gained as a result of the devolution, introduced new allowances based on their own generated income for their staff members. However, since the University Act has not changed, faculties and academic departments are not empowered to take such decisions. This, based on the analysis done, has resulted in academic departments being on a collision course with the Council.

Data further revealed that much as UNIMA was one institution, operational practices differ in almost all academic departments at enterprise level, underscoring that there is morphogenesis of structure in faculties and departments. RP1 and RP8 attributed this scenario to the lack of a universal implementation plan (structure) for the reforms that were implemented. To me these however, according to the morphogenetic theory, are emergent governance practices

arising as unintended consequences of the reforms. It appears that the devolution of power from the centre to colleges did not mean that each unit should govern itself the way it felt fit. However, emergent from this are differing governance practices being experienced in the University. For example, RP4 informed me that at the Polytechnic, faculties started admitting dependents of members of staff into their undergraduate programmes free of charge, that is, they were not required to pay any tuition fees. The University's undergraduate admission is centralized. Therefore, the admission of staff dependents practiced by faculties at the Polytechnic was at variance with acceptable institutional practices and was unique to faculties at the Polytechnic because it was not reported elsewhere in the University. Interestingly, executive management responded positively to this development. The Central Office intervened by temporarily stopping the practice while pursuing with the Council to have the practice formalised and applied uniformly in the entire UNIMA system. This showed that although the Central Office held to the principle of a uniform administrative system, suggesting morphostasis, it was willing to propose change where and when cultural agency at institutional level found the reforms to be compatible. The pursuit of a uniform administrative system here suggests a reluctant morphogenesis. Archer (1995) has argued that where there is disjunction between structural morphostasis and cultural morphogenesis, differentiation is observed in the structural domain.

A close scrutiny of the system of job descriptions which came into effect in 2007, corroborated by some of the research participants I interviewed, showed that in addition to what heads of department were asked to be responsible for, some started mobilizing teaching resources through other income generating activities and departmental projects which was a departure from the expectation but, in my view, in a positive way. RP3 indicated that in her College devolution in decision-making enabled academic departments to help in broadening

the College's financial base. Academic departments were, through their own initiative winning research grants which resulted in financial in-flows into the College. Unlike at other colleges, where resources brought in this manner were personalized, at Kamuzu College of Nursing such resources were pooled together and managed by the College administration. As a result of this, the College managed to build new classrooms and expanded the cafeteria without relying on Government financing. The College had also acquired new vehicles. It would seem that a shared culture and strong agency in College management enabled the emergence of this outcome.

As a result of devolution, some heads of academic departments were cultivating a research and consultancy culture within their respective departments, a practice that was not envisaged by the reformers. Some departments were sourcing funds for postgraduate training of their junior colleagues on their own. These were activities that previously were centralized and performed by the University Research Coordinator through faculty deans. As Archer (1995) has argued, as more materials are provided at the disposal of primary agents, there is disruption in the social relations which creates cleavages as new corporate agents develop. What is happening among faculty staff members now is that as a result of devolution, talent has been unlocked in UNIMA to the extent that some active departments are able to generate a lot of financial resources. Faculty members therefore rather than looking to the Central Office for material support, have started looking inwards to their respective departments for financial help to attend external conference or short-term training (RP4). The implication of this is that more and more corporate agency is emerging thereby transforming the landscape of the University's governance.

Furthermore, in their revised job descriptions implemented by executive management, deans are required to provide leadership in departments that fall under their jurisdiction. However, according to RP4, sometimes a head is more powerful than the dean. The deans' office had no budget and this meant that every time the office of dean needed materials for the office such as stationery the dean had to get these either from the administration or from their respective heads of department. So, rather than strengthening faculties, it would appear that in some instances the reforms have weakened faculty leadership's role while strengthening that of the department.

Added to this, it was reported that the empowering of academic heads of departments has at times compromised standards as well. The objective of the reforms was to enhance 'efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery' which included teaching and learning. RP1 complained that with devolution, staff members being recruited now are not going through a rigorous selection process as was the case in the past when recruitment was centralised. It was also reported by RP1 that some staff members were being recruited on a patronage basis. It was difficult though to establish the authenticity of these claims during the study. But this might be an interesting subject for further research. If there is any truth to this assertion one may conclude that the quality of University education service delivery is now under greater threat than was the case before these governance reforms were initiated. What appears to emerge is that colleges are increasingly taking control of their destiny than before the reforms but possibly at the expense of senior leadership roles and to the detriment of quality.

