



Historical amnesia: A study into the causes of the disconnection between communities and their rock art sites at Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the award of the degree of Masters of Science (Rock Art Studies), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This work has not been submitted before for any examination or degree in any other University.

(Chrissy Chimodzi Chiumia)

_____ day of _____, 2012

ACRONYMS

CCAP	=	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
DC	=	District Commissioner
ICCROM	=	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOMOS	=	International Council on Monuments and Sites
NGO	=	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMMZ	=	National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe
UNESCO	=	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHC	=	World Heritage Centre

DEDICATION

To my family for their unconditional love and support

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I would like to express my sincere thanks to the following people without whom this study would not be successful. First and foremost I would like sincerely to thank my mentor and supervisor, Professor Benjamin Smith for the kind of support and encouragement I got from him. Without him this thesis would not have been the same. I also owe the Malawi Government profound gratitude for granting me the scholarship and permission to complete my studies at Witwatersrand University. In particular, I would like to thank my colleagues from the Department of Culture for the support they provided during my field work and studies.

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Above all glory and honour be to the Most High God for His love and kindness.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the history by which the local communities became separated from their ancestral heritage at Chongoni World Heritage Site in Malawi and then uses this knowledge to improve the management and conservation of rock art sites in the area. It demonstrates how various forces of the distant and immediate past came into play and systematically disconnected the Chewa communities around Chongoni area from their ancestral rock shelters once used by scores of generations for many important functions such as rock painting, rainmaking ceremonies and boys and girls initiation rituals. It shows that the separation of these communities from their heritage happened gradually in various episodes spread over the past 150 years. The key factors that directly or indirectly led to the separation included the early conquest of the Chewa communities by the Ngoni and other groups; conflicts with early Christian missionaries; heavy handed policies of the British colonial government; social and political failures of the post-independent state; the rise of multiparty politics, governance and human freedoms and others. Using local evidence, I build a case for each of the mentioned factors and shows how this community is still in danger of not only being completely separated from their ancestral heritage but also losing the remaining strands of their unique traditions. The study concludes by making recommendations for instituting participatory approaches in the management and conservation of Chongoni World Heritage Site.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Synopsis of the study

This study seeks to investigate the causes that led to the disconnection between the Chewa people and their rock art heritage in Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site in Dedza District of central Malawi. This investigation is critical in that it will provide the basis for the future management of the site which is currently in danger of being destroyed. The vandalism of the site, which contains numerous historical rock art sites linked to the ancient Chewa people, tends to point towards a loss of conceptual and physical connection between the current inhabitants around the site and their cultural heritage. We, therefore, need to understand why and how this disconnection occurred in order to enhance their roles in the management of this World Heritage Site.

1.2 Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site

Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site is located within Chongoni Forest Reserve in Dedza District of central Malawi. The forest reserve is characterized by numerous gneiss hills, rock outcrops, overhangs and shelters containing evidence of early occupation. The most outstanding features within the reserve are the Chongoni hills where the Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site is located. The site is approximately ten kilometres to the north east of Dedza Township. This site contains a large number of important ancient rock art sanctuaries that form the subject of subsequent discussions.

Chongoni and the surrounding hills were declared a forest reserve in 1924 by the British colonial government in order to protect the indigenous tree species and also to preserve land for the introduction of exotic soft woods for the timber industry. At that time there were over 40 villages within the reserve. The forest boundaries were later revised to exclude the villages. The management of Chongoni paintings, therefore, fell under by the Department of Forestry whose main mandate was to protect trees.

The paintings of Chongoni were declared a World Heritage Site in 2006 under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) criteria 2 (vi) and 24a (iii). Although Chongoni rock art area was the second site in Malawi to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, it is the first and currently the only cultural heritage site on the list. The first site to be inscribed on this list was Lake Malawi National Park, a natural heritage site, which is located in Mangochi District and was declared a World Heritage Site in 1984. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the heritage managers in Malawi to ensure that the Chongoni paintings are properly protected and preserved so that the new World Heritage Site acts as a catalyst for instilling national pride in the people of Malawi and more especially the Chewa people who are direct descendants of the authors of the paintings.

1.3 Rationale of the research

My interest in this study began in 1999 during a training course in Mombasa, Kenya on Conservation and management of immovable cultural heritage which was organized by Africa 2009. Africa 2009 was a joint programme introduced by cultural heritage organisations, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre (WHC) and CRATerra-EAG. The purpose of the programme was to build capacity of African cultural heritage professional to better manage and conserve immovable cultural heritage. A group of heritage professionals from sub-Saharan Africa attended this course. Various speakers talked about community participation and how it leads to better management of heritage sites, especially if the communities have direct ties to the sites. Several participants shared their experiences on how countries work with their local communities in the management of heritage resources. This changed my perception of heritage management concepts in Malawi where most heritage professionals still do not involve local communities in conservation and protection of cultural heritage.

Upon my return to Malawi we put the new ideas to the test by developing our own local list of important heritage resources and examining their historical association with

adjacent local communities. We noted that certain Chewa communities are still living around particular rock paintings sites (which were made by their ancestors) in settlements long associated with these ancient paintings. A number of researchers (Lindgren & Schoffeleers 1978; Anati 1986; Juwayeyi & Phiri 1992; Smith 1995) have shown that the white paintings of Chongoni were made by the Chewa Bantu-speakers. The paintings depict beliefs and rituals that are still practised by the present day Chewa men and women living in the area. This, therefore, suggests that both Chewa men and women have special ties to the rock art sites.

The Department of Antiquities was at the same time conducting research on the rock art paintings of Chongoni Hills. This was in preparation for a nomination dossier that the department intended to submit to the World Heritage Committee for the paintings to be declared a World Heritage Site. As part of the research team, we took this opportunity to talk to the Chewa people and find out what values they still hold concerning the site or indeed if they had any specific concerns about the paintings. We discovered that even though their beliefs and rituals are depicted in the rock paintings, these Chewa communities did not have any conscious attachment to the paintings other than the fact that they are in their area. They seemed to have completely lost any sense of connection to these sites.

The rock art of Chongoni has been studied by a number of researchers (Clark 1959a; Lindgren & Schoffeleers 1978; Juwayeyi & Phiri 1992; Smith 1995, 2001; Zubieta 2006, 2009). Around 1950s, several rock art sites, including Mphunzi, Chentcherere, Chigwenembe, Nsana wa Ng'ombe and Diwa were publicised. This was followed in 1978 by what we can consider as the first major publication dealing with Malawian rock art (Lindgren & Schoffeleers, 1978). Since then many researchers became interested in studying rock art of Malawi and it was from their studies that more information about authorship and meaning of the rock paintings in this was derived. Although the researchers' primary interests were description, authorship and meaning, they could also clearly note that the paintings were in danger of being destroyed and called for immediate management intervention of the sites (Anati 1986; Smith 1995; Zubieta 2006).

At that time it seemed apparent that the Chewa communities themselves were largely responsible for the destruction of the sites but no efforts were made to investigate why the communities were damaging their own heritage sites, some of which were used as recently as the twentieth century. Evidence for the late date of some of the art comes from Namzeze Rock shelter in the Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site where Chewa men painted a *Nyau* image of a car in the 1920s (Lindgren & Schoffeleers, 1978; Smith, 2001). In neighbouring Zambia, Chewa women painted a spread-eagled design into a rock at a site in the 1950s (Chaplin, 1960). Leslie Zubieta (2006) also found out that women continued to use similar spread eagled designs at Chentcherere rock shelter in Chongoni as recently as the 1960s. Zubieta (*ibid*) also participated in a secret *chinamwali* and the elders took her to Chentcherere rock art shelter where they showed her the meanings of some of the images depicted there. There is an image of a large figure holding a smaller one. The elders told Zubieta that the images represent the practice of taking a young initiate to the river to teach her how to clean herself during menstruation. This signifies the importance of these paintings to the Chewa society.

Today both Chentcherere and Namzeze are being destroyed by fire, graffiti and touching by the same local community who used these sites for ritual practice just a few decades ago. Important questions can now be asked as to what happened and what caused this rapid disconnection between the people and their heritage.

1.4 Aim and objectives of the research

The aim of this study is to understand the origins and processes that led to a disconnection between communities and their heritage so as to explore future possibilities for better management of the World Heritage Site.

Specifically, I intend:

- a. To provide a contextual framework that defines the study area in terms of its geography, ethnography, history and management;

- b. To define the conceptual framework of the study that focuses on theory, empirical research and case studies showing how societies were disconnected from their heritage sites within Sub-Saharan Africa and the ensuing consequences;
- c. To identify the historical and political processes over the last 150 years that have disconnected the communities around Chongoni from their rock art heritage site; and
- d. Finally, to make recommendations for the improvement of management and conservation of the World Heritage Site based on the information generated by the study.

1.5 Research methodology

Several methods were used to understand the history by which the communities of Chongoni were separated from their heritage sites. The following methods were used to collect and analyse data for synthesis of this report:

- a. The study involved a comprehensive review of key theories, empirical research and case studies surrounding the subject matter in order to understand social and political processes that cause the alienation of communities from their cultural heritage. The review focused on studies and general literature from the region and also focused on Chongoni World Heritage Site. Logical conclusions were drawn from the conceptual framework about the specific areas that require new research within the on-going academic debate on heritage resources. This helped to clarify key research questions for this study in particular;
- b. Relevant case studies from Zimbabwe, South Africa and Kenya were also reviewed to draw lessons and analogies that are applicable to this study;
- c. A wide range of stakeholders were interviewed to provide information on various aspects of the study. Amongst the stakeholders interviewed were relevant government officials, village chiefs, elders of the *Nyau* and *chinamwali* institutions, other local people in and around Chongoni area and elders from religious institutions which included Christian churches and Islamic institutions. Appropriate statistical methods were used to sample interview subjects from the

- Chongoni area. Leaders were purposively sampled to ensure that persons with relevant information were selected. Sampling of other local subjects followed a 2-stage cluster sampling technique. The first stage involved random sampling of villages from among 40 villages in Chongoni settlement areas. The second stage involved sampling of subjects from each village. The subjects were also randomly selected in each village. The main data collection instruments included checklists, questionnaires, camera and digital recorder. In total, 120 people were interviewed.
- d. Data collected in the field was analyzed using statistical summaries and triangulation techniques. Its interpretation will be based on the proposed theoretical framework and following the standard procedures applicable to the fields of rock art and heritage management.

1.6 Chapter outline

This study comprises seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the study. Chapter two describes the contextual background of the area with special focus on geography, environment, and description of rock art sites and finally management of the heritage area. Chapter three presents history and archaeology of the Chongoni area. Chapter four provides conceptual framework of the study and focuses on theory, empirical research and case studies. It also raises key research questions of the study. Chapter five presents the finding of the study focusing on the causes of disconnection between the Chewa people and their rock art heritage sites in Chongoni, Dedza. In chapter six I summarise the findings and make recommendations for improved management in the area. Lessons are drawn from a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa to provide solutions to heritage management problems. Then the study is concluded in chapter seven.

CHAPTER TWO: CHONGONI ROCK ART HERITAGE AREA

This chapter provides the contextual background and general setting of the study area in terms of its physical geography, environment, location of rock art sites and current management issues. The aim is to provide the reader with an understanding of the contextual variables that help to explain the dynamics in relationships between local communities and their cultural heritage over a long period of time.

2.1 Location and physical description of the study area

The study area is located in Dedza District, approximately 80 kilometres south of Lilongwe city and 10 kilometres north of Dedza Township (Figure 2.1). The heritage site is situated between latitudes 14° 10' S and 14° 21' S and longitudes 34° 08' E and 34° 17' E within the Chongoni Forest Reserve and covers the entire reserve to the extent that they share common boundaries (Figure 2.2). This was done purposively to ease the management of the area. This is a unique site due to the fact that a single area serves two purposes with two different management structures.

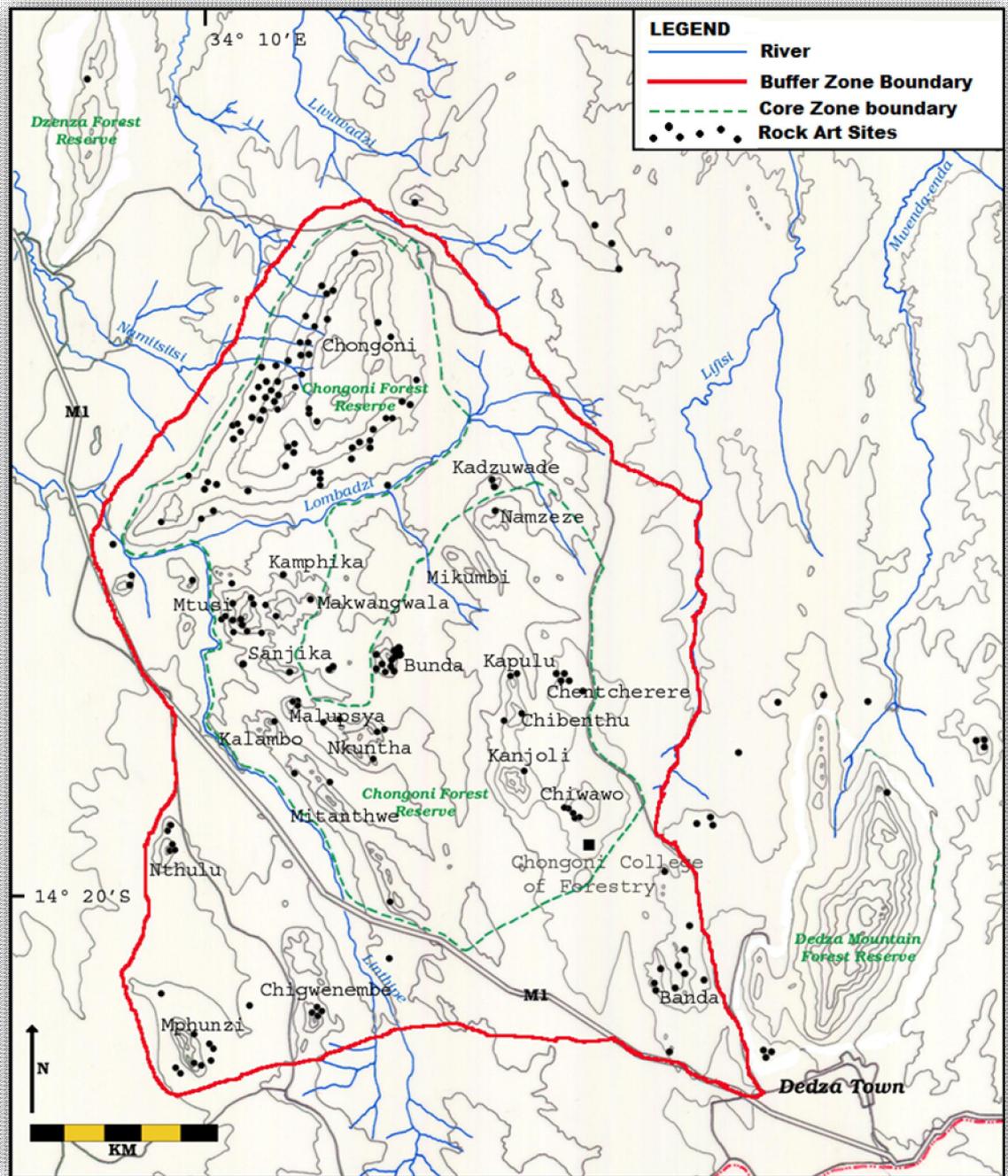
The World Heritage Site area has two boundaries: the inner boundary is called the core zone and the outer boundary is the buffer zone (Figure 2.2). The buffer zone was included to shield the core zone from direct encroachment and destruction of the forest reserve. The core zone is the real boundary of the reserve and the heritage site and is approximately 126.4 km² compared to the total district area of 3624 km².

The forest reserve is characterised by numerous mountains, rock outcrops, overhangs and shelters containing evidence of early occupation. The area has two types of landforms: hills with steep slopes and wide valley areas together with undulating hills with moderate slopes. Most of the rock art sites are on the hills. Chongoni Forest lies between altitudes of 1100 m and 1400 m above sea level with annual rainfall of over 1000 mm.



© Malawi Department of Antiquities, 2004

Figure 2.1: Map of Malawi showing the Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site



© Malawi Department of Antiquities, 2004

Figure 2.2: Map of Chongoni showing rock art sites and site boundaries

The area has a mean value of temperature that ranges from 10° C in winter to 25° C in summer. Chongoni Forest Reserve has a dense network of streams and rivers that drain the area. These rivers have been important sources of water from the earliest to the present inhabitants of the area.

Chongoni Forest Reserve is covered by exotic vegetation dominated by *Pinus* species. Originally, the reserve was mostly covered by miombo woodlands of the hills and scarps which largely comprised *Brachystegia floribunda* and *Uapaca kirkiana* species with a natural grass layer. The government, however, decided to replace most of the indigenous trees with the exotic pines to boost the timber industry in the country. Other common species of trees in this reserve include *Brachystegia*, *Julbernardia* and *Isoberlinia*, *Faurea* and *Lannea* (Figure. 2.3). Hilly areas and other high altitude areas are covered by patches of montane forests and grasslands. Today the miombo woodlands only cover a few areas of the forest. Large rock outcrops lie in the upper mountain areas and evergreen vegetation fill the gullies and depressions. The Pine and Miombo woodlands of Chongoni Forest Reserve are annually subjected to harsh episodes of bush fire caused by the local population for hunting purposes or production of charcoal. Miombo woodlands, however, have a higher regenerative capacity than most types of vegetation. Fires affect the second and third year seedlings and coppice leaving much of the forest with little secondary vegetation except grass. Chongoni Forest Reserve is also a habitat of a wide variety of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds and insects. Large animals are rare in Chongoni Forest Reserve due to hunting and destruction of natural habitats (Malawi Antiquities Department, 2004).

There are many settlements and cultivated areas within the forest reserve. Most of these are Chewa villages (mostly Christian) although there is also a small population of Yao (mostly Muslims).



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Figure 2.3: Showing general topography and vegetation of the area

2.2 Rock art sites

The core and buffer zones of the Chongoni World Heritage Site have more than one hundred and twenty seven (127) sites in total (Figure 2.2). There is the possibility that other sites may still be discovered in future. In addition, one hundred and ninety five archaeological sites have been recorded out of which 44 are rock shelters and 151 are open Iron Age sites. About 27 of the 44 archaeological rock shelters contain rock paintings (Clark, 1973; Mgonezulu 1978; Malawi Antiquities Department 2004).

