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Malawi's Tobacco Paradox: Short Term Survival Versus Long Term Languish

Over the past four decades, the tobacco companies have faced increasingly stringent regulations in the United States and in Europe. In order to maintain their level of profits, tobacco companies, like British-American Tobacco (BAT) and Philip Morris International (PMI), needed to expand their influence, explore new strategies, and tap into markets abroad. Therefore, the tobacco companies adjusted their sales techniques to the cultures of each unique country they were trying to market to. One of these countries is a small sub-Saharan African nation called Malawi.

Malawi, formerly a British protectorate, was granted independence in 1963 and currently has about sixteen million inhabitants. Malawians face the problems of abject poverty with a GNI per capita of about \$360. In addition to economic problems, there have been many instances of corruption and public health issues like HIV/AIDSⁱ. The current President, Joyce Banda is the second woman African President and has sparked a great deal of optimism in the country by encouraging freedom of press, improving the energy sector, and restoring confidence with the International Monetary Fundⁱⁱ. Two alarming facets of Malawi are the country's dependence on tobacco as a cash crop and the increasing trend in consumption of tobacco products. This comes to the dismay of both public health officials and economists alike. Over 180,000 hectares of land are dedicated to producing tobaccoⁱⁱⁱ and the cigarette consumption rates have nearly tripled in thirty years^{iv}. Since the Malawian farmers depend on this product and since a majority of revenue is derived from tobacco, the government, including President Banda, also endorses tobacco as not only means for taxes, but also a means for Malawians to survive the rampant poverty that plagues the country^v. Thus, a public health dilemma unfolds in Malawi with Malawians opposing international anti-tobacco legislation and health officials urging the government to consider the health ramifications in the future.

While carrying out preliminary research on this topic, we hypothesized that tobacco consumption in Malawi is increasing because of differing public opinions and strategies when it comes to the actual effects of tobacco on the environmental, economic, and social structure of the country. These conflicting opinions are highlighted in the issues of: deforestation, child labor, and crop substitution. Essentially, the tobacco companies, health officials, governments, and economists all have different visions when it comes for the future of tobacco and are all hoping to put forth their views to create an international agreement. However, with the sheer volume of parties all having a stake in the outcome of tobacco, it is almost certain that some sort of conflict would ensue. During our study, we learned that it is impossible to consider only one side's opinion when it comes to the regulation of tobacco and that there will be disagreement on the proper handling of the issue between those who believe that tobacco is more important for the economy and those who believe that tobacco is detrimental for public health.

Methodology:

To gain an understanding of culture in Malawi we consulted with a variety of online sources. Several news sources like the Nyasa Times (<http://www.nyasatimes.com>) and the New York Times (nytimes.com), amongst others, helped us understand the current happenings in the country, including issues regarding the economy, agriculture, and politics. We also worked

with sources like The American Journal of Public Health (ajph.org) and Tobacco Control (tobaccocontrol.bmj.com) to understand the level of tobacco control in Malawi and how tobacco was perceived culturally. Sources like the World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org>) and the World Health Organization (<http://www.who.int/en/>) were used to gain insight on indigenous health problems that the Malawian populace is facing and how they affect the public health outlook when it comes to tobacco.

During our study we primarily used the Legacy Tobacco Documents Library (<http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu>), a database compiled by the University of California in San Francisco. This database contains over fourteen million internal tobacco documents used for litigation and research alike. The database consists of marketing strategies, letters, faxes, memos, and many other documents that provided us with a firsthand look on how the industry dealt with the economy, government, and public health organizations in order to sell more of their product. Like any other literature study, it was important to understand how to fully utilize the database to elicit pertinent results. Normally, the searches would contain two to three criteria to narrow down the results without being too specific as to having limited results. When performing the searches, it was vital that the proper criteria be entered into the search fields. In almost every search "Malawi" was used as one the criterion.

