

**“Exploring barriers to citizen participation in development: a case study of a participatory
broadcasting project in rural Malawi”**

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my dearest late mother Bilaya Kawanga

For bringing me into the world of possibilities,

For instilling in me a hardworking and forward-looking spirit despite challenges,

Thank you for your unconditional love,

Your inspiration is bearing fruit, your spirit and legacy will always live on.

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ABSTRACT

In Malawi, as in many newly-democratic countries in the developing world, donor organisations and NGOs have embarked on projects aimed at making reforms in governance which have generated a profusion of new spaces for citizen engagement. This thesis critically examines one such project in Malawi against the backdrop of a democratic nation emerging from a background of dictatorial regime. For thirty years, until 1994, Malawi was under the one-party regime of Kamuzu Banda which was characterised by dictatorial tendencies, in which participatory processes were non-existent and development was defined in terms of client-patronage relationships between the state and society (Cammack, 2004: 17). In 1994, however, Malawi embraced a multiparty system of government, paving way to various political and social reforms, which adopted participatory approaches to development. Drawing on a number of literatures, this thesis seeks to historicize the relationship which developed during the pre democracy era between the state and society in Malawi to underscore its influence on the current dispositions displayed by both bureaucrats and citizens as they engage in participatory decision making processes. This is achieved through a critical realist case study of a participatory radio project in Malawi called *Ndizathuzomwe* which works through a network of community-based radio production structures popularly known as ‘Radio Listening Clubs’(RLCs) where communities are mobilised at village level to first identify and define development problems through consensus and then secondly engage state bureaucrats, politicians, and members of other relevant service delivery organisations in making decisions aimed at resolving community-identified development problems (Chijere-Chirwa et al, 2000). Unlike during the pre-democracy era, there is now a shift in the discourse of participation in development, from the participation of ‘beneficiaries’ in projects, to the more political and rights-based definitions of participation by citizens who are the ‘makers and shapers’ of their own development (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2000). The findings of this thesis, however point to the fact that, there remains a gap between normative expectations and empirical realities in that spaces for participation are not neutral, but are themselves shaped by power relations (Cornwall, 2002). A number of preconditions exist for entry into participatory institutions as such entry of certain interests and actors into public spaces is privileged over others through a prevailing mobilisation of bias or rules of the game (Lukes, 1974: I)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This thesis is about how relations of social inequality and/or patron-client political relationships may affect the quality of ‘deliberative’ interaction and problem solving efforts in formally inclusive participatory communication processes. The introduction gives a brief background to participatory development approaches in Malawi. Through this chapter I will also briefly talk about what motivated me to undertake this research study. The chapter also introduces various debates about citizen participation in relation to patronage and clientelism. The chapter will also discuss the research problem, the aims of the research and the significance of the study. Finally, the chapter will relate the research methods and procedures that were used in the study.

Study rationale

On a personal note

The challenge to build democratic polities where all can realise their rights and claim their citizenship is one of the greatest of our age (Cornwall, 2002). In response to this challenge, NGOs and non state actors in newly-democratic countries in the developing world have embarked on projects aimed at making reforms in governance which have generated a profusion of new spaces for citizen engagement. I have worked closely with rural citizens in Malawi for the last eight years, as they engage state actors in dialogues aimed at generating discourse on development on an equal basis. It started in 1994, when Malawi embraced a multiparty system of government and introduced various political and social reforms, which resulted into the introduction of participatory approaches to development after 30 years of dictatorship (Commack, 2004: 24).

In line with such reforms, the public broadcaster, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), which I was working for during that time, initiated a participatory rural radio project called *Ndizathuzomwe* literally meaning ‘It’s ours’ (Chijere-Chirwa et al, 2000: 3). The project was aimed at promoting dialogues on development between rural communities and some state bureaucracies and agencies or other ‘state actors’, and NPOs/development organisations. I was privileged to be one of five pioneers assigned to work on that new project, which marked the beginning of my journey in the field of participatory communication. My new job involved

facilitating participatory development processes which mobilized rural communities into radio production structures, through which they engaged dialogically with state actors around their development needs. During that time my focus in broadcasting media changed, from the classic use of media and communication technologies to diffuse innovation and promote change through top-bottom approaches, to the use of communication as a tool in participatory development for social change. In 2007, the MBC handed over the project, including the staff working on the project which also included me, to a non-governmental organisation called the Development Communications Trust (DCT).

In my experience, the field of participatory communications to some extent opened up spaces for citizen participation in development. Poor rural communities interacted with state actors in finding solutions to their development problems, like the lack of education infrastructure, the lack of health facilities, and the lack of accountability and transparency among state actors. However I began to notice gaps between the theoretical aims and normative principles of the approach and the empirical realities of the project. Such gaps included disparities in participation among different demographic groups of the community, especially the domination of discussion by traditional leaders and higher status individual community members of discussions. I also noticed how politics and tradition influenced the way particular groups participated in discussions. Much as I questioned such practices, I did not have the theoretical background to enable me to grapple with these questions.

This prompted me to apply to Rhodes University for a Master's degree in Journalism and Media Studies. Through my studies, I read into the debates in the field of participatory development communication. I began to develop an interest in understanding the extent to which processes of citizen participation and engagement with state actors are patterned by relationships of political, social and cultural power inherited from the past and reproduced in the present. I was motivated to carry out a research study to assess what is really happening on the ground as participatory communication enterprises are implemented through projects.

The background of the study

This study is based on a participatory communication enterprise which operates within two key contexts, firstly in the realm of global development, where donor agencies support emerging

democracies in developing countries and secondly the context of a democratic nation which was emerging from a dictatorial regime. In the national political context, Malawi was under the one-party regime of Kamuzu Banda for 30 years until 1994. Literature dealing with this moment in history suggests that Malawian politics was characterised by dictatorial tendencies, in which participatory processes were non-existent. Community development, during the Banda era was defined in terms of client-patronage relationships between the state and society (Cammack, 2004: 17). Banda ruled personally by controlling the flow of public revenues and selectively disbursing rewards to a narrow entourage of familial, ethnic or factional clients. He took exclusive charge of policy-making (rather than relying on technocratic planning) and implemented instructions through personal emissaries (rather than formal institutions) (Heredia, 1997: 4).

In 1994, however, Malawi embraced a multiparty system of government, paving the way to various political and social reforms, which adopted participatory approaches to development (Cammack, 2004). These reforms were in line with the international agenda on development. In the global context, there is an agenda calling for a confluence of development and democratization processes which bring citizen engagement in governance to centre stage (Blair, 2000; UNDP, 2000). Development intervention in the last decades has seen a shift from top-bottom approaches to bottom –up approaches. Governance and sector reforms, instigated and promoted by lending agencies and bilateral donors, created a profusion of sites in which citizens came to be enlisted in enhancing accountability and state responsiveness (Crook and Sverisson, 2001; Manor, 1998; Goetz and Jenkins, 1999).

Based on that global discourse on development, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), initiated a participatory rural radio project called *Ndizathuzomwe* literally meaning ‘It’s ours’ (Chijere-Chirwa et al, 2000: 3). The project aimed at promoting critical dialogue about development, and was designed within a ‘rights-based’ framework of development (Chijere-Chirwa et al, 2000: 6). The United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (2001) defines the rights-based approach as methods and activities that link the human rights system and its inherent notion of power and struggle with development. Contrary to earlier ‘top-bottom’ approaches to development, the rights-based approach views ‘the people’ or ‘the poor’ not as passive

beneficiaries, but as empowered citizens who make and shape their own development (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2000: 4). The *Ndizathuzomwe* project works through a network of community-based radio production structures popularly known as 'Radio Listening Clubs' (RLCs), which are each made up of 12 core members. RLCs are established at group village headman level, usually comprising 10 to 20 small villages (Manyozo, 2007: 16). RLC members are trained in radio production processes in human rights issues, including the right to development, as well as in skills for facilitating deliberative forums (Manyozo, 2007: 16). Their task is to mobilise community members at a village level, encouraging them to become involved in participatory processes that identify and define development problems through consensus. These participatory processes occur at two levels. The first level is village-based deliberations in which development problems at community level are identified and discussed. This is recorded by the RLC and then sent to state bureaucrats, politicians or members of other relevant service delivery organisations. The project is designed in a way that at this level, ordinary people should discuss issues independent of local chiefs to avoid their influence on the framing and outcomes of discussions.

The second level involves conducting deliberative forums in which state bureaucrats, politicians, members of other relevant service delivery organisations as well as local chiefs are invited to engage with local communities in making decisions aimed at resolving community-identified development problems (Chijere-Chirwa et al, 2000: 3). According to the project design, these dialogues should be organised in such a way that community members are allowed to express themselves, discuss problems and ask questions on an equal footing with each other and with the state bureaucrats, politicians, NPOs and chiefs. At the conclusion of the discussions, all stakeholders make commitments around how they will help find solutions to the problems raised (Manyozo, 2007).

Problem statement

In 2005, barely five years after the project had started, Chijere-Chirwa and others were contracted in to do a tracer study to evaluate the progress of the project. According to that study, there was evidence that through the project the rural communities had, to some extent, addressed some of their development problems. Such development problems included the lack of potable water, non-functional education systems, the lack of health facilities as well as the lack of accountability and transparency among public officers (Chijere-Chirwa et al, 2005). The same

study, however, also revealed that there had been a noticeable gap between the expectations that informed the project design and the practices of the participants on the ground. The study talked about power imbalances among participants during discussions (Chijere-Chirwa et al, 2005:15). Cornwall (2002) argues that spaces for citizen participation are not neutral, but are shaped by power relations that influence which actors, voices and identities among multiple social groups may enter or are excluded from participation. Based on these debates and my own field observations over the years, I was motivated to conduct a study that would attempt to build upon the findings of the previous tracer study conducted on the project as well as engage with international debates on participatory communication.

Significance of the study

The '*Ndizathuzomwe*' radio project is Malawi's first participatory development communications project. It offers an ideal case study to explore the extent to which a project like this one lives up to the normative ideals of participatory development communication and the normative ideals expressed by the originators of a particular project. Participatory communication is still a relatively new field in Malawi, and much work needs to be done to refine and improve its theory and practices. My work therefore hoped to provide a better understanding of how participatory communication is being conceived and implemented in this project in the Malawian context.

Aims and objectives of the study

The study sought to understand how social, cultural and political contexts and relations may affect the quality of 'deliberative' interaction and problem solving efforts in formally inclusive participatory communication processes. This was achieved through a case study of a listener club in the DCT participatory radio project. The study wanted to answer the following questions:

- Is there a disjuncture/disconnect between the imagined aims of the project and its implementation?
- How, and to what extent, do some social relations hinder, or even prevent, certain participants from speaking in public or from fully participating in citizen deliberation?
- Do the participants imagine themselves to be either patrons or clients – or do they see themselves as rights-bearing citizens?

- To what extent do citizens, who have been on the receiving end of paternalism in the past in their everyday encounters with state institutions, bring these dispositions and expectations with them into the participatory spheres?

To answer these questions, it was necessary to discover how the project aims have been conceptualised and understood among the various stakeholders involved – the local citizens the DCT itself, donors, local chiefs, politicians, state bureaucrats, service delivery organisations and the radio listening club members. It was also important to understand the attitudes and dispositions of each stakeholder towards the project and towards their own participation in it. It was then necessary to research how the various deliberative forums work in practice. Who is present, what are the structures and protocols of the forums, what specific roles do the various stakeholders play, and what are the outcomes of the deliberations? Finally, it was important to evaluate the quality and efficacy of these deliberative forums from the vantage point of the various stakeholders. It was also important to evaluate the extent to which the project measured up to its imagined and stated aims and goals.

Thesis outline

The study is divided in to eight parts (including this introduction):

Chapter two presents a socio–political context of the study.

Chapter three presents a review of theoretical perspectives surrounding development, focusing especially on the subject of participatory communication and associated debates on participation, human rights and citizenship.

Chapter four discusses the methodological stance of the study, the case study approach adopted, including an explanation of the specific research methods employed.

Chapter five presents a critical examination of the project design.

Chapter six presents findings made from the observation conducted during problem-defining discussions at the community level and during problem-solving dialogues in which the community engaged service providers in discussions.

Chapter seven discusses the findings from the interviews conducted with various stakeholders of the *Ndizathuzomwe* participatory radio project.

Chapter eight presents conclusions derived from the study in answering the research questions. It also summarises the findings and offers some recommendations. The chapter also highlights theoretical contributions which the study has made.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter aims to historicize the relationship which developed between the state and society in Malawi, which continues to have a bearing on the current political culture in the country. This will be achieved by examining how the legacies of the colonial and pre-democracy eras in Malawi have influenced the current political culture and dispositions of both the politicians/bureaucrats and the citizens. The chapter will then examine how these dispositions have eroded citizenship and consequently increased the urgency of citizen participation in participatory projects.

The socio-political culture of Malawi

The current socio-political culture of Malawi was profoundly shaped by three epochs: the pre-colonial era, the British colonial era and the pre-democracy era under the dictatorship of Dr Kamuzu Banda. Almond and Powell (1978) define political culture as "the set of attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about politics current in a nation at a given time" (cited in Hellen, 1996: 11). In this case, there are particular features and characteristics of the social-political culture of the three episodes, which are of interest to this study. My area of interest for the pre-colonial era is pre-colonial citizenship and client-patron relationship while my interest in the colonial era is how state formation and citizenship were conceptualised and on how they influenced the political cultures of both post-colonial Malawi and the current democratic modern state.

Governance/citizenship/participation in pre-colonial Malawi

The first of the several clans to settle in what is known as Malawi today were the Maravi who arrived in the area in the 13th Century AD, from the northern Shaba province and settled near Lake Malawi. The clans were ruled by traditional chiefs who almost exclusively derived their authority and legitimacy either as descendants of a great ruling ancestor or on the basis of membership in a particular ruling family (Karlstrom, 1996; O’Laughlin, 2000; Ribot, 2002). They were variously described as “guardians of traditional norms, values and practices that were

respected in particular communities from generation to generation — and as such [they] were an important channel through which social and cultural change could be realized” (Senjonyo, 2004: 2); “actors and embodiment of customary decision making institutions” (Blom, 2002: 109); and “a socio-political expression of local social organizations which were based on lineage and quite key to the continuity of societies” (Soiri, 2002: 8).

As a social-political expression of local African social organizations, chieftaincy entailed power and influence which incumbents wielded over a distinct territorial unit occupied by a largely homogenous people sharing more or less a common culture, social values and aspirations. This meant that, traditional leaders could not exist without a distinct territory and a socio-political organization over which they exercised governance, power, authority and influence. These chiefs had the status of an administrative magistrate presiding over customary, civil and even commercial disputes (Lule, 1995) and were at the heart of custom and culture preservation.

One of the most important type of custom was tribute giving. Tribute constitutes the traditional practice of gift exchange in peasant societies and traditional kingdoms, in which patron and client are engaged in bonds of reciprocity and trust. It is embedded in a communitarian ethos. In traditional moral economies of patron-clientelism, dominant individuals provided livelihoods and/or political protection to the less resourced in exchange for loyalty and/or labour (cited in Lemarchand and Legg, 1972: 156). These practises were largely concordant with cultural beliefs about good and legitimate governance. ‘Governance’ in such contexts effectively takes the shape not of a universal and legal system, but of personal relationships between ‘governors’ and ‘governed’, or between those who enjoy wealth and status and those who are less resourced (Auyero, 1999). The following section will present the position of women in such contexts during traditional and pre-colonial era.

Position of women in traditional and pre-colonial era

The social status of Malawian women in pre colonial period must be understood within the context of the historical, political, and cultural experiences (Semu, 2002: 77). The position of women in the pre-colonial period was related to ethnicity. All of the ethnic groups which settled in traditional Malawi were predominantly matrilineal. However, despite the fact that among the *Chewa* tribe, descent was traced through females, where women were vested with the power of

making the most important decision in the society, which was choosing of the (male) kings, the authority was still exercised through the women's uncles or brothers (Semu, 2002: 81). Thus a woman's uncle or brother had the final say in the affairs and control of the woman's life, including her whole family (i.e. husband and children). The uncle was regarded as *Nkhoswe*, (the guardian from the woman's lineage and was in charge of their clan locally called *Mbumba*) (Malera, 2005). On the other hand, the tribes which had settled in the northern region of Malawi were predominantly patrilineal, and the men enjoyed considerable power (Semu, 2002: 77). During this era, traditional or cultural practices played a fundamental role in ascribing status to men and women (Chidyaonga, 2003).

The concept of culture was used to curtail women's participation in the public sphere. Malawian traditions and Culture was significantly biased towards male domination in various spheres in which patriarchal interests dominated public discussion – very few women featured in such discussions. The cultural perceptions recognised men as heads of households and women as subordinates. Parental guidance, initiation and marriage counselling ceremonies systematically taught women to be subservient to men (Chidyaonga, 2003: 11). Later during the colonial era, the position of women in Malawi was further influenced by the introduction and spread of the Christian religion which undermined some of the powers which Chewa women had traditionally enjoyed (Semu, 2002: 79). The following section will talk about issues of governance and citizenship during the colonial era, when Malawi was first explored by the Europeans.

State formation, governance and citizenship in the colonial era

Malawi, previously known as Nyasaland, was first explored by European powers in 1858 by David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary who encountered a number of different ethnic groups living side-by-side without any centralized rule. Nyasaland was then declared a British protectorate in 1891 by the British government, creating an entirely new geographical entity (Kanyongolo et al, 2006).

State formation in Malawi dates back to 1907, when the British government converted the protectorate into a colony, which was characterized by paternalistic tendencies and followed two systems of rule; direct and indirect (Cammack et al, 2007).

Mamdani (1996), outlines “direct and the indirect rule” as a dual system of political governance practised in colonial Africa. The direct rule system was mainly applied to the urban population, who enjoyed citizenship with all its associated rights. Civil laws were applied to the urban population. The British officials directly administered the day-to-day affairs of governance of the urban population. In contrast, indirect rule was applied to the rural population which was divided into different ethnic groups and treated as subjects who followed traditional and customary laws (Mamdani, 1996). In the direct rule system, the British, officials, under the leadership of the Resident or Commissioner at district level, kept the peace, raised and spent revenues and adjudicated western-inspired law, while under indirect rule indigenous leaders were formally recognized as a new hierarchy of ‘traditional’ authority, charged with powers of overseeing the general welfare of their subjects on behalf of the District Resident (Cammack et al, 2007:10). Chiefs were incorporated into the administrative system as assistants to District Commissioners as early as 1912. Following the promulgation of indirect rule in 1933, chiefs were conferred legislative, judicial and fiscal powers over their respective jurisdictions. Through indirect rule, chiefs had access to resources which they distributed to their subjects in return for their loyalty and this resulted in client-patron relationships (Cammack et al, 2007:10-11). Powers of traditional authority included maintaining law and order, encouraging tax-paying, providing sanitation, and controlling cattle movement (Cammack et al, 2007). These powers were however revoked in 1953 following the launch of statutory district councils (Baker, 1995; Kaunda, 1992).

After the Second World War, however, demands for equality and self-rule inspired a generation of mission-educated Africans across Africa to campaign for independence from colonial powers. In Nyasaland, young intellectuals founded the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC), which became the main national organization to challenge colonial rule. In 1958 the NAC invited Hastings Kamuzu Banda, a Nyasaland-born medical doctor living and practicing medicine in Britain, to return to Nyasaland to spearhead the independence movement (Lwanda, 1993: 34). Dr Kamuzu Banda became prime minister in 1963 in an authoritarian system of rule similar to the regime introduced by the British. The following section will examine how relations of patron-clientelism were solidified and extended in the authoritarian regime of Dr Kamuzu Banda in independent Malawi.

The authoritarian regime of Dr Kamuzu Banda

Soon after Nyasaland became independent Malawi, Banda quickly installed a highly centralized regime (Mkandawire, 2003). There was almost no separation of the presidency from the government, the party from its leader, politics from the law, and the state from the nation (Chirambo, 2001). Dr Banda's dictatorship was described as highly exclusionary because he ruled by decree and institutions of participation existed in name only (Bratton & van de Walle, 1994: 474). Other commentators have argued that Banda's political leadership was hegemonic in nature in that he mobilized a national consensus to support his regime (Chirambo 2001). They argue that Banda's ruling ideas were internalized by the majority of the people and became a defining motif of everyday life (Phiri, 2000) – they appeared as 'common sense' (Gramsci, 1971: 133). Common sense is "uncritical and a largely unconscious way in which a person perceives the world" (Simon, 1982: 44). The subsequent section will demonstrate how the Banda ideology created an 'uncritical mass' and consequently solidified relations of clientelism among the populace.