2.3 Management of the Chongoni World Heritage Site

2.3.1 Background of Chongoni heritage area

The Department of Forestry started protecting the area when it was declared a forest reserve in 1924. The first Forestry Act, enacted by the colonial government in 1942, prohibited the community from collecting anything from the forest, even dead wood. In 1947 trials started on the introduction of exotic soft wood timber into the area. A number of people were employed as patrol men to guard the forest, mainly from the villages around the reserve. The villagers were not allowed to use the forest for any rituals or other activities. Upon independence in 1964, the new government just adopted the same Act without any amendments until 1997. From 1968 large scale clearance began of the indigenous forests to make way for pine and bluegum plantations. By the 1980s the bulk of the area was under soft wood commercial forestry. Indigenous forests remained only on the hill sides too steep to allow commercial plantations. When the Government decided to retrench all the forestry patrol men from this reserve in 1994, there was a crisis in the management of the forest. This directly affected the management of the paintings as the department of Antiquities relied on the Department of Forestry for their protection. The local people, who had been banned from the forest for a long time, now started encroaching on the forest for the many things it could supply: women for fire wood, herd boys for grazing their animals, traditional healers for their medicinal plants, hunters for game meat and so on. People who had for a long time felt betrayed and deprived of their 'God given' natural resources expressed their deprivation by plundering the forests. It was a direct retribution to the forestry officials who they thought had unjustifiably denied them access to resources they naturally deserved. One informant complained:

before the forest was taken away from us, we did not lack anything as the forest provided everything we needed. But the *azungus* (white people) came and chased us out of the forest. When our women needed firewood, they had to go and buy from them, but we are poor people, we have no money, yet the *mzungu* is already rich. Chauta (God) gave this forest to our ancestor, why should they take it away from us? We thought that after

the *mzungu* is gone, our people would give us back the forest, but that too has not happened. We are still denied access by our own people.

The plundering of resources was exacerbated by the fear that the Government would soon replace the patrolmen so they decided to maximize the use of the forest before that happened. The situation was practically out of control. This lack of physical restraints and open access to the rock art sites had direct consequences on the state of rock paintings in the Chongoni area.

As stated before, several rock art sites, including Mphunzi, Chentcherere, Chigwenembe, Nsana wa Ng'ombe and Diwa were already well known by the 1950s. Chentcherere rock shelter became the second rock art site in Malawi to be declared a national monument in 1969, the first one being Mwalawolemba rock art site in the southern region of Malawi which was gazetted in 1968. In 1972, the Chentcherere paintings had the rare distinction of appearing on Malawian postage stamps (Juwayeyi & Phiri 1992). The site had very well preserved paintings of spread-eagled designs. The site was later open to the public and the Department of Antiquities erected a wire perimeter fence around four shelters on the hill as a management and protection strategy to control unrestricted access, touching and creation of graffiti that could destroy the paintings. Interpretative facilities were also setup with limited information since at that time not much research had been conducted on the authorship and meaning of the paintings. Although the site had open access to the public, it was left without any caretakers or public attendants. The site was managed from the Department of Antiquities Offices in Lilongwe, which is about 90 kilometres away. It was assumed that since the site was in a protected Forest Reserve, it would be protected by the Forestry Department. This meant that all visitors went unescorted to the site without being monitored. However, Blundell (1996) and Smith (2006) have argued that defending public rock art sites with barriers such as wire fences does more harm than good. People look at such sites with contempt because they portray authoritarian attitudes. Defended sites are, therefore, more likely to be vandalized than undefended ones. Perhaps this is what caused vandalism of the rock paintings of Chentcherere. Sometime in the early 1980s people broke the fence for easy access to the shelter. By

1993 the gate, the wire perimeter fence at Chentcherere and the interpretative facilities were stolen by the local community for their own use. Today, the rock paintings of Chentcherere are in a poor state of conservation. They are covered in graffiti, dust and soot from fires that are lit by hunters, honey gatherers and herd boys who seek shelter in the caves from weather elements and light fires to cook food.

In 1986, on the request of the Malawi Government, UNESCO provided a consultant, Emmanuel Anati, to advise the Malawi government on the management of cultural heritage sites with specific reference to rock art (Juwayeyi & Phiri 1992). Anati expressed concern for lack of comprehensive preservation measures for the rock paintings. He observed that a number of paintings were being damaged due to human causes. He, therefore, called for measures to be taken to ensure that paintings are adequately preserved. He advised the Malawi government to declare all rock art sites national monuments. He further recommended that the Chongoni rock paintings should be enlisted as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Official Sites (Anati 1986).

In 1993, 127 rock art sites were recorded in the area by Smith during research for his doctoral thesis. Smith (1995) also expressed concern at the rate at which the paintings were being destroyed. He further expressed concern that the extent to which the national protective bodies offer protection to the art was strictly limited by tight financial constraints.

In 1998, the Department of Antiquities began to prepare a nomination dossier for Chongoni rock art site and more sites were recorded. In 2006, the Chongoni rock art area was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

2.3.2 Criteria for nomination

The Chongoni rock art site was inscribed on the World Heritage List under two cultural criteria of UNESCO, namely, criteria 24 a (iii) and (vi). Criterion 24a (iii) stipulates that the cultural property being proposed for inscription should 'bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which

has disappeared' while criterion 24a (vi) states that a heritage should 'be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance'.

Chongoni qualified for these criteria because the rock art is associated with a number of ancient religious and cultural traditions which are still being practised today. Secondly, Chongoni paintings depict living traditions which are of outstanding universal value. For example, *Gule wa Mkulu* or *Nyau*, which is depicted in the rock paintings, was declared by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2005.

Chongoni paintings are associated with at least three types of intangible heritage. The first is rain-calling which is depicted by certain geometric images. A number of researchers (Lindgren & Schoffeleers 1978; Juwayeyi & Phiri 1992; Smith 1995) have observed that the red geometric paintings are associated with weather divination. This is supported by the fact that a number of local people in Dedza recall that some sites with red geometric paintings were used for rain-making offerings (Smith 1995). The makers of the red geometrics were accredited throughout southern and central Africa with special abilities in rain calling. The Chewa inherited these sites and used them for similar purposes. They believed that the geometric images had the power to influence weather. Although the Chewa did not execute the red geometric paintings, but being farmers, they still regarded the sites as important and had some ties to them because of their weather divination abilities which were crucial for their mode of survival.

The other two traditions, which are found in the white paintings, are the initiation rituals, *chinamwali* for girls and *Nyau* for men. All these traditions continue today, underscoring the great significance that these sites potentially have for the present day Chewa people in the area.

The white paintings of Chongoni record cultural traditions and religious practices that are important institutions in modern Chewa society. *Chinamwali* and *Nyau* mark the transition from one status in society to another, such as from girlhood to womanhood, boyhood to manhood or from ordinary man or woman to chief (for further detail on *Nyau*

and *chimamwali* rituals see Yoshida 1993; Van Breugel 2001; Smith 1995, 2001; Zubieta 2006, 2009). When a Chewa girl reaches puberty, she is supposed to undergo instructions on how to behave as an adult person. She is no longer a 'child' and therefore her behaviour and conduct should show that she is an adult. Failure to behave as expected of an adult brings shame to the parents and the whole family. It is, therefore, vital that every Chewa girl, upon reaching puberty, should go through *chimamwali* because this is where proper behaviour and good manners are taught and instilled in the girls. Such instruction also serves to equip girls with the necessary skills they will need in their new roles. *Chinamwali*, therefore, is of great significance within the matrilineal society of the Chewa; it is the most important of all Chewa women ceremonies (Zubieta 2006).

All Chewa boys are also expected to go through *Nyau* initiation for this is where they learn different skills which will prepare them for the adult roles that they will take up in society. The ingenuity involved in the use of multiple layered symbolisms to impart *Nyau* instructions is perhaps what makes the Chewa initiation rituals such a culturally significant tradition (Department of Antiquities 2004). What makes *Nyau* even more significant to the Chewa is that it is not only an initiation ritual, but also a traditional religion. Further, the *Nyau* institution is regarded as the principal guardian of Chewa traditional culture. Its great secrecy has contributed considerably to its resilience in the face of external threats, thus making it one of the most enduring traditions in the world today (*ibid*).

2.3.3 Heritage values

According to the Burra Charter of Australia, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), there are four categories of cultural values: social, historical, scientific and aesthetic. Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site possesses all the above values. However, of interest to this study are the historical and social values. The Burra Charter states that a place may have historical value because it has influenced, or has been influenced by an historic figure, event, phase or activity. It may also have historical value as the site of an important event. The social value on the other hand, embraces the qualities for which a place has become a focus of spiritual, political, national or other

cultural sentiment to a majority or minority group (*ibid*). Chongoni World Heritage Site has always held both historical and social significance to its inhabitants. The area was a special place for both the autochthonous Batwa hunter-gatherers and the Chewa people. The fact that Chongoni rock art area contains more red geometric paintings than the rest of Malawi taken together (Lindgren & Schoffeleers 1978; Smith 1995; Department of Antiquities 2004) is evidence that the hunter-gatherer inhabitants lived in this area for a longer time than any other place and attached special significance to it. The landscape was not only a source of food and shelter but also a source of religious inspiration for the hunter-gatherer communities and later the Chewa farmers who took over the landscape from the hunter-gatherers.

Extensive archaeological research in the area has shown that the Batwa held some relationship with the first farmer groups around Chongoni (Clark 1973; Robinson 1975; Mgomezulu 1978; Crader 1984; Juwayeyi 1991; Smith 1995). It is clear, for instance, that the Batwa lived alongside farming communities until as recently as the 19th century (Mgomezulu 1978; Crader 1984). Although the hunter-gatherers and the farmers did not always get along well, evidence suggests that there was some level of symbiotic relationship which led to exchange of ideas and skills. Excavations carried out in a number of areas in Malawi and Zambia reveal the presence of both Iron Age and Stone Age materials in Batwa sites (Clark 1959a; Mgomezulu 1978; Phillipson 1976; Crader 1984; Musonda 1987). This research concluded that the Batwa hunter-gatherers might have acquired these materials from the Iron Age farmers through trade and may even have acquired the art of making pottery and metal. This relationship, at least in some areas, was symbiotic.

The Chewa on the other hand claim to have learnt rain making skills from the Batwa (Rangeley 1952; Schoffeleers 1973; Smith 1995). It has been widely acknowledged that the Batwa were highly renowned throughout central Africa for their rain-making skills (Clark 1959b). As already noted, the Bantu farmers needed rain much more than the hunter-gatherers. Although drought had some disastrous effects, it brought game near water sources and made hunting easy for the hunter-gatherers. The farmers on the other

hand, could not survive without rain and this could have encouraged them to learn the rain making skills for their survival. Acquisition of these skills by the Chewa would mean stopping making payments to the hunter-gatherers in return for their rain making services. The Chewa could also have inherited the rain making skill through their intermarriages with the Batwa. This is evidenced by oral testimony from the present Chewa who still remember the Batwa as the greatest of rainmakers and the Chewa claim to have learned all their rainmaking skills from the Batwa.

The ancient skills have made the Chewa the most highly renowned of all central Africa's rainmakers (Department of Antiquities 2004). Oral tradition also states that even the sacred Chewa rain drum – *mbiriwiri* – which is currently at Tsang'oma rain shrine was stolen from the Batwa (Rangeley 1952; *personal interview with elders at Tsan'goma*). As already observed, researchers have associated the Batwa geometric rock art tradition with rainmaking practices (Lindgren & Schoffeleers 1978; Juwayeyi & Phiri 1992; Smith 1995, 1997). Today, local people around Chongoni still regard the landscape as the source of rain. Chewa are traditionally farmers and therefore rely on rain for their livelihoods. Chongoni landscape, therefore, still remains a significant source of their livelihood. As Geselina Sizeki, a local woman aged 65 commented:

the hills are important because the rains come from the hills.

Charles Phiri, age 28, also commented:

in other areas the rains do not come, but here we have plenty of rains because of the hills and the forest (Department of Antiquities 2004:5).

Although shrines are the most important rainmaking centres, other places such as big trees, hills and rock shelters can also be used for rain-making. In Chongoni, some rock art sites such as *Mpata wa Milonde* are still used for rainmaking ceremonies at village level (Smith 1995). Rain-shrines also encircle Chongoni. Having the greatest concentration of

Batwa art in Malawi, it is no coincidence that Chongoni is considered the most powerful rain shrine complex in central African history (Department of Antiquities 2004). *Makewana* – ‘the mother of all people’ presides over the rain-shrine complex. *Makewana* is married to God and, through him she brings rain to the land and fertility to her people (Smith 2005c). Unfortunately, due to the nineteenth century Ngoni invasions the rain shrine complex was significantly destroyed and this led to a decline in the power associated with it. Although today there is still a functioning shrine at Msinja its influence is limited to the areas surrounding the shrine and its importance is restricted to times of drought and other calamities (Smith 2005c:1030).

The rock paintings of Chongoni depict *Nyau* and *chinamwali*, two traditions that are still very important for the present day Chewa speaking people. The Chewa attach great significance to the intangible values that are associated with these traditions as they are what define the Chewa culture. Chewa culture revolves around *Nyau* and *chinamwali* and the Chewa hold these values close to heart. This underscores the great importance and uniqueness of Chongoni as both the tangible (rock paintings) and intangible (*Nyau* traditions) heritage.

Chongoni has also been a significant place for both Batwa and Chewa women. Gender roles were negotiated through the paintings. The area has paintings that have been identified to have been executed by two different groups of women; Batwa women produced the red geometric paintings while Chewa women produced the white spread-eagled designed paintings. Smith (1995) has used ethnographic evidence to argue that the red geometric paintings were made by Batwa women while the white spread-eagled designs were made by Chewa women (also see Zubieta 2006, 2009). Chongoni, therefore, was a unique place for its women inhabitants, both of the hunter-gatherers and Chewa origins.

The whole landscape of Chongoni holds high social and historical values for the different groups of people, Chewa, Yao and Ngoni living in the area today. For the Chewa Chongoni provided refuge in times of invasions by the Yao and the Ngoni. Mgomezulu

(1978) writes that some rock shelters such as Chentcherere were used as hide outs by the Chewa during the invasions. Some of the informants I interviewed also told me that one of the rock shelters, *Phanga la Ngoni*, was given that name because it is where a lot of Chewa people sought refuge during the time of the hostile Ngoni invasions. Historical sources (Read 1956; Pachai 1973; Phiri 1975; Smith 1995) state that the Yao and Ngoni invaded the Chewa of Dedza from the late 1860s until the early 1890s when Malawi was declared a British Protectorate. Details on this will be discussed in chapter three. In October 1866 when the Scottish explorer David Livingstone walked through the Chongoni area he recorded in his diary that he found a landscape full of thousands of people who had fled the devastating slave raids and political upheavals of the time (Department of Antiquities 2004:6). For the Chewa, therefore, Chongoni is a reminder of their past struggles and Nyau resilience against forces that attempted to suppress it. Smith (2001) argues that the *Nyau* paintings were probably made during the period of the Ngoni invasion when the Chewa were forced to abandon their traditional places for *Nyau* operation and retreated in the rock shelters. These are some of the values that contributed to the declaration of the rock art of Chongoni as a World Heritage Site.

2.3.4 Current management of the site

There are two statutory provisions in Malawi which protect the Chongoni rock art area. First is the Forestry Act, 1997, that protects the land and forest resources of the forest reserve. Second is the Monuments and Relics Act, 1990, which protects the cultural heritage resources of Malawi. The Monuments and Relics Act however, is silent on the protection of intangible heritage. It has been widely acknowledged that in Africa the tangible and intangible heritages are intricately intertwined and that their significances complement each other. From the above discussion on the values of Chongoni, it is clear that there is a common interface between the tangible and intangible values of the site and that it was inscribed on the World Heritage List mainly due to its intangible values. Any meaningful management and preservation of the tangible rock art sites should include the intangible values. It is the traditional leaders and local community who have the necessary systems for management and preservation of the intangible values. Unfortunately, the Monuments and Relics Act, which provides for the management and

protection of the rock art sites does not recommend the strategy of community involvement.

As a result the local communities are excluded in the protection of their heritage resources. Hence they vandalize the heritage resources either knowingly or unknowingly.

When Chongoni was declared a World Heritage Site in 2006, the Department of Antiquities enacted a management plan which put measures in place to slow down the deterioration of the rock art sites. One of the strategies was to construct an office and a visitors' centre which would be used for the interpretation of the paintings. The intention was to have full time staff based at Chongoni to manage the World Heritage Site. These structures are now under construction. However, leaving out local communities as part of the management of the site will make such attempts unsuccessful. These people are always in the area looking for different resources. The Department of Antiquities cannot play a police role as this is not part of its mandate. This therefore, requires an inclusive dialogue between the Department of Antiquities and other stakeholders including the communities and the Department of Forestry to map out a way forward for better management and protection of the rock paintings which are irreplaceable if destroyed.

2.3.5. Implementation of the 2006-2011 Management Plan

Implementation of the 2006-2011 management plan has been a big challenge for the Department of Antiquities. In this plan, the importance of working with the local communities and other stake-holders has been recognized and highly emphasized. It was envisaged that the department would carry out a number of activities to ensure proper management and conservation of the paintings. The need for well-trained personnel to effectively and efficiently execute conservation and management duties for the upkeep of the site, the interpretation centre and further research activities for the site was also emphasized. However, most of its plans were dependent on the establishment of an interpretative centre and office in Chongoni since at present management is still done from Lilongwe. Construction of these structures took time to start as the department struggled to raise money for the project. The construction only started in July 2010 and

was expected to be completed in 2011, the year that the management plan was scheduled for review. This means that all the projects that were dependent on the establishment of this structure would not be implemented throughout the entire period of 5 years that the management plan was supposed to be in force. At present, there are still no people employed to manage the World Heritage Site. Hundreds of visitors are still going to rock art sites unaccompanied. One activity from the management plan that the department has started is conducting awareness campaigns among local communities in both English and Chichewa (a local language of the Chewa) on the need to preserve and protect rock art in the area. However, since the department still operates from Lilongwe, it has only managed to cover a few villages with awareness messages. Many villages are yet to be reached and this can only be possible when the department finalises its project in Chongoni. The awareness campaign has already shown some positive results. It has slowed down graffiti and other human damage to the paintings.

2.3.6 Conservation status

The conservation status of the paintings can be divided into two or three groups. In general, the red paintings of Chongoni are in a better state of preservation compared to the whites. Most of the red paintings are clearly visible though they are believed to be much older than the white paintings. The white paintings on the other hand are fading and in some cases hardly visible. This could be due to a number of reasons. First, the pigment used in the white paintings is white clay which is easily soluble if rain water runs over it. Most of the white paintings are also found in deep shelters which are ideal for occupation. This attracts people who are seeking shelter from weather elements. The most serious damage has been that of fires lit by such people close to or against painted surfaces. This has occurred at a number of sites where the paintings suffered nearly complete obliteration by thick soot deposit. One such site is *Phanga la Angoni*.