Depending on the issue, other search terms were added like: "deforestation", "child labor", and "crop substitution." When we were exploring the tactics used by tobacco companies and health anti-tobacco organizations alike, we entered in the terms "Malawi," "consumption," and "strategy." These criteria gave us comprehensive searches that resulted in positive findings. The database was particularly useful because it allowed us to sort documents by specific dates, people, tobacco companies, and locations. If we found a particular subject or person of interest in a document we would implement a "snowball" search, which involved further researching that specific topic by using the subject or name in an advanced search. This is all in hopes that the search would lead us to further findings that could prove helpful to our study^{vi}.

It was important that a degree of standardization be maintained when using this resource. In order to acquire this uniformity, the documents examined were among the first fifty that appeared based on the criteria entered in the advanced search. We determined the documents we would use by assessing their relevance, redundancy, length, and substance. Usually documents that were two pages or under were not particularly fruitful for study. These documents may have been small faxes, e-mails, or memos and were not substantive. The remaining documents that we deemed pertinent would be the documents that we would examine.

Specific topics, like deforestation, crop substitution, and child labor illustrate the effects of the conflicting interests. Our examination of their differing perspectives on these three topics has shown how tobacco control is hindered and consumption increases in Malawi in a more textured and genuine way.

Consumption:

The first step in actually showing that there has been difficulty with regulating tobacco in Malawi is to find that tobacco companies did indeed try to sell products to Malawians. It was also necessary that we examine the tactics used by the industry to sell their products including ways to lobby effectively and battle any criticism. Additionally, it was imperative that we

understand if any party was trying to counter the tobacco companies to gain a full understanding of the tobacco regulation arena in Malawi.

Our searches would contain words along the lines of “Malawi,” “consumption,” “strategy,” “marketing,” and “advertising.” When delving into this topic, Legacy showed us that certain tobacco companies have a genuine interest in marketing to Malawians. One of these companies was British-American Tobacco (BAT). In fact, they have created several strategic plans for marketing to Malawi as well as marketing to much of Africa. For instance, one document entailing their marketing plans from 1998 to 2000 shows how BAT feels that companies like Philip Morris International (PMI), who are trying to provide product that could compete with BAT’s Life cigarette, are threatening their 98 percent market share. They also plan on introducing a new menthol line of Life cigarettes to test the profitability of that type of product in the country^{vii}. This illustrates that BAT was not only interested in marketing to Malawians, but also that BAT had an active strategy implemented to increase the level of consumption in Malawi.

Amidst intensifying global pressure from the WHO, PMI realized that a new strategy had to be forged in order to maintain their profits. Consequently, PMI executives and strategists met in Boca Raton, Florida in 1988 alongside government officials and policy-makers, namely, Heatherwick Ntaba of Malawi. Together, they discussed policies on how to combat the WHO’s anti-tobacco sentiment and how they could make the WHO’s policies seem unrealistic. They also discussed ways to deflect government regulation and improve the industry’s public image.

"Science and Technology (S&T) division of Philip Morris Europe [PME]...provided 'scientific assistance' to allies such as smoker's rights groups in their attack on WHO's anti-tobacco programme...and personalities close to the government in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and South Africa...' Several documents indicate that Philip Morris cultivated a relationship with WHA delegate and representative to the WHO Executive Board, Heatherwick Ntaba,' the Chief of Health Services from the Malawi Ministry of Health...^{viii}"

PMI at one point planned on using food subsidiaries, to help developing nations with their food crises. This [assistance](#) would not only appeal to the government and soften their level of enforcement, but also counter some of the WHO's claims that PMI acts malevolently to developing nations, yet another instance of corporate social responsibility used to mask the true intentions of the industry. The industry also planned on attacking the WHO internally. They ascertained that a substantial portion of the WHO came from private contributions and that the funds could be reduced through proper persuasion^{viii}.

These plans and tactics did not go unanswered, however. Organizations like the World Health Organization and World Bank began to fully comprehend the lengths at which the tobacco industry would go in order to sell their product in developing nations. They learned that - in places like Malawi - "...multinationals began to target nations where regulations were weaker. The laws tended to be especially weak in nations that were significantly dependent on tobacco revenues and those with less stable governments"ⁱⁱ.

Tobacco companies would also try to twist the WHO's own global health policies to make them seem inappropriate and irresponsible. They argued that the WHO should be concentrating on "societies where infectious disease and violent trauma remain significant causes of death..." and not concentrate so much on tobacco regulation"ⁱⁱ. How did they respond accordingly?