What was equally interesting to discern from the data is how the morphogenesis of culture was occurring in colleges. RP4 and RP6, from two separate colleges, concurred that academic departments embraced governance practices which involved everybody in decision-

making. RP4 and RP6 informed me that for an academic department or faculty to make a decision, the head or dean has first to lobby all staff members in their respective faculty or department. The dean or head did not have to invite the staff members to their offices but they visited each of the staff members in their respective offices and presented their proposals to them. Thereafter, the matter was tabled before the whole academic departmental meeting or faculty. By this time, there was already buy-in by the majority of the academic staff members, such that, decision-making was quick and progressive. However, when one imagines the amount of time invested by the head in order to attain consensus in decision-making as described in the foregoing, it is equally debatable whether this is an efficient way of improving productivity.

Another notable cultural elaboration experienced by some respondents is that after the implementation of the reforms the strong sense of professional hierarchy previously experienced has severely been weakened within departments in favour of collegiality (RP6). In academic departments all staff members are treated professionally as equals and members of staff in the department call each other by first names a social norm that was not the case before (RP6). Furthermore, when it came to material resources at the disposal of the department, there was a lot of transparency in the manner in which these were managed and apportioned. Everybody knew what resources the department had. Staff members were free to go to the head of department's office and requisition any materials, be it stationery or teaching aids such as LCD projectors through the departmental secretary. As a result of this, RP6 informed me that he had experienced reduced abuse of resources in the department. The transparency generated a governance cultural transformation because everybody was careful as to how they use the departmental resources because they knew what is available. In his further submission, research participant RP6 admitted that because of this governance

approach, there is a sense of ownership in this particular department and nobody polices anybody.

In the governance reforms which were adopted, there was an agreement that there should not be duplication of degree programmes in the University. Contrary to this, I observed that there is a greater proliferation of degree programmes in the University now than existed before. Instead of faculties and departments complimenting one another as envisaged by the Council, it has been observed that there is now rigorous competition among faculties. For example, the Minutes of Senate (RD 12) revealed that Chancellor College and the Polytechnic had introduced similar postgraduate degree programmes in 2011. Attempts were made to harmonize both programmes so that the faculties concerned could jointly complement each other by letting students take some modules in one semester at a faculty in Chancellor College and the other modules at the Polytechnic. But Senate failed to resolve this problem. It was after protracted debate and revision of the curriculum that both programmes were eventually approved in 2012 as separate programmes to be offered by the two faculties. This suggests that there is still a lot of wastage in resource utilization contrary to what the reforms had envisioned and that in some cases the reforms have led to the kind of competitive culture expected in a corporate governance model. The above can be attributed to cultural elaboration that is espousing collegiality in UNIMA at enterprise level noted in the preceding section.

Related to the above, RP4 reported that one of the service departments (service department in the sense that it did not offer a degree programme on its own but offered some prerequisite courses that complemented other degree programmes in the college) at the Polytechnic which was earmarked to be integrated into another department responded to this move by

introducing its own degree programme. This scenario reinforces Archer's (2003) concept of reflexivity. This concept argues that agents have intelligence which allows them to make judgements. In constraining circumstances agents manifest behaviour that serves to extricate them from such situations. In this case when the department received the directive to dissolve and its functions to be absorbed by another department, they construed the directive as a contingent incompatibility. Contingent incompatibilities bring about the situational logic of opportunism (Archer, 1995). Rather than dissolving, the service department took this as an opportunity to become a full department offering its own degree programmes.

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that faculties and academic departments have acquired more autonomy as a result of the devolution of power from the centre to colleges. It is important to recall that this is happening at a time when Government's structures have intensified its oversight role over the University as noted in section 7.1.1. Because the Central government exercise its oversight roles through Central Office, what the findings reveal is that the more the systems level governance structures intensify their oversight role over the University, that is get elaborated, the more the governance context at institutional level (Central Office) appears to regenerate (morphostasis is observed). The above scenario is evidenced particularly when mirrored against the cultural elaboration being experienced in academic departments pressurising Central Office to transform. Emerging from the foregoing are growing disjunctions within the governance landscape of the University, a scenario that has been acknowledged by my research participants. For example, as noted earlier, the expectation of faculty is that the Central Office should not get involved in operational issues as these have been devolved to colleges. The Central Office should, going by the governance reforms adopted by the Council in 1997, only concern itself with policy direction. However, according to RP3 and RP5, the Central Office continues to take most decisions, including

some that were passed over to colleges, faculties and academic departments for implementation. According to RP5: 'the university was supposed to be strategic and looking at policy … the university has in fact gone worse I think … it's now thus looking at small small issues not looking at strategic issues … even much worse than before…'(RP5).