Recent graffiti has also been noted at a number of sites. This has been in the form of name scribbling and charcoal or chalk drawings. Some of the drawings depict *Nyau* figures similar to the painted ones and have been regarded as indicating a definite conceptual or artistic purpose, thereby warranting some recognition as an art form (Smith

2001). Chentcherere sites have been significantly affected by graffiti. These are the best known sites and therefore the most visited. As stated, Chentcherere became a public site in 1969 but no guides were employed. Visitors went by themselves and inflicted a lot of damage to the paintings. The most serious danger to the paintings, therefore, is from human activities. What is worrying is the rate at which the paintings are being destroyed. Leslie Zubieta (2006) lamented that there is a serious graffiti problem at Mwana wa Chentcherere and other sites and many of the paintings are almost destroyed.

Among the natural agents, water seems to take a leading role. Rainwater flowing over the rock surface deposits salts and minerals on the rock upon drying, thereby obscure the paintings. Exfoliation and weathering due to variations in temperature, humidity and moisture are other climate related processes that cause damage to the paintings.

Biological agents that pose a threat to the rock painting include organisms such as lichens, bird, rock hyraxes and termites. Colonies of lichens are present on most of the painted rock surfaces but only in a few cases have these been noted to affect the paintings. In one instance, a colony of green fungus has grown on the clay pigment of a spread-eagled pictograph, turning its colour from white to green (Department of Antiquities 2004).

The rock shelters are used by various animal species whose excrements can obscure paintings. Bird droppings have been noted at some sites but at none of them do they cover pictographs. At one site, Chibenthul 1, hyrax urine has been noted to drip down a rock surface and wash part of a white painting. Swallow nests, which are made of mud, also pose a threat to the paintings. At a number of sites swallow nests have been placed right on the paintings thereby partly obscuring them (*ibid*).

Termites are also recorded at a number of sites. The most seriously affected site is *Phanga la Angoni* where a huge mound has caused extensive damage to the paintings (Figure 2.4).



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Figure 2.4: Termite mound inside Phanga la Angoni rock shelter

2.4 Perception of community towards the rock art heritage site

Despite the historical and social values that Chongoni rock art area holds for the Chewa people today; their perception of the rock art sites is somehow negative.

Although the Chewa people in the Chongoni area are familiar with rock art sites, and they know that some sites are associated with *Nyau* and *Chinamwali* and broadly conceive rock art as part of Chewa heritage, there is a lack of connection between present communities and the rock art sites. Smith (2001) argued that the Chewa rock painting tradition ceased early in twentieth century and that the rock paintings associated with *Nyau* are outside the regular *Nyau* activities. He specifically notes that ...“today the paintings are largely forgotten by the descendants of the people who made them; they are now part of the history rather than the living ritual landscape”.

The present day Chongoni communities perceive the rock art sites with indifference to the extent that they even participate in the destruction of their heritage. Parents advise their children or herd boys who take their cattle up the hill slopes to use the shelters as resting camps or to take refuge in them in case of harsh weather elements. The animals rub against the painted surfaces while the boys scribble graffiti on the rock surface and sometimes make fires in the rock shelters.

The local communities perceive the sites as belonging to the government, both the Forest Reserve and the paintings. The communities feel government does not want them anywhere near the sites. As already noted above, when Chongoni was declared a forest reserve the local communities were denied access into the forest. Anyone found without proper explanation in the forest was deemed to be trespassing and was therefore fined. This instilled a lot of fear and resentment in the local people and as such they could not openly voice their concerns. Not long ago, the Chewa people had been using some sites in Chongoni as their initiation lodges but they were forced to stop this due to the forestry laws in force. The Forest officials argued that most *Nyau* activities happen at the night and members have to cook their own food. This means that there is a lot of fire lighting. The concern was that the fires might sometimes spin out of control and burn the forest. This was particularly so because the Department of Forestry had introduced pines into the plantation which burn quickly and easily in runaway fires. Nonetheless, the people still secretly continued to use the forest for their activities and just ensured that they lied routinely when asked if they use the forest. Smith (1995) found that some sites were still being used for storage of *Nyau* masks, and Zubieta (2006) writes that some of her informants recalled that some of the sites were still being used as recent as the 1960s. Further, Mgomzulu (1978) also writes that women were still using Mtusi site for their rituals in the 1970s.

The negative perception that the Chewa have towards their rock art sites is not unique to Malawi. It has been observed that many local communities in other countries in southern Africa show negative attitudes towards their cultural heritage sites. Pwiti and Ndoro (1999:144) argue that the negative attitudes of local communities towards their heritage can only be understood within a political framework and that such attitudes have been

one of the lasting legacies of colonial resettlement policies. This is true in some southern Africa countries especially Zimbabwe and South Africa which saw the drafting of legislations which divided the country into European and African Areas. This resulted in forced removals of local communities from their ancestral lands and leaving behind their immovable cultural heritage. The people lost any ties to their heritage as they were moved to new places far away from it. As a consequence, there were no local communities around heritage sites which could claim direct historical links with the sites as those living in the proximity of the sites were mainly farm labourers drawn from other places (Chirikure *et al.* 2009).

Following decolonization, many African nations felt the need to restore lost cultural values and pride in the African local communities by involving them in the management of cultural heritage. However, this proved to be a difficult task in some cases because there were no local communities with any historical links to the sites as those with links had been settled away by the colonial governments. The people now living around those sites are not interested in preserving heritage that has nothing to do with their history. In cases where historical links have been identified, the situation has been different. It has been observed that some communities have fought over control of the heritage because they all claim links to it (Fontein 2006). At Great Zimbabwe for example, the Mugabe and Nemamwa clans have been competing for control of the monument because they each believe they are the rightful guardians of the monument. They each want to be at the centre stage in matters affecting the preservation and management of the cultural heritage resource.

In other cases local communities show negative attitudes because they stopped attaching any values to the site because they felt that its sacredness became desecrated because the traditional rules and customs were no longer followed. Great Zimbabwe, for example, is viewed as a desecrated site by communities surrounding it (*ibid*). Most accounts of Great Zimbabwe's past sacredness referred to sounds and voices that used to be heard among the stone walls. Today these sounds and voices are no longer heard and the people believe that the spirits have gone away because some rules and customs were not properly followed (*ibid*).

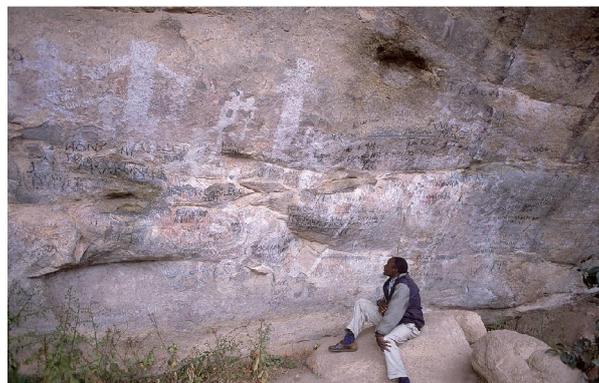
Local communities in Chongoni area did not experience large scale forced removals as was the case with other southern African communities. In this area, the majority of people were not forcefully removed from their ancestral lands. When Chongoni was declared a forest reserve in 1924, a number of villages were left to reside in the forest reserve. Instead of removing the villagers, the Department of Forestry later decided to revise the forest boundaries to exclude the villages. If any villages were removed, they were very few. There is also evidence that some of the sites, such as Chentcherere rock shelter, were still being used in the 1960s (Zubieta 2006) long after the forest was declared a forest reserve. As already noted Mgomezulu (1978) also records that Mtusi site was still being used for *chinamwali* during the time he was conducting his doctoral research in the 1970s, long after Malawi had attained its independence. The important question that still needs to be asked is why did the Chewa people stop using these sites and what caused the sudden disconnection?

CHAPTER THREE: ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE AREA

The chapter provides an archaeological and historical background of the area. The aim is to provide the reader with the historical and social-political process that took place over a specific period of time, i.e. the past 150 years. These processes will help us in chapter five to understand why and how the disconnection between the Chewa communities and their heritage sites occurred.

3.1 The rock art

Researchers have divided the rock paintings of Chongoni into two general categories: the red schematic and white series. It is widely believed that Batwa hunter-gatherers made the red geometric paintings while the Chewa executed white paintings of which there are two traditions. One reflects the concepts, beliefs and traditions of the *Nyau* secret society of the Chewa speaking people (Schoffeleers and Lindgren, 1978; Juwayeyi and Phiri 1992; Smith 1995) while the second reflects *chinamwali* tradition (a Chewa girls' initiation ceremony). The latter is dominated by spread-eagled designs made by the Chewa women as teaching instructions for *chinamwali* (Smith 1995; Zubieta 2006, 2009). The Chewa women still practise this ritual today and still use similar shaped clay figurines in their teachings, but not in the rock shelters (Zubieta 2006, 2009). Chongoni, therefore, is a rare example of a place where the present inhabitants' rituals can be directly linked to the rock paintings.



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Figure 3.1: Paintings of spread-eagled designs at Chentcherere rock shelter



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Figure 3.2: Paintings of *Gule wamkulu* characters at Namzeze rock shelter

3.2 Chewa historical background

A number of researchers (Ntara 1973; Pachai 1973; Schoffeleers 1973; Phiri 1975; MacCracken 1977; Mgomzulu 1978; Smith 1995; Juwayeyi 2010) have written about the history of the Chewa. All these researchers agree that the Chewa arrived in Malawi in two different groups and at different periods. The first group to arrive was that of the Banda clan which settled in different parts of central Malawi (Phiri 1975; Mgomzulu 1978; Smith 1995). This group is also referred to as the Proto-Chewa or Pre-Maravi (Schoffeleers 1973; MacCracken 1977). The second group, also known as the Maravi, arrived later and was led by kings who bore the title of Kalonga (Rangeley 1952; Ntara 1973; Schoffeleers 1973; Phiri 1975; Smith 1995; Juwayeyi 2010). Both groups practise a matrilineal system and are believed to have originated from the Luba country which is now eastern part of the present Democratic Republic of Congo (Schoffeleers 1973; Phiri 1975; Smith 1995; Juwayeyi 2010). Phiri (1975) and Smith (1995) argue that this can be supported by the fact that certain Chewa and Luba words bear similarities and also the fact that both Chewa and Luba groups use ceremonial masks and organization of secret societies (*Nyau* for Chewa and *Bambudye* for Luba). Upon their arrival in Malawi the Phiri clan extended their rule to other parts of the central region where the Banda had

already settled and established the Maravi kingdom which at its height extended to other parts of Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique (Schoffeleers 1973; Phiri 1975; Smith 1995).

The Chewa people practice *Nyau* and *chinamwali* traditions, both of which have been depicted in the rock paintings (see Lindgren & Schoffeleers 1978; Juwayeyi and Phiri 1992; Smith 1995, 2001; Zubieta 2006, 2009). According to oral traditions, *Nyau*, also known as *Gule wamkulu* was initially performed by women during *chinamwali*, but later changed in its scope. Today *Gule wamkulu* is mainly an association of men and is danced during the initiation of girls, installation of a new chief and during funerals of their members. It can also be performed just as a celebration or entertainment. Young members are initiated and trained just like in ordinary school. Boys who have reached puberty are taken to a *dambwe* for their initiation.

Members of *Nyau* operate from *dambwe* and everything they do is very secretive to those not initiated. This is why *Nyau* partakers are called members of the secret society. Members of this society learn and memorize coded language. This distinguishes them from the non-initiated. Through the centuries, *Nyau* tradition has strengthened the social and spiritual bonds among the Chewa people who practice it. Through *Gule wamkulu* the Chewa people come together to celebrate, mourn or get entertained (*ibid*). It is more than a dance as it embraces every aspect of their life. This is a distinctive feature of the Chewa culture.

Nyau put on masks and wear very old and torn clothes, sack clothes or leaves that shake every time they move, dance or even when they are motionless. The identities of the performers are concealed by the masks they wear. Kamlongera (1992) observes that each actor's identity is top secret and they are regarded as a reincarnation of dead ancestors who come in form of the *Nyau* to dwell temporarily among the living. Behind the masks are considered to be spirits of men and animals so that when *Nyau* moves into the village from the graveyard or bush there occurs a re-enactment of the Chewa primal belief in which men, animals and spirits lived in harmony (Linden 1974).

The participating audience believes that the actors are the ancestors' spirits who must be feared and revered (Katani 2008).

Chinamwali is an old initiation ritual for Chewa girls. It is a school through which girls graduate from childhood to adulthood or from girlhood to motherhood. When a girl has her first menstruation she is taken to a *tsimba* (a special place where chinamwali instructions are held). *Chinamwali* is also a secret and sacred ceremony just like *Nyau*. A girl is warned under pain of death never to reveal to the men the teachings that she receives at the *tsimba* (see Zubieta 2006, 2009).

By end of the eightieth century the Maravi kingdom began to decline due to internal as well as external factors (Schoffeleers 1973; Phiri 1975; Smith 1995; Juwayeyi 2010). Some of the external factors were the arrivals of groups of Yao speaking people between 1858 and 1860 who were later followed by the Ngoni in 1870 and the coming of European Christian missionaries (Pachai 1973; Phiri 1975).

3.3 Nineteenth century invasions on the Chewa

3.3.1 The Yao

According to Yao oral sources obtained by Phiri (1975), the Yao who settled in central Malawi including parts of Dedza District are of the Machinga Yao who originally came from northern Mozambique. The first group, led by chief Mponda and his cousins, migrated to Malawi between 1858 and 1862 and settled west of Shire River. Phiri (1975) states that the subsequent groups of Yao used Mponda's village as their resting place before proceeding with their journeys. Two such groups settled in Dedza after staying at Mponda village for almost a year. One group was led by Liwewe and the other group which was led by Mnenula (later known as Pemba), Mnduwila (later known as Maganga) and his brother Chiponda followed a few years later. Both groups arrived in the Kalonga country where the then reigning king, Sosola, allowed them to settle in his area. Phiri (1975) further writes that it was difficult for the two groups (Chewa and Yao) to coexist peacefully because of two things which were sources of conflict. First, the Yao were

slave traders who had a tradition of raiding for slaves for export. Secondly, the power of Kalonga was already in decline which made it difficult for the Chewa to control the Yao newcomers. Subsequently, there was a conflict between the Chewa and the Yao in which the Yao came out victorious and the Chewa lost their power to the newcomers. Meanwhile another group of the Machinga Yao led by Mlenga and Mtukula (who later became Tambala) entered the Chewa country and killed one of their chiefs, Chauma, near *Mpata wa Milonde*. Several Chewa chiefs were forced to ally themselves with the Yao invaders. Thus the Yao took control of the Chewa country and the Chewa lived under Yao hegemony (Phiri 1975).

3.3.2 The Ngoni

Before the Chewa recovered from the Yao invasion, there was yet another more serious invasion by the Ngoni who arrived and settled at Domwe in Dedza between 1868 and 1870 (Pachai 1973; Phiri 1973; Phiri 1975; Rafael 1980). The Ngoni, who were known for their fighting skills, terrorised and raided the Chewa people. Many people in the Chongoni area were captured and incorporated into the Ngoni political hierarchy. Other people were forced to seek refuge in rock shelters in the mountains such as *Phanga la Angoni*. Mgomzulu (1978) also writes that the Chewa used rock shelters such as Chentcherere to seek refuge from the Ngoni and Yao invasions.

The Ngoni, who sought complete domination over the Chewa, tried to impose their culture on the Chewa. However, the Chewa managed to resist these attempts by using *Nyau*. Smith (2001) argues that *Nyau* stood for local interests and autonomy and also acted as a guardian of Chewa traditions and identity. The Ngoni, therefore, saw *Nyau* as a threat to their authority and sought its complete annihilation which was not successful as *Nyau* still survived though its activities were now underground.

3.4 European and missionaries' influence

From the late nineteenth century a number of Europeans and Christian missionaries began to arrive in Malawi and this was later followed by the declaration of Malawi (then Nyasaland) as a British Protectorate. By this time, the Chewa had lost control of Dedza

area to the Yao and Ngoni. Phiri (1975) observes that by 1904, when Dedza was recognised as a separate district by the colonial government, out of the 34 principal chiefs and headmen recognised 11 were Ngoni, the other 11 were Yao and only 6 of the remaining chiefs could be clearly distinguished as Chewa. Power had shifted from the Chewa to the Yao and Ngoni invaders by end of the nineteenth century (*ibid*).

Since the Chewa were now formally under British control, they were free from Yao and Ngoni domination. Although the Chewa accepted to be under the British politically, they resisted any attempt by the British and the missionaries to suppress their cultural beliefs and traditions. This was shown by their attitude and response towards the educational and evangelical work of the missionaries (Schoffeleers & Linden 1972; Linden 1974; Phiri 1975).

The first Christian Missionaries in the defunct Chewa kingdom were those of the Livingstonia Mission who established their station at Cape Maclear in 1875 in the mist of Chewa and Yao people (Pachai 1973; Phiri 1975; Rafael 1980; Tindall 1988). Due to unfavourable climatic factors the mission withdrew from Cape Maclear and settled at Bandawe in Nkhata Bay District which is in the north of the country in 1881 (*ibid*). In 1889, a group of Christian missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church from Stellenbosch, South Africa arrived in central Malawi and settled at Mvera in Dowa (Pachai 1973; Phiri 1975; Katani 2008). From there the missionaries extended their influence to other parts of the central region including Dedza. This was followed by the arrival of the Catholic missionaries at the beginning of the twentieth century.

All these Christian missionaries were unanimous in their condemnation of *Nyau* and *chinamwali*. They viewed *Nyau* as an exhibition of ‘obscenity, savagery, sensuality and cruelty’ which they considered as a national evil (Schoffeleers & Linden 1972:259). In particular the missionaries perceived *Nyau* as promoting “heathen and sexually immoral rituals” (Kerr, 1998:31). Christians and catechumens were forbidden from take part in *Nyau* and *chinamwali*. If they did, they were excommunicated. Schoffeleers and Linden report that the Mua Catholic mission dairy of 1909 had the following entry:

This morning the father superior had to go to Makombe to ‘excommunicate’ two catechumens who have just joined the famous *zinyau* society.

This discouraged a lot of Chewa people from joining Christianity and may explain the different initial response to Christianity between the Ngoni and Chewa controlled areas. Schoffeleers & Linden (1972) and Linden (1974) report the following statistics (Table 3.1 below) to show the different responses to Christianity between areas under Ngoni and those under Chewa influence in the central region of Malawi including Dedza District. The table below shows that there were some Christian converts baptised in areas under Ngoni influence and none in areas under Chewa influence.