According to Wander and Malone, two anti-tobacco advocates, "...engagement with the industry can focus attention on tobacco control issues, negotiations or settlements may undermine delegitimization and provide the industry with opportunities to improve public relations, and in the end, garner relatively little for public health". The transnational tobacco companies have numerous approaches to sell their product, but the health groups have just as much of an imperative to battle tobacco companies. For instance, the World Health Organization knew exactly how to campaign against the tobacco industry. At first, they were worried about losing their good faith with big businesses, but they strategically attacked tobacco at the right time insisting that tobacco was one of the few businesses with which they had qualms. They emphasized that non-communicable diseases were a universal problem and did not belong to a specific socioeconomic class. In addition, they knew that the World Bank had already stated that the health impacts of smoking far outweighed the employment or agricultural benefits from tobacco. The WHO not only criticized the product, but also the unethical nature of the marketing. Smoking was not a choice for many developing nations because they did not know any of the risks.

The WHO did manage to get a treaty passed in 2003, but only after some of the provisions were weakened after tobacco lobbying. This treaty was called the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the FCTC. The WHO created this joint resolution to address issues like selling tobacco to minors, smuggling tobacco, and tobacco label regulations. Over 180 countries supported the provisions, but only after many modifications and tobacco lobbying^{ix}. Although they did not get the FCTC through exactly as they imagined, it still managed to pass while the organization maintained their pro business reputation. The organization attained a new level of credence with foreign governments and now had an international voice^x.

In 2000, BAT issued a formal statement in response to the WHO's FCTC. The industry asserts that the WHO is infringing on people's right to choose and mismanaging its agenda and the draft of this statement shows BAT's resentment of the premise of such a treaty. "The assumption on which the FCTC is drafted so far and that advocated by the WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative, is that one set of laws to reduce tobacco consumption apply equally to all countries and all cultures. While respecting the WHA's intention, we do not believe that this is necessary, practical, or sensible." BAT goes on to say that governments should offer people help to quit, but they should not take away decision for adults to smoke.

In addition, BAT says that "The WHO has set the elimination of tobacco as a priority, above issues such as HIV/AIDS, access to clean water and malnutrition...Less affluent countries tend to have lower life expectancies and a very different pattern of causes of death. For example, the same WHO report gave figures for Africa, with around nine and one half million recorded deaths in 1998, less than 0.3% due to lung cancer."

The statement also claims that the WHO is trying to create "National Tobacco Commissions" in the developing world to try to regulate the industry. "The mandate should grant the commission separate legal authority, enabling it to make independent decisions...without interference from any branch of government or any public or private entity."

The tobacco industry knows that the WHO's policies will be bad for business and if the WHO's authority goes unchecked, the consumption of tobacco products may actually decline. Therefore, to keep consumption rates up, BAT claims that the WHO does not know how to operate functionally because they are allocating their efforts on battling tobacco as opposed to

infectious disease. BAT also states that the WHO is overstepping its jurisdiction by influencing the policies of sovereign nations through tobacco commissions^{xi}.

Tobacco companies would also try to manipulate the actual health impacts of their products. For instance, a particular Malawian health official has discussed with BAT affiliate about the content of the health warning labels that printed on the labels of cigarette packages. Dr. W.O.O. Sangala, the Chief of Health Services of Malawi wrote to a Mr. Philip of BAT stating that the labels should expressly say, “Smoking is hazardous to health.” Mr. Philip forwarded this letter to Shabanji Opukah, another BAT member in Malawi. Mr. Philip believed that the warning language is too strong and it should be changed to “Smoking may be hazardous to health” to avoid any misinterpretation. In essence, BAT wanted this nuance with the label so that the health claims would seem speculative despite the proven health hazards associated with smoking^{xii}. The industry continued to use its public relations prowess to seduce the public of foreign nations with their products.

Information Dispute

The WHO and the tobacco companies have come into conflict over the regulation of tobacco frequently. Marketing strategies and government intercession were just a few ways in which these entities tried to push forward their agendas. In the midst of this back and forth fight, both sides have proposed information that is often conflicting or contradictory, which often times makes regulation of tobacco exceedingly difficult. Deforestation, diversification of agriculture, and child labor are all issues with grey area.