According to RP4, this scenario is creating mistrust between the Central Office and colleges. Most of the research participants were of the view that the relationship between Central Office on one hand and faculties and academic departments on the other is characterized by mistrust. It can be concluded therefore that in as far as the University' governance is concerned in the domain of the actual, there has been structural and cultural elaboration in the governance context at enterprise (college) level and a corresponding strong systematization at systems level with the Central Office, at institutional level of governance caught in the middle. This perhaps explains why Central Office's leadership role is being questioned. The end result is that there is a disjunction emergent from the structural and cultural elaboration in the governance context of colleges and the structural and cultural regeneration at institutional level (Central Office). Similarly, as noted before, there are also disjunctions between structural elaboration at systems levels with the structural and cultural regeneration at institutional level (Central Office) of governance. According to Archer (1995) in situations of this nature, where there are contradictions between internally and necessarily related institutional structures, there are potential problems: 'Structural contradictions represent obstructions to certain institutional operations and these translate themselves into problem-ridden situations for the agents associated with them' (Archer, 1995:230). This can explain why most respondents in this study have observed that there is tension in the University governance context, one that seems to threaten the unitary structure of UNIMA.

My interpretation of these findings is that the corporate governance model adopted by the University under the auspices of the New Public Management ideology has created contradictions in the University's governance context. However, NPM ideology promotes devolution of powers with a lot of discretionary powers vested in the corporate agency coupled by intense surveillance exercised by the political authorities. This is the scenario that is emerging in higher education landscape in Malawi. These findings thus validate the criticism levelled against NPM ideology in the context of other studies that have been done in other sectors (Christensen & Leagreid, 2002).

7.2 Views of stakeholders regarding governance reforms in UNIMA at T4

Finally, I sought the views of my research participants regarding the current governance in UNIMA that is at T4. In addressing this question, my main aim was to discern through their responses, the enabling and constraining mechanism for governance reforms in the University.

7.2.1 Agency in change management as a constraining and enabling mechanism of governance reforms at institutional level

In their responses, most of the research participants were of the view that there is now need for strong leadership at the Central Office level. There is clear indication that if only the University had strong agency in change management at the higher levels of the institution, most of the reform measures that the Council had adopted would have been implemented successfully because they were good for the institution according to the research participants. This implies that strong agency in change management would be an enabling mechanism for

governance reforms in UNIMA. Corollary, where it is lacking, it becomes a constraining mechanism.

7.2.2 Executive leadership as both a constraint and an enabling mechanism of governance reforms at enterprise level

The research respondents also went on to suggest that they want strong and empowered principals, registrars and finance officers at college level. They want principals and deans to exercise executive leadership and to use committee structures only as advisory bodies for taking decisions and not use them as decision-making bodies. This of course is in stark contrast to collegiality that is often associated at this level. However, it seems that the call for strong leadership at college management level is being advanced to wrestle power from the Central Office so that deans and heads of departments are equally empowered to take more responsibilities. This suggests a strong call for greater autonomy within the governance structures in colleges emerging from both academic and administrative managers in the University I interviewed. Evidence for this is my discovery that the majority of my research participants want the Central Office management to test faculty opinion at grass root level first before they introduce any future policy change. They also want to see that when the Central Office is introducing changes which affect faculties and academic departments, they should do so through Senate, implying, there is popular view in the University to see top leadership involving the majority of UNIMA stakeholders, particularly faculty in future decision-making processes. These respondents are not happy with just being consulted. They want to see faculty actively involved in the decision-making processes in the University. RP8, for example, stated that:

… when the University is bringing in a change, don't leave it to the Principal, otherwise people think, they now blame the Principal but you are the bosses right, so come down and explain … engage staff, they will ask you questions but in the end, they will be satisfied as long as the principle is good. That's the way because to be honest with you, there's been too much of administration, the executive management, is far removed from staff, that's what creates enmity, that's what creates fear and that's what creates the gap that has been created between us and you and it has now become an issue of them and us… when you come up with a new policy, you just write to say this is what will happen; no, no, no, come and engage staff and if you know what you are doing is right, the principle governing it is good and also equally good for the University, come and explain and once you explain, let them ask questions because that's the way to express [their opinions] and once you have explained, I think the main problem that we have in this University is communication, that would be the area that I would like us to improve.