Table 3.1: Number of baptisms in Chewa (*Nyau*) and Ngoni areas

Year	Area	Number of baptisms
1901-1906 (6 years)	Mzama- under Ngoni control (Gomani)	120
1902-1907 (6 years)	Mua- Under Ngoni influence (Maseko Ngoni)	72
1903-1908 (6 years)	Kachebere- under Ngoni influence (Mpezeni Ngoni)	22
1902-1907 (6 years)	Likuni- under Chewa influence	0

Source: Schoffeleers & Linden (1972)

The first converts in the predominantly Chewa area of Likuni were only made in 1909 when 7 converts were baptized. Schoffeleers & Linden (1972) and Linden (1974) give the following statics (Table 3.2) of how the number of converts rose by 1914.

Table 3.2: Table number of converts in Nyau and Ngoni areas

Area	Number of converts
Mzama	25000
Mua	50000
Kachebere	25000
Likuni	35000

Source: Schoffeleers & Linden (1972)

As expected, *Nyau* elders were not happy with the increasing number of people being converted to Christianity. This was more so because those who converted to Christianity started to ridicule or despise *Nyau* and were exposing some of its secrets. The elders also did not like the mission schools which were creating another class of people in the Chewa villages, non-initiates, who also rejected *Nyau* and did not participate in its activities (Linden & Schoffeleers 1972; Linden 1974). This led to more conflicts between *Nyau* members and Christians. For example, in November 1924 a Christian was almost throttled to death by *Nyau* members at Bwanali, a Chewa village, for singing the secret *Nyau* songs in public (Linden & Schoffeleers 1972:264). An active campaign was therefore mounted against the missionaries. The *Nyau* leaders complained that the Christian catechists divulged the *Nyau* secrets to school children and encouraged disrespect (*ibid*). Therefore, they resorted to thwarting the missionaries' efforts by keeping young children away from mission schools and admitting them into *Nyau* at very young age (*ibid*). Within a few years mission schools in Chewa areas were empty and some were literally closing down because of lack of students (*ibid*).

Schoffeleers & Linden (1972) observed that a survey in the Nyasa (Malawi) Vicariate under white father's bishop Guilleme which was carried out in the 1930 illustrated the effectiveness of the *Nyau* opposition to education as follows:

Table 3.3: Attendance of Chewa and Ngoni pupils in schools

Area	Total no. of converts	No. of schools	No. of registered students		Average attendance
			Boys	girls	
Mtakataka,					
Ngoni villages	5400	24	1165	855	60%
Chewa villages (Chikaole, Kudoole and Falikile)		1	124	70	15% (6 boys/2 girls)
Mua					
Ngoni villages	2600	16	-	-	45%
Chewa villages					
- <i>Mtyanja</i>	-	-	80	26	0%
- <i>Bwanali</i>	-	-	80	28	5.4% (5 pupils)
- <i>Madziasatsi</i>	-	-	40	26	5.28% (8 pupils)
Bembeke					
19 Ngoni villages	3300	-	-	-	70%
29 Chewa villages	-	-	-	-	35%
Likuni					
48 Chewa villages		18	26	9	20%

Table adapted from Schoffeleers & Linden (1972)

In Kasina, Dedza, another Chewa controlled area, 11 schools closed down barely 4 years after they were opened. This attempt by *Nyau* members to undermine the mission education forced the catholic mission to wage a serious campaign against *Nyau*. The two sides had declared 'war' on each other.

Another response of *Nyau* to missions' pressure involved some degree of development and change in the traditional character and discipline of the society. New characters were

created to ridicule the Church. They deliberately chose the most sacred figures of the church such as Virgin Mary, Joseph and Saint Peter in their ridicule (Schoffeleers & Linden 1972; Linden 1974). This ability to adapt to outside pressure is what has made *Nyau* very resilient. It is able to invent new characters for any strange or new elements in the society. A number of *Nyau* elders I interviewed in Dedza informed me that they have managed to be resilient against any outside influence by creating new *Nyau* characters which satirises the strange elements in society. People would not take something that is the subject of ridicule seriously. In so doing they have managed to guard against their people from going ‘astray’. Table 3.4 below shows some of the *Nyau* characters created due to outside influence. Schoffeleers & Linden (1972) have recorded some of the *Nyau* characters such as Maria and Yosefe that were invented due external influence.

Table 3.4: Some new *Nyau* characters

<p>Maria (Mary)</p>	<p>Maliya is a <i>Nyau</i> character which is portrayed by a woman with pronounced breasts and carrying a baby (Jesus) in her hands. It was created to ridicule the Christian missionaries especially Catholics who held Mary in high esteem.</p>
<p>Makanja</p>	<p>Makanja is a dancer on stilts which is a satire on the Arabs, popularly known as <i>dziko la a Lenda</i> (a country of tall lazy people) who prefer slaves other than work for themselves. This was when the Chewa came in contact with the Arab slave traders who raided villages for slaves.</p>
<p>Mbalagwe</p>	<p>A witted stranger who comes into the village chatting up or flirting with other peoples wives but will not marry them. One day he is here the next is gone.</p>
<p>Mzungu (whiteman)</p>	<p>A <i>Nyau</i> character that wears a mask which portrays a white man driving a car. This character was invented during the colonial period and was satirising the colonial District Commissioner.</p>
<p>Simoni and Yosefe</p>	<p>These are white characters with red faces who portray European missionaries. Simon and Joseph are some of the biblical characters that the missionaries preached about.</p>

(Some information drawn from Schoffeleers & Linden 1972)

By April 1923 the mission appealed for government support to completely and effectively suppress *Nyau*. In neighbouring Zambia *Nyau* had been banned by the colonial government and the missionaries were hoping the government in Malawi would do the same. Much to the missionaries' disappointment the colonial government refused to ban *Nyau*. Its policy was that of preserving the 'native' culture. The government however, made some attempts to mediate between the missionaries and *Nyau* elders. Linden (1974) writes that a meeting was organized at the Colonial Provincial Commissioner level between *Nyau* leaders and missionaries to resolve their differences and that the Chewa leaders reiterated:

“We Achewa cannot allow our customs to disappear. They are the precious legacy of our ancestors. We hold them as the most sacred things”.

The missionaries went further to enlist support from Ngoni chiefs such as Kachindamoto who were also interested in keeping Chewa influence under control. By the 1930, *Nyau* was suppressed under pressure from the protestant mission in the area controlled by Gomani, a Ngoni chief, never to appear again (Schoffeleers & Linden 1972).

This conflict between the church and *Nyau* practitioners has contributed to the negative attitudes that Chewa communities today have towards some of their heritage. Chewa descendants who are practising Christians still despise *Nyau* and any heritage associated with it.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This chapter considers key theories that help us understand the dynamic relationships between people as they live today and their cultural heritage. In particular, the chapter focuses on how and why some communities in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond have been physically or socially disconnected from their cultural heritage over different time periods and circumstances. Although there are many theories (e.g. politics, modernism, gender etc.) that can help explain this disconnection, I focus on two of the key theories in this chapter: post-colonialism and the cosmopolitanism. In addition empirical research and case studies on cultural heritage carried out in the same context have also been explored and consolidated to broaden our perception of the processes leading to this kind of disconnection. The chapter is concluded by raising important research questions concerning the dynamics between the people and rock art of Chongoni area.

4.1 Post-colonialism

Some researchers (e.g. Pwiti & Ndoro 1999; Munjeri 2003; Ndoro 2006; Chirikure & Pwiti 2008) have argued that the negative attitudes that communities have towards their heritage can only be understood through a post-colonial framework. Such attitudes have been one of the lasting legacies of colonialism and the colonial resettlement policies which displaced people from their heritage (Chirikure *et al.* 2009). Post-colonial theory will be applied in this study to consider how the Chewa communities in Chongoni were disconnected from their rock art sites. A number of researchers have also adopted post-colonial theoretical frameworks in the application of community participation in management of both cultural and natural heritage (Pwiti & Ndoro 1999; Munjeri 2003; Chirikure *et al.* 2009; Ndoro 2006; Karega-Munene 2009).

The Chewa society of Chongoni has lived many generations in the area and over this period has been subjected to domination by external powers including the missionaries, Yao, Ngoni and the British Colonial Government. The Ngoni domination from the 1830s onwards, although characterised by conquest and displacement, was short lived due to the arrival of missionaries such as David Livingstone and white settlers in the area in 1860

and 1870s. Later, in 1891, the British Government declared Nyasaland (now Malawi) a British colony. During the early 1900s things began to change for Chewa society as more land was taken for white settlement and new land ownership laws came into being. This came to be the beginning of a long term colonial relationship between the British and the people of Nyasaland (Pachai 1973; McCracken 1977). British Colonial rule was also imposed on the neighbouring states of Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe, respectively) at about the same time.

Following colonisation of Malawi by the British in 1891, new policies with regard to land, taxation and labour were introduced which brought a great deal of suffering to the local people. In terms of the labour and taxation policies, the government introduced laws to provide suitable conditions for the payment of tax. In order to maximize tax collection the government imposed a system of taxation called hut tax. People were forced to work for colonial plantation owners to raise tax money. In some cases employers were empowered to pay tax on behalf of employees and in return were entitled to exact in kind in form of labour (Pachai 1973). This was the much disliked economic system called *Thangata*. During this period many people migrated from their homelands to work in plantations in order to raise money for tax. Others went to work in mines and farms of Rhodesia and South Africa (other British colonies). Following drastic changes in land policy, the colonial government introduced several other policies most of which had direct impact on the Malawians (Pachai 1973).

Several theorists have written on the effects and legacy of colonisation in Africa. Historians and political commentators today agree that colonialism has left indelible legacies in Africa and other continents. These legacies have had negative effects on property, societal relationships, cultural values and links with the past, particularly the manner in which people have been alienated from their heritage (Pwiti & Ndoro 1999). Underpinning postcolonial theory, therefore, is an examination of the effects of European conquest, colonisation and domination of non-European territories, peoples and cultures. This critical examination involves analysing inherent ideas of European superiority over non-European peoples and cultures that such imperial colonisation implies. Colonising

powers in Africa and elsewhere uprooted and systematically replaced local values with foreign systems and forced the abandonment of older cultural and religious beliefs, systems of governance and many other ways of doing things (*ibid*). Chirikure and colleagues (2009) also argue that heritage management and conservation in colonial Africa was the preserve of the colonial elites, who took a keen interest in the heritage of the colonized.

The concept of colonialism and post-colonialism is reflected in the works of many other important researchers (Said 1995; Childs & Williams 1997; Pwiti & Ndoro 1999; Loomba 2005) who have focused on what is and what is not post-colonial and how it should be perceived in the light of globalisation of many parallel concepts including capitalism, modernism, rationalism and others. These researchers argue that the consequences of colonial domination cannot be fully understood without taking into account the impact of capitalist economics on the environmental context of human relations.

Post-colonialism is a term that is subject to an ongoing debate. Childs & Williams (1997) claim that the term post-colonial seems to refer directly to a period after decolonisation or a new formation that replaces colonial systems. Loomba (2005) observes that the term has been highly contested, with most critics saying that a country may be postcolonial (in sense of being politically independent) or neo-colonial (if it remains economically or culturally dependent). She says that the new world order allows for political, cultural and economic penetration of one country by another, especially if it involves countries of different economic standing. This allows for stronger countries to dominate weaker ones indirectly rather than through a direct colonial relationship.

Said (1978) in his analysis of the western representations of the 'Orient', argues that the concept has been portrayed as the binary opposite of the West-the 'Orient' being North African Arab and Middle-Eastern peoples and cultures. According to him, the orient is what the West finds disconcerting to its higher image. In this way, the Orient is seen as the occident's other (*ibid*). Said (1978) further contends that 'orientalism' is a western feeling of the East which is based on this 'otherness'. Said (1978) also demonstrates how

representations of the Orient function to re-impose colonial domination over the cultures of the colonised.

Fanon (1967) suggests that colonialism, with its concepts of white racial superiority over natives, has created a sense of division and alienation in the self-identity of the colonised peoples. The history and culture of the colonisers were regarded as universal as and higher than the indigenous culture of the colonised. This creates inferiority in the indigenous people and leads to an adoption of their culture (language, customs, beliefs and practices) as a way of compensating for these feelings of inferiority in their self-identity (*ibid*). This adoption of the culture and beliefs of the colonisers leads to a sense of alienation from their own culture by the colonised.

One of the major critics of Said and Fanon is Homi Bhabha. Bhabha (2004) does not agree with Fanon's idea that colonialism led to the alienation of self-identity of the colonised. He argues that colonialism was a two way negotiated relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. In this relationship the colonised were also agents of change. The coloniser also takes cultural aspects of the colonised. Bhabha further argues that the notion of the 'orient' and 'otherness' are just stereotypes which are being perpetuated by writers such as Fanon and Said.

According to Loomba (2005:8-9) the term colonization is a complex terminology and often confused with imperialism. She describes colonization as a conquest of other people's land and goods. She states that colonialism, although not the same in different parts of the world locked the natives and the newcomers in the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history. Whatever the justification, colonialism is based on unequal relationships and a one way advantage in favour of the colonists.

Loomba (2005) further states that the meaning of the term colonisation is complicated by the differences between colonialism and imperialism. She distinguishes the two terms by their geography, with imperialism (the process that leads to domination and control) as a concept that originates from the metropolis. What happens in the colonies as a result of

imperial domination is the concept of colonialism. Young (1995) also suggests that imperialism is the concept while colonialism is the practice. The main critiques of this theory (Childs & Williams 1997; Loomba 2005) have shown that the term post-colonial has a wide meaning and application. Major criticisms are with respect to the period within which it occurs, spatial variation, reoccurrence of colonisation and others.

Recent research in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa shows that local communities were alienated from their heritage due to colonialism and colonial policies which forced many African populations off their ancestral land (Pwiti & Ndoro 1999; Ndoro 2001a; Chirikure & Pwiti 2008; Chirikure *et al.* 2009). In some cases the colonized countries also abandoned their traditional customs because of the introduction of Christianity and Islam. In Zimbabwe, the introduction of the Land Apportionment Act by the colonial government in 1930 led to the forced removal of local communities with historical or ancestral link to the Khami heritage site when the land was turned into commercial farms (Chirikure *et al.* 2009). As a result, there are presently no communities who are willing to participate in the affairs of the site. The communities residing near Khami now mainly comprise farm workers who were drawn from faraway places and have no historical link to the heritage site (*ibid*).

In South Africa, communities with historical links to Mapungubwe archaeological heritage site were disconnected from their heritage when indigenous people were forcibly removed from the area around the site in the 1930s and 1940s when all African communities were removed from that part of the Limpopo Valley. The creation of Kruger National Park had similar consequences as it involved moving whole communities. Heritage sites, such as the famous site of Thulamela, were isolated from their descendants (Meskell 2007).

In Kenya, Pwiti & Ndoro (1999) write that the creation of the 'White Land' led to a large scale displacement of the Kikuyu. Communities were removed to reserves. What this meant was that the Africans left their immovable cultural heritage in areas which were designated European land. They were thus disconnected from cultural heritage sites and

important cultural activities such as rain making and honouring the ancestors were disrupted (*ibid*). Traditionally, African people believe in the power of the spirits of their ancestors. Sites where ancestral spirits are believed to abode are accorded great respect and religious ceremonies are normally held to revere the spirits. Pwiti & Ndoro (1999) write that Great Zimbabwe had always held a special place in the religious life of the people living near it and beyond. They reported that as recently as the twentieth century, cattle were sacrificed to the ancestors on the hill complex. With the proclamation of the site, and the new land as well as monument legislation, such practices were discontinued and settlement around the site became illegal (*ibid*: 150). The people were then effectively disconnected from a major part of their heritage. Several other immovable sacred sites, such as rainmaking shrines, rock art sites, were now private property; local people could not go there to offer sacrifices because according to the law, they would be trespassing. One example can be found in Zimbabwe where the white land owner refused to grant access to the Mangwende people to the sacred site of Tsindi near Marondera (Pwiti & Ndoro 1999:150). Thus the heritage continues to be physically and spiritually disconnected from the people. In other parts of the world where colonisation took place, similar practices occurred. For example, in America and Australia Native Americans and aboriginal Australians were forcibly removed from their ancestral land to provide land for white settlers, thereby effectively disconnecting them from the immovable heritage they had (Prucha 1971).

The creation of political boundaries following the scramble for Africa also contributed to the alienation of people from their heritage. Huffman (2007) writes that the Shona people have ancestral link to an archaeological site which is in South Africa. The Shona people now live in Zimbabwe while Mapungubwe is in South Africa. This means that the Shona people have been permanently disconnected from their ancestral heritage because of the new boundaries which separate the two countries.

Although Malawi did not experience large scale settlement removals, the introduction of Christianity had a huge effect on the indigenous people's customs and beliefs. Traditional religious practices were regarded as pagan and indigenous people were strongly

discouraged from participating in many traditional religious rituals (Schoffeleers & Linden 1972). People started going to churches and abandoned their shrines. Christianity also taught its converts that rain comes from the Christian God. Essentially, therefore, the authority and significance of rain shrines was undermined. Other traditional rituals that were detested the Christian missionaries were *Nyau* and *chinamwali*. The missionaries in both Malawi and Zambia encouraged the colonial government to ban *Nyau* (Schoffeleers & Linden 1972; Smith 2001) because according to their belief, it was evil, the opposite of what they preached. In the eyes of the missionaries, *Nyau* was immoral and Christians were forbidden from participating in its ritual activities. Christians and catechumens were also forbidden from taking part in *chinamwali* (Schoffeleers & Linden 1972). Those that joined in *Nyau* or *chinamwali* ritual activities were excommunicated from the church (*ibid*). The colonized were, therefore, made to believe that their long evolved culture was bad and they were forced to adopt the culture of the colonizer. Although both countries are independent today, they are still heavily influenced by Christianity as the majority of people in both countries are Christians and are still not allowed to participate in any *Nyau* and *chinamwali* rituals. Although colonialism is gone and the countries are now independent, they are still suffering from the effects of colonialism. The colonising countries have left indelible marks on the cultural beliefs of the once colonized countries. I therefore, support the argument that one of the worst legacies of colonialism has been the permanent dislocation or alienation of people from their heritage. The Chewa people of Chongoni have also been victims of colonialism and imperialism as will be demonstrated in the following Chapter.