Deforestation:

In the case of deforestation, we have come across many anti-tobacco lobbies that argue that tobacco is detrimental for the environment. For instance, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) wrote a report in 1995 on the effects on the environment. They wrote that deforestation and other environmental hazards were directly due to the effects of tobacco production.

Deforestation in Malawi, in part owing to needs for fuel to cure tobacco is not well documented but may be reaching critical levels. The country uses wood for flue and fire curing of about 20 per cent of its tobacco. At least one of the larger flue-curing operations is reported to use charcoal produced from thinnings of commercial forest in the central and northern part of the country. About 80 per cent of production is burley and other air-cured tobaccos that do not require a fuel^{xiii}.

The claims of UNCTAD did not go without a response from tobacco companies like Japanese Tobacco International (JTI), essentially the non-U.S. operations of RJ Reynolds. JTI remarked that while their product may have required some wood for its preparation, the industry was still taking a proactive effort to help plant new trees and battle deforestation. The corporate website explains their mission statement:

Yet in Malawi, forest cover has more than halved over the last four decades, creating fears about the sustainability of wood as a resource. This has significant consequences for the lifestyles and livelihoods of the farmers JTI works with. Without a ready supply of wood they are less able to sustain their way of living and produce the high volume of quality tobacco that both they and JTI need. So not only does JTI's investment in reforestation help the environment, it also makes good business sense^{xiv}.

Not only have tobacco companies like JTI responded, but tobacco farmers in Malawi have as well. Some farmers go beyond the tobacco companies' solution by refuting the claims that tobacco in Malawi is the reason behind deforestation. They consider the global idea of tobacco requiring lots of wood as preposterous. Most of the farmers agree that the wood is being used for common needs like fuel for stoves. In an issue created by A.B. Mzumacharo, President of the Tobacco Association of Malawi (TAMA), a farmers' group, he states that in a 1986 report: "...of all wood cut in developing countries, merely 0.7% was consumed as wood-fuel in tobacco curing"^{xv}. The UNCTAD states that tobacco is causing major environmental problems, TAMA is refuting these claims, and JTI is instituting programs to build more forests. Philip Morris, in an untitled statement in regards to tobacco industry criticism says in regards to deforestation that:

A charge frequently made against tobacco production is that wood fuel used in the curing process depletes forest lands... Worldwide, wood-curing is used in less than 10 percent of total tobacco production; 67 percent of the world's flue-cured tobacco is cured with coal as the primary energy source. Thirty-eight percent of all tobacco produced in the world is air-cured, and uses little or no heat energy source in the curing process.

In the statement, Philip Morris goes on to say how the company and certain governments have also plan on encouraging farmers to replant new trees^{xiv}. Just in the case of deforestation we can see all the conflicting information between each party that makes regulation problematic.

Diversification of Agriculture:

Another major cause for conflict is the notion of crop substitution - is it possible for farmers to grow other profitable crops? Diversification of agriculture is another area where there is a great deal of conflicting information.

A report commissioned by WHO to investigate the viability of crop substitution stated that: "For small shareholders with direct access to the auction... paprika and tomato were the only crops to provide a higher net income compared to typical management tobacco. For farmers who must sell through an intermediate buyer, however, several other enterprises appear to provide more income including rice, cassava, groundnuts and smallholder coffee"^{xvi}. The farming economy in Malawi is set up so that farmers can either sell tobacco directly to an auction or through middlemen that will sell the tobacco for the farmers. In other words, the report states that the vast majority of the country's producers, the small farmers, should – instead of going through middlemen – consider transitioning to another crop.

The UN Food and Agricultural Organization on the other hand states that: "In view of these factors, farmers continue to have strong incentives to produce tobacco, and governments to encourage its cultivation and manufacture. Until world demand - which was still rising in 1977-80 - can be curbed sufficiently to make tobacco less profitable, it will be very difficult to induce growers to curtail production"^{xvii}. In an untitled statement written by Philip Morris, the industry discusses "the impracticability" of substituting other crops for tobacco..."

