

DEVELOPMENT, DECOLONISATION AND GLOBAL HEALTH: REFLECTIONS ON BUILDING EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

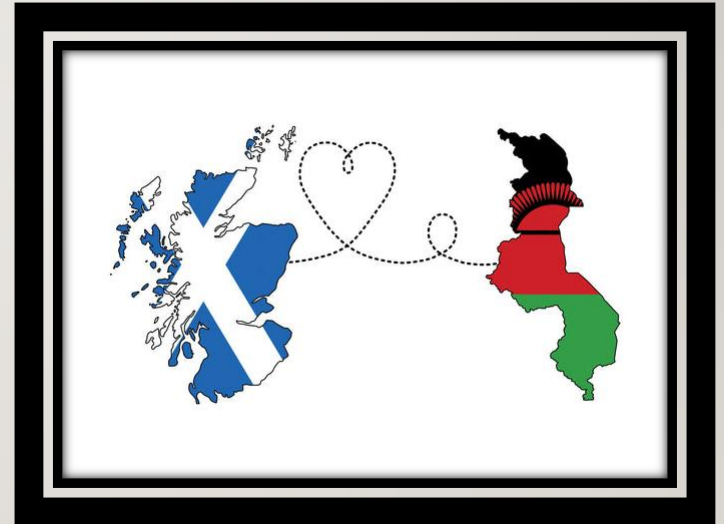
8TH MAY 2026

BEN WILSON



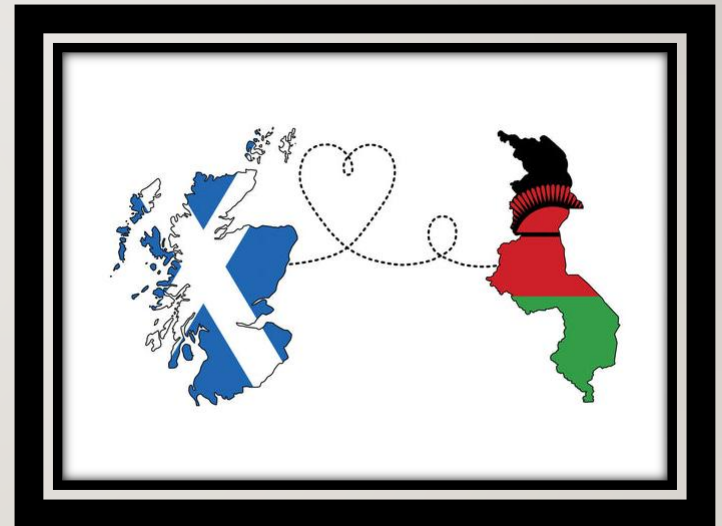
BACKGROUND

- Scotland & Malawi
- Post-Development + Decolonisation
- SCIAF
- Climate Change Advocacy



SCOTLAND AND MALAWI

- Dr David Livingstone (1813-1873)
- Church of Scotland Missionaries
- Malawian Independence 1964
- Malawi Millenium Project
- Scotland – Malawi Cooperation Agreement 2005



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are Scotland and Malawi really “friends”?
- Are we causing more harm than good?
- Who is really in power?
- What is development anyway?



WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?



POST-DEVELOPMENT THEORY

- “Invented concept” that begin on 20th January 1949
- Development = Underdevelopment
- Manufactures needs
- Rooted in ‘Western’ knowledge



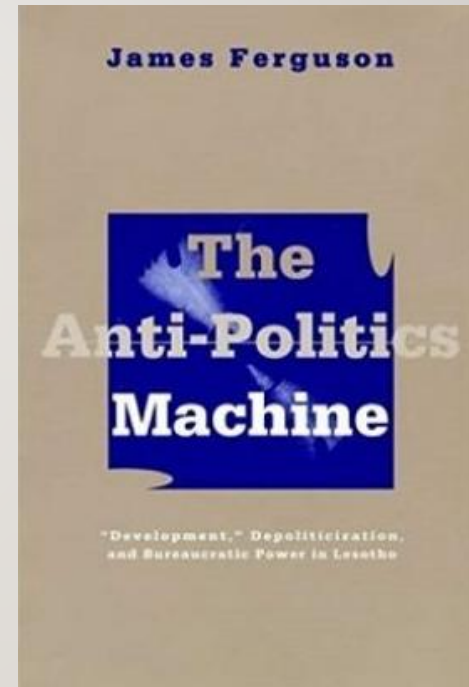
FAILURE OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- Parable of the Women and the Well
- Improved Livestock in Lesotho
- Goat Rearing in Brazil
- Spirit Children of Ghana



THE ANTI-POLITICS MACHINE

- James Ferguson, (1990)
- Thaba-Tseka Development Project in Lesotho, 1975–1984
- Introduction of 'Improved Cattle'
- Failure to understand local circumstances
- Development de-politicises



‘DEVELOPMENTALIST WORLDVIEW’

- Cavalcanti, (2007)
- World Bank Funded Goat Rearing Project - failed
- 1) Local People regarded as lazy and stupid
- 2) Community resisted imposition of external values
- 3) Top-down approach creates artificial problems
- 4) Cultural Violence



SPIRIT CHILDREN IN GHANA

- Allotey and Reidpath (2001)
- Found local belief in *chichuru*, spirit children
- ‘Verbal autopsy’
- Mothers committing infanticide
- Misunderstandings and Misrepresentations
- *Why* a child died rather than *how*



ON COLONIALITY AND HEALTH

- Richardson, 2019
- Global Health investments not tackling root cause
- Colonial structures still shaping means of implementation
- Wrong questions, hence wrong answers
- RCTs wrong method
- Ebola Case Study

REFLECTIONS

- Development “lens”
- Development is apolitical
- Inequality is baked into the relationships
- Extraversion



SUGGESTIONS FOR A BETTER DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

- Deep partnership approach
- Intercultural communication
- Facilitative funding models
- Movements & politics
- Constant critique