The attainment of Malawian independence in 1964 brought some cultural ramifications. Attempts were made to address factors such as colonialism and foreign religions, which threatened cultural awareness, preservation and development by portraying African culture as primitive and backward. The new post-colonial government made attempts to instil in the minds of Malawians a sense of pride in their culture. Government and private institutions were established to manage and preserve Malawi's cultural heritage. The Department of Antiquities was created by an act of Parliament on 1st January 1965, its mandate was to study, preserve, conserve and protect Malawi's physical and cultural

heritage. Unfortunately, the legacy of colonialism still continued to haunt the Department of Antiquities as the new Act, which was enacted after colonialism, did not make any mention of community participation in the management of cultural heritage resources. This is further evidenced by the fact that all declared national monuments from the time of the creation of the Department of Antiquities, with the exception of two rock art sites, are colonial buildings, Christian churches and structures or sites associated with struggle against colonialism. The coming of multiparty democracy in Malawi in 1994 brought with it many other concepts such as decentralized governance, new legal systems, political plurality and other freedoms. These have necessitated government to promote a national identity for Malawi.

In this study, therefore, I will consider how the cosmopolitanism effect, which has been in existence from the pre-colonial era, has played a significant role in influencing the disconnection of the Chewa from their heritage. The study will further consider how cosmopolitanism can also be used to instil a sense of pride and ownership in the heritage sites as the people of Chongoni Dedza have adopted other cultures since the pre-colonial times.

4.2 Multiculturalism

The multiculturalism theory will be applied in the later chapter to understand the political and social processes that have affected the Chewa cultural society of Chongoni from pre-colonial times to present. Multiculturalism is generally used to describe societies where people of different cultures coexist. By definition, a multicultural society consists of several cultures and multiculturalism generally refers to a context of plurality or multiplicity of cultures (Barry 2001:148). It is about cultural diversity and or cultural embedded differences. Critics of multiculturalism argue that it weakens national identity and also that cultural majority can affect minorities and expose conflicts between cultures (Watson 1996; Wieviork 1998; Michael 2003). However, according to Gingrich (2006), the practice of multiculturalism allows for harmonious living and interaction amongst different cultures. African people are mainly identified by their ancestral roots. In this era

of democratic dispensation, the need to respect other people's identities and cultures cannot be overemphasized. Democracy should teach people that we are all equal and that no culture is superior over others.

In this study, multiculturalism will further be used to explore how the different cultural groups of Chongoni can work together for better management of the World Heritage Site. Not only Chewa people should be targeted as the Chongoni area is home to several other people with different ethnic identities which include the Yao and Ngoni. As we have noted in the preceding chapter, from the late nineteenth century the Chewa, Yao and Ngoni have co-existed despite their initial conflicts. For over a century now these three groups of people have lived together in this area without any major conflicts. Chongoni is now a World Heritage Site and it is not only the Chewa people who should pride themselves in this heritage but rather all the different groups of people living around Chongoni today. If we take the argument put forward by Smith (2001) that the *Nyau* rock paintings were only produced to serve a particular purpose during the Ngoni invasion, then the Ngoni people unintentionally and unknowingly contributed to the production of the paintings. It is, therefore, also part of their history.

4.3 Cosmopolitanism

The term cosmopolitanism is generally used to refer to the idea that all human beings create a single moral community. Cosmopolitanism "regard all the peoples of the earth as so many branches of one family" (Appiah 2006: xix). Appiah (2006: xix) further states that there are two strands that intertwine in the notion of cosmopolitanism. "First, as individuals, we have obligations to others that stretch beyond those that are related to us and secondly, we take seriously the value of not just human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance". There is a recognition that people are different and that we can learn from each other's difference. The differences should not drive us apart nor cause any clashes between different people but rather we should be willing to learn from others who are different from us.

The inhabitants of Chongoni can be described as a cosmopolitan society. Many people have assimilated different religions or spiritual beliefs, customs and languages which are not their own. The Chewa, Yao and Ngoni people have influenced each other in many areas for over a century. The arrival of different religions also brought with it different cultures. A lot of Yao people converted to Islam because of their contact with Arab slave traders who were mostly Muslims. When they settled in Dedza they brought with them their Islamic religion which they continue to practise today. The Christian missionaries on the other hand brought different religious cultures. As we have observed in the preceding chapter, the first Christian missionaries were from the Scottish Livingstonia Mission. Then the missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church arrived from Stellenbosch, South Africa. Finally, there were the Catholic missionaries who were mainly from France and Holland. The Chongoni people have over the time learned each other's language, culture and religion.

This study will, therefore, also consider how the concept of cosmopolitanism can be applied to understand the cultural dynamics among the present day Chewa, Yao, Ngoni, Christians and Muslims and how they can guide future management strategies in Chongoni.

CHAPTER FIVE: UNDERSTANDING THE DISCONNECT

This chapter aims to establish the reasons that led to the disconnection of Chewa people from their rock art sites. It builds on the previous chapter which focused on similar circumstances from other parts of sub Saharan Africa. The chapter will critically examine the stages and processes by which the local communities became separated from their ancestral heritage at Chongoni World Heritage Site and then use this knowledge in the subsequent chapter to make recommendations on how to improve the management and conservation of indigenous cultural heritage which is in danger of being destroyed by the communities. It will also be demonstrated that this disconnection happened gradually in a chain of connected events that systematically destroyed, diluted, replaced and even physically separated the Chewa from their own value systems, cultures and heritage.

5.1 Nineteenth century invasions

The invasions of Chewa lands by the Yao and Ngoni put a considerable amount of pressure on Chewa traditional customs. While the impact of the Yao invasion in the Chongoni area was limited, the Ngoni invasion was more devastating. The Ngoni, who sought complete domination over the Chewa, were open in their dislike of *Nyau* because it stood for local interests and local autonomy (Smith 2001:203). Therefore, they made serious attempts to suppress *Nyau*. This forced the Chewa and *Nyau* to go into hiding to continue performing their customs and traditions. Traditionally, *Nyau* performs from the *dambwe* which is normally a graveyard or thick forest, but not in caves. The Ngoni knew this and must have patrolled the potential hideouts just to ensure that *Nyau* was not being practised. The use of the caves must have been a last resort by the Chewa in an attempt to protect *Nyau* from elimination. Therefore, they chose new venues that the Ngoni never suspected. Smith (2001) also argues that attempts by the Ngoni to suppress *Nyau* forced the Chewa to go underground by abandoning their traditional venues and retreat to secret places.

The dating of the *Nyau* paintings coincides with the period of the Ngoni invasion (Smith 2001). Smith has argued that the *Nyau* paintings must have been executed during the

period of the Ngoni invasion and that they should be seen in that historical context. I support his argument. Some researchers (Schoffeleers 1973; Phiri 1975) have shown that *Nyau* predates the arrival of the Maravi. Its origins can be traced back to the proto-Chewa period. Schoffeleers (1973: 59) writes:

The *Nyau* are in all probability older than the rain shrines, going back in time to a hunting and food gathering economy. They formed part of the proto-Chewa culture as a means of solemnising female puberty rites and mortuary ceremonies.

The spread-eagled designs, which depict *chinamwali* rituals (Smith 1995; Zubieta 2006, 2009), have been dated to over 1500 years (Smith 1995, 2001). Now, if the Chewa painting tradition included the painting of *Nyau* figures, we could have seen the paintings much earlier than the nineteenth century. They could have been as old as the *chinamwali* paintings. The fact that they only appear within a specific period and cease soon afterwards strengthens Smith's argument. Today *Nyau* has returned to the *dambwe* and the paintings are no longer used. One of my informant, a village headman, when I asked him if he knew why the paintings were made on the rocks, he said as a young boy he recalls his grandfather telling him that people sought refuge in the rock shelter during the Ngoni invasions. According to this informant, that could be the only reason the paintings were made. He further said:

The Ngoni war ended long time ago. People no longer have to use the shelters for *Nyau* activities. In fact, painting of *Nyau* images the way they have been done baffles us. Why would people paint *Nyau* on rocks? Something out of the ordinary must have forced them to.

More than thirty informants, especially those living in villages near Namzeze rock shelter, also recalled that in the past *Nyau* used to operate from Namzeze rock shelter but did not understand why the paintings were made. When I suggested to them that maybe the aim was to teach young initiates some instructions or skills, they unequivocally

explained that boys are taught the crafts skills through demonstrations. Learners watch as elders are making actual masks. Smith (2001) writes that his informants also questioned why they should need images or models of *Nyau* figures when they were making real masks. His informants further informed him that the use of *Nyau* rock images would be problematic as they could not be hidden. Their use of Namzeze in the recent times, therefore, was because the site was ideal for their activities and not because of the paintings.

This helps to explain why the Chewa communities do not feel attached to these paintings. The sites were respected when they were at serving as *dambwe* during the Ngoni raids, but now the people have gone back to their real *dambwe* and the importance of the rock shelters and the rock art have been undermined. As illustrated in figure 5.1, the response to my question as to whether the paintings have any special significance to them, 70 out of the 100 people interviewed within Chongoni said no, 20 said yes while 10 were not sure.

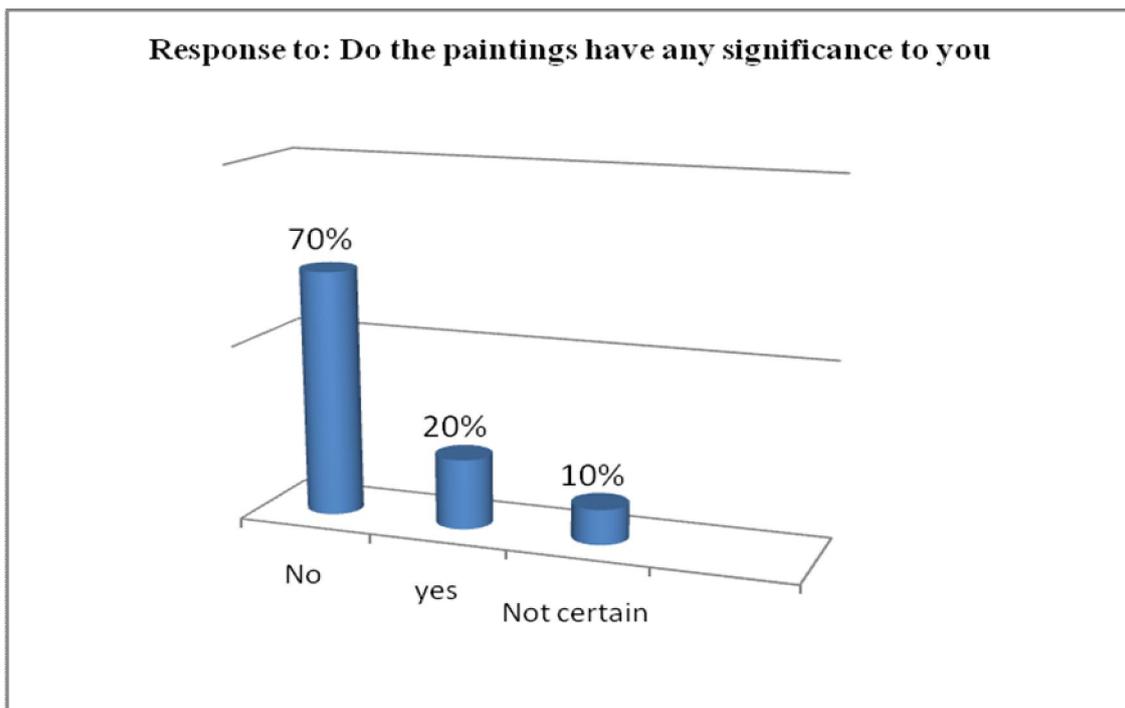


Figure 5.1: Significance of the paintings to the community

5.2 Christianity

We have seen in chapter three the conflict that existed between the Christian missionaries and *Nyau* elders. The struggle between *Nyau* and missionaries still exists today. Although white missionaries are now few and the leadership in most Christian churches is composed of Malawians, *Nyau* members are still condemned as sinners and every effort is still being made to convert them to Christianity. Today almost every village in Malawi has a church or prayer house. There are cases where entire Chewa villages, including the chief, have been converted to Christianity and the *dambwe* have ultimately been closed. The Chewa Christians are now despising their own culture. Those still practising *Nyau* are scorned and despised, they are called *a Mpingo wa Aroni* (members of the church of Aaron). Aaron is the biblical figure (Exodus 32) who let the Israelites make and worship an idol, a Gold Bull-Calf, while Moses had gone to the Mount Sinai for forty days to receive the Ten Commandments from God. So, in essence, *a Mpingo wa Aroni* are idol worshippers; meaning *Nyau* members are idol worshippers. There is still an ongoing campaign by Christians to turn the hearts of *Nyau* members to God. Those still clinging to *Gule wamkulu* are told to repent otherwise they will burn in hell.

Over seventy percent of the Chewa people I interviewed in Chongoni are converted Christians. They told me they cannot participate in *Nyau* because it is a bad custom. “*Nyau* and *chinamwali* are against our Christian morals”, they said. One village headman, a Chewa himself, who has been converted to Christianity and is now an elder of a local catholic church in the area, had this to say:

People at *dambwe* do all sorts of evil things. There is a lot beating, stealing and killing each other either physically or through witchcraft. All these things are not acceptable to God.

I asked him about the killing and why people should kill each other. He said in the past those who divulged *Gule wamkulu* secrets were killed. He explained how men would plan a supposedly ‘hunting trip’ with the man they wanted to kill. Once in the bush they would kill the person and bury him there. His wife and relatives would just be told that he

has been 'eaten' by a beast. He further explained that although at present the physical killing might no longer be there, *Nyau* members can still kill through witchcraft. I asked him if he ever participated in such 'hunting trips' or if he knew of someone who was bewitched for exposing the secrets. His answer was no but said this is what he was told when he went for initiation and that a lot of people also talk about it. It is, however, difficult to prove whether or not the killings really happened although there are also records by colonial officers of people being killed for revealing *Nyau* secrets. It could also just be one of the tactics the ancestors used to scare the boys and make sure that they did not reveal the *Nyau* secrets.

On stealing the informant explained that people wearing *Nyau* masks sometimes steal people's property under the disguise of the masks. He further explained that in the past young boys at the *dambwe* were somehow encouraged to steal. He told me that although it may be viewed within *dambwe* setting as teaching skills and how to be resourceful, the boys were nonetheless encouraged to steal. For example, each of the initiates would be told to go and bring back 5 chickens within 2 hours. The elders of the *dambwe* would use shadow marks to determine the time by which the initiates must bring the chickens. What should be understood is that the initiates did not have any money to buy the chicken; but failure to bring back the chicken would result in severe punishment such as heavy beating. What the boys did was to go to the villages and steal the chickens. This was shrewdly and cleverly done without people noticing. Within two hours every initiate was back with the 5 chickens. The informant told me that now that they are Christians they know that these things are bad.

When asked about the rock art sites, he said why should he care about something that is a representation of evil (*Nyau*)? He further told me that he cannot allow his children to participate in *Nyau* even if they wanted to because other Christians would laugh at him for failing to exercise control over his children. He said 'how can people (other Christians) respect me as their leader when they see that I am failing to lead my own children?' When I pressed further that the rock art sites are their ancestral heritage and that they need to protect them he explained that their parents were doing the rituals

because at that time the truth had not yet been known. God had not yet sent his 'light' to them. 'But we have received the light', he told me. The headman's views were shared by both Christian and Islamic religious leaders. One of the Christian leaders I interviewed is a reverend for the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). The reverend is a Chewa himself who was initiated into *Nyau* when he was a young boy. He repeated what the headman said about *Gule wamkulu* being evil because of what happens at the *dambwe*. He explained that there are several reasons why the church does not allow *Gule wamkulu* but the most outstanding ones are five and these are:

- Foul (obscene) language that is used by *Gule wamkulu*
- Killing of people who have offended *Gule wamkulu*
- Fighting and beating each other
- It is associated with witchcraft
- The place where it is done – the graveyard

The reverend further explained that some of the early missionaries wanted to incorporate some of the *Gule wamkulu* elements into the church but it was the overzealous African converts who refused. He cited an example of Reverend Namoni Katengeza who was the second black minister to be ordained in the Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP. The reverend said that at a meeting organized between government and Christian missionaries to iron out the differences between the missionaries and *Nyau*, some missionaries expressed willingness to incorporate some elements of *Nyau* into the church. But it was Namoni Katengeza who was outspoken in his opposition to such proposals. He reminded the missionaries that it was them who brought the gospel to the people for them to be 'saved' and the people have known and accepted the gospel, so why should they go back to sin? In the end it was resolved that no elements of *Nyau* should be incorporated into the church.

My informant explained that the position of the church today is a result of what our parents, who were the first converts, accepted and put in place for us. He cited another example that in Mvera, the early missionaries decided to allow those with two wives into the church hoping that during the course of learning the gospel, they would come to realize the 'truth' and subsequently drop one of the wives. This proposal was again shot

down by African converts who said ‘don’t accommodate sinners in the church’. Another informant, a catholic priest also concurred with the CCAP reverend. He told me that it is difficult to accept *Nyau* members into the church because of the evil things that take place at the *dambwe*. He said some of the things are in direct contravention of God’s commandments. When I asked him to elaborate he said *Nyau* members practise magic which is prohibited in the Bible. He further explained that *Nyau* members sometimes dance naked in the presence of women and children and that the songs they sing are mostly obscene. All these are contrary to the principles and teachings of the church.

On his part, a Muslim leader said that Islam does not allow its faithfuls to be *Nyau* members. He said according to Islamic teaching, use of a graveyard by *Nyau* members is not allowed. He further said that *Nyau* is associated with witchcraft. This view was shared by other people who associated the *Nyau* cult with witchcraft. This however could be because of the ruthlessness and cruelty that is displayed by *Gule wamkulu* and also the fact that it operates from the graveyard. Malawians in general strongly believe in the existence of witchcraft. Any unexplained death or illness is said to be the work of witchcraft. Alleged witches have even been tried in the constitutional courts of Malawi. There are several people at the moment who are serving prison sentences after being found guilty of practising witchcraft. The belief in witchcraft runs deep. In the past a lot of people died under the *mwavi* ordeal. *Mwavi* was a poisonous drink that people were forced to drink to prove whether or not they were witches. Those who died were said to be witches while those who did not die were said not to be witches. An elderly woman, who must be in her early nineties, told me that her mother told her that one of her uncles died due *mwavi* poison and that after the death the whole family was stigmatized because the uncle was accused of witchcraft.

This disconnection from *Nyau* and *chinamwali* of people who have been converted to Christianity and Islam has greatly affected the way they perceive the rock art shelters. The loss of the intangible values associated with *Nyau* and *chinamwali* has directly led to the loss of values for the rock art sites. I, therefore, argue that the conversion of many Chewa people to Christianity and Islam is one of the major causes for the disconnection

between the people and the rock art sites. Although Christianity and Islam did not physically remove the people from the rock art sites, they have made people look at *Nyau* and *chinamwali* with contempt and as a result they cannot attach any significance to the rock art sites which depict *Nyau* and *chinamwali*.