Few crops are as profitable as tobacco, are as easy to store and ship (cured tobacco improves with age), enjoy such strong, steady demand worldwide or exhibit such a stable earnings pattern. Tobacco provides a certainty of income and cash flow uncharacteristic of many crops. Tobacco farmers are usually paid either immediately upon or soon after sale. Such timely payment is rare in the marketing of many other cash crops, especially those sold internationally^{xviii}.

PMI's statement makes it seem that crop substitution is especially difficult. This applies to places like Malawi where farmers in destitute conditions would essentially grow anything to get paid the maximum return in a short amount of time to alleviate the effects of poverty. In a BBC radio broadcast transcript, it is noted that a program brings together many factions that have opinions regarding this public health debate. These people include a doctor, a member of the International Tobacco Grower's Association (ITGA), an author, and a member of BAT. They came together to discuss the details surrounding tobacco regulation.

Magenta Devine [Presenter]: Antonio Ambrenosa, I think that your organisation, International Tobacco Growers Association, which has been referred to by the WHO as 'a front organisation for the tobacco industry.' ...

Antonio Ambrenosa: ...I am really, really angry about this, because when a grower from Malawi says that his life depends on tobacco and the International Tobacco Growers Association vocally says this on a world-wide press or in press releases, then... you are being vocal for the tobacco companies^{xix} ...

The radio program with the ITGA member is another prime example of how intricate it is for Malawian farmers or tobacco farming groups to merely change their professions and standpoints respectively especially since their ways of living depend on it.

The Malawian government does take an active part of the tobacco discussions as well. The president remarks that "[t]obacco is Malawi's biggest foreign exchange [forex] earner, accounting for up to 60 per cent of the southern African country's forex inflows. Mrs. Banda said that tobacco was crucial to the country's survival as it is integral to the implementation of her Economic Recovery Plan." The government may not find the idea of being dependent on tobacco to be appealing, but for now, the current administration seems to be a proponent of tobacco as the main industry^{xx} (See Figure 1).

Country profile
Malawi
Figure 1.
Bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

	2010
Direct bans	
National TV and radio	No
International TV and radio	No
Local magazines and newspapers	No
International magazines and newspapers	No
Billboards and outdoor advertising	No
Point of sale	No
Internet	No
Other direct bans	No
Compliance score of direct bans §	—
Indirect bans	
Free distribution	No
Promotional discounts	No
Non-tobacco goods and services identified with tobacco brand names	No
Brand name of non-tobacco products used for tobacco product	No
Appearance of tobacco brands in TV and/or films (product placement)	No
Appearance of tobacco products in TV and/or films	No
Sponsored events	No
Other indirect bans	No
Compliance score of indirect bans §	—
Are there subnational laws or regulations banning some or all types of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship mentioned in the above questions?	No

Health warnings on tobacco packages

	2010	
	Cigarettes	Smokeless tobacco
Does the law mandate that health warnings appear on tobacco packages?	No	
What percentage of the principal display areas of the package is legally mandated to be covered by health warnings? FRONT AND REAR COMBINED	—	—
What percentage of the principal display areas of the FRONT of the package is legally mandated to be covered by health warnings?	—	—
What percentage of the principal display areas of the REAR of the package is legally mandated to be covered by health warnings?	—	—
Does the law mandate that the warning be placed at the top of the principle display areas of the package?	No	No
Does the law mandate font style, font size and colour for package warnings?	No	No
Are the health warnings rotating on packages?	No	No
Are the health warnings on packages written in the principal language(s) of the country?	No	No
Does the law require that health warnings on packages are not obscured in any way, including by required markings such as tax stamps?	No	No
Do the health warnings on packages include a photograph or graphic?	No	No
Do health warnings appear on each package and any outside packaging and labelling used in the retail sale?	No	No
Does the law on health warnings apply to products whether manufactured domestically, imported, AND for duty-free sale?	No	No
Does the law state that warnings on packages do not remove or diminish the liability of the tobacco industry?	No	No
Do health warnings on packages describe the harmful effects of tobacco use on health?	No	No
Does the law mandate specific health warnings on cigarette packages?	No	No
How many specific health warnings are approved by the law?	—	—
Does the law require or establish fines for violations regarding health warnings on packages?	No	No
Are there any laws requiring that cigarette packaging and labelling do not use misleading terms which imply the product is less harmful than other similar products, such as "low tar", "light", "ultra-light", or "mild"?	No	No
Are there any laws requiring that cigarette packaging and labelling do not use figurative or other signs, including colours or numbers, as substitutes for prohibited misleading terms and descriptors?	No	No
Are there any laws requiring that cigarette packaging and labelling do not use descriptors depicting flavours?	No	No
Does the law ban the display of quantitative information on emission yields (such as tar,	No	No