Contesting citizenship and governance under Banda

The rise of modern statehood in societies traditionally governed by patronage, typically resulted in 'hybrid' political cultures in which the public institutions of 'modern' governance came to exist alongside cultural practices of 'indigenous' governance. Peter Ekeh (1975), writing about Africa, argued in this context that postcolonial political cultures are not constituted by one public arena, but by two: the 'civic public' and the 'primordial public'. He further argues that the first is related to the state apparatus, comprising the civil service, schools, police and so on, while the second one is related to communal, kinship and ethnic groups. The civic public is the sphere from which gains and benefits can be drawn where as the primordial public is the sphere in which people make claims to such gains and benefits. Political actors operate in both publics at the same time, but on different moral grounds. Governance in such contexts effectively takes the shape not of a universal and legal system, but of personal relationships between 'governors' and 'governed', or between those who enjoy wealth and status and those who are less resourceful (see especially Schmidt *et al.*, 1977, Gellner and Waterbury, 1977, Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984). The kind of political system that evolved during the post colonial era under Kamuzu Banda was one akin to what Weber called *patrimonialism* (Eisenstadt,1973). Weber wrote: "The

patrimonial office lacks above all the bureaucratic separation of the 'private' and the 'official' sphere. For the political administration is treated as a purely personal affair of the ruler, and political power is considered part of his personal property' (1978: 1028-9). When these relationships take on forms of reciprocal political exchange between actors commanding unequal resources (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972: 151), they can be described as patronage, clientelism or patron-clientelism. In systems of patronage, high-status individuals ('patrons') provide physical protection and/or livelihood resources to lower-status individuals ('clients'), who repay the former by offering their loyalty, labour or political support.

Bureaucrats in such a system are dependent on the whims of neopatrimonial rulers who can reward or punish them and are expected to focus their allegiance upwards, to their masters, rather than downwards, to their agencies' nominal clients, from whom they have less to gain or fear (*ibid.*, Budd, 2004: 2). During the Banda regime regional patrons, often representatives of political parties had increasingly taken up 'brokerage' functions by linking local communities up with the central bureaucracy and its funds (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972: 154). Such 'brokerage' functions were taken up by political representatives – 'big men' members of the Malawi Congress party at all levels (community level, district level, the regional level and the national level) – who mediated between the people and the administrative apparatus of the Banda regime (Booth et al, 2006). These party loyalists and political leaders were also in charge of overseeing development in their respective areas (Cammack, 2004: 17). The distribution of development projects, in this case was based on political subordination in exchange for public resources and services (Heredia, 1997: 4).

Apart from political leaders, traditional leaders were also indispensable to the state as the final link in the chain reaching from Banda down to the local population (Kanyongolo et al, 2001). Dissenting views were ruthlessly quashed by the Banda regime (Lwanda, 1993: 34). Anyone who was critical of Banda was regarded as an enemy of the nation. This was based on Banda's political philosophy of the four cornerstone principles of obedience, unity, discipline, and loyalty to which every Malawian was expected to adhere to (Simon, 1982: 58). Simon (1982) argues that "ideology has material existence in practical activities such as politics by providing people with rules of practical conduct and moral behaviour" (1982: 58).

Position of women under kamuzu Banda Regime

In post independent Malawi, Kamuzu Banda used the Chewa tradition called *Nkhoswe* in which the uncle is in charge of the lineage of the family to exploit it into the subjugation of Malawian women into supporting the only party in Malawi. As Semu observes:

Under the rule of Kamuzu Banda, the Nationalist, and later the Malawi Government and the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), manipulated the literal and figurative role of women in the matrilineal cultural sphere. In the process, culture was redefined to suit political ends. (2002: 81)

Through this traditional concept, Banda developed a special relationship with the women of the nation, referring to them as ‘his *mbumba*’ and he became known as ‘*Nkhoswe* Number One’ (Chirwa, 2001). As ‘*Nkhoswe* number one’, Banda provided women with their needs at times. In return for such kind gestures, women composed songs and danced in praise of Banda during political rallies, thereby legitimizing and popularizing his autocracy (Chirambo, 2001, Chirwa, 2001, and Gilman, 2001). Such dances also played a key role in solidifying the patron–client relations of the Banda dictatorship (Gilman, 2001: 34). The growing economic inequalities and political repression, however had led to widespread popular dissent and by the end of the 1980s, Banda’s regime was coming to an end (Chirwa, 2001). In 1992, Banda called for a regime change and announced a referendum proposing changes to the political system in Malawi and in 1994 Malawi went through the country’s first multiparty elections in which the leader of the United Democratic Front (UDF), Bakili Muluzi, ousted Banda from the Presidency (Chirwa, 2001). The following section deals with both political and social reforms in Malawi after the fall of the Banda regime.

Redefining development and citizenship in post-Banda Malawi

Discourse on development and citizenship in post-Banda Malawi, can be contextualised within two perspectives: one which deals with post Banda socio-political reforms in Malawi, and the other one which deals with the international agenda on development. One of the socio-political reforms in the post-Banda regime was the enacting of a new constitution which decentralised power through the creation of District Assemblies to enable citizen participation in decision making processes (Cammack, 2004). In line with such reforms, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), a national broadcaster, initiated a participatory rural radio project called

Ndizathuzomwe literally meaning ‘It’s ours’ (Chijere-Chirwa, Kayanura & Lijenda, 2000: 3).

The project was funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and according to the project documents (DCT, 2009:8) it aimed to empower local communities to become aware of the need for governance structures to be functional, accountable and transparent in service delivery.

The project works through a network of community-based radio production structures popularly known as ‘Radio Listening Clubs’ (RLCs) (DCT, 2009:7-18). These structures act as public spaces in which members of the entire community participate in defining their various development problems (Chirwa et al, 2000). The ‘Radio Listening Clubs’ (RLCs) are established, at group village headman level, and are trained in radio production processes, human rights and its relation to development, as well as in skills for facilitating deliberative forums (Manyozo, 2007: 16).

From the international perspective, the country embarked on political and social reforms based on an international development agenda (Cammack, 2004), which called for a confluence of development and democratization processes which brought citizen engagement in governance to centre stage (Blair, 2000; UNDP, 2000). Global development organisations believe that more direct involvement by citizens in processes of governance makes for better citizens, better decisions and better government (Mansbridge, 1999; Avritzer, 2006; Gaventa, 2002). It is believed that when citizens engage directly in local problem-solving activities and make their demands directly to state bodies this leads to improved understanding, and contributes to improving the quality of definition and implementation of public programmes and policies (Cunill, 1997; Abers, 2003).

Position of women in post democratic Malawi

During the post-democracy period, however, the position of women in Malawi was redefined through the Malawi National Gender Policy, which states forcefully in its preamble that, Malawi recognises that sustainable economic and social development of the country requires full and equal participation of women, men, girls and boys (Malawi National Gender Policy,2012). Right at the outset, the policy acknowledges the presence of strong traditional and cultural forces that impinge on the participation of both men and women in development initiatives. Further, it states

that disparities exist between men and women in actual power sharing, participation and control over decision-making processes which consequently place women in subordinate positions. The major flaw in the institutional structure for the Gender Policy, however, is the fact that it puts in place a top-heavy structure, almost leaving out the village level where the rural population is the most influenced by the problematic gender imbalances. Men dominate in these structures, thereby minimising women's participation in the public sphere and monopolising the control of resources. (Malera, 2005: 56).

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the pre democracy era, comprising both the colonial era and the dictatorial regime of Dr Kamuzu Banda, and also dealt with the post-Banda period with its political and social reforms, which redefined development and citizenship in the new democratic Malawi. Through this chapter, it was argued that state formation and citizenship calls for attention to be paid to historical encounters with the state that are inflected with other aspects of that colonial heritage. Colonial histories are an institutional landscape in which residues from the colonial period are overlaid by layers of institutional modification. These histories are important because they shape, constrain, but also give possibility to ways of seeing the state and being seen by the state that are an important part of contemporary political life in particular countries. In this chapter questions of being a citizen or a subject have also been discussed with reference to Mahmood Mamdani (1996) acclaimed book called "*Citizen and Subject*", in which he draws attention to the implications of colonial legacies for post-independence democratisation in Africa. He suggests that whereas African cities became sites for the production of citizens, the countryside remained the domain of traditional leaders and their ethnic subjects, and he argues that the problem for democratisation in post-colonial Africa is that it has been unable to rid itself of this legacy, which has run unevenly through decades of post-colonial 'development' and still retains a semblance in the current political culture (Mamdani, 1996). Tracing the trajectories of citizenship and state formation in these landscapes enables us to understand particular dispositions which various participants may bring to the participatory arenas including gender. Marginalisation of women in Malawi is rooted in Malawian cultural history where traditional or cultural practices play a fundamental role in ascribing status to men and women (Chidyaonga, 2003). Critics argue that Malawi has a significant male domination in various spheres in which

patriarchal interests dominate public discussion – very few women feature in such discussions (Semu, 2002). The following chapter provides some theoretical underpinnings of participatory communication in development.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

This chapter presents theoretical perspectives of development by discussing a general historical overview about the origins, purpose and main paradigms of development and how these relate to communication. This will be achieved by providing three key paradigms for the theorisation of development namely modernisation, dependency and ‘multiplicity’. The chapter will then emphasise the multiplicity paradigm, in which the participatory radio project in question is situated. In this chapter I will also present debates on human rights as applied in development, debates on gender and development, as well as debates on citizenship and participation. Through this chapter, I will also present the issue of power and its implication in development. Lastly the chapter will explore various strategies that have been devised to improve the efficacy of participatory deliberative practice for subaltern groups.

Historical perspective of the role of communication in development

Development scholars argue that the ‘development age’ was born out of point four of US President Harry Truman’s 1949 inaugural address to the nation, where he stated that the US would expand its scientific progress and industrial growth models to under-developed parts of the world in order to overcome poverty and ill health, which most people in these countries faced (Escoba, 1995). There are three key paradigms for the theorisation of development – modernisation, dependency and ‘multiplicity’ – each with a very different model of development communication associated with it (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Servaes, 1995).

Modernisation paradigm - the early voices

The modernisation paradigm stressed that the newly-independent nations in the Third World needed to emulate Western ideas and innovations in order to catch up to the developed nations (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). According to the supporters of modernisation, to be a modern society meant the removal of attitudes of ‘backward’ people – their perceived traditionalism, bad taste, superstition, fatalism - which were seen as obstacles and barriers to development (Servaes, 1995). One way of removing these ‘barriers’ was through ‘diffusion’, in which the American scholar Everett Rogers imagined the role of communication as the transfer of technological

innovations from development agencies to their clients and to create an appetite for change through raising a 'climate for modernization' among the members of the public (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Rogers, 1976; Servaes, 1989).

During the same period, sociologist Daniel Lerner undertook a large scale study in the Middle East to understand the correlation between mass media and modernisation. Lerner, through his book the *Passing of the Traditional Society* (1958) emphasised the relationship between communication, urbanization, and modernization, which led to the belief that the greater the communication facilities, the greater the modernisation (Lerner, 1958: 50-54). The central idea in the modernisation perspective was the idea that developed Western societies or modern societies were the ultimate goal which the less-developed societies strived to reach (Servaes, 1995: 3).

Critiques of the modernization paradigm

Critical voices towards the modernisation theory began to be heard in the 1960s and later in the 70s. Such critical voices came from Latin American development communication scholars such as Juan Diaz Bordenave, Luis Ramiro, Beltran and Elizabeth Fox de Cardon (Servaes, 1999). Beltran (1976) and Diaz-Bordenave (1976) argued that mass media in developing countries were accessible only to the elites. Likewise, the adoption of new technologies was restricted to only the rich and consequently widened the income and information gaps in the developing countries (Servaes, 1999).

Another critic of modernisation theory was Frank (1969), who argued that the complexity of the processes of change are too often ignored and that little attention is paid to the consequences of economic, political, and cultural macro-processes on the local level. For him, the resistance to change and modernisation could not be explained only on the basis of traditional value orientations and norms, as many seemed to imply. These criticisms gave rise to a paradigm shift from modernization theory to dependency theory.

Dependency paradigm

The dependency-dissociation paradigm arose in the 1960s from a ferocious critique of the modernisation theory of development. For dependency theorists each peripheral country should

dissociate itself from the world market and opt for a self-reliant development strategy. For them, the technological evolution of the communication media further contributed to the cultural and ideological dependence of the periphery (Servaes, 1995: 45). The dependency paradigm therefore played an important role in the movement for a New World Information and Communication Order from the late 1960s to the early 1980s during which the new states in Africa and Asia and other countries provided the goals for political, economic and cultural self-determination within the international community of nations (Servaes, 1999).

The role of communication in dependency theory was redefined. Some communication scholars such as Rogers and Schramm adapted their communication models to suit the needs of the people in the developing world. Marking the passing of the dominant paradigm Rogers (1976) modified his communication model, by making it more culturally sensitive by integrating traditional and modern media and the use of community-based change agents and local opinion leaders. Through this modification communication was redefined from being a linear information delivery system to a two-way process in which audiences played an active role in creating and negotiating meaning (Servaes, 1999).

The dependency-dissociation perspective, however, became more difficult to support because of the growing interdependence of nations and the development failures of post-colonial states (Friberg & Hettne, 1985: 212). It was against that backdrop that critics argued for the need for a new concept of development which was multi-dimensional. The former secretary of defence for the USA during the Vietnam and later president of the World Bank, Robert McNamara, suggested a shift from understanding problems of underdevelopment in terms of structures and systems of dependency to understanding development from a basic human needs perspective (Rist, 1999). This view gave birth to the paradigm of 'multiplicity' or 'another development' (Servaes, 1995: 46).

Multiplicity (multiple voices) or 'another development paradigm'

The purpose of development through this approach is to empower people to have greater control over decisions that affect them and in this way to foster equity and democratic practices (Servaes, 1999). Located within the multiplicity paradigm is the notion of 'participatory communication' or 'another communication', which holds that, communication is not a vertical

process of information transmission from the knowledgeable to the less-knowledgeable, but rather a horizontal process of information exchange and interaction (Servaes 1991: 51; Melkote, 1991: 220). 'Another communication' thus favours what McQuail referred to as "multiplicity, smallness of scale, locality, and de-institutionalisation, interchange of sender–receiver roles and horizontality of communication links at all levels of society" (McQuail, 1987: 97).

The role of communication through this approach is seen as a process of stimulating debate and involves all stakeholders in decision making and action to bring about change (Fraser & Restepo, 1998; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). Communication, which is participatory in nature, allows people to gain new knowledge, challenge existing oppressive structures and above all gain control over their lives and thus overcome oppression (Agunga, 1997; Chambers, 1983; White, 1999). There are two major approaches to participatory communication. The first is the dialogical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, and the second involves the ideas of access, participation and self-management articulated in the UNESCO debates of the 1970s (Berrigan, 1977, 1979). For this study, Paulo Freire's approach will be applied. Central to this approach are the concepts of participation, cultural identity and empowerment as well as Freire's (1983: 76) notions of dialogical communication (Servaes, 1999). The Freirian argument works by a dual theoretical strategy. He insists that subjugated peoples must be treated as fully human subjects in any political process. This implies dialogical communication. Paulo Freire (1983: 76) argues that the people have the right to individually and collectively speak their word: 'This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone -- nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words.' (Freire, 1983: 76). These ideas are deeply unpopular with elites, including elites in the less developed countries. Freire (1996) argues that in the traditional pedagogical systems the receivers were supposed to be uncritical and passive, ingesting the world view of the elites and then perceiving their problems and needs in terms of the elite-dominated rationality. He calls for a new dialogical pedagogy in which the receiver will be liberated from his/her mental inertia, penetrate the ideological mist imposed by the elites and perceive the realities of his/her existence. It is within the context of this conscientisation that theory can be appropriated as praxis for social and political transformation (Habermas, 1974). Communication thus becomes more 'concerned with process and context, that is on the exchange of "meanings", and on the importance of this process, namely, the social relational patterns and social institutions that are the result of and are determined by the process'

(ibid). In a sense, this is a shift from the positivist–instrumentalist approach of the modernisation paradigm, to a model that is less quantitative, and more qualitative and normative (Melkote, 1991: 234). ‘Participation’, in this case, entails the conscious decision to reach out and involve those people that would be most affected by the proposed development program - specifically the disempowered, the marginalised and the poorer people in any society (White, 1994: 56). The approach is aimed at empowering those outside the centre of power on the assumption that power, which resides in conventional sites such as the central state or in government elites, should be shifted to the grassroots in the community through participatory approaches for effective development to take place (Chambers, 1997:22-24). Empowerment in this case is understood as a process by which people, organisations or groups who are powerless become aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context, and as a result develop skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives, and exercise this control without infringing upon the rights of others” (Melkote, 1991: 234). The DCT “*Ndizathuzomwe*” participatory communication project is located within this approach. The theory further emphasizes the need to eliminate the differences between development agencies and the community in terms of knowledge control and the need to promote free dialogue and participation in development (Freire, 1996: 89). The following sections, however present a contestation of participation.

Historical perspectives on participation

Participatory decision making has, over the decades, emerged as a central concept underpinning development practice and theory in many post-colonial countries (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999; Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001; Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2004).

Historically, the concept has been used in a range of ways, from enabling people to gain political agency and wield influence over the context and direction of their lives, to its employment as a means of maintaining social control and neutralising political opposition.

Early forms of participation in post-colonial countries tended to mirror community development models in that they focused on community participation in local self-help development initiatives which were largely unconnected to the wider policy environment (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999, Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001). Cornwall (2002), emphasizes the fact that in many ex-colonies the templates for self-help development initiatives were already in place through the

decentralised governance structures set up to administer indirect rule during the colonial period as a strategy to save government money, stave off demands for services, and counter opposition to the regime. Cornwall claims that this strategy continues in many of the same countries today. (Cornwall, 2002)

Critics of this view, however, contest this argument noting that with an enhanced focus on Western agendas of ‘good governance’ and accountability, a shift has occurred towards a more political model, broadening participation to include searches for more direct ways through which citizens may influence governments and hold them accountable (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999). Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) assert that, through this approach, participants have moved from being passive beneficiaries of development interventions to playing a more active role, engaging as citizens in the process. The shift has seen participants share in decision-making and become involved in implementation and, in many cases, in monitoring, of the agreed intervention (Valderrama, 1999).

Participation has, however been contested in various debates as noted by Evelina Dagnino (2005), who highlights a ‘perverse confluence’ between two versions of participation in contemporary debates on governance. One is cast as a project constructed around the extension of citizenship and the deepening of democracy, in which participation as freedom is not only the right to participate effectively in a given space, but the right to define and to shape that space. The second one is where participation has come to be associated with shrinking state responsibilities and the progressive exemption of the state from the role of guarantor of rights (2005: 159).

Participation contested

Heller (2001) and Avritzer (2002), argue that participation of various groups of the community is far from straightforward, and that a number of preconditions exist for entry into participatory institutions. Much depends on *who* enters these spaces, on *whose* terms and with *what* ‘epistemic authority’. On the other hand, “there is a glaring disjuncture between everyday political practices and the models of democracy, citizenship and participation that are exported throughout the world” (Robins et al, 2008: 1070).

These contestations continue within contemporary discourses and practices of participation to the extent that there has been a growing literature on the subject, polarised between a rejection of participation as “*the new tyranny*” (Cooke and Kothari, 2001) and the exploration of its transformative potential (Hickey and Mohan, 2004). White (1996 in Cornwall, 2002a) developed a typology of participation, which draws on a distinction between concepts of participation focused on outcome, and concepts focused on process. While the former perspective focuses largely on issues of efficiency and effectiveness of particular policy interventions, the latter engages with issues of power and inclusion, seeing empowerment of the marginalised groups and peoples as an end in itself within participatory processes. Four different forms of participation are presented, in this typology as articulated in the table below:

Table 1: A Typology of Participation (White, 1996, adapted by Cornwall 2002a)

Form of Participation	What ‘participation’ means to the implementing agency	What ‘participation’ means for those on the receiving end	What ‘participation’ is for
Nominal	Legitimation – to show they are doing something	Inclusion – to retain some access to potential benefits	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency – to limit funder’s input, draw on community contributions and make projects more cost-effective	Cost – of time spent on project-related labour and other activities	As a means to achieving cost effectiveness
Representative	Sustainability – to avoid creating dependency	Leverage – to influence the shape the project takes and its management	To give people a voice in determining their own development
Transformative	Empowerment – to strengthen people’s capabilities to take decisions and act for themselves	Empowerment – to be able to decide and act for themselves	Both as a means and an end, a continuing dynamic

From the table above, nominal participation is presented as little more than a display of action on the part of policy-makers to legitimise their own actions, while participants only gain some services or benefits of particular policy actions. Instrumental participation aims at reducing the costs of specific policy initiatives by drawing on participants’ own resources. This form of participation represents a potential gain to participants in the hope of obtaining new and/or improved services and facilities. Representative participation moves on to a more political level whereby participants begin to find a space to influence the design and outcomes of policy initiatives. Policy makers also benefit in the sense that by increasing the involvement of participants in the design, as well as in the implementation of policy initiatives, there is a more likelihood of higher levels of effectiveness in policy action. Finally through transformative participation, participation is seen as an end in itself, as well as a means towards policy design and implementation. The focus of participation at this level is on the participants themselves, consolidating and enhancing their own capacities and abilities to be active agents in their own

development, ultimately leading to their own empowerment. White's typology is useful for an analysis of participation within broader participatory processes because it highlights the importance of agency, drawing attention to the different agendas of different actors engaged in the participatory processes.