That notwithstanding, *Nyau* is also misunderstood by people of different ethnic identities who view it as an exhibition of savagery and backwardness. This has made a lot of Chewa people refrain from sending their young boys for initiation. After young Chewa boys have attained education, their view of *Nyau* becomes different. They begin to perceive *Nyau* as indeed an exhibition of savagery and obscenity, not something for the educated. They become 'too good' for *Nyau* which paints its body with mud, wears leaves or torn clothes or even dances naked. This problem has been compounded by the fact that today, a lot of Chewa people are mixed with other ethnic groups who constantly demonise *Nyau* to the extent of stigmatizing Chewa boys who have been initiated. Due to Christian influence, people of other tribes also ridicule the Chewa and their *Nyau* tradition. If a person of different ethnic identity wants to insult a Chewa person, he would usually say "a *Chewa kuzolowera Nyau*" (You Chewa are fond of *Nyau*) or *choka Nyau iwe* (go to hell you *Nyau* or animal). *Nyau* has therefore turned into an instrument for insulting Chewa people. This has forced a lot of young Chewa boys to disassociate themselves from *Nyau*.

Multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism have also made some Chewa people abandon their customs and adopt other people's culture. For example, there has been a departure from the traditional way that Chewa people conduct their *chinkhoswe* (marriage engagement). Today most Chewa people are doing the Ngoni type of engagement. The traditional Chewa *chinkhoswe* is viewed as not exciting and the couple does not receive as many gifts as they would if they conducted the Ngoni style *chinkhoswe*. This has also contributed to the loss of certain Chewa value systems.

5.3 The colonial government policies and legacies

The policies introduced by the colonial government consolidated the estrangement of Chewa communities from their heritage sites. The colonial government did not have any specific policy on immovable cultural heritage. In fact, no government department or institution was established that was responsible for the management and preservation of immovable cultural heritage. The Department of Antiquities, which has the mandate to manage and preserve cultural heritage sites was only created in 1965, after Malawi had attained independence. From 1891 when Malawi was declared a British Protectorate until independence, no single site in Malawi was declared to be of national significance. Although a number of rock art sites had been published as early as the 1950s (Metcalf 1956) no site was gazetted by the colonial government.

After Chongoni forest was declared a reserve in 1924, local communities were not allowed to use the forest. The forestry official I interviewed told me that during that time even those just passing by were apprehended. Grazing of livestock was also prohibited. This led to the physical disconnection between the people and the rock art sites. Smith (2001) has shown that the Chewa men must have continued the art of rock painting until the early twentieth century. Evidence for this comes from the painting of a *Nyau* car mask at *Namzeze* shelter. There is therefore a high probability that the Chewa were still using the sites either for painting or for other rituals when the forest was declared a reserve and the people were barred from accessing the area.

This period, therefore, represents the final physical disconnection of the people from the sites. During my research, more than 40 people I interviewed acknowledged the fact that their parents told them that during a certain period the shelters were used for *dambwe* but that they were forced to abandon the sites when the forest was declared a forest reserve. They also said that since the area was now in government hands and they had no control over it, it was difficult for them to continue using the place. They said that what they do is supposed to be secretive and non-initiates and women are not supposed to come to *dambwe*. When they still had control over the forest they had their own traditional systems and authority which ensured that non-initiates never came close the sites used for

dambwe and *chinamwali*. When government took control, non-initiated people had access to the sites. Government employed people to work and patrol the forest, some of whom were not Chewa and did not know anything about Chewa culture. Their sites were thus violated and their secrecy taken away. This forced them to abandon the sites and look for alternative places where their traditional systems of management would ensure that the sites were well respected. When I asked them about the rock paintings, there seemed to be a complete historical amnesia as most of the people could not remember why the paintings were made and how the paintings were used.



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Figure 5.2: Painting of a Nyau car mask at Namzeze rock shelter

During the colonial period, education was the responsibility of missionaries. Most mission stations also acted as education centres. In those days one could not differentiate between church and school. As we have seen in chapter three the Christian missionaries condemned *Nyau* and discouraged its members from participating in *Nyau* activities. The same missionaries who condemned *Nyau* were responsible for education. Obviously,

pupils were taught the evils of *Nyau* in these mission schools. Young boys who were educated by these mission schools and considered themselves civilised began to despise *Nyau*. Schoffeleers and Linden (1972) argue that one of the reasons *Nyau* elders fought with the missionaries was because mission schools were creating another class of people in the Chewa villages, non-initiates who rejected *Nyau* and did not participate in its activities.

Phiri (1975) writes that in the age of European imperialism in the nineteenth century, Christian missionaries could also act as agents of liberal industrialisation or capitalism. Mission stations, therefore, functioned as educational, industrial and commercial centres. Phiri (1975:207-208) further writes that “the attitudes then of the British towards their African subjects was that Africans were children who had to be regulated in order to appreciate and embrace the virtues of progress and industry”. The assumption was that Africans were politically helpless and industrially backwards, but would nevertheless make a contribution to the development of the colonial economy (*ibid*: 208). The British, therefore, imposed taxes on the Africans to force them to join the labour market. This forced many people to leave their villages and go to work on private European farms and mines so that they could earn money to pay the taxes. Phiri (1975) also observes that government agencies, missionaries, planters and the African Lakes Company (ALC) preferred the services of Chewa men who were recruited from the villages. Chewa porters were “indispensable to the expansion of African Lakes Company Trade Empire” (*ibid*: 208). The African Lakes Company was one of the early establishments in Nyasaland which came to do legitimate trade as opposed to slave trade. The overall impact of this was that many Chewa men left their villages to work in European plantations and mines where they became disconnected from their cultural heritage. Another implication was that some of these men were traditional leaders and this led to a break in traditional management systems.

5.4 Post-independence social policy and politics

Malawi attained independence from the British in 1964. The person who led the liberation struggle, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, became Malawi’s first president. His policy

on cultural heritage was complex. In the eyes of some people he encouraged traditional ways. He made deliberate efforts to revive traditional dances which he said were dying as a result of Christian missionaries. He particularly encouraged people to perform their traditional dances at his public rallies or functions. During Malawi's first Republic anniversary celebrations on 6 July 1967 in Blantyre this is what he told the people:

When I came here in 1958, all the traditional dances were dead or dying because the missionaries, with wrong ideas, told the people, the Christians, that African dances, traditional dances were heathen, savage and sinful. Therefore anyone who danced African dances would not go to heaven. As a result, African dances were dead. But when I came back I deliberately revived traditional dances.

Throughout his presidency traditional dances were performed at his functions. This led to revival and evolution of dances which were also used to celebrate the new won freedom. Furthermore, the dances were seen as an expression of national solidarity between people of different cultures. One of the dances that Banda liked and which featured prominently at his rallies was *Gule wamkulu*. Banda himself was a Chewa who had also been initiated into *Nyau* as a young boy. He, however, had a hybrid upbringing and most of his policies were a result of his cosmopolitan personality.

Despite his attempts to revive traditional dances, no deliberate efforts were made to undo the injustices of the colonial government and Christian missionaries' policies with regard to Chewa traditions and customs. As we have seen in chapter three, the colonial period made the Chewa people uneasy about their cultural spaces. Banda unwittingly perpetuated this legacy. He discouraged Malawians from identifying themselves with their cultural heritage. His government policies made no attempts to use the past or the country's heritage in national building as was the case in other countries in southern Africa such as Zimbabwe or South Africa.

Born in 1898 (Brody 2000) in Kasungu District of central Malawi, Hastings Kamuzu Banda was a product of the two great Chewa clans, his father's Banda clan and his mother's Phiri clan (Virmani 1992). His life from early childhood was influenced by mores and cultures of Africa, America and Europe. He had a hybrid identity, he was a cosmopolitan. At an early age of between 4 and 5, as was per Chewa custom, Banda was sent to live with his maternal grandfather, Chayamba. While staying with his grandfather, he learnt a major lesson that would strongly influence his presidential years (Brody 2000:7). Chayamba was a master farmer who practised good farming methods which gave him bumper yields all the time. When he became Malawi's first president after independence, Banda introduced agricultural policies that saw Malawi achieving agricultural excellence after the failure of plantation oriented colonialism (*ibid*).

Banda did not encourage urbanisation but wanted people to remain in their villages so that they could be productive farmers. His vision was for a nation of huge traditional villages where people would farm and produce food enough to feed themselves and with surplus to sell and have money to buy other necessities. He discouraged people from going to urban centres where there would be no farming opportunities. On 22 September 1968 Banda stated:

I will establish schemes throughout the country. Under this scheme, people can have a market near their villages; we can arrange better villages, not a little village there, a little village there, but villages properly arranged. There we can build a school, build a clinic or hospital, we can have water so that women do not have to travel many miles to go and get water. Under this scheme, many, many families will live in one village, one settlement.

From Banda's regime to present, the economy of Malawi is agriculture based and Banda made every effort to encourage all his people to be farmers and to achieve agricultural excellence. He subsidised agricultural inputs to make farming affordable and appealing to the people. By encouraging people to stay in the villages he created the conditions within

which traditional customs could continue and thrive. However, that was never really achieved. Why?

Banda came under missionary influence in the early days of his life when in 1905, at the age of seven, he enrolled for a school run by the Livingstonia Missionaries from Edinburgh, Scotland. In 1915, after completing standard three, he trekked to South Africa in pursuit of further education (Short 1974; Virmani 1992; Brody 2000). He stayed in South Africa for eight years where he worked at Witwatersrand Deep Mines. While there he stayed in hostels with Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho and Tswana and witnessed what he described as “the epitome of ethnic chaos” (Brody 2000: 20) as the workers fought savagely in the hostels and deep in the mines because of their tribal difference. From this experience Banda also learnt a lesson which was to inform one of his policies when he became president. Although he wanted his people to remain in their villages, instead of encouraging them to take pride in their customs, he alienated them from their ancestral roots. In his interview with Brody in 1989, about the day he arrived in Nyasaland after more than 40 years in foreign countries, Banda had this to say:

As I sat in front of my people, many, many, thoughts went through my mind. I knew that if we were to succeed in our struggle, that we must be united, one nation, one people; no Chewa, no Yao, no Tumbuka, no Lomwe, no Sena. No! We must be Nyasas. We must owe our allegiance to our homeland, not to our tribe. Our nation and our national spirit must override everything else. Everything else!

Although Banda made it clear that he was Chewa, his publicly stated vision was to create a nation of united people who did not owe allegiance to their tribe. Indeed throughout his presidential years Banda reiterated and enforced the need for national unity and identity. These words persistently echoed in his public speeches: “We are all Malawians. There must be no Chewa, no Ngoni, no Yao, no Tonga, no Sena, no Lomwe. *Tonse ndife a Malawi*. We must just be Malawians”.

As a result people did not want to be conspicuously identified by their tribe. This indirectly caused people not to associate with their ancestral heritage. People could not openly take pride in the immovable heritage of their ancestors because that could have been interpreted as being tribalistic. This fear of course might not have been warranted but Banda created an atmosphere of fear. Everyone feared his neighbour. He had spies everywhere. He created a political youth wing called the Malawi Young Pioneers. Members of this group were planted everywhere throughout Malawi and they terrorised people. People got arrested merely by saying I am a Chewa or a Yao or a Tumbuka. In such an atmosphere, could the Chewa or indeed any other tribe openly say “our ancestors left us this and as Chewas we must take pride in it?” As far as things were concerned, the heritage did not belong to any particular tribe, since there was no Chewa, no Yao, no Ngoni *etcetera*, it belonged to the whole nation and therefore it was government’s responsibility to manage it. That is why even today people do not feel particularly connected to cultural heritage sites, they have long been disconnected. An informant in Dedza had this to say when I asked him how people felt when the wire fence was erected around Chentcherere rock art shelter:

“there was talk going round in the villages at the time when the wire fence was erected that government wanted people of all tribes, even Europeans to come and see the paintings. Although these paintings are in Dedza, we were told they are not only ours, they are for the whole nation and government is protecting them for the nation”

From South Africa Banda migrated to the United States of America in 1925 where he obtained several degrees in the fields of philosophy, medieval history, language and political science. His desire however, was to become a medical doctor so that he could return back home to Nyasaland and serve his people. He, therefore, enrolled for a medical degree at the Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1937, Banda left America for England where he enrolled with one of the esteemed medical institutions, the University of Edinburgh to earn medical qualifications that would enable him to return to Nyasaland as a physician. While in Scotland he became friends with Scottish

missionaries who had served Nyasaland during their evangelical services (Virmani 1992; Brody 2000). In 1940, he was admitted to a membership of the Church of Scotland at Guthrie Memorial Church in Edinburgh where on 13th April 1941 he was ordained as a church elder, an experience that Banda himself described as “touching and humbling” (Brody 2000:43). He remained a church elder for the rest of his life. As a Christian and of course church elder, Banda did not want to go against Christian teachings. His government remained silent on the Christian missionaries’ policy on *Nyau* and *chinamwali*. This stand by the government has continued until now.

After Banda obtained a British medical degree, an offer was made to him by the Nyasaland government as a junior medical officer, but with severe social restrictions not imposed on British junior physicians with far less qualifications. Banda rejected the offer as “racist, demeaning and hypocritical” (Brody 2000:45). He, therefore, decided to start his own private practice in England. Throughout the entire period that he was away from home, Banda was kept informed about political events taking place in Malawi and sent financial assistance to the liberation movement which was being established in Malawi. In 1953, Banda left England for Ghana where he also practised as a private physician until 1958 when he decided to go back home to Nyasaland and help his people in the fight for freedom and liberation from colonial power. Upon his arrival to Malawi he received a hero’s welcome. Malawians looked up to him as their saviour who had to come from overseas to liberate them. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, called *Ngwazi*, or “fearless warrior”, was revered by the people of Nyasaland and later Malawi.

They gave him titles such as messiah and saviour. People listened to every word he said. His word was law. The traditional dances were in fact used to praise and glorify him. Some songs were composed which praised him while other songs scorned and bedevilled those who opposed him. His regime manipulated *Nyau* and used it for its own political purposes. As a Chewa who had been initiated into *Gule wamkulu*, Banda was aware of the roles that people wearing *Nyau* masks (with hidden identities) could play. Smith (2001) writes that people wearing *Nyau* masks were used to punish and eliminate dissenting views. The use of *Gule wamkulu* in such a manner had the negative effects of

diluting its values and acceptability of the Chewa influence by the general population. During the political rallies *Gule wamkulu* dancers were also ferried in lorries to the political venues where they mixed with a lot of people most of whom were non-initiates. Thus *Gule wamkulu* was taken out of its context and made to perform in non-formal functions and this led to the dilution of its values and the power of its secrecy.



Figures 5.3 and 5.4: Chimbano and Kamano, respectively

In the pictures above *Gule wamkulu* known as *chimbano* (left) and *kamano* (right) perform at Kamuzu Banda's political rally. Also note the singing and hand clapping women wearing party colours with Banda's portrait on it. The song for the *chimbano gule wamkulu* that is being sung by the women is titled "Kamuzu Banda *ndi mtima wa dziko*", meaning Kamuzu Banda is the heart of the nation. Most of these women sitting near *Gule wamkulu*, other than the hand clappers are non-initiates.

Although on one hand Banda appeared to be encouraging traditional ways, he was on the other hand calling upon Malawians to be progressive, civilised and aspire to be like Europeans. His stay for more than 40 years in America and England made him adopt American and European values which he wanted his people to embrace. He told Malawians that he decided to revive traditional dances because the Americans and the British also dance:

.... when I came back I deliberately revived traditional dances. Why did I do that? When I was in America and Britain, I saw Christians of all denominations, including my own church, the Presbyterian Church, dancing.

Banda maintained strong ties and feelings for Britain. He modeled his government on the British Parliament and built his private Grammar school, Kamuzu Academy, which was patterned after Eton School in England. His policies, however, sometimes conflicted. While encouraging his people to aspire to be like Europeans, dress and talk like Europeans, he also banned the wearing of miniskirts and trousers by women. Men were also not allowed to braid their hair or keep it long. He said he did not want ‘hippies’ in his country.

Malawians’ attitudes towards archaeology and immovable cultural heritage can also be attributed to Banda’s personal convictions and his government policies. Barely one year after independence, was the Department of Antiquities created. Banda’s government declared nineteen sites and buildings as protected national monuments between 1968 and 1985. Out of the nineteen monuments, 12 are of colonial significance (5 churches, 4 colonial administration buildings and 3 early missionary graves sites), 3 signify the struggle for independence, 2 have natural significance and two are rock art sites.

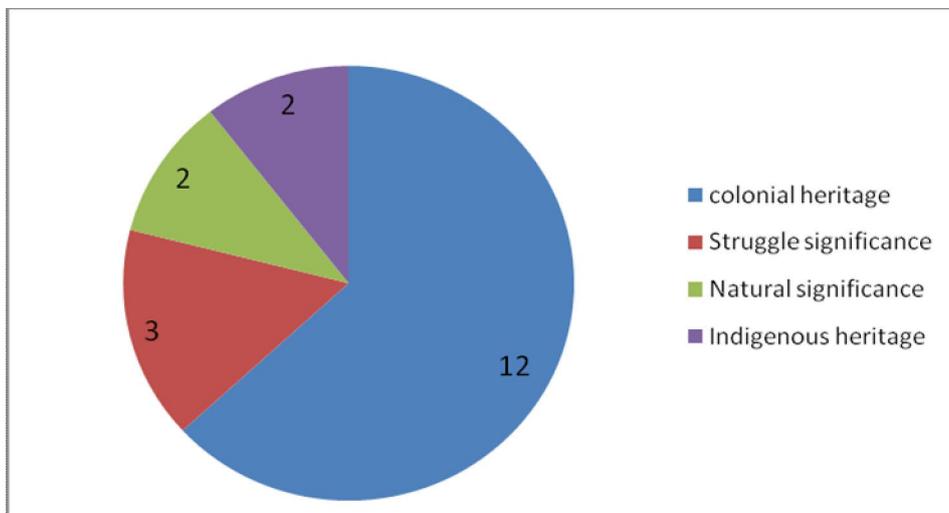


Figure 5.5: Declared monuments in Malawi and their attached significance

From the chart above, it is clear that there is a bias towards colonial heritage. Among the colonial buildings, there is also a bias towards churches, mostly Presbyterian churches as Banda himself was a Presbyterian. There is evidence that the coming of Islamic religion in Malawi preceded Christianity and that some mosques were built before the arrival of Christianity. We know this because Islamic religion in Malawi came with the Arab slave traders. One of the first Arab slave traders, Jumbe Salim bin Abdallah arrived in Nkhotakota District of central Malawi and settled among the Chewa between 1840 and 1850 (Pachai 1973; Phiri 1975). A mosque was also constructed whose ruins are still there today. However, the list of gazetted monuments in Malawi does not include any Islamic religion sites or any Catholic Church sites. This shows an obvious bias. Also conspicuously missing from the list are pre-colonial or traditional sites. Other than the two rock art sites, there are no sites that represent immovable indigenous (pre-colonial) heritage. This lack of recognition of the traditional heritage has made people feel that their traditional heritage is not important as it is not monumental; it is viewed as backward, primitive and therefore not worth preserving. When people see that government is recognising their traditional heritage and advocating for its preservation, it strengthens people's attachment to their cultural heritage. Government policies should therefore, aim at instilling a sense of pride in the people for their heritage.