Council is a policy maker, when polices have been made, we don't want you to give them to us through a memo, no, lets engage… consultations are important… communication we say is a two way process, we have issues as staff which needs to go up …our governors …have issues….I think face to face communication is the best, written communication is good for record purposes but by the time you write you would have discussed with us and we would have known … that's the kind of communication I am talking about… I am sure if we start engaging with each other, we start consulting with each other on matters, I am sure you would come up with a good University.

According to RP6, ' ...every employee should feel wanted… they should feel that they own the University… people are very knowledgeable, so when you have a leader, the leader does not necessarily mean they are experts in everything…'

Strong leadership which is being favoured at college level is aligned to strong agency in change management, as noted before. It can be concluded therefore that strong and empowered leadership at all levels of governance in UNIMA can enable governance reforms. This implies that its absence, which was the case in UNIMA, is a constraining mechanism of governance reforms.

7.3 UNIMA governance context at T4

At this stage I can claim that the UNIMA governance context at T4 (2013) is one that favours strong agency in change management among the leadership of the University at institutional level. It also favours executive leadership being exercised at disciplinary level of governance. The study has further revealed that the majority of the stakeholders in UNIMA would like to see executive leadership practiced at college level primarily when it comes to administrative functions. However, when it comes to matters in the academe there is an inclination towards a governance culture that embraces shared governance.

As can be recalled from section 4.3.5 of Chapter Four, shared governance is a system of governance where *de jure* of either governing body or academic body is seldom exercised and instead a sense of common purpose is nurtured (Shattock, 2002; Dearlove, 2002). UNIMA stakeholders do not want one person to arbitrarily make important academic decisions absent of the advice of key constituents. They also do not want decision-making in UNIMA as regard academic matters to be simply a function of making decisions by consensus through committees but that various stakeholders should participate in the process. In summary, UNIMA stakeholders want academic members of staff to be given primary responsibility over decision-making in academic matters. This augments observations made by the research participants as noted in Chapter Six who viewed executive deanship as a contingent incompatibility, an affront to academic freedom which

is the vested interest of the majority of the academic staff members. There is thus notable agency in academic freedom being exhibited by academic members of staff when it comes to tampering with academic matters. Thereby confirming that agency in academic freedom is a constraining mechanism on such reforms in academic departments and programmes.

The overall picture that is emerging in the University governance at T4 is that much as the governance reforms in the University has pushed for adoption of the corporate model of governance practices, the emergent governance practice in the domain of the real is one that exhibits a combination of properties of corporate governance model with properties of the collegial model of governance.

7.4 Conclusion

In the first part of this Chapter I presented my findings regarding emergent governance practices in the University period after the implementation of the governance reforms. I demonstrated that there has been an elaboration in governance culture and practices at systems (Government oversight) level and enterprise (college) level. It is at institutional level, where Central Office operates, where the study has revealed there is greater morphostasis – regeneration in governance practices owing mainly to the fact that the University Act has not been amended in line with the reform measures. This scenario is thus generating disjuncture in overall governance context in UNIMA. The second part of this Chapter presented the results of my analysis of what enabled and constrained the University governance practice in the period under review particularly at enterprise level. It established that agency in change management and executive leadership among the University senior leaders are the precursor to governance reforms in UNIMA. Both agency in change management and executive leadership are thus identified as constraining and enabling

mechanisms for institutional governance reforms in UNIMA. Similarly it has also be shown that agency in academic freedom among academic members of staff is the main constraining mechanism for reforms in academic programmes. In the third part of the Chapter I presented the overall context of governance in UNIMA in 2013 – that is the governance context at T4 and concluded that the UNIMA governance in 2013 is one that combines elements of both corporate and collegial model of governance practices.