Problematising spaces of participation

Lefebvre (1991), in his book *The Production of Space*, examines the spatiality of society and political action. He posits that social space is a produced space, and draws attention to the significance of the interplay between how particular spaces come to be defined and perceived, and the ways in which they come to be animated. In doing so, he highlights the importance of analysing the social and power relations that constitute spaces for participation, the 'spatial dialectic' of identities, activities, discourses and images associated with any given place.

Space is a social product ... it is not simply "there", a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control and hence domination, of power. (Lefebvre, 1991: 24)

Lefebvre notes that all struggles and achievements of civilisation take place in space. All social struggles are contained and defined in their spatiality. According to this analysis, social struggle must therefore become a conscious politically spatial struggle to regain control over the social production of this space. Cornwall (2002b), drawing on the work of both Lefebvre and social movements, posits that spaces opened up by dominant interests may be re-colonised and become a site for the expression of alternative visions and policies.

...Spaces may be created with one purpose in mind, but used by those who come to fill them for something quite different. The fluidity and ambiguity of efforts at enhancing participation means that spaces produced to lend legitimacy to powerful interests can become a site for expression and expansion of the agency of those who are invited to participate. (Cornwall, 2002b: 9)

In a more recent contribution on this topic, Cornwall (2004) focuses more specifically on the dynamics of power and difference within these "invited spaces" as she terms them and suggests that the broad configuration of actors within the spaces turns them into sites that are constantly in transformation (2004: 85-87). She highlights three elements which may help toward realising the transformative potential of such invited spaces: The first lies in the area of institutional design whereby institutions are designed to maximise participation; the second element involves

strategies to allow participants to engage in reframing debate; and the third element consists of popular mobilisation wherein participants may reframe and define for themselves their own scope for agency (2004: 86-87).

Cornwall, however acknowledges that there is a need for new ethnographies of participation that help locate spaces for participation in the places in which they occur, framing their possibilities with reference to actual political, social, cultural and historical particularities rather than idealised models of democratic practice. (2004: 87) .In particular, she is interested in examining and questioning how certain norms come to form the common ground for the deliberations and contestation of governmental practices. There is a need therefore to locate participation in the context of power which includes gender

Locating participation in the context of power

In her collection of essays on communication for development Karen Wilkins begins with the argument that to reshape the field of development communication we must “situate its discourse and practice within contexts of power” (Wilkins, 2000: 1). Cooke and Kothari, (2001) writing in their collection entitled *Participation – The New Tyranny?* , have argued that so-called participatory approaches have often failed to engage with issues of power and politics and have instead become largely technical approaches to development. They charge that so-called participatory approaches are carried out with an insufficiently sophisticated understanding of how power operates and is constituted, (Kothari, 2001:10; Mosse, 2001:14).

According to Max Weber power is defined in the following way: "'Power' (*Macht*) is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (Weber, 1978: 53). Unlike Weber's definition, Antonio Gramsci (1971) talks about a hegemonic power bloc in which he conceptualises the state and its apparatus of governance as having dominant ruling ideas over subordinate groups. Through this hegemonic power the state exercises control by actively seeking the consent of society by persuading its members to accept and internalise their values, attitudes, and norms, a process attained through control over knowledge and discourse (1971: 261).

While Gramscian conceptions of power relations sought to understand power in terms of the role it plays in the maintenance of relations of economic production and class domination, Michel Foucault (1976) gives a different view of power, arguing that a focus on the mechanisms on how power is exercised is required. Foucault's interest specifically lies with the agents – groups and individuals – of power and the mechanisms whereby they exercise this power.

We need to identify the agents responsible for them (repressions and exclusions), their real agents... and not be content to lump them under the formula of a generalised bourgeoisie. We need to see how these mechanisms of power... have begun to become economically advantageous and politically useful. (1980: 101)

Foucault argues that power in modern society is comprised of both sovereign power and what he terms “disciplinary power” (1980: 106-107). This disciplinary power, which aims at promoting order within society, is focused on the individual and comprises two parts. The first, what Foucault termed an “anatomy-politics of the human body” centres on the body as a machine, and the second, a set of “regulatory controls: a bio politics of the population”, focuses on demography, the economy and social security (1981: 139). The aim of this disciplinary power is to “normalise” individuals and eliminate deviancy, thereby increasing the possible utility of individuals within society (1977: 210). In contrast to Marxist thinkers, Foucault locates the nexus of this power, not within the state, but within society as a whole – its members, social groups and institutions (1977: 210).

Sociological theories of power

Power in development is exercised through the control of development agenda. What gets included or excluded in policy statements, development plans, or public debate is carefully controlled. Entities with power can stymie participation or slant perspectives by erecting many barriers: control the topics of discussion, the timing of discussions, discussion participants, and the range of issues discussed (Steeves, 2001: 36–7)

Lukes's (1974: I) sociological theories of power highlight three dimensions: First is the direct power through decision making, in which contests over interests are assumed to be visible in public spaces,. Second is the indirect power through non-decision making, in which the entry of certain interests and actors into public spaces is privileged over others through a prevailing mobilisation of bias or rules of the game.

Lastly is the ideological power through the shaping of other actors' perceptions in which conflict is more invisible, through internalisation of powerlessness, or through dominating ideologies, values and forms of behaviour (Lukes, 1974; I). In more recent work which builds upon this approach, VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) present a framework for distinguishing between the visible, hidden and invisible (or internalised) forms of power (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: forms of power, adapted by Just Associates from VeneKlasen and Miller (2002)

Visible power: observable decision making	Hidden power: setting the political agenda	Invisible power: shaping meaning and what is acceptable
<p>This level includes the visible and definable aspects of political power – the formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions and procedures of decision making. Strategies that target this level are usually trying to change the ‘<i>who</i>, ‘<i>how</i> and ‘<i>what</i>’ of policymaking so that the policy process is more democratic and accountable, and serves the needs and rights of people and the survival of the planet.</p>	<p>Certain powerful people and institutions maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. These dynamics operate on many levels to exclude and devalue the concerns and representation of other less powerful groups ... Empowering advocacy strategies that focus on strengthening organisations and movements of the poor can build the collective power of numbers and new leadership to influence the way the political agenda is shaped and increase the visibility and legitimacy of their issues, voice and demands.</p>	<p>The most insidious of the three dimensions of power, invisible power shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. Significant problems and issues are not only kept from the decision-making table, but also from the minds and consciousness of the different players involved, even those directly affected by the problem. By influencing how individuals think about their place in the world, this level of power shapes people’s beliefs, sense of self and acceptance of the <i>status quo</i> – even their own superiority or inferiority. Processes of socialisation, culture and ideology perpetuate exclusion and inequality by defining what is normal, acceptable and safe. Change strategies in this area target social and political culture as well as individual consciousness to transform the way people perceive themselves and those around them, and how they envisage future possibilities and alternatives.</p>

Many pluralist studies of power examine the first dimension of power in its most visible manifestation in which emphasis is put on examining who has participated in a particular action, who has benefited and who has lost, in an effort to conclude who has power. Mayoux (1995)

argues that it is important to emphasize that the marginalization or exclusion of women from participatory projects remains an issue. Critics of participatory communication processes argue that spaces for participation create situations in which only the voices and versions of the vocal few are raised and heard. The question of who participates and who benefits in these institutions created as part of participatory development initiatives—whether committees, user groups, community action planning groups and so on raises awkward questions for participatory development (Mosse, 1995; Mouffe, 1992). The voices of the more marginal may barely be raised, let alone heard, in these spaces. Women, many critics argue, are those most likely to lose out, finding themselves and their interests marginalized or overlooked in apparently ‘‘participatory’’ processes (Guijt & Kaul Shah, 1998; Mayoux, 1995; Mosse, 1995

Problematising power in gender contexts

Development discourse on women and gender had however evolved through three major approaches namely WID (Women In Development), GAD (Gender and Development) and lastly international feminism.

A WID strategy advocated including women as an explicit focus in order to achieve development goals (Dagenais & Piche, 1994). WID constructed women as actively contributing to society through their both economic and human reproduction (Staudt, 1985). The approach also pointed the need to improve women’s access to education, political participation and employment, which were previously considered to privilege male constituents (Parpart, 1995, Valdivia, 1996). The WID approach, however shifted to GAD, which attempted to position women as active agents to social change situated within social and structural system of patriarchy and power (Cardinal, Costigan & Heffernan, 1994, Dagenais &Piche, 1994).

In contrast with WID, which privileged the importance of an individual in the social change, GAD approach to development locates power within normative and structural conditions (Parpart, 1995) Recent literature , however has proposed a new shift towards international feminism, which recognises differences across race, class and other social categories, by also respecting diversity across women, a move seeking a collective identity across women as an imagined community of participants seeking to change a global history of patriarchy domination (Cardinal, Costigan & Heffernan, 1994, Dagenais &Piche, 1994). Mohanty, however, contends that

..“the mere presence of women in the decision making committees without a voice can be counter-productive in the sense that it can be used to legitimise a decision which is taken by the male members”(2002: 1).

Critics further argue that in order to deal with such challenges, there is need for strategies that are sensitive to local dynamics of difference which build on the ‘gender issues’ that men as well as women can identify with and mobilize around, and also which can deal with the diversity of experiences and interactions that are part of everyday life, rather than imposing categories and concepts from conventional “gender” approaches (Cornwall, 2000b; Greig, 2000). Agarwal (1997) draws attention to familiar constraints to women participation such as time; official male bias; social constraints about women’s capabilities and roles; and lack of public speaking experience.

While Agarwal suggests addressing issues to do with meeting times and membership rules , to increase women’s confidence and awareness of their rights in order for them to be more assertive, Gaventa (2004) however, examines how boundaries of participation are constructed through invisible forms of power which he terms “it’s more insidious form” and analogous to Luke’s ‘ideological power’ (2004: 37),. He argues that hidden (indirect) forms of power may operate to privilege the entry of certain interests and actors into particular spaces through a prevailing ‘mobilisation of bias’ or manipulation of the rules of the game (2004: 37-38). Gaventa, further argues that this power , occurs where visible conflict is hidden through internalisation of dominating ideologies, values, forms of behaviour, self-esteem and identities “..such that voices in visible places are but echoes of what the power-holders who shaped the places want to hear” (2004: 19).

The work of Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright on what they term “empowered participatory governance” also draws attention to the need for specific design characteristics built into institutional arrangements. They highlight the need for clarity on the norms surrounding specific processes within participatory governance institutions. Particular issues they raise include the norms for decision making, norms for negotiating different discourses / positions, norms regarding the form of knowledge acceptable, and norms regarding inclusivity – of both peoples and processes (Fung et al, 2003: 20-23). Within this perspective, power is established, exercised

and consolidated through discourse which, in turn, shapes what is understood as knowledge and ‘truth’ within particular fields such as public policy

Locating power in discourse

Iris Marion Young talks of discourse in this context as

...the system of stories and expert knowledge diffused through society, which convey the widely accepted generalisations about how society operates that are theorised in those terms, as well as the social norms and cultural values which most of the people appeal when discussing their social and political problems and proposed solutions. (2003: 115)

Foucault argues that particular forms of knowledge or discourses vie with each other for control or power over what becomes established as the ‘truth’.

...[I]n a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse(1980: 93)

The ability to create, interpret, or tell stories about an individual, a group, community, or nation is a form of power (Servaes, 1999). Melkote and Steeves argue that initiatives for development must begin with grassroots communities in which individuals and organizations gain control and mastery over their own stories and discourse” (Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 37). There is therefore a need to create spaces for the less vocal and powerful to exercise their voices and begin to gain more choices, and therefore participatory approaches would appear to offer a lot to those struggling to bring about more equitable development (Fawcett et al, 1984: 146).

Strategies for the promotion of participatory parity in development work

These concerns about the participation of citizens – and especially subaltern social groups like women and children – in development have led various theorists to devise strategies for the more effective exercise of deliberative democracy. One such theorist, Jurgen Habermas (1989), argued that when citizens participate in public deliberation, they should set aside social inequalities and interact as if they were social equals. Only by abstracting from social inequalities would citizens be able to focus their deliberations on topics of common concern (cited in Haas, 2007: 36).

However, Nancy Fraser (;1990) takes issue with this assumption, as well as with the goal of focusing deliberations on topics of common concern to all citizens because, in her view, the ‘setting aside’, abstracting or veiling of social inequalities has always functioned to privilege the interest of dominant social groups over those of subaltern social groups – like women, people with disabilities, and children – by universalising narrow group interests. Instead, Fraser argues that citizens should explicitly articulate or ‘publicise’ inequalities. She is critical of communitarians, who assume that a ‘community’ represents a unified site bounded by shared values and interests.

By virtue of inhabiting a certain geographical territory, citizens are assumed by communitarians to confront common problems and to share an overarching vision of the common good that enables them to reach consensual solutions to those problems. But, for Fraser this ignores how communities are fragmented into multiple social groups, situated in what she calls “relations of dominance and subordination”, structured by class and gender (1990: 65). These social inequalities may preclude the emergence of a shared, overarching vision of the common good. Consensus may not even be the most realistic or appropriate goal, especially if it means ratifying an unjust status quo or precluding further debate.

In the light of these arguments, Haas (2007: 37) suggests that those involved in organising public deliberation should help citizens reflect on their different, potentially conflicting, concerns as the focal point of these deliberations. They should offer citizens the opportunity to reflect on one another’s reasons for espousing certain opinions and also offer them opportunities to articulate the social locations from which they view given topics and to reflect on how those social locations affect their sense of problems and solutions.

Organisers of participatory deliberation should encourage an acknowledgement that some social locations hinder or prevent certain citizens from speaking in public. An emphasis on transcendent communion may in itself be silencing. Subaltern communities need to be heard and citizens with more social power may be more willing to listen if organisers of these deliberations helped them consider how social inequalities may harm some citizens’ abilities to participate on an equal footing. This is not to argue that organisers should essentialise social identities, promote divisiveness, or exaggerate the impact of minor differences. They should not reductively assume that single social identifiers determine one’s perspective – but instead help articulate the

interrelations between various social signifiers. Haas's (2007: 39) basic point is that a sense of social solidarity is more likely to emerge from mutual respect – including an acknowledgement of diversity – than from an abstract pursuit of commonality.

Haas (2007: 39), concerned to make public deliberation as open and inclusive as possible, explores which institutional arrangements would best further this goal. He argues that Habermas's notion of a single unified public sphere not only presupposes that topics of common concern exist, it also “deprives subordinate social groups of spaces for *intra*-group deliberation about their particular concerns outside the supervision and control of dominant social groups” (2007: 39). Fraser (1990: 66) thus calls for “multiple discursive domains” organised around distinct bases of affinity and interest. This is because, in socially stratified societies, “arrangements that accommodate contestation among a plurality of interests better promote the ideal of participatory parity than does a single, comprehensive, overarching public [sphere]” (Fraser, 1990: 66, cited in Haas, 2007: 39).

However, Fraser does not mean to completely isolate her multiple counter-publics from a wider public. Instead, subaltern social groups (like women and children) are first given opportunities to circulate counter-discourses through which to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, needs and interests. These opportunities effectively function as a “training ground for agitational activities” directed towards the wider community (Fraser, 1990: 65).

Following Fraser, Haas (2007: 40) argues that organisers of public deliberation should help nurture a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains in which members of different social groups could articulate and deliberate about their particular concerns *among themselves*. This is a form of participatory ‘affirmative action’ that encourages participatory parity. Thereafter, organisers would record *intra*-group deliberations and report these to wider communities to help them understand how particular social locations affect certain groups’ sense of problems and solutions. Only after this was done, would organisers go on to invite all community members in on joint deliberations. This is to encourage discursive contestation between a plurality of social interest groups in a joint discursive space. More encompassing inter-group deliberations would help compare conflicting concerns as well as identify possible points of overlap that might subsequently form the basis for joint problem-solving (Haas, 2007: 40).

Hickey and Mohan (2004), however argue that more needs to be done to understand the ways in which participation relates to existing power structures and political systems in order to move towards a more transformatory approach to development, one which is rooted in the exercise of broadly defined citizenship” (2004: 5).

Conceptualising citizenship in development

Some critical social theorists argue that citizenship and participation need to be understood from a broader political, social and historical perspective, which draws attention to the politics of inclusion and exclusion that shape popular agency beyond particular interventions (Tilly, 1995). Robins et al (2008) also argue that, the idea that citizenship is primarily about active participation and that citizens are automatically willing and ready to participate in a created democratic space is debatable (Robins et al, 2008). In order to get more insights into these arguments there is a need to understand how citizenship has historically been conceptualised.

In 12th Century Europe, ‘citizenship’ (*citeseyn, cite/sein/zein*) was historically and etymologically connected to the city and then to the state (Isin and Wood, 1999; Lister, 1997; Nyamu-Musembi, 2002). The citizen was originally a person who, by living in the city acquired both rights and culture and the right to participate in a process of cultivation or civilization, while the pagans lived in the countryside, with no rights. Thus, citizenship was an exclusionary category (Isin and Wood, 1999; Lister, 1997; Nyamu-Musembi, 2002).

Just as Western conceptions of citizenship had disenfranchised populations in their own countries, the colonial powers in Africa did the same in constructing personhood based on differences of caste and religion, which in turn defined citizenship (Lister, 1998:228-9).

Much of the work on how citizenship was conceptualised in colonial Africa was done by Mamdani (1996), through his work, *Citizen and Subject*, in which he outlines a dual system of rule practised in colonial Africa called direct and the indirect rule, which in turn implicated the definition of citizenship. The direct rule system was mainly applied to the urban population, who enjoyed rights and ‘civilization’ and ‘citizenship’ (Mamdani, 1999). Contrary to the direct rule, the indirect rule was applied to the rural population, who were identified along ethnic lines which fragmented them into subjects with no rights (Mamdani, 1996).

Contestation of citizenship

Based on Mamdani's work, critics argue that in sub-Saharan Africa unequal social relations have eroded citizenship, leading to what has been characterised in the Malawian context as a "subject culture" (Patel, 2005, Mamdani, 1996) In this case the subjects who are supposed to be citizens establish relationships with 'big men', including state functionaries and politicians, in order to access state resources (Scott, 1986).

This kind of patronage-client relationship limits the promotion and development of participatory communication processes, in the sense that the quality of discourse and policy input by the subjects who are clients in this case restricts their role in participatory communication (see Englund, 2002, 2003; Patel, 2005; Booth et al, 2006). Robins et al (2008), however, contend that the relationship between the citizen and the state in many developing countries settings seldom resemble the kind of deliberative democratic models of citizen participation promoted by donors and NGOs (Robins et al, 2008: 1075).

Critics of this view however, contest that, depending on the specific contexts, people in poor communities often shift between client-ship and rights-based citizenship, and politicians often present themselves as both patrons and democratic representatives (Dagnino, 2007: 549-556). In the scramble for livelihoods and security, poor people tend to adopt plural strategies; they occupy multiple spaces and draw on multiple political identities, discourses and social relationships, often simultaneously (Fraser, 1995).

From client-ship to rights based citizenship

During the late 1990s there was however, a shift in the discourse of participation in development, from the participation of 'beneficiaries' in projects, to the more political and rights-based definitions of participation by citizens who are the 'makers and shapers' of their own development (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000). The strategy attempts to re-signify power from being a clientelistic response of helping a friend to being a service to citizens in a culture of dialogue and human rights (White, 1996:13). The approach calls for an integration of a human rights in development initiatives. A rights-based approach to development (RBA) is a framework that integrates the norms, principles, standards and goals of the international human rights system into the plans and processes of development. It is characterised by methods and activities

that link the human rights system and its inherent notion of power and struggle with development. The approach is well spelt in the documents of various UN bodies. For example, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in its Human Development Report of 2000 on Human Rights and Human Development and in its 1998 statement on human rights and development (UNDP, 1998) gives justification and the conceptual basis for a rights-based approach in their work is as follows:

The central goal of Development has and will be the promotion of human well-being. Given that human rights define and defend human well-being, a rights-based approach to development provides the conceptual and practical framework for the realization of human rights through the development process. (UNDP, 1998:7)

Johnson (2003) talks of UNICEF's approach to implementing a 'rights-based approach' in its community capacity development strategy, which looks at five specific steps in programming namely:

causality analysis to identify basic causes such as gender discrimination; analysis of the complex web of social and political relationships between rights-bearers and duty-bearers; analysis of capacity gaps that prevent duty holders (e.g., parents, communities and government agencies) from fulfilling their obligations; identification of 'candidate actions' to equip both rights-holders and duty-bearers in relation to a specific issue; and finally programme design, which involves aggregating the priority actions into programmes and projects sensitive to the level of society at which each action is being undertaken. (Johnson, 2003: 7)

Some commentators contrast a 'rights-based' with a 'needs-based' approach. They argue that whereas a needs-based approach focuses on securing additional resources for delivery of services to particular groups, a rights-based approach calls for existing resources to be shared more equally and for assisting the marginalised people to assert their rights to those resources (Johnson, 2003). Through rights-based approaches poverty is recognised as injustice and includes marginalisation, discrimination, and exploitation as central causes of poverty. In this sense, poverty is never simply the fault of the individual, nor can its solution be purely personal. A central dynamic of RBA is thus about identifying root causes of poverty, empowering rights-holders to claim their rights and enabling duty-bearers to meet their obligations. It focuses on participation and empowerment of the poor and their right to hold governments and other responsible actors accountable (Johnson, 2003: 23). UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2002) expresses this broader notion of accountability as follows:

Perhaps the most important source of added value in the human rights approach is the emphasis it places on the accountability of policy-makers and other actors whose actions have an impact on the rights of people. Rights imply duties, and duties demand accountability (UNOHCHR, 2002: 230). DCT's approach to project implementation works in the same way what Johnson (2003) is referring to as a UNICEF's model.