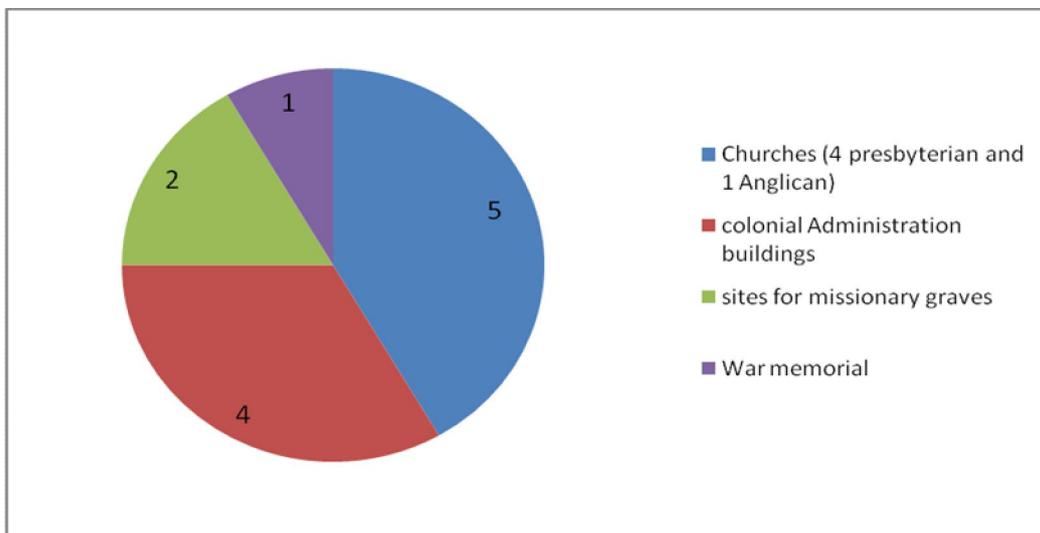


Figure 5.6: National monuments from the colonial period

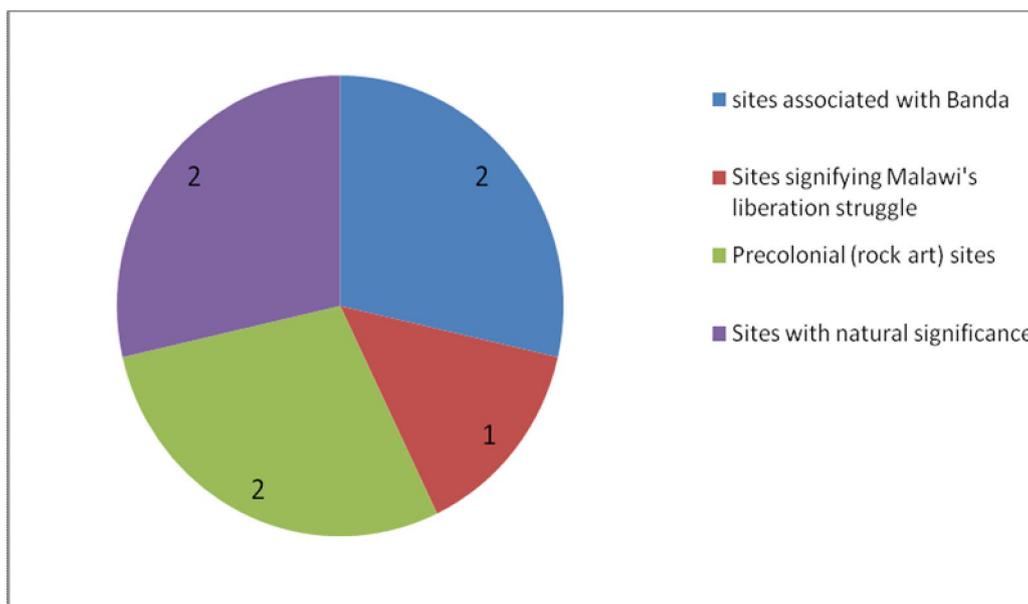


Figure 5.7: National monuments with non-colonial significance

5.5 Democratic government policies

Malawi became a multiparty democracy in 1994. The multiparty democracy brought its own challenges for the management and preservation of the cultural heritage of Malawi. The new United Democratic Front (UDF) government had its own priorities which were different from those of the previous government. Management and preservation of cultural heritage was the least of its priorities. Government departments were defined as either developmental or non-developmental. Those in the category of developmental, such as Health, Education, Agriculture, received the lion's share of government funding while non-developmental departments such as heritage, were allocated little funds. During the periods between 1994 and 2004, the government departments responsible for the management and preservation of cultural heritage could barely function as funds allocated to them barely even covered existing salaries. As a result the departments could not offer any protection to the cultural sites threatened by damage from development and desecration. In fact, most of the damage at Chentcherere rock art shelter was done from 1994 to 2004.

Departments were also judged by how much revenue they contributed to central government. Departments were therefore advised to intensify their revenue collection efforts and the incentive was that they would retain a certain percentage of what was collected. This is one of the major problems facing heritage institutions. They are expected to make considerable contributions to government and consequently the managers are forced to commercialise heritage sites and sometimes disregard the values of the sites. In this way the objectives of the cultural preservation are not being achieved. There is need to recognise that some heritage sites are better off not publicised if doing so would go against the interest of the communities.

The last monument in Malawi was gazetted in 1985 by Banda's government. From that time no single site has been added to the list of monuments. The Monuments and Relics Act, which governs the immovable cultural heritage of Malawi, provides for the establishment of the Monuments Advisory Council. One of the major functions of the Council is to advise the Minister in all matters affecting the collection, protection, conservation and of the preservation of monuments and relics. Section 11 (1) of the Act stipulates that "the Minister may from time to time, on the recommendation of the Council, by notice in the Gazette, declare any monument or any group of monuments or any relic or collection of relics to be a protected monument or a protected group of monuments or to be protected relic or protected collection of relics for the purpose of this Act". The new democratic government dissolved the Monuments Advisory Council in 1994 and up to now the Council has not been reconstituted. What this means is that the government has made it practically impossible to have any new moments declared. As a result traditional sites continue to be underrepresented on the list of national monuments. Local communities still hold the attitude that their heritage is not as important as the 'European' heritage.

With regard to traditional dances, the new UDF government continued to use *Gule wamkulu* at political rallies. Furthermore, since 1994 there has been an increasing number of performances which are purely for monetary gains. It is very common to find *Gule wamkulu* along the roads of the central region entertaining people just for money. The

researcher, though a woman who is not initiated, was allowed to take a picture of *Kasiyamaliro* (fig.5.8) from close range for a small amount of money.



©Photo by Chrissy Chiumia

Figure 5.8: Kasiyamaliro

Tourism has also reduced the rich spiritual and social meaning of *Gule wamkulu* out of its original context to pure entertainment. Performances are staged for tourists just for monetary gains. Malawi has also of late seen a proliferation of cultural dance troupes which also feature *Gule wamkulu* out of its cultural context. Today there is also evidence of a new threat to the values of *Gule wamkulu*. There is a new demand by local and international commercial art collectors who entice the practitioners to make and sell masks according to the tastes and demands of the world market. Due to the high degree of poverty, it is difficult for the mask makers to resist the temptation of selling them and the masks produced then move out of their cultural context. Although the institution is

still regarded as secret, its rituals have become demystified and it does not command the same respect as it used to in the past.

As already observed, *Nyau* operate from *dambwe* and these *dambwe* are normally a section of the graveyard where people have not been buried. Due to the high death rate partly due to HIV/AIDS, most of the graveyards are filling up and people have now encroached to the areas designated for *dambwe*. In some Chewa village there are no *dambwe* now as the areas are fully used for burying people.

In chapter two we noted that one of the criteria for inscription of the rock art of Chongoni on the World Heritage List was the intangible values associated with *Nyau* and *chinamwali*. The rock art sites had meaning to the Chewa during the time that they attached great value to *Nyau* and *chinamwali*. Now that most Chewa no longer take part in these rituals, the rock shelters have been rendered irrelevant or useless to them. Other than that, those still practising these rituals today can no longer use these sites because they have been desecrated as their respect and secrecy have been removed. Today, the sites are within the World Heritage Site and a lot of people, both local and foreign, have access to them as they are opened for public visitation. *Nyau* and *chinamwali* never operate in open areas where non-initiates can walk in at any time. Chirikure and colleagues (2009) argue that sometimes the interests of heritage managers and those of the local community militate against each other; this seems to be true with Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site. While the communities would want the sites to be kept away from intruders (non-initiates), government managers are busy publicising and marketing the sites for tourism purposes which goes against the interests of the local communities. This is because government would like to generate income to sustain conservation and other activities. Government employs people who are not initiated, and sometimes not even Chewa to explain the meaning and significance of these sites to the visitors. Obviously, the local communities have reservations about this as they may not trust what we tell visitors and sometimes they threaten to destroy the sites in protest.

CHAPTER SIX: TOWARDS A COMMUNITY DRIVEN MANAGEMENT: RECONFIGURING HERITAGE MANAGEMENT OF CHONGONI ROCK ART WORLD HERITAGE SITE

6.1 The discourse of community participation

The rock paintings of Chongoni were granted a World Heritage status in 2006. Being a World Heritage Site, the management of Chongoni needs to conform to policy guidelines enunciated by the UNESCO WHC and its affiliate bodies such as ICOMOS which emphasize the need for community involvement or participation in heritage management. Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have been criticized for not involving local communities in the management of cultural heritage especially after attaining independence (Ndoro 2001a; Chirikure & Pwiti 2008; Chirikure *et al.* 2009). For a long time, the local communities have been excluded in the management of both the natural and cultural heritage resources. Colonialism has been widely blamed as the cause of this practice as legislations enacted by the colonial governments deliberately alienated the local communities from their heritage while the interests of the colonisers were guaranteed (Ndoro 2001a, Munjeri 2005; Hall 2005; Karega-Munene 2009; Chirikure *et al.* 2009). In Malawi, however, the alienation of the Chewa local communities from their cultural heritage cannot only be blamed on colonialism. As shown in the preceding chapter, this alienation was caused by a connected chain of events which sprung from the pre-colonial times to present. Before the coming of Christianity and colonialism the Chewa communities and their *Gule wamkulu* tradition had already come under immense pressure from the invading Yao and Ngoni groups. The arrival of Christianity and later imposition of colonialism found an already culturally weakened Chewa society in Dedza struggling for survival. That notwithstanding, the missionaries and colonial government also attempted to suppress it further. The policies of the governments that followed after independence again consolidated the estrangement of the Chewa communities from their heritage sites.

Upon attainment of independence, most African countries did not live up to the expectations of the local communities with regard to heritage management and its use.

Most countries just adopted the colonial heritage legislations with little or no amendment at all. Obviously, the communities expected African governments to understand their needs, after all the leaders were Africans who understood African cultural values. Unfortunately, some countries made haphazard attempts to give back control of heritage sites to local communities. For example, after attaining independence, the indigenous community regained some control of Great Zimbabwe (Pwiti & Ndoro 1999; Ndoro 2001a) and the traditional leaders naturally expected to be allowed to resume conducting their customs and traditions as before. However, the independent government continued to manage Great Zimbabwe in a similar manner to the colonial government and prevented traditional customs from being practised at the site (Munjeri 2000, 2003). The traditional leaders felt that by being refused the right to continue their traditional practices the government was indirectly suppressing their traditional management system of the site (Pwiti & Ndoro 1999).

Similarly in Malawi, the government continued to bar the people of Chongoni from using the forest even after independence as the same Forestry Act which was enacted by the colonial government in 1948 was still being enforced. The Monuments and Relics Act, which was enacted after independence, was also mirrored on colonial legal frameworks which did not include community participation in the management of heritage. This means that local communities continued to be alienated from their heritage even after independence. With time however, some disgruntled communities protested against their exclusion and insisted on benefiting socially and economically from the heritage resources (Pwiti & Mvenge 1996; Pwiti & Ndoro 1999; Chirikure & Pwiti 2008). In some cases, communities vandalized their own heritage to protest against their exclusion. For example, in Domboshava, Zimbabwe, irate communities burned down a curio shop and sprayed oil paint on the rock paintings to protest their exclusion (Chirikure & Pwiti 2008). This was a clear message to the government authorities that if they could not benefit from the site spiritually and economically, then the Archaeologists and the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) would not benefit from it either (*ibid*).

Schmidt (2009) has noted that studies reveal that despite being independent, most countries are still not completely free from the colonial hegemonies because colonial influences continue to manipulate the ways in which the postcolonial world is constructed. This has perpetuated the exclusion of local communities in the management of heritage management even during the post-colonial period. Given this sad history of alienation of many local communities in the management of their heritage until recent times, the discourse of community participation has naturally appealed to heritage managers and communities alike (Ndoro 2001a; Fontein 2006; Chirikure & Pwiti 2008; Chirikure *et al.* 2009). Many books and articles have been written by heritage professionals (Deacon 1996; Pwiti & Ndoro 1999; Ndoro 2001a; Munjeri 2005; Mumma 2005, Chipunza 2005; Eboreime 2005, 2008; Kamamba 2005; Kamuhangire 2005; Abungu 2006; Chirikure & Pwiti 2008) on the need to involve the local communities in the management of heritage resources. Furthermore, to ensure that communities do not continue to be alienated from their heritage resources, donors and policy makers have made community participation a key requirement in heritage projects. This has compelled heritage managers to include statements in their management and action plans on the need to involve local communities (Chirikure *et al.* 2009: 32). This is also reflected in the management plan for Chongoni drawn by the Department of Antiquities in 2006, which underlined the need for local community involvement.

Questions remain as to whether community participation has been successfully translated into practice. Some efforts have been made to involve the Chewa communities in Chongoni. However, the local communities have mainly been used as labourers when the department is carrying out some works such as the maintenance of pathways to the site, clearing of unwanted bushes around the rock art sites and currently in the construction of an office block and information centre. Whether this fully meets the needs for local community participation is debatable. There remains a need to explore how the communities can be involved in a manner that instils a sense of ownership of the heritage resources. This is one of the best ways to ensure that the paintings are well protected and preserved.

Gwasira (2005) writes that when a community is properly involved in the management of the heritage resources and enjoys some of the benefits derived from them; it views the heritage product as its own and thus assumes the responsibility for its continuity. Citing an example of how local communities have been successfully entrusted with the management of wildlife resources in their localities in Zimbabwe, Chipunza (2005) observes that the communities feel a sense of ownership and responsibility over the wildlife under their custody. This is especially so because the communities are able to sell off some of the wildlife and its by products and derive a direct income for them. Such involvement of local communities has been one of the ways of making local communities appreciate the values that are enshrined in their heritage resources.

Eboreime (2008) has observed that the heritage of Africa is threatened by many factors which include lack of awareness of the value of heritage, low levels of funding and inadequate expertise and equipment. By making communities aware of the value of the heritage resources, we reduce the effects of vandalism or destruction on the resources. Lack of awareness of the value of the rock paintings seems to be one of the major causes of destruction as most of the recorded damage to the paintings is caused by human activities. Involving communities in the management of the sites and instilling a sense of ownership would perhaps offer better protection of the sites. The challenge remains on how to achieve this. Although the discourse of community participation has been overwhelmingly received by sub-Saharan African heritage managers, the level of involvement is sometimes not as straightforward as it would appear. It is difficult to prescribe how the community should be involved because local situations are different. Studies in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa have shown that the discourse of community participation has produced mixed results. Chirikure and colleagues (2009) argue that from a practical point of view community participation is not easy to apply and caution heritage managers that community participation is not a homogenous practice. They further argue that this is because at any given site the local situation is different; which implies that the needs are different. Community participation is also not an event but a process which evolves over time (*ibid*).

6.2 Community participation and the cases of sub-Saharan Africa

As already noted above, the problem of lack of community involvement in heritage resources management is not unique to Malawi. In a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, heritage managers have decried the lack of interest that communities show in the management of their heritage sites. Heritage managers also widely acknowledge that this lack of interest might be the result of some government policies which have intentionally or unintentionally alienated the local communities from their heritage sites. Attempts have, therefore, been made by different countries to ensure that the interests of the local communities are addressed. The way African countries tried to address these problems varied depending on the local situations. In some countries such as South Africa, Botswana and Namibia new legislations were enacted which made important concessions in favour of the local communities (Mahachi & Kamuhangire 2008 or 2009?).

In the section below I will provide examples of case studies where community participation or involvement has been applied successfully. The examples are drawn from two countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Great Zimbabwe and Kasubi Tombs in Uganda.

6.3 The case of Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site

During pre-colonial times Great Zimbabwe was managed through a system of traditional beliefs and customs (Ndoro 2001a, 2001b; Munjeri 2003). The site had traditionally been seen as the home of the ancestors where religious ceremonies were held. It has been reported (Pwiti & Ndoro 1999) that as recently as the twentieth century, cattle were sacrificed to the ancestors on the hill complex. With the proclamation of the site, and the new land as well as monument legislation by the colonial government, such practices were discontinued and settlement around the site became illegal (*ibid*). The government refused to allow the spirit mediums to enter the Great Zimbabwe enclosure and the traditional leaders were removed. The indigenous people then lost their right to manage Great Zimbabwe (Fontein 2006). The situation did not change immediately after independence and this brought conflicts between NMMZ and the indigenous communities who resorted to vandalizing the heritage resource in protest. In order to resolve this, a new approach was adopted. The indigenous people were included in the

management structure of Great Zimbabwe with the view to resolving vandalism and related activities that created conflict (Bwasiri 2008).

Today Great Zimbabwe is co-managed by the NMMZ and the traditional leaders. This has helped to remove conflicts between the indigenous communities and the NMMZ. The co-management assisted in establishing a good relationship between NMMZ and the local community in order to effectively manage and preserve the site. Through co-management the community came to understand that if the site is vandalised, so is their heritage. Great Zimbabwe is part of their heritage and, therefore, they are responsible for the preservation and conservation of the site (Munjeri 2003; Bwasiri 2008). Malawi can learn from the case of Great Zimbabwe. If we adopt a similar approach and include the local communities in the management of the rock art sites, we can reduce the rate of destruction of the paintings. Just like the case of Great Zimbabwe, the Chongoni rock art sites need to be co-managed by the Department of Antiquities and the local communities through their traditional leaders.