Figure 1. These tables indicate the low level of government enforcement when it comes to the marketing and distribution of cigarettes and other tobacco products.^{xxi}

Does Malawi actually have an alternative crop that could replace tobacco and more importantly, can they transition to another crop? As the discussion continues, exposure and consumption of the product increases.

Child Labor:

Finally, there is a great deal of contention when it comes to tobacco and child labor. Health organizations argue that tobacco companies are profiting from the work of children while these same tobacco companies say that they never buy from farmers who use child labor. Who are the legislators to believe?

The tobacco companies state that they are vehemently against any form of child labor, but at the same time believe that they are not the ones to enforce labor laws in Malawi. BAT "...firmly agree[s] that children must never be exploited, exposed to danger or denied an education. We do not employ children in any of our operations worldwide and make it clear to all of our contracted farmers and suppliers that exploitative child labour will not be tolerated." At the same time however, BAT states that the tobacco economy in Malawi is set up so that small farmers sell their crop to intermediate-scale buyers that subsequently sell to the company^{xxii}. Therefore, the large buyers are not fully aware of who cultivates the crops and may inadvertently buy tobacco that was picked by the hands of children.

Are the tobacco companies to blame if they cannot directly intervene with the small shareholders? Not all the parties are convinced. The Center for Tobacco Control said that "BAT co-founded the Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation (ECLT)...[t]hese statements expressed a nominal commitment to the United Nation's International Labour Organization (ILO) provisions on child labour, but failed to make any changes in the industry's monopolistic leaf buying practices that benefit from child labour." Essentially, the authors' point is that the tobacco companies have so much influence on the government and politics of the country, but are yet to take corporate responsibility and use what influence they have to sacrifice some of their profits to make sure that the crop is cultivated without hurting the well-being of children^{xxiii}.

Another author, Marty Otanez, adds to this by saying: "Cigarette manufacturers and global leaf companies (merchant companies that buy tobacco leaf through prearranged contracts with manufacturers) fund child labor "corporate social responsibility" projects in Malawi to distract public attention from how they profit from low wages and cheap tobacco."^{xxiv}

Malawian Government:

The government in Malawi has understood the complexity of the situation in the economy. One of Malawi's freedom fighters and self-proclaimed "President for Life," the now deceased Hastings Banda, seared tobacco into the agricultural society of Malawi. "It pleases me to see my people farming," he said. "All Malawians must be farmers; that is what I have taught my people. When Malawi became independent, people with a primary education thought they were too good for farming. But not now. Why, even my civil servants have farms"^{xxv}. More recently, Malawi has understood the health implications of both tobacco growth and consumption after the WHO's anti-tobacco movement and proposal of the FCTC. Despite the

health warnings, the two subsequent presidents, President Mutharika and President Joyce Banda realized that they had to continue growing tobacco as it generated a vast amount of Malawi's foreign exchange and that it would take too much capital for them to transition to a new crop that quickly. The government believes that as of right now – tobacco must stay. Even though tobacco is a dangerous product, it is a way of life for farmers. As long as they can sell this product they have a means to put food on the table. The Malawian government has been responding to some of the WHO's pressure to help prevent children from smoking and regulating advertisements. At the same time however, the Malawian government has been working to ease some of the strict regulations that the WHO wishes to impose on tobacco companies through the FCTC. This duality shows the difficult position the government is in with both the industry and the public health community.