Conclusion

This chapter presented theoretical perspectives of development by discussing general historical overview about the origins, purpose and main paradigms of development and how these relate to communication. In that respect, it provided three key paradigms for the theorisation of development namely modernisation, dependency and 'multiplicity'.

This thesis is situated within the multiplicity paradigm. It best relates to the participatory radio project in question in which the role of communication in decision making, allows people to gain new knowledge, challenge existing oppressive structures and above all gain control over their lives and bring about change (Fraser & Restepo, 1998; Melkote & Steeves 2001). The theoretical framework has however, placed development within a rights based approach in which the central goal of development is to promote human well-being.

Given that human rights define and defend human well-being, a rights-based approach to development provides the conceptual and practical framework for the realization of human rights through the development process (UNDP, 1998:7). Related to the issue of human rights is the issue of citizenship, clientship, subjects and participation. The chapter presented various debates on whether participants in participatory decision making processes participate as citizens with rights or as subjects and clients.

Through this chapter, it has been argued that depending on specific contexts, people in poor communities often shift between client-ship and rights-based citizenship, and politicians often present themselves as both patrons and democratic representatives (Dagnino, 2007: 549-556). In the scramble for livelihoods and security, poor people tend to adopt plural strategies; they occupy multiple spaces and draw on multiple political identities, discourses and social relationships, often simultaneously.

The chapter also examined the issues of power and its implication on participation. Theorists argue that power in development can be visible, invisible, or insidious.

Many pluralist studies of power examine the first dimension of power in its most visible manifestation. In more visible aspect power is examined to see who has participated in a particular action, who has benefited and who has lost, in an effort to conclude who has power, while hidden (invisible) forms of power may operate to privilege the entry of certain interests and actors into particular spaces through a prevailing ‘mobilisation of bias’ or manipulation of the rules of the game. The last form of power occurs where visible conflict is hidden through internalisation of dominating ideologies, values, forms of behaviour, self-esteem and identities such that voices in visible places are but echoes of what the power-holders who shaped the places want to hear.

The chapter has also tackled the issue of gender and participation. Problematizing the way in which ‘gender’ is used in development is essential for addressing the transformatory goals of participatory development, since marginalization or exclusion of women (and other vulnerable or subaltern social groupings) from participatory projects remains an issue (Mayoux, 1995). Women’s involvement in participatory projects is often limited to implementation, where essentialisms about women’s caring roles in the community come into play (Guijt & Kaul Shah, 1998; Lind, 1997).

The chapter also explored various strategies that have been devised to improve the efficacy of participatory deliberative practice for subaltern groups. These arguments will be developed in the subsequent chapters in which I have presented my findings. The following chapter looks at the methodology which I used in carrying out the research study

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes and discusses the methodology used to carry out this study. It discusses the research design and methods of data collection, the research procedure, the physical location of the study and the selection of a Radio Listening Club, as well as data analysis and processing. The limitations of the study will also be discussed. The relevance of the methodological approaches to the goals of the study will be discussed, in line with the theoretical frameworks chosen.

Epistemological considerations

The broader epistemological framework under which the study was undertaken was critical realism (Deacon et al, 1999). This position entails an understanding of the relationship between social and cultural structures and everyday activity, which is based on a transformational conception of human activity (Bhaskar, 1989: 3). Critical realists argue that everyday action cannot be properly understood without taking into account the broader social and cultural formations that envelope and shape it by providing the means, media, rules and resources for everything we do (Deacon et al, 1999). These social and cultural structures are “continually modified by social action until they are eventually transformed into something else” (Deacon et al, 1999:10). The role of the critical analyst is thus to bring structures to light and “explain how they work in order to encourage informed action aimed at eradicating barriers to equity and justice” (Deacon et al, 1999:10). Thus, unlike the interpretive approaches which concentrate on the meanings people mobilise to make sense of their worlds, critical realism is also concerned with generative mechanisms underlying and producing observable events (Bhaskar, cited in Deacon et al, 1999: 11). In this case, the critical realist researcher must analyse transformations at macro, meso and micro levels, including “intimate features of the human self”, to enable him or her see the relations between them (1999:11).

Theoretical considerations

Critical realists contend that it is only when an analysis of underlying social and cultural formations is combined with research on the ways these structures are negotiated and contested on the ground that we can arrive at a comprehensive account of the organisation of meaning

(Deacon et al, 1999:12). They further argue that pursuing the critical realist project is, however, not just a matter of conducting more comprehensive research. It also involves a major commitment to developing more adequate theories of the way underlying social and cultural formations work to structure everyday action (Deacon et al, 1999:12). Both theory and research activity are crucial to the success of any inquiry. As can be seen from chapters two and three this study has drawn on a number of broadly critical theoretical frameworks which provides the lens through which this study is situated.

The research design and procedure

Physical location of the study

The study was carried out in three different locations related to the three broad data gathering methods used in this study: document review, direct observation and in-depth individual interviews. The document review exercise and the initial in-depth interviews with key DCT staff were conducted within the offices of DCT, in Blantyre, the headquarters of the project implanting partner in Southern Region of Malawi. Direct observations and follow-up in-depth individual interviews with the members of the community were done in the field at Muwalo Radio Listening Club, in Ntcheu District some 150km away from Blantyre in the Central Region of Malawi. Government officials and the Member of Parliament were interviewed in their respective offices at Ntcheu District Council after participating in the deliberative discussions with the community at the field. The choice of the site was purposively selected based on the availability of resources and its distance (150km) from the project headquarters office which is in Blantyre.

Muwalo Radio Listening Club as a critical case study

Muwalo RLC was chosen as a case study within the DCT project. Applying the qualitative research tradition in this case was vital in the sense that the approach intended to study attitudes and behaviours within their natural setting. In other words, as observed by Bryman, qualitative research has an expressed commitment to “viewing events and actions as they happen, norms, values, etc. from the perspective of the people who are being studied” (1988: 61). This is where qualitative tradition distinguishes itself from quantitative research in that it is conducted in the natural setting of social actors and aims to describe and understand events within the concrete,

natural context in which they occur. It places events in contexts that are understandable to the actors themselves, and their everyday life experiences (Geertz, 1973).

In my case it was important to apply this approach since the goal of the study was to discover the extent to which relations of social inequality and/or patron-client political relationships affected the quality of discursive interaction and problem solving efforts in formally inclusive participatory communication processes.

There are three key types of qualitative research: ethnographic, case studies and life histories (Yin 1984:13). In this instance a case study approach was chosen. According to Simons, a case study is:

An in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project in a 'real life' context. It is research based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic - to generate knowledge and/ or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action. (2009: 21)

In addition, Yin writes that a case study inquiry uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate a specific contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially where the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 1984: 13). It is preferred in examining contemporary events when the relevant behaviour cannot be manipulated as in an experiment (Yin, 1994: 8). According to Simons case studies can be divided into "intrinsic" and "instrumental" categories depending on the purpose of the research (2009: 21). An "intrinsic" case study is undertaken to better understand a particular case. It is not undertaken primarily because it represents other cases or because it illustrates some particular trait, characteristic, or problem. Rather, it is because of its uniqueness or ordinariness that a case becomes interesting. The intention is to better understand intrinsic aspects of the organisation or project, not to understand or test abstract theory or to develop new theoretical explanations. An "instrumental" case study on the other hand provides insights into an issue or refines a theoretical explanation (Simons, 2009: 21).

The case is often looked at "in depth, its contexts scrutinised, its ordinary activities detailed, because this helps us pursue the external interest" (Simons, 2009: 21). In this instance Muwalo Radio Listening Club was chosen for the instrumental role it could play in helping us to understand theoretical issues and help tackle some of the problems associated with the practice of participatory decision making processes on development projects in Malawi. This kind of a

role is suitable for my research study because the DCT participatory radio project is an example of a participatory communication enterprise which is implemented in a specific context shaped by historical and socio-political processes of the past and present. As for most other research strategies, case study can be used for one of the three purposes: exploratory, descriptive or explanatory, or a combination among any of them.

In my case the main purpose of my study is exploratory and descriptive at the same time. In this respect, the case study will be used to explore how a participatory communication project is being implemented in a specific context which is shaped by the historical and socio-cultural and political processes of both the past and the present. Through a case study, I will critically look at its design and follow its implementation processes by looking at one cycle in the project processes. However with the case study approach, the findings cannot be generalised (Wimmer and Dominick, 1987:156). Though the findings of a case study can only apply to the case under study, it does not mean the results are always unique to that particular case. Yin (1984:10) observes case studies— like experiments, are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes.

The case study design and research questions

As indicated earlier, a case study's strength is the ability to deal with a full variety of evidence (Yin, 1994:8). It allows for a number of research techniques to be used in the same study and has the ability to deal with a wide spectrum of evidence such as documents and interviews (Wimmer and Dominick, 1987: 156). The methods used for data collection for this study were selected based on their ability to provide relevant data to answer the research questions. The research study was mainly concerned with four major questions as follows:

- Is there a disjuncture between the imagined aims of the project and its implementation?
- How, and to what extent, do some social relations – like gender – hinder, or even prevent, certain participants from speaking in public or from fully participating in citizen deliberation?
- Do the participants imagine themselves to be either patrons or clients – or do they see themselves as rights-bearing citizens?

- To what extent do citizens, who have been on the receiving end of paternalism in the past in their everyday encounters with state institutions and service institutions, bring these dispositions and expectations with them into the participatory spheres?

Data gathering methods

It is important to recognise that the case study is not a data-gathering technique in itself, but a methodological approach that incorporates a number of data-gathering measures (Berg, 2001: 225). This is in line with the notion that a mixing of methods is central to critical realism (Deacon et al, 1999: 11). While critical realists incorporate the kinds of work done by interpretive researchers in exploring “how people make sense of their world on a day-to-day basis”, they also aim to go beyond them by “considering the underlying formations that organise meaning making” (Deacon et al, 1999: 11). Consequently, this research has sought rich, detailed information of a qualitative nature using a three-stage approach to data collection, namely document analysis, direct observations, and in-depth individual interviews (Simons, 2009: 33). This is aimed at establishing a better understanding of whether there are disjunctures/disconnects between the imagined aims of the project and its implementation on the ground.

Document analysis

I had access to the official documentation regarding the project This included the project proposal, concept note, project training manuals, project guidelines, project progress reports and project contract agreements. All of these documents were reviewed and analysed to study the aims, goals and objectives of the project in question, and also to appreciate how the project was designed in relation to the normative ideals of participatory communication for development.

As I reviewed various documents of the project, my major interest was in who was involved in designing the project, the rationale behind the project design, and its specific aims and objectives. I also wanted to know its stakeholders and how it defined and conceptualised the participation of the different stakeholders at different levels in the project implementation process. It also helped me understand how the project conceived of empowering the marginalised community through the project. The process also revealed the kind of skills and knowledge participants would be given to enable them participate effectively, the kind of training manuals, and also project-related guidelines on how they impacted on the participation of different

stakeholders. It was also necessary to understand who sets the guidelines and for what reasons as well as the role these guidelines played in practice. Project progress reports were also reviewed and analysed as to where they originated from, their main purpose, who wrote them and how often were they written and who were they written for. Through the review of progress reports, I also wanted to find out what was being reported on. I also wanted to know how each stakeholder was defined in the reports, what roles they played and what processes were employed to generate reports as indicated in the reports themselves.

After reviewing these documents, I then proceeded to do qualitative content analysis of the data generated, to come up with thematic areas which were subsequently used in carrying out direct observation and in-depth individual interviews. As a follow up to that, I conducted in-depth, open-ended interviews with DCT staff and the donors respectively to get more insight into how the participatory communication concept has been conceived through the official documentation and how it was applied in practice through project implementation, while paying particular attention to their understanding of participation.

In order to get a clearer understanding of the project design and what was going on in practice, I then proceeded to observe discussions in deliberative forums. Krippendorff (1980: 23) notes that validation of the results of content analysis to something that is observable in principle is important to help conceptualise reality in relation to the analysed text.

Direct observation

One activity undertaken by the Radio Listening Club in the implementation of the project is a problem identification process. Through this process, a wider spectrum of community members assembles at one place to define their development problem. According to the project design, the process is supposed to be inclusive; thus both men and women of different social classes participate in the process. Later, a similar process is conducted in which the community engages service providers from either the private or the public sector in a dialogue aimed at identifying possible solutions to the development problems raised in the first process. Members of the Radio Listening Club play a facilitative role in both cases. I observed one full cycle of such activities as one way of collecting data.

One of the strongest points made by Deacon *et al* (1999: 258) for observation research is being physically there, actually witnessing the events being researched. It was for this reason that doing observation, could help me to understand how relations of power, patron-client relations between citizens on the one hand and traditional leaders, politicians and bureaucrats on the other were played out during such interactions and consequently impacted on the manner each stake holder participated in these deliberative forums. There are two types of observation research approach, namely participant observation and simple observation Denzin (in Kelleher, 1993). In this study, I carried out a simple observation.

During my observation, I paid particular attention to nonverbal clues like where particular participants sat during the meeting, how they sat, how they talked, where they stood, their dress code, and their expressive movements like eye movement, facial expressions, and body posture. Through, nonverbal clues, I paid attention to observe the setting of the meeting, the people's personal space, its structures and protocols, the duration of time a particular participant was given to speak and how she or he spoke and the observable dispositions and silences displayed by each stakeholder during discussions. According to Juluri (2003), silences in discussions are important because they may constitute the boundaries of not only what people would like to say, but perhaps what they are capable of saying as well. In other words, what is not said points out the 'limits of intelligibility' of certain discourses (2003: 225).

Similarly, through verbal clues, I was interested in observing how the agenda for discussion was set, who controlled the deliberations and what noticeable differences there were between core members of the RLC and non-members in the way they participated in the discussions. Through verbal clues, I also wanted to observe how a particular development problem was defined and articulated, and how consensus was reached. In particular, I also wanted to observe the extent to which the outcomes of the deliberations in the forums measured up to the imagined aims and goals of the project. I was also interested in the kind of dispositions various stakeholders brought into the discussions at both levels.

After observing the two deliberative forums, I then processed and analysed the data through qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is used for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through identifying themes or patterns (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2008:1). Qualitative content analysis also follows the same rigour and procedures as quantitative

content analysis but differs with its thematic approach to content. I employed qualitative content analysis to develop thematic areas which formed a basis for the next method of collecting data which was in-depth individual interviews which is discussed in the following section.

In-depth individual Interviews

In-depth individual interviews were used to further investigate how different groups understood their participation in relation to the goals of the project, their perception of power dynamics present during discussions, and how, in their observation; it had worked out in practice, their attitudes and dispositions towards the project and towards their own participation in it. Bryman (1988: 47) points out that the in-depth individual interview is often used with observation. They are used to capture the inside view and provide thick' descriptions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Bryman, 1984).

Interviews are a useful research tool as they enable the researcher to explore areas that would not be possible through the use of a questionnaire (Deacon *et al*, 2007:66). They have the ability to solicit more information from respondents as they direct them to express their views around a theme leaving the respondent to decide on what is vital for inclusion (Deacon *et al*, 2007:68). Participants for these interviews were purposively drawn from the participants, within the five groups of people thus (i) those who participated in problem defining sessions, (ii) those who participated in problem solving sessions, (iii) those from the project implementing office (DCT), (iv) those from the project funding partner, and (v) governance experts and commentators From group (i) there were five participants, group (ii), there were four participants, group (iii), and the remaining groups there were two participants each. For the interviews to remain focused, I operated within a loose collection of themes which were developed either after document analysis or after direct observations were conducted. The interviews were recorded and later the data was analysed and thematic areas were developed for the purpose of presenting the data. The following section deals with procedures which were followed in the carrying out the study.

Research procedure

I would like to declare that despite my close relationship with the activities of the project in question, my role in this study was to attempt to view the world through the eyes of the actors, try to understand their actions, decisions, behaviour practices, rituals and so on from their

perspectives in real situations (Guba, 1990). With that in mind, I attempted to avoid some biases to some degree, as I carried my study.

With the aid of my supervisor, a list of thematic questions was compiled prior to my embarking on field research in Malawi. I was advised to pay close attention to the theoretical frameworks and concerns explored in Chapter two in organising and categorising the information generated through the various approaches I used for data collection.

The case study I was interested in researching was managed by DCT and also funded by UNDP as such I needed to get permission from both organisations, prior to my accessing the Radio Listening Club and official documents. I therefore, communicated to both, requesting their permission. In the request I also indicated the type of the documents I was interested in and the permission was granted.

My supervisor supplied a letter of introduction, clearly stating the purpose of my research and I took that letter to each of the organisations I visited. Despite the fact that I was granted the permission to access the community, I knew beforehand that the timing for my field visits needed to coincide with what was planned in the community in terms of their activities in order for me to get that opportunity to observe the deliberations at both levels. Through the DCT field officer, I made arrangements to meet the RLC on the day they were discussing their development problem and later a date was set for a dialogue with service providers to respond to their development problems. I attended both events accompanied by the DCT field officer for that particular community.

At both deliberative forums, I asked for permission to have the deliberations recorded on an audio cassette, using a tape recorder. In the course of my observations, I used the data collection tool I had earlier on developed. Through that process, I made small notes from the observations and put them down under specific thematic areas.

Data from these discussions and non-verbal observations made were then analysed through qualitative content analysis to further generate more themes. These themes were used in the in-depth individual interviews. During the course of the study, there were some ethical questions to consider. Fontana and Frey (1994: 378) observe that traditional ethical concerns have revolved around the topics of 'informed consent' (consent received from the subject after he or she has

been carefully and truthfully informed about the research), ‘right to privacy’ and ‘protection from harm’. I have adhered to all three. At the beginning of each interview, I explained the purpose of the study to the informants and their consent was obtained in all cases. I asked each of my key informants’ permission to record the proceedings on tape recorder beforehand. I also asked each of the informants to identify themselves at the start of interview. The duration of the interview ranged from 45 minutes to one hour. The length of the discussions and interviews depended on the information provided by the interviews.

Most of the interviews with the community members were conducted in *Chichewa*, Malawi’s widely-spoken language. I took shorthand notes in English to remind me of the theoretical topics I needed to address. Each interview and discussion was transcribed and translated into English. The rest of the interviews particularly with DCT staff and the funding partners as well as government officials were done in English. They were also transcribed. The following section talks about data processing and analysis.

Data analysis procedures

The data which was collected was analysed through the use of thematic coding as the mode of analysis. Jensen succinctly explains this approach as:

... [a] loosely inductive categorisation of interview or observational extracts with reference to various concepts, headings, or themes. The process comprises the comparing, contrasting, and abstracting of the constitutive elements of meaning. (1982: 247: 53) Data was categorised and labelled under specific themes which also related to particular research questions in the study. The researcher’s job was thus to report on those sections of the data under each theme and relate it to particular research question. Following a vigorous data analysis based on different thematic areas, it became visible that some key research questions were being addressed. Selection of data that could tell an eventful story was considered in order to present it in a more broadly, chronological order (Simons, 2009: 118). The following chapters deal with findings of the research study. Chapter five will critically examine the project design and present its findings while chapter six will also critical examine discussions which communities and service providers were engaged in. Chapter seven discusses the research findings and finally chapter eight makes recommendations and conclusions

CHAPTER 5

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter presents findings made after reviewing project-related documents and conducting in-depth interviews with key informants. The chapter presents some notable achievements which the project has registered so far through its implementation process. The chapter also presents some disjunctures between the imagined aims of the project and the empirical realities. Through the same chapter it will be noted how each project stakeholder was defined and also how each stakeholder defined participation within the project implementation.

Project rationale and design

The *Ndizathuzomwe* participatory radio project concept was based on arguments put forward by the Democracy Consolidation Program (DCP) support document (2008) which was originally developed by UNDP and the office of President and Cabinet (OPC) in which the root cause of poverty in Malawi was said to be the low enjoyment of the right to development (RTD). According to that document, poverty is caused by low public participation in governance especially for vulnerable groups, which include children, women, people with disabilities, and the rural and urban poor, who least enjoy the right to development, including the right to exercising informed democratic choices (DCP, 2008: 14). In view of that, the project was designed within a human rights-based approach to development, which entails addressing rights that are least enjoyed by vulnerable groups in the community, which include women, children, youth, people with disabilities and people living with HIV and AIDS (DCT, 2012). The document was produced based on the United Nations Development Program- UNDP (1998) statement on human rights and development in which it talks of the central goal of development as the promotion of human well-being (UNDP, 1998: 7). Through rights-based approaches poverty is recognised as injustice and includes marginalisation, discrimination, and exploitation as central causes of poverty. In this sense, poverty is never simply the fault of the individual, nor can its solution be purely personal. A central dynamic of RBA is thus about identifying root causes of poverty, empowering rights-holders to claim their rights and enabling duty-bearers to

meet their obligations. It focuses on participation and empowerment of the poor and their right to hold governments and other responsible actors accountable (Johnson, 2003: 23).