Chapter 8
CONCLUSION

8.0 Introduction

I set out in this study to investigate the University of Malawi's (UNIMA) experiences with governance reforms after realizing that no comprehensive study had been conducted ever since UNIMA embarked on the reforms from 1997 to 2013. My intention for undertaking the study was to examine the emergent governance practices in UNIMA and the properties enabling or constraining governance reforms. I used Bhaskar's Critical Realist Theory to lead me to the essence of the reforms and the mechanisms driving change in UNIMA governance practice. I also employed Archer's Social Realist Theory, which enabled me to focus my attention in the study on the interplay of structures, culture and agency in the higher education governance. The investigation led to key findings which I summarize in section 8.1 that follow. There are also some lessons that policy makers in the higher education sector in Malawi might want to learn from this study which I summarize in section 8.2. Equally important to note is that this study is aimed at making a contribution to the higher education field of study and I demonstrate in section 8.3 the ways in which I believe the study has added to this field. The use of judgmental rationality, discussed in section 3.6 of Chapter Three, under ethical consideration entailed that I attempt to ensure that this study is as robust and unbiased as possible. However, in any study of human behaviour, there are always some limitations and in section 8.4 I summarize these in the context of this study.

8.1 Summary of key findings

The key research question this study sought to answer was: What are the emergent governance practices in UNIMA arising from the implementation from 1997 to 2013 of

governance reforms and what has enabled or constrained them? To address this question I investigated the objectives of the reforms in the governance of UNIMA. Since I had employed Critical Realism in my study, this led me to first answer the following question: 'What was the situation of University governance context in 1995 for the above governance reforms to be possible?' In answering this research question I was able to locate the ontological premise of the reforms from the realm of the 'experienced'. The study revealed that governance reforms in UNIMA were as a result of the interplay of various mechanisms in both internal and external structural and cultural domains of governance. Internally, the governance context period before the reforms were introduced exhibited a state-centric model. The structures, culture and some aspects of agency of governance in UNIMA were impeding the growth and development of the University. The context was constraining to the full realization of the objectives of UNIMA, which were teaching, research and outreach. This context was primarily as a result of the external influence of the State organs on the University styled on the one-party system of governance that prevailed in the country from independence in 1964 to early 1990s. The national political influence spread throughout the UNIMA governance context and impeded on academic freedom in the University. The governance context therefore was frustrating to most of the stakeholders in UNIMA. Furthermore, UNIMA relied heavily on Government funding. The external global forces emerging mainly from globalization and its attendant ideologies of neo-liberalism and NPM, coupled with coercive policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, forced the Government of Malawi to introduce public sector reforms which had strong dosages of fiscal discipline. The end result was reduction in government funding to public sector institutions in Malawi including UNIMA. This scenario greatly undermined the capacity of the University to deliver. It is the reduction in funding that triggered the move to introduce governance reforms in UNIMA. The frustrating governance context period before

the reforms is one that enabled the reforms' implementation. The study revealed that the reforms were therefore introduced to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness of the institution with the main aim of increasing students' intake.

It is important to stress from the literature search that the causal mechanisms to changes that have been identified from the foregoing in UNIMA governance are not very different from what has been experienced elsewhere. The only difference is the approach taken in responding to these causal mechanisms and the emergent consequences. This can be attributed to the structural and cultural variations different contexts offer and how they are acted upon by key agents in a particular space and time.

I then examined the specific reform measures that were introduced in UNIMA governance practices through the implementation of the MIM recommendations between 1997 and 2013 in the realm of the 'actual' using the morphogenic theory. These were the constitutive properties of the governance reforms. I discovered that the reforms took the form of infusing a corporate governance model in UNIMA and they were strongly underpinned by NPM principles. They involved introducing governance structures at systems level of education hierarchy in Malawi to regulate Government and the University relations and facilitate greater autonomy in decision-making in the University. At institutional and enterprise levels of the UNIMA governance, the reforms pushed for decentralization in the management of the University; introduction of a business culture in the management practices in the University through mechanisms of outsourcing of non-core business of the University, retrenchment of superfluous non-academic staff members, introduction of private service providers in the delivery of University services such as catering, maintenance and security; introduction of measures aimed at cost containment and diversification in the revenue base of the

University; restructuring of academic programmes and departments and creating executive leadership positions within the University.