According to Donald Makoka, a Malawian scholar and member of the African Growth and Development Policy Modeling Consortium^{xxvi}, the Malawian government issued a direct ban on radio advertising of tobacco in 2004. Certain radio stations followed this mandate and have understood the public health problems that cigarette advertising could cause in the future. At the same time however, many other stations have refused to act upon this and report "...it is a loss of revenue for the institution." FM101, for instance, believed that the advertisements were always followed by health warnings and that the ban was an unnecessary restriction and loss of money for both the tobacco company and media sources trying to stay afloat. Nonetheless, they complied with the directive. Although the government has issued this ban, there has been little enforcement. Newspapers on the other hand are allowed to carry print advertisements. According to Makoka, two prominent newspapers, *The Daily Times* and *The Nation* carried full-page tobacco advertisements with health warning labels. Ever since the WHO has been battling the tobacco industry however, the frequency of these ads has been going down. The limited regulations that the government places on tobacco advertising through radio and newspapers contribute to the increase in consumption^{xxvii}.

Conclusions:

As we have seen, tobacco companies like BAT and PMI are being regulated heavily domestically, and thus, they are trying to increase consumption in the southern hemisphere. Consumption hike are especially evident in Malawi, where tobacco growth is already so crucial to the economy.

It is simple for the WHO to tell Malawi that they need to grow something different than tobacco – but it is evident that it is much more complex than that. These farmers have been growing tobacco for almost a century and a transition is difficult. Training and resources need to be considered in order to change to a competitive crop and even after that is provided, the transition will be slow as long as demand for tobacco is high. Is it even viable for a new crop to grow on Malawian soil? Then there is the issue of child labor. In the developed world, child labor has been labeled as a human rights violation. In Malawi, laws are set in place to prevent kids from the dangerous side effects of growing tobacco (like nicotine poisoning)^{xxviii}, but again, we must consider the other argument. What is a child to do if his or her family is poor and needs help farming to survive? For Malawian farmers, tobacco ironically equates to life.

It is also easy for anyone to pin the blame on the Malawian government. The WHO says more must be done to regulate tobacco usage and the industry tries to emphasize their necessity to the economy. As informed researchers however, we needed to understand that legislation cannot randomly be pushed through that if it caters to one of the former parties mentioned

alone. What is worse for Malawians? The chance of getting a non-communicable disease thirty years down the line or not putting food on the table for dinner tonight? Obviously, it's easy to see why President Banda's thinking is more short term. She acknowledges tobacco's detrimental effect on public health, but at the moment, tobacco means life to so many Malawians. As prudent researchers and regulators, we cannot be so quick to propose legislation that does not consider each party involved.

Each party has an agenda, which makes it complicated to find a middle ground to proper regulation and it makes it even more difficult to gain a valid insight on the tobacco industry. When it comes to the situation in Malawi, legislators must understand that there is no black and white answer. They need to understand that tobacco is the crux of their economy, but at the same time could lead to a major public health crisis down the road.

ⁱ "Malawi Profile." *BBC News*. BBC, 14 Mar. 2013. Web. 01 June 2013. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13864367>>

ⁱⁱ Raghavan, Sudarsan. "Malawi's Joyce Banda Ushers in a New Kind of African Leadership." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 28 July 2012. Web. 1 June 2013. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/malawis-joyce-banda-ushers-in-a-new-kind-of-african-leadership/2012/07/27/gJQAYIxyDX_story_1.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Tobacco Area Harvested 2009 - from the Tobacco Atlas." *Tobacco Area Harvested 2009 - from the Tobacco Atlas*. Tobacco Atlas, 2009. Web. 21 May 2013. <http://www.tobaccoatlas.org/industry/growing_tobacco/land/>

^{iv} <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTETC/Resources/375990-1112106769274/Malawi.pdf> (WORLD BANK)

^v Simutowe, Yamikani. "The Maravi Post - Anti-smoking Campaign Threat to Malawi Tobacco Production, Says Pres. Banda." *The Maravi Post*. The Maravi Post, 12 Mar. 2013. Web. 24 May 2013.

<<http://www.maravipost.com/national/society/3267-anti-smoking-campaign-serious-threat-to-malawi-tobacco-production%2C-says-malawi-president-banda.html>>

^{vi} Tobacco documents research methodology

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