The project was expected to achieve three key results: (i) To have an empowered rural community in the project impact area group which is able to effectively demand for progressive accessible and acceptable basic social services, basic services, and good governance especially for vulnerable groups like women, youth, children, and people with disabilities (ii) To have an empowered rural community in the project impact area group which is able to effectively demand for fair labour practices, and markets and consumer protection especially for women, youth, children and people with disability. (iii) To have service providers who are responsive to the demands of the communities especially the vulnerable groups of women, youth, children and people with disability (DCT, 2012:5)

Achievements on the goals and aims of the project

According to a tracer study conducted by Chijere-Chirwa et al (2000) on behalf of the Development Communications Trust, the project has to some extent, achieved its aims and goals by conducting dialogues which have resulted in rural communities addressing some of their development problems, such as lack of potable water, non-functional education systems, lack of health facilities as well as the lack of accountability and transparency among public officers (Chijere-Chirwa et al, 2000). The DCT (2012) concept note proposal for phase four of the *Ndzizathuzomwe* project makes some claims of that achievement in the following account:

Under the *Ndzizathuzomwe III* project, there have been tremendous achievements in attaining the right to good health. Such achievements included construction of health related infrastructures such as Health Centres, ART receiving points, maternity wards, and staff houses, which to improve the lives of the people. Community members to some extent enjoyed their rights to good health through the provision of health services since the infrastructures were available. Pregnant women enjoyed their rights to reproductive health, since maternity wards are at least available in some areas (DCT, 2012: 5-8).

Apart from the health sector the project further made claims in terms of achieving the right to education for children from various areas. This is according to the same report of DCT (2012) which indicated:

Most communities engaged duty bearers in dialogues to demand the fulfilment of the right to education. Such discussions resulted in the increase of initiatives towards the enjoyment

of the right to education through education related infrastructures like forty eight teacher's houses; sixty teachers deployed to schools, five new schools opened, ten school blocks constructed, sixty four school blocks rehabilitated and three school feeding projects were initiated among other initiatives in the project impact area" (DCT, 2012: 7-9).

According to the same report, such development resulted in easing most of the challenges pupils were facing in attaining their right to education.

Pupils no longer walked long distances to access an education facility, they also no longer experienced poor quality of education since more teachers were available to teach which reduced the teacher to pupil ratio" (DCT, 2012:7-10).

The same document claimed that communities have engaged various stakeholders in achieving fair trade, consumer protection and fair labour issues, as explained in the following account:

During the previous project, communities have been capacitated to demand fair trade, good labour practices, fair markets and consumer protection. Through fair trade initiatives communities have been able to improve their economic status by profiting from their produce which they now sell at reasonable prices which was not the case before. Communities managed to withdraw children from child labour and enrolled them in schools, (DCT, 2012).

According to Manyozo(2007), the participatory radio project was designed to allow the community to participate in dialogues with the state bureaucrats/politicians and chiefs, express themselves, discuss problems and ask questions and are ostensibly on an equal footing with each other .This kind of participation is most clearly expressed within 'civic republican' theories of citizenship which is founded on "the collective and participatory engagement of citizens in the determination of the affairs of their community" (Dietz, 1987: 13-15, in Lister, 1997: 24). This entails seeing citizens as members of a political community who are actively engaged in "political debate and decision making" processes (Miller, 1995: 443). Despite the many claims made on the achievements of the goals and aims of the project in the project documents, I noticed a number of disjuncture between the aims of the project and the reality on the ground. This is explained in the following sections.

Disjuncture between imagined aims and empirical realities

One of the aims of the project was to target vulnerable groups like people with disabilities, but as noted by the DCT (2012) concept note in the following statements, this was not the case on the ground:

Despite the progress the project had made through the construction of educational facilities, like schools for the attainment of the right to education, it did not however take into account other important factors such as the issue of who were accessing these education facilities among the demography of the community. This was the case because through the implementation of the project, issues of people with disability and girls as prioritized groups in the education sector were not adequately addressed. Furthermore issues of adequate learning material and other resources in the education sector were not exhaustingly addressed” (DCT, 2012: 15).

The same issue of lack of participation by vulnerable groups in the attainment of the right to health was also observed in the same report which asserted:

Addressing issues related to health service delivery was not targeted to vulnerable groups like women.....Their participation in demanding for accessible quality basic services in the health sector among was limited. Furthermore, the implementation of the project to some extent did not fully take into account issues of health governance which is very crucial in the management of resources at the health facility (DCT, 2012:15-16)

As previously observed, the project design was also aimed at promoting fair trade, consumer protection and labour rights among the vulnerable groups of the community. It is noted, however through the DCT (2012) report that there are some gaps to that effect, as explained below:

Much as the project addressed the rights of the marginalized groups like women, in the areas of fair trade, consumer protection and labour rights. Oftentimes issues that specifically affect these groups were somehow swallowed by issues that affect the general population. This was the case because when identifying issues of non-enjoyment of rights being faced by the community, the implementers of project did not specifically focus on women. Exploitation of vulnerable groups in trade like women still remains the order of the day. Women face gender based violence in labour practices, and the same case applies to the youth, particularly girls, who are often sexually exploited in order to get employment (DCT, 2012: 20-22)

As observed through the report, marginalisation of women in Malawi is rooted in the Malawian culture where traditional or cultural practices play a fundamental role in ascribing statutes to men and women (Chidyaonga, 2003). Malawi has a significant male domination in various spheres in which patriarchal interests dominate public discussion – very few women feature in such discussions. The cultural perceptions relating to the social construction of the family, where men are recognised as heads of households and women as subordinates, have only contributed to the vulnerability of women over the years (Semu, 2002).When women attempt to participate in decision making processes , they are sometimes ridiculed and dehumanised by the men folk

I couldn't participate during the meeting because I don't have the skills to speak in front of men. Sometimes when you take part in such meetings, other people would ridicule and make fun of you if you fail to articulate a point. They say all sorts of bad things to you. So I just kept silent (**Interview female villager, 20 – 6 - 2012**).

These assertions made are in sharp contrast with the goals and purpose of the project which is aimed at increasing the number of women in leadership positions.

According to the way the project is designed, it is expected that 40% of the community structures are women participating in all decision making processes. To some extent we have seen that the leadership of many of the Radio Listening Clubs are women. In most of the Radio Listening Clubs, membership of women and men is 50:50" (**Interview Deputy Program Manager of DCP-the project funding partner 16-9-2011**).

The mere presence of women in the decision making committees without a voice can be counter-productive in the sense that it can be used to legitimise a decision which is taken by the male members (Mohanty, 2002:1). Mohanty argues that hidden (indirect) forms of power may operate to privilege the entry of certain interests and actors into particular spaces through a prevailing 'mobilisation of bias' or manipulation of the rules of the game (2004: 37-38). This form of power structure at the local level is linked to the question of whether people feel they have as much right to speak as those who have more social power/confidence to speak.

Empowering the centre while disempowering the periphery

The project is implemented through a network of community-based radio production structures popularly known as 'Radio Listening Clubs'(RLCs) which are trained in various skills like advocacy, public speaking and were given knowledge on human rights democracy good governance and issue of citizenship. (Manyozo, 2007: 16). In this case non-members of the RLC were not given such knowledge and skills for participation.

1st speaker (villager):

I did not ask questions because I feared that I could make mistakes. You know, I am not a member of the Radio Listening Club. You know, those are knowledgeable members and can speak and ask questions without fear (**interview Female villager 15 5 - 2012**)

From the above interview, it seems that the 'training' received by the RLC members has created a social cleavage between them and the rest of the community. This is ironic, because this project is supposed to do the exact opposite of this. The 'training' is perceived as some sort of

extraneous, foreign 'knowledge' coming from the outside world which gives the RLC members some sort of special power and unfair advantage over the rest of community members. Lister (1998), however asserts that, for any person to participate as a citizen, he or she must be aware (have knowledge) of his or her right to participation as well as the capacity of performing in terms of 'skills and abilities' of active participation which centre on the arts of engagement with others (Lister, 1998:228-9).

From the above observations, the project seemed to have been designed on the assumption that by building capacity of the RLC members, the knowledge and skills they get would be imparted to the wider community to build their capacity too. These observations are shared by the deputy program manager for DCP, project funding partner:

The project design worked on assumption, that once the RLC members, who are the nucleus, have been trained, they would animate the entire community in identifying and defining development problems in their area. This was so because this particular structure [the RLC] was living with the people, who included the vulnerable groups. It was effective for a certain group to animate others and to enable them understand the concept better and lead them to demand the fulfilment of the right to development.” **(Interview deputy program manager for DCP, project funding partner:16-9-2011).**

It was, however, perhaps unreasonable to expect a newly-empowered group of community members to have the skills and consciousness to run community discussions in such a way that vulnerable community members like women feel empowered to participate.

..... I think more work needs to be done because they are other aspects that play a role, for example the quality of animators. As you know information changes from one individual to the next, so if we have good quality animators it works well but where the quality is not as good, we have problems. But, also the critical mass we are talking about may take a bit of time as you know we are dealing with low levels of literacy. **(Interview, deputy program manager for DCP, project funding partner 16-9-2011)**Members of the RLC admit that they are supposed to transfer their skills to other non-members of the RLC within the community.

Yes we are supposed to be going to various communities to build the capacity of ordinary people. Teach them about their rights. The challenge, however, is that we cannot manage to do so because of distance. We don't have the means for mobility, the project does not provide for that. **(Interview, Male villager20-8- 2012)**

Project implementers admit that, there are gaps between the project design and what is happening on the ground:

Obviously there are challenges because these RLC structures work as volunteer groups and the concept of voluntarism is not well understood by most of the communities. We have also realised that mobility for RLCs is a challenge. We are still looking at ways of dealing with that problem. **(Interview DCT field officer 22 -8- 2012)**

From the observations made above, the project seems to have only empowered ‘the centre’ – members of the Radio Listening Club – through capacity building in terms of training on human rights and the right to development while the target group like women were not exposed to such capacities.

Interrogating the rights-based approach to development

The guiding philosophy of the project design is a ‘rights-based’ framework of development mainly originating from its funding partners, the UNDP (Chirwa et al, 2000: 6). A rights-based approach according to United Nations (2001) entails linking all the activities and methods of development with the human rights system and its inherent notion of power and struggle. In its Draft Guidelines for a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2002) put much emphasis on the broader notion of accountability on the part of the duty bearers as follows:

Perhaps the most important source of added value in the human rights approach is the emphasis it places on the accountability of policy-makers and other actors whose actions have an impact on the rights of people. Rights imply duties, and duties demand accountability. (UNOHCHR, 2002:230)

In view of this notion, the project mainly focused on building the capacity of the communities to be able to demand accountability on the part of the duty bearer. In contrast the supply side (duty bearers) to some extent have not been responsive

In our focus we mainly dealt with the demand side of service delivery and in a way we were assuming that the service providers, particularly the state actors as duty bearers, understand their responsibilities. However the reality is that duty bearers have not been very responsive. I think they still believe in the top-bottom approach where they feel they are supposed to be bosses and don’t appreciate that when communities come to demand, they do so as citizens who have rights to do so **(Interview deputy program manager for DCP, project funding partner:16-9-2011)**

Non-responsiveness among state actors and duty bearers in general could be attributed to the legacy of the past political culture:

Multiparty politics have increased the marginalised voices to be heard but what it has not managed to add is the kind of the responses from the state actors. Power holders take advantage of the less powerful and they hold information on what they are supposed to account for to these less powerful people like in terms of public resources. There is some kind of elitism among the Malawian, a culture of the elite emanating from the past Banda regime (**Interview, Governance Expert and Political commentator -Dr Tembo 16-9-2011**).

Robins et al (2008), however, contend that the relationship between the citizen and the state in many developing countries settings seldom resemble the kind of deliberative democratic models of citizen participation promoted by donors and NGOs (Robins et al, 2008: 1075). From the way the project was designed, it appears that DCT project concentrated almost exclusively in building the capacity of the demand side (the community) while the supply side (the state actors in this case) had not been fully given capacities to appreciate the implementation of the rights-based approach to development . Johnson (2003) argues that community capacity development strategy, for rights based approach should be comprehensive in that it should consider ways of building capacities of the duty bearer too:

....; analysis of the complex web of social and political relationships between rights-bearers and duty-bearers; analysis of capacity gaps that prevent duty holders (e.g., parents, communities and government agencies) from fulfilling their obligations; identification of 'candidate actions' to equip both rights-holders and duty-bearers in relation to a specific issue; and finally programme design, which involves aggregating the priority actions into programmes and projects sensitive to the level of society at which each action is being undertaken. (Johnson, 2003: 7)

Conclusion

The chapter presented findings from document review and interviews with key project implementers and other commentators. The findings have revealed that to some extent the project has achieved its aims and goal specifically. The project design has enabled the rural communities to demand for the rights from duty bearers which they were not enjoying in the past. There have been some tremendous development initiatives which had been implemented through the project. Through the same findings however, it has been observed that there have been some disconnect between the project aims and the empirical realities, owing to the issues of

power relations and socio-political contexts. The project was designed through a rights based approach to development on the assumption that by building the capacity of rural community as right holders to demand their right to development, from the duty bearers, the duty bearers would automatically respond to those demands. The findings however indicate the contrary. To some extent duty bearers have not been responsive to the community's demands. This has been the case due to the gaps within the project design which mainly focused on building the capacity of the community members only, leaving out the duty bearers, who did not fully appreciate the rights based approach concept. This also applied to the members of the community. It appears, only members of the RLC were exposed some kind of training to enable them participate in dialogues with duty bearers. Most members of the community, who were not exposed to any form of training within the project, demonstrated incompetency in terms of skills and knowledge.

CHAPTER SIX

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF PROBLEM DEFINING DISCUSSIONS AND PROBLEM SOLVING DIALOGUES

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the observations which I conducted at Muwalo village in Ntcheu district, as one of the Radio Listening Club implemented two different activities for the ‘*Ndizathuzomwe*’ project: the development problem identification process and problem solving dialogue. A development problem identification process is a meeting in which, a wider spectrum of the members of the community assemble at one place to define their development problem, while a problem solving meeting is where a community engages service providers from either the private or the public sector in a dialogue aimed at identifying possible solutions to the raised development problems (Manyozo, 2007). I observed one full cycle of such activities and later conducted in depth interviews with various stake holders after observing each deliberation. The following sections present the findings.

Problem definition discussions

A variety of groups of the community members of Muwalo village assembled to discuss an issue of lack of motorised water pumps for the community irrigation scheme. The scheme has a membership of 220 farmers, of which 68 are men and 152 are women. The community have been experiencing challenges in terms of drawing adequate water from a river to irrigate their crops. Members of Muwalo Radio Listening Club therefore mobilised the community to discuss the issue. During the meeting, there were 54 participants who included members of the Radio Listening Club, members of the irrigation scheme committee, the youths and ordinary people from the community. Among the participants 50 were adults who included 30 women and 20 men and the remaining 4 were the youths, while people with disability and people who self-identified as living with HIV and AIDS were not represented at the meeting.

Critical examination of the protocols and the set-up of the sitting plan for the meeting

During my observation, I paid particular attention to both verbal and nonverbal clues in order to understand how the agenda for discussion was set, who controlled the deliberations and what noticeable differences there were between core members of the RLC and non-members in the

way they participated in the discussions. I was also interested in the seating plan of the meeting, like where particular participants sat during the meeting, how they sat, how they talked, the setting of the meeting, the people's personal space, the structures and protocol of the deliberation, the amount of time each participant spoke or was given to speak. I also observed the observable dispositions and silences displayed by each stakeholder during discussions. The following were my observations:

The seating plan for the meeting was done in such a way that people with positions and authority, like the chairman of the Radio Listening Club, the chairman of the village development committee, the chairman of the irrigation scheme and traditional leaders sat on chairs at a designated place. Members of the RLC sat on benches close to the people with authority while other ordinary people particularly women sat on the ground in a horn-curved shape on the periphery of the arena away from the rest. This kind of the seating plan divided the participants into various clusters which included and excluded particular participants from visibility and consequently impacted on the way they participated in the discussion. The Radio Listening Club monitor who moderated the discussions positioned himself in the middle of the arena to enable him control the deliberations. Lefebvre (1991), posits that social space is a produced space, and draws attention to the significance of the interplay between how particular spaces come to be defined and perceived, and the ways in which they come to be animated.

Space is a social product ... it is not simply "there", a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control and hence domination, of power. (Lefebvre, 1991: 24)

The RLC monitor moderated the entire session while standing, to effectively record the proceeding. He selectively called upon participants to make contributions to the discussion. Through his moderation process, he selected the composition of the speakers, who were mainly those sitting on chairs and benches, to speak. Lefebvre (1991) highlights the importance of analysing the social and power relations that constitute spaces for participation, the 'spatial dialectic' of identities, activities, discourses and images associated with any given place.

There were 12 participants who spoke, from the 54 people who attended the meeting. Among the 12, there were 5 people with authority who were all men, 7 ordinary people of whom, 5 were men and 2 were women. From the observation, women featured very low in terms of

representation of speakers who actually took part in the discussions. The first four speakers who the monitor invited to speaker to define the problem were men and people with authority. The first person to speak was the chairman of the Radio Listening Club who was followed by the local chief. The third one was the chairman of the village development committee and then the local chief was again invited for the second time to make his contributions.

Defining development problem in the context of power relations: Whose view?

When the meeting started the Radio Listening Club moderator introduced the agenda for the meeting and later invited speakers to define the development problem under discussion in this order:

Now we want to start our discussion on the issue, the chairman of the Radio Listening Club, tell us what is the real problem, which is related to this irrigation scheme?
(Discussion recording 15-5-2011)

1ST speaker (Male villager)

Our problem is lack of proper technology facilities to pump water from the source to irrigate our crops. We have plenty of water in the source but the problem is that we do not have motorised pumps which can draw water from that far source into our gardens to irrigate the crops (discussion recording).

Moderator (Male member of the Radio Listening Club)

I want to hear from our chief who is also here, what is the issue here? **(Discussion recording 15-5-2011)**

2nd speaker (Village Chief- Male)

My people, particularly women are really facing challenges in their irrigation scheme. They are drawing water from the water body to irrigate their crops by using buckets which they carry on their heads. This is really cumbersome....” **(Discussion recording 15-5-2011)**

From the above account, it is seen that definition of the irrigation problem which women face in their area was done by the chief. This was the case despite the fact that women dominate the membership of the irrigation scheme committee in question – yet they were not the ones who defined the problem. Women were not given an opportunity to tell their stories. Instead the chief defined the problems women faced in achieving better harvests through irrigation. The chief had used his power to create, interpret, and tell stories about women. Critics of traditional leadership

institutions argue that traditional authority are seen as instruments of social oppression entirely devoid of progress especially in such areas as political organization, women's rights, social mobility and economic rights. Customary institutions are further criticized as being undemocratic on the grounds that they infringe on basic human right in contemporary democracies (Ribot 2002: 69). On the contrary, the supporters of traditional leadership institutions contend that traditional leaders play a very critical role in the livelihoods of their subjects in the sense that: 1) they inspire and motivate their people for development in every aspect; 2) advocate cooperative action; and 3) extols the commitment and total involvement of all members of a community in forming and implementing policies for overall community welfare(Owusu, 1997) and (Blom, 2002)

....I want government to help us with the motorised pump so that crop production for my people is improved. We need more crops so that we sell the surplus and people get money. When they have money, they will be able to send their children to school buy clothes and build better houses. So I invite government to come to dialogue with us on the issue....." (**Discussion recording 15-5-2011**)

The ability to create, to interpret, or tell stories about an individual, a group, community, or nation is, however s form of power. The fact that women endorse the idea that their stories can be told on their behalf by men constitutes them as the subjects of discourse: in this case, the exercise of power at the micro level participates in the formation of women as 'willing' subjects of patriarchal discourse (Foucault, 1980a, 1982):

Sometimes it appears that whatever we women would like to speak or contribute during a meeting had already been said by men. We feel men have said it all on our behalf. (**Interview female villager 15-5-2011**)

Gaventa, further argues that this power, occurs where visible conflict is hidden through internalisation of dominating ideologies, values, forms of behaviour, and self-esteem (2004: 37-38).

Freire (1983: 76) however argues that people have the right to individually and collectively speak their word:

"This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone – nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words" (Freire, 1983: 76).

He insists that subjugated peoples must be treated as fully human subjects in any political process. Melkote and Steeves argue that initiatives for development must begin with group of people mostly affected by the problem to be able to tell their own stories (Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 37).