Most of the reform measures that were specific to improving the governance structures and culture at the systems level were implemented. However these reforms rather than enhancing UNIMA autonomy have on the contrary intensified the systematization of UNIMA governance practices at that level. The State's role has strengthened rather than being weakened, though it has also become more transparent and thereby potentially more open to critique. The Government of Malawi, especially the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, continues to exercise a lot of influence in the governance of UNIMA despite the successful implementation of the reforms at systems level. The role of the Government in the management of UNIMA is evident mainly through the directives emanating from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Department of Statutory Corporations.

The administrative reforms that were introduced at the enterprise level of governance were well received fundamentally because they were construed as emancipatory by UNIMA stakeholders who had gone through a frustrating governance period at T1 (period before the reforms were introduced). The reform measures that focused on academic practices at enterprise level received mixed reactions. Some were implemented but the majority of them were resisted. The resistance emerged mainly because such reforms were construed by UNIMA academics as impinging on cultural practices of academic freedom. The other causal mechanism that were identified to the unsuccessful implementation of academic reforms at disciplinary level were due the fact that the enabling UNIMA Act has not been revised, lack of agency for change management and weak leadership among top leaders in the University.

The study has revealed the conspicuous disjunction in the governance practice in UNIMA governance context emergent from the implementation of the reforms. At the enterprise (college) level of governance, there is cultural and structural transformation of administrative practices leading to the elaboration in the governance culture and practices in UNIMA colleges. This is evidenced by growing resentment from faculties and academic departments targeted towards Central Office to the extent that the ensuing relationship is characterised by tension. It has been noted too that some departments are exercising greater autonomy in decision-making than envisaged. Equally, operational practices differ in almost all academic departments.

There is also strong manifestation of collegial governance practices when it comes to academic practices. For example, restructuring of some academic departments and programmes has failed to take place; there is duplication of programmes and faculty opinion is in favour of shared governance. This is however under pressure from the institutional leadership which is tempered by strong government surveillance at systems level. The Central Office is caught in the middle of having to mediate a disjunction between cultural morphogenesis and structural morphostasis at college level and the elaboration of governance practices at the systems level. The 'wave' emerging from the morphogenesis of structures and culture in both direction appears however to be very forceful signalling disintegration of the unitary structure of the UNIMA. If the UNIMA Act is amended to conform to the changes already being experienced, there is little chance that UNIMA Central Office will defend its current position. Gradually, the role of Central Office might not be necessary and new Universities emerge from the current colleges in UNIMA, something that was not intended by these reforms.

8.2 Points for further reflection on the relationship between Government and Higher Education institutions in Malawi

There are important lessons which this study reveals as regards the future relationship between the higher education sector and the Government, which policy makers in Malawi might wish to reflect upon. This is the fact that it is not business as usual on the part of Government in the manner in which it relates with the University. There is need for the Government to take cognisance of the changes that are taking place in UNIMA governance and redefine its relationship with the institution to avoid future conflict and foster higher education growth. This means that the Government should begin to exercise its oversight roles through clearly defined mechanisms of control such as the newly established National Council for Higher Education and that such oversight role should be subject to thorough discussion by various stakeholders. The Government might wish to utilise the emergence of the public regulatory bodies such as Council for Higher Education, to steer higher education in the direction it wants to take by introducing control mechanisms such as requiring universities to submit annual returns on a number of important aspects to the national development such as:- students: staff ratios, students' enrolments, students' throughput, research outputs (number of publications emanating from academics), and so on, rather than adhering to ad hoc control mechanisms. This would make the relationship even more transparent and the limits of power of both the State and the University open to discussion. The Council for Higher Education could collect such key information which would feed into Government's on-going development programme planning. In this way, the Council for Higher Education would safeguard the Universities' accountability to the public.

On the part of the UNIMA, it is important for the corporate agency to reflect seriously on the compelling mechanisms emergent from global and internal economic and political

imperatives in the governance of the institution and respond to them proactively. Equally, corporate agency, particularly the UNIMA Council should not underestimate the growing resentment against Central Office emerging from colleges because it signals impending major shifts in the governance of the institution. It is also important that corporate agency are sensitised to the interplay of structure, culture and agency and the impact of the emergent properties of such interplay in the governance context of the University. The findings of this study can offer some insights in this regard. This is one way in which pre-emptive measures can be enabled so as to save the University from disintegrating. It is also important for the Council to ensure that in the case of future governance reforms in the University, there must be strong leaders with the drive to implement change. They should also receive proper orientation in change management.