Although no research has been carried out on how the *Nyau* and *chinamwali* rock art sites were managed during the pre-colonial times, we can assume that there was some sort of traditional management system. Ndoro (2001a) writes that we should not think that heritage management started with European colonisation of the subcontinent. He argues that the fact that the Europeans found so many archaeological sites intact means that these sites survived because of some form of management. We need to revive the traditional systems so that they can work together with the Department of Antiquities. Deliberate efforts should be made to instill a sense of ownership of the rock art sites in the communities. Although the paintings may not have much significance to the present communities, the communities still have an obligation to preserve as they are part of their heritage. This can be done through consultations with the traditional leaders.

Ndoro (2001a) also writes that during the pre-colonial period most places of cultural significance allowed protection in the sense that no one was accorded free access to them except with the sanction of the religious or traditional leaders. As already mentioned, the

Department of Antiquities has been carrying out awareness campaigns amongst the communities around Chongoni rock art site. During these campaigns the department has been appealing to the traditional leaders to advise their subjects not to destroy the paintings. This has not yielded the expected results. The problem may be that the traditional leaders feel the Department of Antiquities is imposing itself on them and may not be advising their subjects at all. Traditionally, Malawians have great respect for their traditional leaders. If we involve the traditional leaders directly in the management of the sites, the problems currently being experienced by the department may be reduced. The application of community participation in the management of heritage site has also been successful in other countries in sub Saharan Africa. In Uganda, the Kasubi Tombs World Heritage Site is successfully co-managed by the community-based and state-based systems.

6.4 The case of Kasubi Tombs

Giving the example of Kasubi Tombs in Uganda, Kamuhangire (2005) has demonstrated how the community based/traditional systems of heritage protection and formal state based systems complement each other and can work hand in hand successfully. Kasubi Tombs, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in December 2001, are an outstanding example of the traditional Ganda architecture and palace design (Kamuhangire 2005). Located 4.5 kilometres from the capital Kampala, the site is a living heritage place that holds the remains of the former kings of the kingdom of Buganda (Kigongo & Reid 2007; Chirikure *et al.* 2009). The site is jointly managed by the Department of Museums and Monuments together with representatives of the sections of the Buganda family (*ibid*) and represents one of the successful examples of community involvement. The site measures 26.8 hectares (Kamuhangire 2005) and despite its proximity to the city centre with skyscrapers and other modern structures, the site remains intact from encroachment. Great importance is attached to the preservation of the heritage site not only by the government and the kingdom but also the general public. This was manifested in the loud protests by the public when there were rumours that an acre of the site land had been sold by the government to Shell Petro Company (*ibid*). While in some countries it has been the communities who are responsible for the

destruction of the own heritage resources, at Kasubi the community is seen to be in the forefront of protecting their cultural heritage. Kamuhangire (2005), therefore, argues that any successful management of cultural heritage in sub-Saharan Africa will need to integrate the two systems.

The case studies have demonstrated how communities can play a pivotal role in heritage management and preservation. In both cases management of heritage has been successful because local communities have been empowered to take part in the preservation of the heritage. Malawi needs to draw lessons from these examples if the destruction currently taking place at Chongoni rock art site is to be arrested.

6.5 The vision of Chongoni World Heritage Site management

The Department of Antiquities prepared a management plan as part of the process of inscribing the Chongoni rock paintings on the World Heritage List. One of the objectives of the management plan was to ensure that the economic benefits are brought back into the communities and that this will be achieved through employing as many people as possible from the local communities for various jobs that would be required. Another strategy would be to encourage the local community to set up tourism related businesses. However, the management plan is silent on how the community can participate in the management of the rock art sites. This is the challenge that still remains to be addressed by the department. There is need to bring the communities on board in the practical management of the rock art sites if the paintings are to be effectively protected. As already noted, it is the communities who are mainly responsible for the destruction of the paintings. What needs to be done, therefore, is for the department and the local communities to sit down together and agree on how best to manage the sites together.

As heritage managers we are guilty of imposing our ideas on the local communities. In most cases, we go to the communities with our ideas and impose them without giving the communities a chance to express their views. We arrange meetings with the local communities and go there with bottles of sodas and honoraria which we distribute to the communities. Then we prescribe for them on how they should be involved. We do not

really give them a platform to express their views on how they think they can help in the management of the heritage resources. This has resulted in the communities showing attitudes which are indifferent. Indeed the local communities of Chongoni have never been asked to give their views on how they would want to be involved. There is also a similar situation at Kondo in Tanzania where the Department of Antiquities just prescribed to the local communities how they should be involve without really giving them a chance to tell the Department their needs (Bwasiri pers.comm.).

It is important to note that management of cultural heritage is not tied to a single institution but, rather multiple stakeholders. All the relevant stakeholders and institutions need to participate at all levels, from planning to decision making if we are to achieve proper management of our heritage sites. Usually, these stakeholders range from government institutions, local communities, researchers, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and business people. The stakeholders have different opinions which will lead to the better management and protection of the heritage sites.

Economic benefit sharing is one of the strategies that easily appeals to the local community. With the level of poverty around Chongoni, it is only fair that our strategies should contribute toward the alleviation of poverty in our communities. We should endeavour to develop systems that can contribute to local economic development. Empowering traditional leaders within heritage management can be achieved by creating employment and training opportunities in field of conservation and in the management of cultural heritage. Only through resource benefit and sharing between the government cultural heritage managers and local communities can a holistic understanding of indigenous cultural heritage be achieved and managed (Bwasiri 2008).

Realizing the need for resource benefit sharing, the Department of Forestry in Chongoni has reviewed its Forestry Act to accommodate the needs of the local communities. The first Forestry Act which was enacted by the colonial government in 1942 legislated for the exclusion of the local communities. Some villages were even moved out of their ancestral land in the forest. The communities were not allowed to use any of the

resources of the forest. Even passing by the forest was seen as trespassing and the people were fined. In order to redress the situation the new Forest Policy and Forest Act were drawn up in 1996 and 1997, respectively. The new Act removed some of the old restrictions to allow the local communities utilize resources from the forest. For example, villagers are now allowed to collect grass for thatching from the forest. The communities are also allowed to collect free fire wood for cultural activities such as *chinamwali*, weddings, funeral etcetera. The department has also allowed the villagers to install beehives in the forest for honey production which they subsequently sell and earn some income. Furthermore, the villagers are allowed to buy a head load of firewood for a small amount of 10 Malawi Kwacha which is an equivalent of 40 South African cents. This head load is then sold by the villagers at Chimbiya Trading Centre at a market value of 500 Malawi Kwacha which is an equivalent of 20 South African Rand. In this way, the forest is helping some of the people with direct income which they can use for some of their daily needs. One villager I interviewed told me that he is able to send his children to school using the income that is derived from the forest. Here the communities are seen to be enjoying some of the benefits accrued from the forest resources. This has in turn instilled a sense of ownership for the forest by the communities and as a result they are the ones who are in the fore front protecting it. They now realize that they are the immediate beneficiaries of the forest and that if the forest is destroyed, so is their source of livelihood. Ploughing back some of the economic benefits accrued from the heritage resources, therefore, is considered as one of the sustainable ways of managing heritage resources as communities see their value and hence rationale for protecting them (Manyanga 1996, 2003; Abungu 2006; Chirikure *et al.* 2009).

The foregoing should not be taken to mean that communities are only interested in the economic benefits that are derived from the heritage resources. Indeed sometimes the traditional values that are attached to the heritage resources can outweigh economic benefits. Sometimes letting the community share in the use of the resources can also be equally appealing. For example, the forest officials at Chongoni now allow the local communities to use the forest as *dambwe*. There are at present three *dambwe* in the forest which have been operating from the late 2000s. The traditional leaders are happy to be

back to the places that their ancestors were operating from. Although they no longer use the rock art sites because of the secrecy involved with their rituals, they are nonetheless happy that the Department of Forestry has now made concession to their need. When I asked the other villagers if they would also like to have their *dambwe* in the forest their response was overwhelmingly positive.

Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site is a unique place in that it contains both tangible and intangible heritage which have world heritage status: the rock art was declared a World Heritage Site in 2006 while *Nyau* tradition, which is also depicted in the paintings, was declared by UNESCO as a Master Piece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005. It is, therefore, only proper that the management of the paintings should also involve the community. While heritage managers can think that they have adequate capacity to manage and preserve the paintings, they cannot preserve the intangible *Nyau* traditions by themselves. Obviously, it is only the local community with their traditional systems who have the capacity and capability to preserve the *Nyau* tradition. What is needed is a coordinated management of the different types of heritage to ensure effective management as these are intricately interwoven.

There is also need for dialogue between government and the religious community on the perception of *Nyau* tradition. How can we, as government heritage managers advocate for the preservation of the painting and the *Nyau* tradition while at the same time the religious leaders are telling their faithful to denounce *Nyau*? It is indeed going to be difficult task to manage and preserve the heritage sites together with the communities if government and religious leaders give contradictory messages. Who are the people going to listen to?

Other than the religious community there is also need for dialogue with other groups of people on the same issue. It is not only the Chewa who are damaging these sites. As we have seen in chapter three the Chewa people of Dedza saw other groups of people arriving and settling in the area from the late nineteenth century. Since that time these people have been living in the area. They have co-existed with the Chewa for more than a century now. They have become a multicultural society. As we defined in chapter four,

multiculturalism is generally used to describe societies where people of different cultures coexist and that the practice of multiculturalism allows for harmonious living and interaction amongst different cultures. In Chongoni, you have Yao and Chewa villages in the same area and under one group village headman. For example, the Yao village of Malindima and the Chewa village of Nyau are so mixed that you can hardly see the boundary. While they maintain their separate identities, they are living in one society and have obligations towards one another as members of the same society. The Yao and Ngoni therefore, have an obligation to respect and protect Chewa heritage just like the Chewa have obligations over the Ngoni and Yao heritage. These groups of people, therefore, need to work together in the management and preservation of any heritage that is within their area.

During my interview with elders of Malindima village, which is predominantly Yao, they claimed that their ancestors also made some of the rock paintings that are in Chongoni. Of course this is a subject for further research. However, what this means is that the Yao people also attach some significance to the paintings whether or not their ancestors indeed executed some of them. There have also been intermarriages between the Chewa and Yao, Chewa and Ngoni, Yao and Ngoni. There are different religious groups that have been in the area now for over a century; the Presbyterians from Scotland and South Africa, Catholics from France, Netherlands, Germany *etcetera* and Muslims mainly from the Middle East. There has been a mixture of cultures in this area and the people have been creolized. These people have now become one family, they are cosmopolitans. Appiah (2006) states that cosmopolitanism “regard all the peoples of the earth as so many branches of one family”. The inhabitants of Chongoni, therefore, have obligations to one another as members of one family. There is need to adopt a management system that is inclusive. The other groups need to be included since they are also living in the same area.

Above all, Chongoni is now a World Heritage Site which means its significance is now universal. The people of Chongoni, therefore, have a collective responsibility of preserving the paintings for the whole world.

6.6 Reconciliation and Multiculturalism

There have been some attempts of late to incorporate *Nyau* into some Christian churches today. An example is from the Roman Catholic Church at Mua Mission in Dedza District. With the advent of the Africa synod by the Catholic Church in Africa, people are now allowed to worship in their traditional ways. Some African dances but not *Nyau* are performed during church services. As a departure from the norm, Father Claude Boucher, a parish priest at Mua mission has allowed people wearing *Nyau* mask to participate in the church services. *Nyau* dancers, Ngoni dancers and Yao dancers all participate in the church services. These three cultures predate Christianity and Boucher is trying to find a consensus rather than competition.

Father Boucher established the Kungoni Centre of Culture and Art which also houses the Chamare Museum. The Museum has a collection of over 400 *Gule wamkulu* masks. These masks are made by Roman Catholic Church members who are initiates or practitioners of *Gule wamkulu*, but have been baptized into the Catholic Church. Mapopa Mtonga (2006) observes that this new reconciliation between some sections of the Church and *Gule wamkulu* is aimed at fostering unity and cooperation between institutions that fought one another during colonial times.

Some religious leaders including those from the Catholic Church openly condemn what father Boucher is doing and have labelled him as a ‘confusionist’. But as heritage managers, this is a welcome development because it will help in resolving some of the prejudices against *Nyau*. A lot of Chewa Christians will also welcome this development because it will ‘free’ them because at the moment Chewa people have to literally choose between their *Nyau* culture and Christianity. Various ways need to be explored concerning how a Chewa can be a Christian without having to denounce *Gule wamkulu*. How can a Chewa remain a Chewa while a Christian? There is need for government, church and society to find a way forward on this. As one of the Reverends I interviewed pointed out, “we are today following what our forefathers accepted from the early missionaries and put in place for us”. This can surely be reviewed. The example set by Boucher needs to be emulated by other churches. Christianity and culture do not have to

clash. Christianity found these people with their culture. The church and the people, therefore, need to co-exist and tolerate each other's cultures as they are living in a multicultural society. Father Boucher is using the concept of multiculturalism to unify rather than divide the people.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to investigate the historical and social-political processes that led to the disconnection between the Chewa people of Chongoni, Dedza and their rock art heritage sites. Despite the available evidence that the authors of the white paintings were the ancestors of the Chewa people, the present Chewa communities do not feel any sense of ownership and do not attach much significance to the paintings. The study has established that it was not one single event that led to the estrangement of the Chewa communities from their heritage sites. Rather, it was a chain of connected events from the pre-colonial to post-colonial times. Collectively, these events have led to the current situation in Chongoni where the Chewa communities have abandoned their ancestral heritage sites and are even participating in their destruction.

We have seen in chapter five that Hastings Kamuzu Banda, the first President of Malawi after independence, did not encourage multiculturalism because he believed it would create disunity among Malawians who had just fought colonialism together as one nation. However, today in Malawi the concept and practice of multiculturalism is now gaining ground. All the major ethnic groups have established their cultural organisations and meet every year to celebrate together. The Chewa have established the Chewa Heritage Foundation (CHEFO), the Lhomwe have *Muhlakho wa Alhomwe*, the Ngoni have *Umtheto* and the Yao cultural organisation is in the pipeline. All these cultural organisations were formed to celebrate the existence of their identities and cultures. During these celebrations, people of other tribes are invited to celebrate together.

The current president, Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika, has been guest of honour during most of these events. Although he is Lhomwe himself, he has attended Chewa, Ngoni and Tumbuka celebrations. His government policy is encouraging multiculturalism. This has helped to bring cultural tolerance and unity among people of different tribes. Malawians now are aware that there is unity in diversity. This provides an opportunity for the different ethnic groups living in Chongoni to work together to preserve the paintings. Using the concept of multiculturalism, we can expand people's horizons by exposing

them to different cultural heritage; and as the concept of cosmopolitanism states that we have obligations to each other, the different groups of people in Chongoni need to share the responsibility of preserving the rock art sites.

Community participation is not an automatic process. This is the view that some heritage managers and researchers have. However, the case of Chongoni has proved that community involvement needs to be promoted and encouraged if the paintings are to be preserved believing that communities are the owners of the heritage that we strive to protect and preserve. A number of researchers and heritage managers have decried the high rate of destruction to our African heritage much of which is done by the communities. African heritage sites are already underrepresented on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Despite this fact, most of the World Heritage Sites which are in danger are from Africa. This is a big challenge facing African heritage managers today.

I have personally attended several workshops and seminars on management and conservation of immovable cultural heritage. My colleagues from different countries have also expressed similar concerns about mismanagement of cultural heritage. The question is why is this a common problem? We, therefore, need to critically re-examine our management systems. The fact that these sites have been declared national monuments or have world heritage status means that they are considerably significant to the communities and the nation as a whole. As heritage managers, we are simply employed to manage the sites on behalf of the communities. But the communities do not see it that way. It is therefore important that we change the mind set of our local communities. They need to understand that we are preserving these sites for them. It is our duty as heritage managers to ensure that we give back to the communities the pride that they once had for these cultural heritage sites. To achieve this, government heritage institutions should facilitate the establishment of a management system that is inclusive of all the key stakeholders.

Most of the legal frameworks in sub-Saharan countries are outdated. Mumma (2005, 2008) has written on the need for reviewing heritage legislation. Mumma (2005:22-24)

further criticises the fact that many African countries are changing their laws but are not embracing a new philosophical and policy stance with respect to the role of the local community-based systems in heritage management. He argues that often the legal reform is designed simply to improve the effectiveness of the state-based system itself. To resolve the current management and conservation problems facing African countries, there is need to review or even rewrite our laws so that we empower local communities to manage their cultural heritage. The state based and community based systems need to work in complementarity. Communities on their part need to realise that culture is not static and, therefore, they should not be rigid but change and adapt to new situations so that the present generations can appreciate and find them relevant.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRES

A. Questionnaire for chiefs and elders from villages around Chongoni World Heritage Site (for both men and women but administered separately):

1. What do you know about the paintings?
2. What do the paintings mean?
3. Why were they made in the shelters?
4. Have you ever used the sites?
5. When did you last use them? (If yes to 4)
6. Why did you stop using them?
7. Why do you think the sites are no longer being used? (If answer to 4 is no)
8. Do the paintings have any significance for you today?
9. Would you like to use the sites again?
10. If yes, how would you like to use them?
11. The rock art sites were recently inscribed on the World Heritage List, what role do you think you can play in the management and conservation of the sites?
12. Who do you think are the people damaging the site and why?
13. How have things changed historically with regard to your cultural heritage?

B. Questionnaire for religious leaders (Catholic, Presbyterian and Muslims)

1. Are you aware that there are rock paintings in Chongoni?
2. Do you know what the paintings depict? (If yes to 1)
3. What is your church's/Mosque's stand on Nyau and *chinamwali*?
4. How do you think the church and *Nyau/chinamwali* can work together so that the Chewa people are not forced to choose either Christianity or their culture?
5. Father Boucher at Mua mission has incorporated *Nyau* and other local cultures in the church, what is your view on that?
6. Do you think you can emulate him?

7. Chongoni is now a World Heritage Site and Nyau was declared a Master piece of Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, how do you think we can make the local people proud of their culture and encourage them to preserve it?
8. Has the church any role to play in the preservation of the traditional heritage, both tangible and intangible?
9. Do you think the church should continue refusing members of *Nyau* from joining the church?

C. Questionnaire for Archaeologists and Historians

1. Do you think people in Malawi are fully aware of their history and archaeology?
2. In a number of countries in southern Africa, cultural heritage was used in nation-building after attaining independence; do you think Malawi did the same?
3. Do you think Malawians are aware and proud of their cultural heritage? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Do you think Malawians feel connected to their indigenous heritage?
5. What role do you think cultural heritage can play in nation building?