Mohanty contends that:

..“the mere presence of women in the decision making committees without a voice can be counter-productive in the sense that it can be used to legitimise a decision which is taken by the male members” (2002: 1).

As the deliberation went on; I further observed that people with power and authority were the ones being given an opportunity to define the development problem under discussion. The RLC monitor never gave the youths a chance to make their contributions despite the fact that they showed interest in the discussions by raising their hands to get the attention of the moderator. This was also the case for women, who sat on the periphery; the moderator never invited them to make contributions. Lukes (1974) talks about one form of power in which, the entry of certain interests and actors into public spaces is privileged over others through a prevailing mobilisation of ‘bias’ or rules of the game (Lukes 1974; I), which the moderator of the discussion practised. The moderator deliberately identified speakers by mentioning their positions or names when calling them to take part

I want to hear from our chief who is also here, what is the issue here? (**Discussion recording 15-5-2011**)

..Now let’s hear from the chairman of the irrigation scheme; what do you have to say? (**Discussion recording 15-5-2011**)

From these observations, I discovered that, the RLC monitor invited mostly people with power and authority to make contributions more than ordinary people, particularly women, despite constituting the core membership base of the irrigation scheme committee. This was in sharp contrast with claims made by the project that such discussions are organised in such a way that community members, particularly the vulnerable groups which include women, the youth, and people with disabilities, are allowed to express themselves, discuss problems and ask questions on an equal footing with the other groups (DCT, 2008). Cornwall (2002), however reminds us that spaces for participation are not neutral, but are themselves shaped by various forms of power which both surround and enter them (Cornwall, 2002). This power is found in the creation of

norms and practices at all levels of society that translate into particular inequalities (Foucault, 1980a, 1982).

Defining roles of women participants through verbal and non-verbal clues

During my observations, one of the things I noticed was how particular roles were assigned to women only. These roles had some gender bias in nature. The moderator had defined roles which women were to play in the discussion at the very beginning of the meeting.

....before we start our meeting today, please women give us a song. **(Discussion recording 15-5-2011)**

Similarly such roles were assigned to them at the closure of the meeting:

....But before we close our meeting, I once again ask women to give us the last song. **(Discussion recording 15-5-2011)**

From the observation, women were mostly assigned singing roles than making constructive participation in the discussion, despite their dominance in the membership of the irrigation scheme committee. As noted earlier that marginalisation of women in Malawi is rooted in the Malawian culture where traditional or cultural practices play a fundamental role in ascribing statutes to men and women. Singing and composing songs by women in public meetings in Malawi is rooted within the tradition and historical legacies of past political underpinnings. During the pre-democracy era, women composed songs and danced in praise of Banda during political rallies (Chirambo, 2001, Chirwa, 2001, and Gilman, 2001). Such dispositions among women became deeply-embedded in the fabric of social relations and national traditions and later became internalised by the majority of women in Malawi. This can be seen today as a motif of everyday life among Malawian women, who do most of singing instead of contributing effectively in decision making processes during public meetings (Gilman, 2001).

Apart from singing roles, women were also assigned another role of just making comments on what has been said already by male speakers.

Moderator....

Now let's hear from women, do you have any comments on what has already been said? **(Discussion recording 15-5-2011)**

From the observation above women were only asked to make comments on what has been already articulated by men rather than making their own contributions. Critics to participatory communication process argue that spaces for participation create situations in which only the voices and versions of the vocal few are raised and heard. The voices of the more marginal may barely be raised, let alone heard, in these spaces. Women, many critics argue, are those most likely to lose out, finding themselves and their interests marginalized or overlooked in apparently ‘‘participatory’’ processes (Guijt & Kaul Shah, 1998; Mayoux, 1995; Mosse, 1995). During my observation I noticed that a few women who took part in the discussions only repeated or agreed with sentiments made by men before. Gaventa further argues that women voices in visible places are but echoes of what the power-holders who shaped the places want to hear’’ (2004: 37-38).

Silencing voices of the less powerful groups through cultural norms

One of the observations I noticed as I observed the deliberations was the seating plan of the meeting. As previous indicated, most women who came to attend the meeting sat on the periphery of the arena and rarely spoke during discussions. In view of that, I asked a number of women why they sat on the periphery of the arena and rarely took part in the discussions:

It’s not right in our culture for a woman to stand in front of husbands and brothers in laws and begin to talk and say a lot of things even though what you are saying make sense, we need to respect, our traditional leaders and our families who are present at that meeting.
(Interview female villager 15-5-2011)

Based on statement above, it appears that the issue of culture and tradition play a role in determining how and when one would participate in the public discussions. Chijere-Chirwa et al (2000) suggest that ‘‘given the patriarchal gender inequalities that characterises Malawian society, the quality of community participation may be compromised’’ (Chijere-Chirwa et al 2000:12). Malawi has a significant male domination in various spheres in which patriarchal interests dominate public discussion in which very few women feature, due to the fact that social construction of the family recognises men as heads of households and women as subordinates. Accordingly, parental guidance, initiation and marriage counselling and other adult hood initiation ceremonies, systematically teach women to be subservient to men (Chidyaonga 2003: 11). This is a form of power which Lukes (1974) calls ‘‘ideological power’’ which shapes other actors’ perceptions in which conflict is more invisible, through internalisation of powerlessness, or through dominating ideologies, values and forms of behaviour (Lukes, 1974; I). This study has

to some extent ascertained previously held assertions that the rural poor, especially women, do not participate in development on an equal basis with men, owing mainly to their pre-existing, subordinate positions in the society (Moses, 1994). This was evident during one the community discussion. Soon after the community had conducted their discussion, I interviewed one of the women who never participated in the discussion despite her presence at the meeting:

We, women fear to speak or ask questions in front of a large group of people because we can make mistakes. We are afraid to speak in front of men and chiefs.... (**Interview female villager 15-5-2011**)

Quoting Lefebvre, Cornwall (2002) contends that, “space for participation is the imagery of ‘boundary’ which is shaped by power relations in that they determine what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests” (Lefebvre, 1991: 24). VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) remind us that one of the most insidious of the dimensions of power is the invisible power, which shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002:34). Development commentators like Matthews (2004) have argued that the mainstream model of development rooted in modernist values has proven unsuitable to local cultures. Matthews (2004 cited in Gaynor, 2008), argues that Africa is different from the West in terms of values, world-views and lifestyles of its peoples, and that westernised development approaches have proven a failure. Hickey and Mohan (2004), however argue that more needs to be done to understand the ways in which participation relates to existing power structures and political systems in order to move towards a more transformatory approach to development, one which is rooted in the exercise of broadly defined citizenship (2004: 5).

Haas (2007: 39) argues that Habermas’s notion of a single unified public sphere not only presupposes that topics of common concern exist, it also “deprives subordinate social groups of spaces for *intra*-group deliberation about their particular concerns outside the supervision and control of dominant social groups” (2007: 39). Fraser (1990: 66) thus calls for “multiple discursive domains” organised around distinct bases of affinity and interest. This is because, in socially stratified societies, “arrangements that accommodate contestation among a plurality of interests better promote the ideal of participatory parity than does a single, comprehensive, overarching public [sphere]” (Fraser, 1990: 66, cited in Haas 2007: 39). Instead, subaltern social groups (like women and children) are first given opportunities to circulate counter-discourses through which to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, needs and interests.

These opportunities effectively function as a “training ground for agitational activities” directed towards the wider community (Fraser, 1990: 65). Apart from observing problem defining discussions, I also observed the community problem solving dialogue between the service providers and the community. The following section presents the findings.

Community problem-solving dialogue

Community problem solving dialogue is where the members of the community interact with the service providers. As previous indicated, this level involves conducting deliberative forums in which state bureaucrats, politicians, members of other relevant service delivery organisations as well as local chiefs are invited to engage with local communities in making decisions aimed at resolving community-identified development problems (Chijere-Chirwa, Kayanura & Lijenda, 2000). The guiding philosophy of these deliberative forums is to create spaces to reach out and involve those people that would be most affected by the proposed development program - specifically the disempowered, the marginalised and the poorer people in any society (White, 1994). However, it should be pointed out that there had been some limitation in terms of observing the ideal problem solving session between the community officials and the community. That had been the case because instead of the government officials particularly the politicians to engage into critical dialogues with community in solving their problems collectively, they tended to fix the problems on their own and bring already tailor made solutions to the community in order to score political mileage as well as solidifying patron-client relations. This was the case when I observed one of the supposedly problem solving dialogue meetings organised by Muwalo community.

The community had earlier on presented their recorded voices to the government officials in which they defined their development problem and invited government officials, who included their local member of parliament, and the District Agriculture Development Officer (DADO) to a community dialogue to discuss the community development problem of lack of food security due to an inadequate irrigation technology facility. In view of that I observed the deliberations in attempt to understand the kind of dispositions various participants could bring to the forum, the language which was used by various participants during the discussion, verbal and non-verbal clues which were displayed. I also conducted interviews with various stakeholders after the discussion. I now present the findings in the following sections:

Solidifying patron-client relations through protocols, verbal and non-verbal clues

All government officials, the MP for the area and his party officials arrived at the meeting place amidst songs of praise sung by women. The song went like this:

'Who said our MP would not come, here he is x2,

We are happy you have come to give us irrigation pumps x2,

We praise you for that ...x2. (Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)

The singing went on as the officials were seated at a designated table decorated with flowers next to where members of the Radio Listening Clubs sat on chairs. The officials were greeted by the local chief who later sat close to the MP. All other members of the community particularly women and other vulnerable groups such as the disabled sat on the periphery on the ground. One of the government officials, the District Agriculture Development Officer (DADO) was given a duty by the community to introduce the MP to the community:

My name is Mrs Sumani, the District Agriculture Development Officer for this district. My powers are not worthy to introduce *our big man*, our honourable guest to you. I can't play that role. I am very small really. Therefore I will invite the district governor for the ruling Democratic People's Party, Mr Ngozo to introduce to us our MP. **(Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)**

The government official referred to the MP as a *big man*. Such kind of attribute was also observed in the statements made by Benson Chirwa, the chairman of the irrigation scheme committee:

... When a *big man* visits you, like what our MP has done today, it's always difficult for a small man like me to open up my mouth and say a lot of things in front of our honourable MP who is here today. **(Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)**

Both the government official and the chairman of the irrigation scheme committee addressed the Member of Parliament as a *big man* in their salutations. Commentators have argued that this kind of disposition as displayed by the two participants needs to be understood from a broader political, social and historical perspective (Tilly 1995). In postcolonial states, regional patrons, often representatives of political parties as was the case in Malawi during Banda's regime who used to mediate between the people and the administrative apparatus of the Banda regime were

referred to as ‘big men’ and were members of the ruling Malawi Congress party at all levels (community level, district level, the regional level and the national level), who used to link them with the central bureaucracy and its funds (Booth et al 2006). The language of ‘big men’ is still used amongst politicians and ordinary people in Malawi, as evidenced in the salutations of the previous two speakers. Citizens establish relationships with ‘big men’, including state functionaries, in order to access state resources (Scott 1986). This is true with Muwalo community, where community members would rather patronise a meeting organised by an MP than attending a Radio Listening Club meeting to access economic gains:

When the MP is organising the meetings they come in big numbers because at the end of the meeting they receive money and other material things for attending such meetings
(interview with female villager, RLC member, 6-6-2011)

Many commentators have argued that this kind of patron-client relationships, have eroded citizenship, leading to what has been characterised in the Malawian context as a “*subject culture*” (Patel 2005; Mamdani, 1996). When citizens become subjects of their leaders, their loyalty and deference to authority may limit the space available in the participatory communication process, for intellectual debate and exchange on relevant issues in the sense that the quality of discourse and policy input by the subjects who appear to be clients in this case, is restricted (see Englund 2002, 2003, Patel 2005, Booth et al 2006). Such observations are also shared by a member of Mulawo Radio Listening Club

This is a big challenge because, instead of being critical of the MP when he is not delivering, they always praise him either through songs or conversation. **Interview with female villager RLC member, 6-6-2011**

According to Barber (1981), through a system of patronage-client relations, high-status individuals (‘patrons’) provide livelihood resources to lower-status individuals (‘clients’), who repay the former by offering their loyalty, labour or political support (Barber, 1981: 724). This political support was observed when village head man Muwalo made his contribution to the discussion.

Though I am not a politician but I would not hesitate to call upon my fellow village men and women alike to give full support to our MP. You are a man of development and we fully support you for the development you give us in this area. We will always support you... **(Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)**

The assertions made by village headman Muwalo largely demonstrates the kind of patron-client relations which emerges from a pyramid-like structure, in which patrons ‘at the top’ distribute their resources to their clients who, in their turn, redistribute to *their* clients and so on (one person’s client is typically another person’s patron) (Cammack, 2007: 600; Erdmann and Engel, 2007: 107). When village headman Muwalo declares full support for the MP of the area, in essence it means giving him another vote during parliamentary elections as a token of thank for developing the area. (Auyero et al, 1999) argue that , national elections are often being co-opted in patronage logics, as those who stand for office promise to provide services and resources in exchange for votes (Auyero et al, 1999 , Erdmann and Engel, 2007: 106) and as voting entails a new way of expressing loyalty to a patron (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972: 167-8).

Critics of this view however contends that depending on the political and social context, the populace often shift between client-ship and rights-based citizens, and in return politicians often present themselves as both patrons and democratic representatives, too (Dagnino, 2007:549-556, Robins et al, 2008: 1075). In the scramble for livelihoods and security, poor people tend to adopt plural strategies; they occupy multiple spaces and draw on multiple political identities, discourses and social relationships, often simultaneously (Fraser, 1995).

Past political culture of the pre democracy Malawi still haunts the present

One of the issues I noticed as I observed the dialogue between the community and the government officials was the absence of critical questions from the community to the service providers, particularly the MP. I also observed that there were instances of silence during the dialogues especially within the community participants. The MP used a tactic of intimidation to scare away participants from being critical of him.

If I don’t perform please don’t be critical of me but rather discuss that with me. If you do, you will be making a big mistake for your community because all this development which we are talking about today will disappear. What is needed here is development, not being critical of me. You will end up chasing development away. **(Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)**

Such threats kept most of the participants from asking critical questions during the dialogue and as a result most participants showered the MP with praises.

1st speaker: (villager)

I want to thank our president, Dr Bingu Wa Mutharika, for buying us motorised irrigation pumps. I also want to thank you our MP for the good job you have done. **(Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)**

2nd Speaker: (villager)

I want to ask my fellow farmers that we should work hard in the field to produce enough, through this irrigation scheme so that we fulfil the dream of our president Dr Bingu WA Mutharika. So thank you Bingu, thank you our MP. **(Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)**

In both statements above, speakers only thanked the president and their local MP instead of engaging them into a critical dialogue to further understand how these motorised pumps have been acquired and who funded the purchasing of the pumps and how the community had contributed towards the cost. This was contrary to the aims and goals of the DCT project which aims at building capacity of the rural people to be able to engage politicians and state actors in critical dialogues in which they demand accountability and transparency among politicians and government officials (DCT, 2008). Participants, despite having knowledge on how the government systems operate in terms of funding for development projects, they could not freely express their dissenting views on what they felt were lies from their MP publicly during the dialogue. After the dialogue I interviewed one of the women who attended the meeting to ask why they never engaged their MP in a critical discussion

You know, we villagers fear a lot. When the MP talked about being the one who bought these motorised pumps for us, I knew he was lying because these pumps were bought by using our tax money. I knew he was fulfilling his duty towards my right to development **(interview female villager 6-6-2011)**

Getrude's fear to oppose the MP for the lies he was making could have a basis and when I further probed the real reason for her fear was articulated

I could not stand up and oppose all what he was saying because I feared that after the meeting someone would come to me to deal with me like it used to happen during Kamuzu Banda. We are seeing it happening even today. **(Interview female villager 6-6-2011)**

Politics of intimidation as observed by members of Muwalo community, originates from the legacy of Banda's regime of terror in which those with dissenting views were ruthlessly quashed (Lwanda, 1993: 34). This fear was based on Banda's political philosophy which emphasised four cornerstone principles of obedience, unity, discipline, and loyalty to which every Malawian was

expected to adhere (Femia, 1981). Anyone who was critical of Banda and never adhered to this principle was regarded as an enemy of the nation (Simon, 1982: 44). The same observations are made by Dr Fletcher Tembo who is a Malawian expert on governance

Despite the fact that we are now in a multiparty era, the legacy of Banda, a culture of fear still goes on among many Malawians. That's why up to date when you look at networks, the way they operate, people are using false names because people are afraid since they don't know who will listen to them and report (**Interview, governance expert, Dr Tembo 16-9-2011**).

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to uncover patron-client relations between the communities and the service providers. The chapter also looked at power relations and subaltern social groups within the community. Through this chapter it has been observed that most Malawians in rural areas who still live in an extreme state of social exclusion, and lack opportunities for improving their living conditions and as such their political expression is mediated by the 'patron', broker or 'big man' upon whom they access resources for daily survival (Chirwa, 1998: 248). In summary many commentators have asserted that the main features of the current Malawian political culture is still somewhat at odds with the normative ethos of participatory governance (Patel, 2005) Chirwa (1998), Dominance of men in public decision making processes due to gender disparities constrain women's participation in development. Critics instead call for subaltern social groups (like women and children) to be given opportunities to circulate counter-discourses through which to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, needs and interests. These opportunities effectively function as a "training ground for agitational activities" directed towards the wider community (Fraser, 1990: 65).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter discusses key findings which have been uncovered through this study: The chapter will discuss gaps between normative expectations for participation/deliberation and empirical realities. It further discusses participatory/deliberative decision making processes in relation to how invisible power influences discourse and norms of communication. It also discusses the implications of national political cultural norms of loyalty and respect on participants' agency. The discussions will touch on the extent to which these political cultural norms of loyalty and respect are embedded in normalised cultures of Malawi and the politics of everyday life at the community level has constrained participatory development processes.

A new Malawi with an old political culture

Despite the fact that the government of Malawi in 1995 introduced a decentralisation act which provided for the creation of local government, leading to the creation of local assemblies (Meinhardt and Patel, 2003: 48), in which the emphasis has been the participation of local communities in decision making processes, the country still displays features of centralised power.

Despite the introduction of multiparty politics, with all its changes, politically the rules of the game are still the same: the village structures which were supposed to operate as decentralised structures for development still operate as political party structures, very much the same as during the Kamuzu Banda regime. **(Interview, governance expert, Dr Tembo 16-9-2011).**

Through this study, it has been revealed that as participatory decision making projects are implemented, there is need to pay more attention to the contextual understandings of the politics of everyday life as influenced by particular social, cultural and historical contexts (Patel, 2005). The politics of everyday life at the community level has constrained participatory development processes. There is politicisation of development both at local and national levels. Instead of using the formal district council structures for participatory decision making and the channelling of development resources, politicians use structures which are political in nature. This is because

politicians want to control development funds as a form of party-political patronage and in most cases such funds are used for political campaigns to keep them in power.

We have two parallel development committees, one instituted by the district assembly through the decentralisation process and the other one by the politicians. The ones instituted by politicians are political in nature and they always facilitate development based on politics and they are so powerful such that if a particular village does not support the MP of that area, that particular village will be denied development.

(Interview male villager, member of RLC 6-6-2011)

The politicisation of development is still going on in Malawi due to the relative powerlessness of local authorities (see Meinhardt and Patel, 2003). The situation in Malawi has been aggravated with the absence of local councillors for years now

....Government has been unwilling to share the power on the ground mainly because the MP who are political in nature have been given powers to control local development funds as well as the constituency development fund from the district assemblies. If councillors are introduced that may take away this power. **(Interview, governance expert, Dr Tembo 16-9-2011)**

Commentators have argued that the problem of political patronage which persists despite the fact that the country has put in place institutions to decentralise power, emanates from a legacy of centralised political power and decision making processes left by Banda's dictatorship regime (Phiri and Ross, 1998). They argue that, this legacy continued on into the Muluzi period (1994-2004) and, from there, into the current regime. As one commentator notes:

A large number of our politicians learned their politics at the feet of Banda – and many literally (Mkandawire, 2003: 21).