8.3 Contributions of this research to knowledge in the field of higher education governance

This research contributes to the field of higher education studies. It first adds to the literature of the under-researched issues in higher education governance in Africa by contributing an empirical study to higher education governance reforms from the perspective of a little researched country, Malawi. The study has demonstrated that reforms emerge as a result of the complex interplay of structure, culture and agency and so, while it is possible to trace commonalities across contexts, it is also possible to trace how different contexts lead to different reform measures.

Secondly, the study reveals how national and even institutional structures, cultures and agents can be enabled and constrained by international forces such as globalization, NPM and the economic philosophies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The study has shown that the move toward greater institutional efficiency through the application of

NPM ideologies when intersected with various internal structural, cultural and agential mechanisms produces a governance context which is characterized by tension in the various spheres of decision-making influences and this has the potential to even threaten the survival of the institution as a unitary structure.

Thirdly, this study has demonstrated that issues of autonomy and accountability underpin the governance context in higher education. It has also shown closer links that exist between higher education institutional governance and political governance at national level. It has demonstrated that events in the national politics in the country can be an important mechanism enabling and constraining higher education governance.

Fourthly, the study has revealed that the emergence of the governance model at T4 in UNIMA is a significant change in higher education governance practices from the state-centric model at T1. There has been change towards elements of the corporate model of governance, alongside some strongly defended aspects of collegial governance, particularly at departmental level. These shifting governance contexts were enabled by both internal and external interplay in the governance structures, cultures and of agency over a period of time.

Fifth, the study broadens the application of Bhaskar's Critical Realist Theory. It has been applied successfully in this study as an under labourer in identifying the essence of higher education governance and the mechanisms driving change in governance practice from the perspective of Malawi. The study also extends Archer's Social Realist Theory as it has been used in this research study to identify the interplay of structures, culture and agency in the higher education governance and the enabling and constraining mechanisms underpinning higher education governance reforms. The theory furthermore enabled me to account for the

morphogenesis/morphostasis that has occurred in UNIMA governance context in 2013. The results of this study have therefore established that there is a symmetrical necessary link between my research question, Critical Realism the Social Realist Theory, thereby, rendering these theories as useful applicable theories to the understanding of organizational change.

Finally, the study has identified leadership and concern for change management in corporate agency and strong agency for academic freedom as the underlying mechanisms enabling or constraining change in higher education governance practices. In this respect, this study further affirms Critical Realism as a research approach that helps a researcher to move beyond documenting multiple experience of a phenomenon to the tentative identification of the mechanisms constraining and enabling its emergence.

8.4 Limitations of the study

Because of the long time it took from the time Government reforms were introduced in UNIMA to the period the reforms were implemented and eventually studied, it is possible that a lot may have happened in UNIMA governance which this study was not able to capture. While the study included analysis of a number of documents, it also relied on the views of those who had experienced shifts in governance from T1 to T4 and who were involved in the MIM reform process in one way or another. These participants shared their recall of events in an open and interested manner, but recall is always partial and so their retelling of the past is also incomplete and potentially biased.

Besides, the perspective of the higher education governance reforms reported in this thesis is from a particular set of specific theoretical lenses: the Critical Realism and Social Realist lenses. It is possible that if the same study was undertaken using a different theoretical perspective the findings would have been different.

8.5 Future research agenda in UNIMA governance reforms

Based on these findings it would be interesting if another study was undertaken in a country within the continent of Africa using the same theoretical lenses of Critical Realism and Social Realist theories to see whether it shall identify similar mechanisms as responsible for the emergence of University reforms as well their enabling and constraining properties. Furthermore, it might be necessary also to carry out research to find out whether the above reforms led the University to attain the efficiency and effectiveness the corporate agents envisaged in 1997 and whether indeed students' numbers have increased in UNIMA as a result. Such a study in my view would complement the findings of this study. Equally, it would be interesting to investigate the consequences of retrenching the UNIMA employees mindful that such exercise has had negative human consequences elsewhere (Balfour and Grubbs, 2000; Lerner, 2008). Furthermore, a scientific investigation might have to be carried out in the near future in the event that one or two colleges in UNIMA has generated into a separate University just to appreciate whether the mechanisms identified in this study play a role in such a transition.