During Banda regime party functionaries used to oversee development in their respective areas and today political leaders of the ruling party do the same thing (Cammack, 2004: 17)

During the subsidised farm inputs distribution exercise, village headmen worked with the political structures like the area committees of the ruling party instead of those instituted by the district council, in identifying the recipients of the farm inputs. Our area was not given the coupons to qualify us to buy the subsidised farm input because during the previous election, the current MP got fewer votes from our area. Those who benefitted from government subsidised fertilizer were mainly those who voted for the MP of this constituency. **(Interview female villager 6-6-2011)**

Findings of this study assert that distribution of development projects is based on political subordination in exchange for public resources and services. This resonances well with that

argument Barber (1981) makes that through a system of patron-client relations, high-status individuals ('patrons') provide livelihood resources to lower-status individuals ('clients'), who repay the former by offering their loyalty, labour or political support (Barber, 1981: 724). It appears that there is a sense of loyalty to the political leaders among the population in Malawi. Oftentimes this loyalty and deference is not irrational – that stroking the egos of leaders is a good strategy for getting things done:

Our leaders, as you sit here just feel that we are all proud of you for the development that you are bringing to our area.I would not hesitate to call upon my fellow village men and women alike to give full support to our MP. You are a man of development and we fully support you for the development you give us in this area. We will always support you **(Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)**

Stroking the egos of political leaders during meetings creates uncondusive environment for participatory decision making process. Dissent from the dominantly held views (of leaders) is sometimes not readily tolerated as the case of a local MP of the Muwalo community who during the dialogue with community members uses discourse of intimidation and threats

“If I don’t perform please don’t be critical of me but rather discuss that with me. If you do, you will be making a big mistake for your community because all this development which we are talking about today will disappear. What is needed here is development, not being critical of me **(Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)**

This study has exposed particular dispositions which state actors sometimes bring to the dialogues with community members, which are aimed at disciplining participants’ communication behaviours, instead of encouraging participatory decision making processes. As such, there is lack of strong ideological opposition or critical debate/deliberation during decision making process. Community participants instead engage in a discourse of hero worshipping

I want to thank our president, Dr Bingu Wa Mutharika, for buying us motorised irrigation engines from India.....So I want also to thank you our MP for the good job you have done for the people of this area. **(Recording of dialogue 6-6-2011)**

The ongoing practices of loyalty and clientelism, characterised by asymmetric power relations appear to leave citizens ill-prepared for engagement in critical development discourse and consequently result in the erosion of a concept of citizenship and participation. As seen through this study, asymmetric power relations on participatory decision making processes have the

potential to impact on the range of discourses and quality of participation of the community participants as they engage politicians in dialogues.

This study reveals three main potential contributory factors to that. First, with concentrated authority and centralised political power, there is a narrow range of discourses and forms of communication available for marginalised participants. Second, the loyalty and deference to authority prevalent within the political culture, may constrain participants seeking to promote public debate and discussion on issues which affect their development. And thirdly patriarchal structures that exclude women constrain the participation of women in decision making processes.

Taken together, these implications suggest that the main features of socio-political culture in Malawi lie somewhat at odds with the ethos of participatory forms of decision making processes. The study resonates with earlier works of scholars in Malawi, who have argued before that, although the constitution of Malawi has adopted a citizen framework to characterise the relationship between the respective polities and their members, the country has displayed the essential features of a clientelist framework, whereby patronage is bestowed on political representatives (see Dzimbiri, 1998 and Lwanda, 2005).

It is therefore against that backdrop, that “participatory communication projects” such as the one under study have to some extent attempted to empower local masses through the use of human rights based approaches to development. The project, by building the skills and knowledge of the local masses on their human right issues, they have to some extent begun to demand for what they are entitled to as opposed to asking for a favour from government officials as clients would do to patrons. However, there more to be done about such projects to successfully achieve their goals and purpose. The following sections calls for rethinking on participatory communication.

Rethinking participatory communication in the context of invisible power

The DCT participatory development project was designed on the assumption that it would allow the community to participate in dialogues with state bureaucrats/politicians and chiefs to express themselves, discuss problems and ask questions on an equal footing with each other (Manyozo 2007). Like most participatory communication projects, designers of the DCT project, assumed that the approach would empower those outside the centre of power on the assumption that

power, which resides in conventional sites such as the central state or in government elites, would be shifted to the grassroots in the community for effective development to take place (Chambers, 1997). This included the visible and definable aspects of political power (the formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions and procedures) of decision making process – to make it more democratic and accountable so as to serve the needs and rights of people, in this case the rural masses. This study, however confirms that, there remains a gap between normative expectations of participation and the empirical realities. Participation of the poorer and more marginalized, particularly women is far from straightforward, owing to a number of preconditions which serve as barriers to entry into participatory institutions. The study has uncovered the existence of one of Lukes (1974) form of power, in which the entry of certain interests and actors into public spaces is privileged over others through a prevailing mobilisation of bias or rules of the game (Lukes, 1974; I). When I observed one of the session in which the community were defining their development problem, I noticed the mobilisation of bias from the way the moderator of the meeting selected participants, to make contributions to the issue under discussion:

Moderator: “Now we want to start our discussion on the issue, the chairman of the Radio Listening Club, tell us what is the real problem, which is related to this irrigation scheme?(**Discussion recording 15-5-2011**)

Moderator: “I want to hear from our chief who is also here, what is the issue here? (**Discussion recording 15-5-2011**)

Moderator: “Thank you chief. I now turn to the chairman of the village development committee, what are your sentiments.” **Discussion recording 15-5-2011**)

From the above account, it is clear that the moderator of the discussion controlled the kind of participants who made contributions to the discussions, by strategically selecting people with power and authority. Power in development is exercised through the control of development agenda, i.e. what gets included or excluded in policy statements, development plans, or public debate is carefully controlled. Entities with power can stymie participation or slant perspectives by erecting many barriers: control the topics of discussion, the timing of discussions, discussion participants, and the range of issues discussed (Speer and Hughey, 1995; Steeves, 1996). Such barrier to discussion, such as the timing of discussions, was noticed during my observation.

During problem defining session, the local chief was given more time to speak as compared to others. The chief appeared twice in the discussion: during and in the first instance, he spoke for three minutes while in the second appearance he spoke for three and a half minutes as compared to the female speaker who also participated, but only spoke for 30 seconds. This study builds on the assertions made before through the works of VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) that certain powerful people and institutions maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. These dynamics operate on many levels to exclude and devalue the concerns and representation of other less powerful groups like the case of women who were given less time to speak in the discussion.

Malawi has a significant male domination in various spheres in which patriarchal interests dominate public discussion – very few women feature in such discussions. The cultural perceptions relating to the social construction of the family, where men are recognised as heads of households and women as subordinates, have only contributed to the vulnerability of women over the years

It's not right in our culture for a woman to stand in front of husbands and brothers in laws and begin to talk and say a lot of things even though what you are saying make sense, we need to respect, our traditional leaders and our families who are present at that meeting. **(Interview female villager 15-5-2011)**

The assertions made by the female villager reflect disposition which many Malawian women bring to public discussion arenas. Such dispositions which are influenced by culture and traditions, through internalisation of powerlessness, or through dominating ideologies, values and forms of behaviour (Lukes, 1974; I), shape the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation where significant problems and issues are not only kept from the decision-making table, but also from the minds and consciousness of the different players involved, even those directly affected by the problem such as the women in this case. The process of socialisation, culture and ideology perpetuate exclusion and inequality by defining what is normal, acceptable and safe.

I did not ask our MP a lot of questions, because I feel I was going to embarrass my MP. The other reason is that because when the MP speaks, he is speaking on behalf of the president and you cannot question him because you would be questioning the president which is very disrespectful of your president in our culture. **(Interview, female villager 6-6- 2011).**

This study has revealed that there is some kind of invisible power, which shapes beliefs, sense of self and acceptance of the *status quo* among women – even their inferiority. The findings of this study calls for the analyses of participation and deliberation to be situated in the field of development more broadly. It requires for more attention to be focused on issues of invisible power relations through discourse and the norms of communication, where national-political-cultural norms of loyalty and respect, meet with the embedded power of normalised cultures emerging from various legacies. In view of that, this study calls for a re-think of participation by identifying enabling and constraining factors to transformative participation at an empirical level. The legacy of a hierarchical, authoritarian political culture of terror and fear are still present in democratic Malawi. The past political culture of fear and terror is still influencing people's consciousness and the way they perceive themselves and those around them:

When our MP talked about being the one who bought these motorised pumps for us, I knew he was lying because these pumps were bought by using our tax money. I could not stand up and oppose him because I feared that after the meeting someone would come and deal with me like it used to happen during Kamuzu Banda. We are seeing it happening even today, people who have dissenting views are beaten up by party functionaries. **(Interview: female villager 6-6 2011)**

The legacy of past authoritative regimes still shape dispositions of participants which in turn constrain participants' agency and consequently influence the kind of discourse they bring to the participatory arena. Normative theories of participatory communication fail to recognise the power of existing socio-political cultures to influence individual agency in participation. This study echoes Tilly's (1995) assertions that, citizenship and participation need to be understood from a broader political, social and historical perspective, which draws attention to the politics of inclusion and exclusion that shape popular agency beyond particular interventions (Tilly 1995: 12).

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Thesis contribution to theoretical framework

This thesis makes three principal contributions. First, through a case study it makes an original contribution to normative theories of participatory communication on how the process empowers the community as they engage in dialogues to demand improved public service deliveries.

Second, at a theoretical level, the study contributes to efforts to deepen debates on participatory communication processes, by paying more attention to the issues of power and socio-political contexts in which participatory decision making processes take place. The study demonstrates how legacies of the political culture of the Banda regime in Malawi may have eroded citizenship, leading to what has been characterised in the Malawian context as a “subject culture” (Patel, 2005, Mamdani, 1996), and thereby limiting the potential for transformative engagement in participatory governance processes.

This study makes an empirical contribution to research on participatory development in Malawi by situating concrete grassroots practices within an understanding of the broader political context within which participatory development occurs and its implications for state-civil society power relations. It offers an analytical framework wherein the political dimensions of participatory processes may be examined by political actors at all levels, from villages to offices to state ministries / departments, when visioning their strategies for participatory decision making processes.

Third the study makes a practical contribution in stimulating reflection and public debate on the dynamics and implications of current governance arrangements in Malawi and on how they impact on participants’ (state and civil society) agency, in decision making process. Broadly the study makes a contribution that in contrast to normative theories of participation offers broader theoretical debates on participatory decision making processes in which the key lies in actors’ own understandings of participation and their subsequent agency within these processes.

Answering research questions: lessons learnt and the way forward

The overall objective of the study was to seek to understand and discover how relations of social inequality and/or patron-client political relationships may affect the quality of ‘deliberative’ interaction in formally inclusive participatory communication processes. It was anticipated that through a case study of a listener club in the DCT participatory radio project, the study would seek to answer four key questions.

The first question was based on examining the disjuncture/disconnect between imagined aims of a participatory communication project and the lived realities. To that effect the study has revealed that, participation of the marginalised in participatory decision making processes is not straightforward. There is some invisible power of existing socio-political cultures which constrain individual agency and participation.

The second research question hinged on understanding the extent to which some social relations hinder, or even prevent, certain participants from speaking in public or from fully participating in citizen deliberation. Through this study, it has been established that certain powerful people and institutions maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. These dynamics operate on many levels to exclude and devalue the concerns and representation of less powerful groups like women (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). In view of that through this study, there have been some recommendations to that effect. Scholars like Haas (2007: 37) suggest that those involved in organising public deliberation should help citizens reflect on their different, potentially conflicting, concerns as the focal point of these deliberations. Fraser (1990: 66) suggests subaltern social groups (like women and children) where they are first given opportunities to circulate counter-discourses through which to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, needs and interests. These opportunities effectively function as a “training ground for agitational activities” directed towards the wider community (Fraser, 1990: 65).

Following Fraser, Haas (2007: 40) recommends the same that organisers of public deliberation should help nurture a public sphere composed of multiple discursive domains in which members of different social groups could articulate and deliberate about their particular concerns *among themselves*. Then the, organisers would record *intra*-group deliberations and report these to wider

communities to help them understand how particular social locations affect certain groups' sense of problems and solutions. Thereafter the organisers would go on to invite all community members in on joint deliberations. This is to encourage discursive contestation between a plurality of social interest groups in a joint discursive space.

The third question was to do with the kind of dispositions and expectations which participants bring with them into the participatory spheres. The study has uncovered that the national political cultural norms of loyalty and respect which emerge from legacies of authoritarian regimes meet with the embedded power of normalised cultures and together influence people's consciousness in the way they perceive themselves and those around them.

The last research question which this study sought to answer was how patron-client relations would affect the quality of participation among different participants engaged in deliberative discussions. The study has established that there is an ongoing practice of loyalty and clientelism, in Malawi, characterised by asymmetric power relations that leave citizens ill-prepared for engagement in critical development discourse and consequently result in the erosion of a concept of citizenship, and participation. Through a case study, this research has identified issues which need attention, particularly when implementing participatory decision making projects in Malawi. This study has revealed that participation means different things to various stakeholders such as the local citizens, NGOs like the DCT, the funding partner, local chiefs, politicians, state bureaucrats and service delivery organisations, and as such each stakeholders' understanding of the concept impacts on the quality and efficacy of their participation.

By exploring some of the key features of governance structures in Malawi through this study, it is clear that despite having all the necessary institutions and structures for the decentralisation of governance power in Malawi, the country still displays features of centralised power which is played out in the presence of non-functional governance structures, which have been influenced by legacies of the pre-democracy era. Development needs to re-engage with the lived realities of marginalised people in the context of power relations and local politics within the community.

There is need to pay attention to community's development discourse for potential conflict with the discourses of politicians as they sit within distinct contexts of traditions and lived realities. The study points to the need to re- think participation by identifying enabling and constraining

factors for transformative participation at an empirical level. More attention must be paid to the issues of structure and agency and the importance of invisible power relations which are embedded in the socio-political context

There is need for designers of participatory development projects to do an analytical framework wherein the political dimensions of participatory processes may be examined by political actors at all levels, from villages to offices to state ministries / departments, when visioning their strategies for participatory decision making processes. It is of significant importance for the implementers of participatory communication processes to highlight the need for clarity on the norms surrounding specific processes within participatory governance institutions. Particular issues to be raised include the norms for decision making, norms for negotiating different discourses / positions, norms regarding the form of knowledge acceptable, and norms regarding inclusivity – of both peoples and processes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study makes an empirical contribution to research on participatory development in Malawi by providing some understanding of the broader political context within which participatory development occurs, and its implications for state-civil society engagement. This study has underscored the fact that the transition to democracy can occur virtually overnight, but democratic culture takes a longer time to develop. In Jonathan Fox's felicitous phrase (1994), it takes time and effort to transform clients into citizens: civic organizations, the press, and the expectations of the citizenry will not immediately adjust to the new dispensation, but need to be nurtured and encouraged. For their part, many politicians and their followers were socialized in the *ancient regime* and bring certain expectations to the new one. The old kind of clientelism will remain a convenient solution to day to day problems for these politicians, particularly as long as the instruments of the new kind of politics, political parties, are weak and poorly organized. Schattsneider (1942) may be right that democracy takes time and skill, and requires the passage of time. In the meantime, resorting to the tried and true methods of African politics will be tempting.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 Documents reviewed

Name of document	Author	Institution	Date reviewed	Reviewer
End of phase 111 of DCP project 2011	Democracy Consolidation Program-DCP	DCP	20-Feb 2011	Prince Mtelera
DCT Quarterly progress report for <i>Ndizathuzomwe</i> Project- 2009	Development Communications Trust- DCT	DCT	15-January 2011	Prince Mtelera
DCT <i>Ndizathuzomwe</i> IV project proposal concept Note 2012	DCT	DCT	18 June 2012	Prince Mtelera
DBU/MBC Kanthu Nkham Tracer Study	Wiseman Chirwa, Everes Kayanura, Benson Lijenda	DCT	9 March 2012	Prince Mtelera

APPENDIX II TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR PROBLEM DEFINING DISCUSSIONS AT MUWALO COMMUNITY

Date of conducting dialogues..... 15th May 2011

Place where dialogues took place.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani, Ntcheu District Malawi

Group of people present during dialogue.....Members of Muwalo Radio Listening Club, traditional leaders, the general public of Muwalo community, both male and female

Transcriptions

Participant.... Monitor of the Radio Listening Club, Christopher Lameck

...Our meeting today is in relationship with the problem we have of lack of proper facilities to improve our irrigation scheme. Before we start, women give us a song.....

...Now we want to start our meeting, you gentleman, tell us what is the real problem, which is related to this irrigation scheme?

Participant.....Ganizani Chande

...Our problem is lack of the facilities to pump water from the source to irrigate our crops. We have plenty in the source but the problem is we do not have motorised pump which can draw water from that far source into our gardens to irrigate the crops. We want government to help us by providing us with the pump....

Participant..... Monitor of the Radio Listening Club, Christopher Lameck

...Government had put in policies to improve agriculture especially for the rural poor to help us achieve food security. I want to hear from our chief who is also here, what do you want for your people?

Participant.....Group village head man Muwalo

....My people are really facing the challenges in their irrigation scheme. They are drawing water from the water body to irrigate their crops by using buckets which they carry on their heads. This is really cumbersome. I want government to help us with a pump for our irrigation scheme.

Participant..... Monitor of the Radio Listening Club, Christopher Lameck

...Thank you chief. I now turn to the chairman of the village development committee, what are your sentiments.

Participant..... chairman of the village development committee

....We only hear that, other communities are benefiting from the government support, by receiving motorised pumps for their irrigation schemes. As the chair of the VDC, am really concerned that people here are struggling to achieve food security, yet government has a policy to reduce hunger in this country. We need facilities which can enhance high crop production in

our area. I will make sure that our community benefit from government support and we want the government to come to our area for a dialogue on the same....

Participant..... Monitor of the Radio Listening Club, Christopher Lameck

Now let's hear from women, do you have any comments on what has been said?

Participant..... Layika Wilson, member of the community

....Yes women do face challenges. Some of us have no husbands to dig water wells for us, from which we can draw water for irrigation. We cannot also afford to buy buckets to use to draw water from that distant river to irrigate our crops. We do not have money for that, we are poor. So please government help us, we need the motorised irrigation pump.....

Participant..... Monitor of the Radio Listening Club, Christopher Lameck

...Let's hear from more men again, gentle man what do you have to say now.

Participant..... Gidwell Nawira, member of the irrigation committee

...We have tried but our crops are dying, due to lack of enough water. We hear that government has assured other communities that it would give them irrigation pumps, and I think we also need some. Please government we have bended on our knees, help us please.

Participant..... Monitor of the Radio Listening Club, Christopher Lameck

.. Women please give us another song

Participant..... Monitor of the Radio Listening Club, Christopher Lameck

....I want to give more time to our local chief; please can you now tell us what is needed to solve this problem?

Participant..... Group village head man Muwalo

....I want government to help us with the motorised pump so that crop production for my people is improved. We need more crops so that we sell the surplus and people get money. When they have money, they will be able to send their children to school buy clothes and build better house.

Participant..... Monitor of the Radio Listening Club, Christopher Lameck

Thank you all, this is the end of our discussion. We hope government officials especially the District Agriculture Officer for this district will come for a dialogue when you listen to this audio cassette. But before we close our meeting, I once again ask women to give us the last song.

APPENDIX III TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING DIALOGUES AT MUWALO COMMUNITY

Date of conducting dialogues..... 6th June 2011

Place where dialogues took place.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani, Ntcheu District Malawi

Group of people present during dialogue.....Members of Muwalo Radio Listening Club, local Member of parliament, political leaders, Government representatives from the ministry of agriculture, members of the district council, traditional leaders, the general public of Muwalo community

The meeting begins with a song. The song went like this:

'Who said our MP would not come, here he is x2,

We are happy you have come to give us irrigation pumps x2,

We praise you for that ...x2.

Participant....Chairman of the Radio Listening Club, Peter Mwale

..When *a big man* visits you, like what our MP has done today, it's always difficult for a small man like me to open up my mouth and say a lot of things in front of our honourable MP who is here today....Let me ask Mrs Suman from ministry of Agriculture to introduce to us our honourable minister

Participant..... District Agriculture Development Officer Mrs Sumani

.My name is Mrs Sumani, the District Agriculture Development Officer for this district. My powers are not worthy to introduce *our big man*, our honourable guest to you. I can't play that role am very small really. Therefore I will invite the district governor for the ruling Democratic People's Party, Mr Ngozo to introduce to us our MP.....

Participant... District governor for the ruling Democratic People's Party, Mr Ngozo

....Let me give respect our honourable member of parliament who is here with us. We are very blessed today to have our MP right with us here at this meeting. I want to thank our president Dr Bingu Wamutharika for his vision for his people to end hunger in this country. Our President has given us these motorised pumps and we must be grateful for what he has done for the people of this constituency. We should also thank our MP for fighting for us to secure these pumps of which without him we wouldn't have received these pumps. We promise to support him and work with him all the time and your coming here is seen by us as a blessing really. When a big man visits the community we know all our problems have been taken care of. We thank you *bwana MP*

ParticipantChairman of Muwalo Irrigation scheme

...Bwana MP after realising that your people had challenges in achieving food security you decided to give us these motorised pumps and we are very thankful of that our MP

ParticipantChairman of the Radio Listening Club

..Our MP apart from giving us these pumps, we also need some skills and knowledge on farming and businesses. We are aware that we need skills and knowledge on how to do better farming which will give us more money. We need fair prices and markets to give us more money from our produce. We know there are various NGOs which are good at building our capacities to be

able to do so but we need you to go and talk with them so that you bring them here to train us in various capacities and skills. After such training we will be able to conduct fair trade to fetch better prices for our produce, create labour markets at the community level and improve the economic livelihood of the community.

Participant.....Village headman Muwalo

...We are very proud of you our MP for the work you do to this community. I want to assure you that all these people will support you because we believe that we cannot do anything without your support you give us. In our language we have a proverb which goes like , when a bee stings a child, that child runs to his or her mother and in the same way if we have any challenges we know that you are there as our mother and we know you will deal with them accordingly

Participant.....Jane Kubwalo, female member of the community

...Like the first speaker has said, its true we must thank our MP for bringing these irrigation pumps to our area, we are very grateful, I don't have enough to say but only thank our MP'

Participant..... District Agriculture Development Officer Mrs Sumani

..There are so many people who flock to our offices to ask for these motorised pumps and these people actually qualify to receive these pumps but just imagine out of ten pumps we had for the communities in Ntcheu district alone, the MP has given you 7 in this constituency. You must be very thankful of that indeed. You remember when we visited your irrigation site, Bwana MP emphasised the point that if you don't take care of these pumps and show gratefulness, he will not hesitate to take away these pumps and give them to others who are also lacking irrigation pumps and can work better with him..... You have not used your money from your pockets to buy these pumps but just look at what your MP has done for you people of this community.

Participant...Local Member of Parliament

...When the president Dr Bingu wa Mutharika took over the presidency, his vision was to create a hunger free nation. That is why he started the irrigation scheme project for you. You must be very thankful to the president. When I became the MP for this area, I began looking for money to fund these irrigation schemes, of which one of my success stories is what we are witnessing today, the pumps which I have brought for you today.

..... I will also finish off the clinic which I started building for you. I will buy the iron sheets to finish off the project. Am here to solve all your problems be it development problems, social problems, I will deal with all of them, that's my job. I want to make sure that during my tenure of office each one of you should enjoy my being your member of parliament by getting various benefits in whatever form they can be.

.....During the time you are inviting other communities to see how successful your irrigation project is doing, please notify me so that I come and be with you. I should be here to show them what i have been able to do for my community.

.....However, If I don't perform, please don't be critical of me but rather discuss that with me. If you do you will be making a big mistake for your community because all this development I am

talking about today will disappear. What is needed here is development not being critical of me; leave all that for the 2014 general election. For the time being concentrate on working with me in terms of what you want for development which I will give you but not criticising me. You will end up chasing development away.

ParticipantMember of the community Maria Gondwe

..I want to thank our president, Dr Bingu Wa Mutharika, because we used to hear that he is buying for us motorised irrigation pumps from India and today our MP had really fought for us we have the pumps. So I want to thank you our MP for the good job you have done

Participant..... Member of the irrigation scheme committee Steven Moyenda

..I want to ask my fellow farmers that we should work hard in the field to produce enough, through these schemes so that we fulfil the dream of our president Dr Bingu WA Mutharika. So thank you Bingu, thank you our MP”

Participant...Chairman of the Radio Listening Club, Peter Mwale

..Our leaders, as you sit here just feel that we are all proud of you for the development that you are bringing to our area. Though I am not a politician but I would not hesitate to call upon my fellow village men and women alike to give full support to our MP. You are a man of development and we fully support you for the development you give us in this area. We will always support you

APPENDIX IV TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH SELECTED MEMBERS OF MUWALO COMMUNITY

Date of conducting interviews..... 6 June 2011

Place where the interviews were conducted.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani, Ntcheu District Malawi

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... George Kamwendo

Transcriptions

...If our village has a vision in terms of development, and we need a service provider or a duty bearer to engage in dialogue for that development initiative, we would rather engage the District Commissioner as our duty bearer instead of our Member of Parliament. This is more so because the MP uses his own parallel structures of village development committees instead of the ones instituted by the district council. These parallel structures are political in nature and they will always facilitate development based on politics. For example if a particular village does not support him politically, that village will be denied the development but instead that development is diverted to another community even if that particular community deserved that initiative. We have two parallel development communities, one instituted by the district assembly through the decentralisation process and the other one by the politicians and often times the ones established by the politicians becomes so powerful that development initiatives are politicised.....

....This kind of attitude is also present in our traditional leaders. We have seen that during the subsidized farm inputs distribution exercise, village headmen were given the powers to identify the beneficiaries of the farm input and these local leaders identified the people who supported them and some of us who are sometimes critical of him were left out though we qualified for the program, Local leaders were working with the political structures like the area communities of the ruling party in identifying the recipients of the farm inputs to the fact that those who received were mainly those who voted for the MP of this area and but where they felt there were less votes for the MP during the previous election we were not given the coupons to qualify us to buy the subsidized farm inputs.

Date of conducting interviews..... 15 May 2011

Place where the interviews were conducted.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani, Ntcheu District Malawi

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Mrs Mang'nda

Transcriptions

Sometimes it appears that whatever we women would like to speak or contribute during a meeting had already been said by men. We feel men have said it on our behalf because we lack knowledge and skills to articulate the issues. We also feel we need to respect our husbands and

elders. Its not right in our culture for a woman to stand in front of men and begin to talk and say a lot of things even though what you are saying make sense, we need to respect, our traditional leaders and our families who are present at that meeting....

Date of conducting interviews..... 6 June 2011

Place where the interviews were conducted.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani, Ntcheu District Malawi

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Patricia Benard

Transcriptions

...I was afraid to ask a lot of questions, though I would have asked about, why an ambulance does not come to our area when pregnant women are in pain and are about to deliver, women suffer a lot yet we understand the ambulance goes to do illegal transportation of passengers who are not patients so I would have asked the MP that question. However I did not because I feel I was going to embarrass the MP and I was not sure if that question could have gone to the MP because I did not know who was responsible for that problem. Secondly I feared that once I ask that question, I would have embarrassed the MP and after the meeting I would be beaten up by his supporters for saying such a thing which could not respect the MP. So I was afraid.

.....When the MP speaks, he is speaking on behalf of the president and you cannot question him because you would be question the president which very disrespect of your president after he has provided you with irrigation motorised pumps. I also did not ask more questions because I feared that I could make mistakes. You know, am not a member the RLC. You know those members are trained to do that, they know a lot of things unlike us who are not trained to that. We fear to speak to a large group of people but may be if we are a small group of say women we can articulate our issues and ask more questions when we are alone not mixed with other people like it was during the meeting.....

Date of conducting interviews..... 6 June 2011,

Place where the interviews were conducted.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani, Ntcheu District Malawi

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Witford Layison

Transcriptions

....We should be going to various communities to build the capacity of ordinary people to teach them about their rights to teach them that they have a right to development. To teach them that they pay tax and that money is the money which funds various development initiatives which the people want in their area. We should also go and teach people that when service providers come to give resources for development, such resources are not coming from their pockets but its from their taxes.

Date of conducting interviews.....6 June 2011

**Place where the interviews were conducted.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani,
Ntcheu District Malawi**

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Charity Kandidziwa

Transcriptions

.... But the challenge we have is that may be people would not come for such meetings, because they feel they will not get any material benefits from these meetings. If the MP is organising the meetings they come in big numbers because at the end of the meeting they receive money and other material things for attending such meetings and instead of critical of the MP when he is not delivering they always praise him either through songs or conversation. This is a big challenge for us really

Date of conducting interviews.....6 June 2011

**Place where the interviews were conducted.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani,
Ntcheu District Malawi**

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Janet Machira

.During the subsidised farm inputs distribution exercise, village headmen worked with the political structures like the area committees of the ruling party instead of those instituted by the district council, in identifying the recipients of the farm inputs. Our area was not given the coupons to qualify us to buy the subsidised farm input because during the previous election, the current MP got fewer votes from our area. Those who benefitted from government subsidised fertilizer were mainly those who voted for the MP of this constituency

Date of conducting interviews.....6 June 2011

**Place where the interviews were conducted.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani,
Ntcheu District Malawi**

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Getrude Manyozo

Transcriptions

“You know, we villagers fear a lot.... When the MP talked about being the one who bought these motorised pumps for us, I knew he was lying because these pumps were bought by using our tax money. I knew he was fulfilling his duty towards my right to development. I could not stand up and oppose all what he was saying because I feared that after the meeting someone would come to me to deal with me like it used to happen during Kamuzu Banda. We are seeing it happening even today

.....During the training when we were starting the project, we were taught that, we have a right to development and we should demand it. We were told that these rights are in the constitution and we shouldn't be afraid because we are in a democratic era. It's our right to hold duty bearers accountable for their actions when it becomes to public service delivery.

...You know, we villagers fear a lot....When our MP talked about being the one who bought these motorised pumps for us, I knew he was lying because these pumps were bought by using our tax money. I could not stand up and oppose him because I feared that after the meeting someone would come to me to deal with me like it used to happen during Kamuzu Banda. We are seeing it happening even today, people who have dissenting views are beaten up by party functionaries (**interview**)

Date of conducting interviews.....6 June 2011

Place where the interviews were conducted.....Muwalo Village TA Gomani, Ntcheu District Malawi

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Michael Kaledzera

Transcriptions

...We have two parallel development committees, one instituted by the district assembly through the decentralisation process and the other one by the politicians. The ones instituted by politicians are political in nature and they always facilitate development based on politics and they are so powerful such that if a particular village does not support the MP of that area, that particular village will be denied development. Through this project, we are trying to change that, we are emphasising on the use of the formal structures instituted by the local councils

APPENDIX V TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH FUNDING PARTNER OFFICIAL

Date of conducting interviews..... 16 September 2011

Place where the interviews were conducted.....Democracy Consolidation Program-DCP offices in Lilongwe,Malawi

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Grace Valera, deputy program manager for DCP

Transcriptions

...DCP was established as a government body to contribute to the democratisation process. As you are aware we have a democratic government now and at the beginning of the democratic era, it was thought it necessary to actually make sure that the citizens are aware of issues of good governance, democracy as well as human rights. So the program has a very important aspect of providing civic education to the general public on these issues as well as ensuring that communities are able to enjoy their rights to development

... At the early beginning our main focus was on civic education on human rights to allow the communities to understand these concepts but as time went on we also realised that mere understanding of human rights issues without demanding for the fulfilment of these rights was not beneficial to the communities. We also realised that certain areas were crucial in the fulfilment of these rights and the rights to development was one of that and then our focus shifted to the fulfilment of the right to development. Concepts of the right to development are clearly spelt in our constitution mainly under section 30 of our constitution where it is clear that the citizens have the right to development in terms of be able to enjoy their political, cultural and economic development so our focus now is to ensure how best the communities are able to demand those rights. To achieve this starting point was to looking at rural communities and we created community based structures to spearhead this demand for good governance as well as the right to development. So apart from providing knowledge, the program worked with structures like the Radio Listening Clubs. So we had to provide skill and knowledge to these structures so that they are able to animate the entire community on the issues of human rights and demand the right to development.

..... This nucleus was very necessary because we wanted to create a critical mass at community level which will be vigilant in demanding the right to development at the community level. The issue of effectiveness came in because it was very effective way of implementing the program by working with structures at community level. This was so because this particular structure was living with the people in the same community and it was effective for a certain group to animate others and to enable them understand the concept better and lead them to demand the fulfilment of the right to development

.....Obviously there are challenges because these structures work as volunteers and the concept of voluntarism is not well understood by most of the communities. We have also realised that communities work better where they actually see the direct benefits from the work they are doing so you see that these structures are motivated the tangible results they are able to see from the

work they are doing. Another challenge is in terms of mobility of the RLC to be able to reach the entire community

...In terms of power relations, we did consider who should be mainly beneficiaries of the project at the community level and we are still guided by the constitution and section 30 of the constitution talks about the right to development benefiting the most vulnerable groups in this case we did make sure that women, people with disability, the youth are participating in decision making processes and the expectation is that the animators would ensure that these groups are and to also ensure that 40% of women participate in these community based structures. This is to ensure that the benefits which the community initiate are benefiting these vulnerable groups.

.....In our focus we gave mainly dealt with the demand side of service delivery and in a way we are assuming that the service providers as duty bearers understand their responsibilities. However the reality is that duty bearers have also expressed that in most cases they are not always able to be responsive in terms of providing the required resources from government to respond effectively to the demands from the communities.

.....I think the main reason for doing that is that we relied on complimentary because as a program, we could not manage to reach both sides the demand and the supply. We could be the ideal is that there should have been a balance in the sense that this program could focus on both sides in terms of capacity building on the issues of understanding governance and the right to development.

...I think non responsiveness and hostility is coming from the top-bottom approach they are being used to, and they still feel they are bosses and could not understand why all of a sudden, they see people coming to their offices to demand.

.....I think we have a long way to go in terms of managing this client- patron relationship because we see it more towards the general elections period when you have the duty bearers like the MPs promising a lot of things and the people actually believe that these promises will be fulfilled but never get fulfilled at all, communities sometimes suffer in silence and wait for the next elections to remedy the situation. So the program is trying to put in place a continuous mechanism and awareness of the local community to continuously be able to interface with these politicians because it is only through that the situation will be to change. I would like to see more of dialogue and interface in terms of relating what was promised actually promised.

...It is a combination of issues to do with culture and the past, because in our society issues of respect play a role, believing that elders cannot be questioned in terms of being respectful, so those elements play a role, combined with the legacy of the past. In the past people were not supposed to question decisions made by rulers, I think that element may take longer before it goes away.

.....UNDP is a partner in the sense that they have an interest that democracy is promoted in Malawi as such they provide funds and they have also been interested in the democratisation process by not only providing funds but also providing technical support in terms of ensuring that all the process work well.

.....We report to UNDP as an obvious requirement that all donors would want to see organisations they fund being accountable for the resources they provide and one reason to report for the use of the funds but also to report on the performance of the project since they want to see the achievements on the targets and benchmarks which were agreed upon on as the project was starting.

....The project design was based on several key factors like the past lessons on the previous projects, the issue of section 30 of the constitution of Malawi and also on the assumptions that communities were ready to advance the principles of good governance and democracy. In terms of lessons from the previous projects, it was noted that it was not enough to simply focus on civic education on the rights of the people, but to also making sure that the people were able to demand these rights and our main focus was working on the demand side by creating a critical mass through animators in the community who could facilitate the process of demanding for these rights. The project assumed that by building the capacity of the animators in terms of skills and knowledge these animators will lead the community members in demanding for their rights to development.

...During one of our project evaluation process, we have come to realise that by focusing on building the capacity of demand side, to some extent it has worked in the sense that the communities have been able to take the duty bearers accountable and transparent in the way they deliver public services. However, we have discovered that we have only dealt with the demand side yet the supply side has a lot of capacity gap issues to respond to the demands of the community. We worked on the assumption that other players would be building the capacity of the supply side to be responsive to the community which in this case has not worked in reality. We should have balanced both the supply side and the demand side. The supply side has not been very responsive, I think they still believe in the top-bottom approach where they feel they are supposed to be bosses and don't appreciate that when communities come to demand, they do so as citizens and not clients. I think we have a long way in dealing with client- patron relationships.

....It is a combination of the two, our culture and the legacy of the past which influence how the people should behave as they participate in these dialogues. In our culture one is not supposed to question or be critical of the leaders or elders because you can be seen of being disrespect of the elders. During the Kamuzu banda era, people were not supposed to question the leadership on anything they felt unfairly done against them. You were not supposed to question the decision makers let alone be critical of any decision made.

....According to the way the project is designed, it is expected that 40% of the community structures are women participating in all decision making processes, the project should target, people with disability, children and other vulnerable groups and this is assumed that RLC s as animators would lead that process

....Concept of voluntarism is not well understood among the animators, and that is a challenge when it comes to implementation really. The animators want to see direct benefits either in monetary terms or any material incentives.

APPENDIX VI TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH COMMENTATORS ON GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY ISSUES IN MALAWI

Date of conducting interviews..... 16 September 2011

Place where the interviews were conducted.....Blantyre, Malawi

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Commentator on issues of democracy and governance Dr Fetcher Tembo of Civil Society Group Malawi

Transcriptions

.....Multiparty politics have increased the marginalised voices to be heard but what it has not managed to add is the kind of the responses from the state actors, It has had to have some webs like the ruling party has the majority and tend to have the centralised power to control all the arms of government. Power holders take advantage of the less powerful and they hold information on what they are supposed to account for to the less powerful people like in terms of public resources. Very few Malawians know how much is contained in the national budget and how such resources should be utilised. There is some kind of elitism among the Malawian, a culture of the elite.

.....If you have any voice coming from the marginalised, it's not based on facts it's based on just some kind of complaints. So a complaint is a voice is not as effective as it is supposed to because some people with power can silence that voice by giving you a token of some kind or something to make you not say anything which is critical and in that case it creates patron- client relationship. We are still seeing client – patron relationship even after the introduction of multiparty politics, with all its changes, politically the rules of the game are still the same, the village structures which were supposed to operate as decentralised structures for development, they still operate as political party structures, very much the same as during the Kamuzu Banda regime.

.....During colonialism, independence was seen as freedom, but those who went to power, then became so much of themselves, to the extent that people were not freed to say what they wanted, contributed what they felt they should, they created a cult of personality among the leaders and people became dictated upon it became so entrenched in the people so much that they became afraid to challenge it since they became afraid of being imprisoned.

During the Banda regime you could almost fear even a tree, thinking that its leaves would listen to you and report if you said something against Dr kamuzu Banda. That's why up to date when you look at networks, the way they operate, people are using false names because people are afraid since they don't know who will listen to them and report, despite the fact that we are now in a multiparty era, the legacy of Banda , a culture of fear still goes on among many Malawians.

...Family life has been applied in participatory circles, where men have used family life in public life. This entails, in family life, culturally men over dominate women in whatever they do and men have brought that family life into public life to silence the voices of women.

.....Chieftainship is an institution, not an individual, but government pay an individual not an institution and that makes the whole system complicated. That particular individual alters their accountability from being accountable to the people they become accountable to the government which pays them and in that case they would not become critical of the government when something goes wrong.

.... I think we need to revisit the concept of demand even though myself I work much in this area. I think the most important thing is to get people charter a path for development and within it they create clearly responsibilities on who will do what and when and also creates terms of reference for the implementation so that they take control of the whole process of what they want to do. When someone comes to say I want to do this for you, they would question to say why you have to do that for us yet we have already what we want to do. It is important to understand why something is given to you because it can lock you up in a client –patron relationship. It is not what we have been given that matters most but how and why it has been given to us.

Date of conducting interviews..... 17 August 2012

Place where the interviews were conducted.....Zomba, Malawi

Person who conducted the interviews..... Prince Mtelera

Name of interviewee..... Dr Richard Tambulasi

Transcriptions

.....What we saw at community level after Malawi attained democracy, was that the democratic institutions provided for the decentralisation at community level but the question now is has that materialised? The answer is yes and no, Yes because we have seen the decentralisation policy coming in as a framework encouraging people to participate in decision making processes, articulating peoples voices in development. I can also say no, because in the case of Malawi, there has been the absence of councillors who are crucial in the decentralisation processes.

... We have a framework in place but the operationalization of it is not effected. Politically we are told, government has no resources to hold elections for councillors but you may recall that donors have come forward to fund the elections but government has been making lame excuses to that effect.

..Government has been unwilling to share the power on the ground mainly because the MP who are political cohorts have been given powers to control local development funds as well as the constituency development fund from the District Assemblies. If councillors are introduced that may take away this power.

.....The fact that the MP controls the CDF and LDF amplifies the client –patron relationship and this affect the quality of participation. For example people participate not based on their needs but dance to the tune of politicians like the MP who control the CDF and LDF, Therefore this two development funds have institutionalised the patron-client relationships. It also applies to the public offices where people in public office are seen as people who can offer benefits.

..Communities see these officers as the ones who supply resources to them whenever they want development and not as people who are supposed to be accountable to them. They wouldn't want to criticise them for fear of losing development projects for their area.

APPENDIX VII DATA COLLECTING TOOLS

1. MAPPING OUT DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

WHAT THE PROJECT SAYS		WHAT IS HAPPENING IN PRACTICE	
Document Review	In depth interviews	Observations	In- depth interviews
	DCT staff	Problem definition discussions	Participants of problem definition discussions
	Donor partner	Problem solving discussions	Participants of problem solving discussions
			Non members of Radio Listening Club
			Malawian Governance experts

2. DATA COLLECTION TOOL VERBAL CLUES DURING OBSERVATION ON BOTH PROBLEM DEFINING AND PROBLEM SOLVING DISCUSSIONS

Non-verbal cues	What is being observed	Customary/traditional practice	Political practice	Observed implication

3. DATA COLLECTION TOOL ON VERBAL CLUES DURING OBSERVATION ON BOTH PROBLEM DEFINING AND PROBLEM SOLVING DISCUSSIONS

Verbal cues	What is said by who	Time allocation	What is not said by who	How is it said (tone, register/volume posture)	Customary /traditional practice	Political practice	Kind of language/jargon/ everyday language/ exclude people	Observed implication

4. DOCUMENT REVIEW DATA COLLECTION TOOL

Type of Document Reviewed	Document origin/ Author	What is their philosophy to PC	Identified problems for intervention	Ways of intervention on identified problems	How each stakeholder's participation is defined	Intended results and outcome	Resemblance of participatory communication

5. DATA ANALYSIS TOOL

Thematic Area	Related Research Questions
Understanding of participation	
Client-patron relations	
Dispositions from the past(political/traditional)	
Rights claiming citizen	
Between citizen and subject	
Relations of power	
Gender relations	