8.6 Conclusion

It is important to stress that higher education is in a state of flux, the role being ascribed to it in this era of the knowledge economy and globalisation is shifting and the demands being placed on Universities are numerous. Universities in Africa after years of poor funding and strong centralised governance are trying to establish appropriate governance models befitting the situations they are find in. Studies into these governance models are crucial for policy makers, governors, managers and researchers in higher education to understand the state and

the direction of higher education governance, nationally, regionally and indeed globally. By adding a national dimension following the tracking of the governance models of one University in Malawi, I believe that this study has added to the understandings of how change in the governance of higher education is triggered and how intended and unintended consequences emerge from such change. If the higher education sector is to continue to contribute to better opportunities for the citizens of our countries, we need to take careful cognizance of the structures, cultures and agency constructing the governance of our Universities as this study has done.

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Appendix : Interview schedules

A. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR POLICY MAKERS (VC, AND OTHERS)

Introduction

1. Could you give a background to the consultancy that MIM undertook in 2005?
    a) What were the reasons for the consultancy?
    b) Who decided that it should take place?
    c) Were other stakeholders in the University involved in the decision?
    d) Why were others not involved? Why was it important to involve those stakeholders?

2. What role did you play in the decision about the consultancy?

Objectives and kinds of reforms proposed

3. Following the consultancy, MIM proposed some reforms pertaining to governance in UNIMA.
    a) What are these reforms?
    b) Why or what were the justifications for such reforms?
    c) Which of these reforms were justified from your perspective as a policy maker?

Kinds of reforms implemented

4. Which of the proposed governance reforms were implemented during your time?
5. Which ones have been implemented in subsequent years?

6. Do you recall any governance reforms which MIM recommended but have not yet been implemented? What do you think are the reasons for this?

Emergent practices on implemented reforms

7. For the reforms that have been implemented in this stated period, what have been your experiences in terms of:
   a) Acceptance by the UNIMA concerned stakeholders such as Deans, Heads of Department?
   b) Actual practices of the concerned stakeholders

8. Can you give me some examples of success stories of implementation of the governance reforms?

9. In your opinion what factors contributed to this success?

Constraints to implementation of reforms

10. What challenges have been experienced in the implementation of the reforms in the Colleges?
11. How have these been mitigated?

Suggestions for improvement

12. What suggestions do you have to improve the implementation of the reforms that are already operational?
13. If you were to recommend governance reforms today which areas would you suggest should be improved?

B INTERVIEW SCHEDULE TO REFORM IMPLEMENTERS (DEANS OF FACULTY, HEADS OF DEPARTMENT)

Introduction

1. Do you know anything about the MIM Report?
   - probe for what it is about?
   - What are the main things you know about it?
   - How was it disseminated to you?)
2. What role did you play in the decision about the consultancy?
3. What role did you play in the implementation of UNIMA governance reforms?

Objectives and kinds of reforms proposed

4. Following the consultancy, MIM proposed some reforms pertaining to governance in UNIMA.
   a. Which of these proposed reforms do you know?
   b. Why or what were the justifications for such reforms?
   c. Which of these reforms were justified from your perspective as a Dean, HoD etc?

Kinds of reforms implemented

5. Which of the proposed governance reforms have been implemented over the years?
6. Do you know of any governance reforms which the UNIMA Council adopted but have not yet been implemented? What do you think are the reasons for this?

Emergent practices on implemented reforms

7. For the reforms that have been implemented in the stated period,
   a) Which ones were you involved in its implementation?
   b) How were they disseminated to you?
   c) What roles did you play?
   d) How did you feel about doing things in the way suggested by the reforms?

8. Can you give me some examples of success stories of implementation of UNIMA governance reforms where you were involved?

9. In your opinion what factors contributed to this success?

Constraints to implementation of reforms

10. What challenges did you experience in the implementation of the reforms as HoD/ Dean
11. How were these been mitigated during your tenure of office?
12. What challenges are still being experienced to date?

Suggestions for improvement

13. What suggestions do you have to improve the implementation of the reforms that are already operational?
14. If you were to recommend governance reforms today which areas would you suggest for improvement?