

**EFFECTS OF HIGH INCUMBENCY TURN-OVER RATES ON
REPRESENTATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CONSTITUENCIES IN
THYOLO AND LILONGWE.**

M.A. (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS

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B.A (Public Administration)-University of Malawi**

**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

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BY

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B.A (Public Administration)-University of Malawi

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (Political Science)

**University of Malawi
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December, 2009

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

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Date:

Certificate of Approval

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

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Member, Supervisory Committee

Dedication

To My wife and kids who bore the burden of neglect during the research and writing tasks and more specifically my twin boys Pempho (Sam) and Dan (Yankho) who were born within the period of the research. Zema and Taya, you are special.

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the effects of high incumbency turnover of Members of Parliament on representation. Malawi has one of the highest turnover rates of incumbent members of parliament in Africa. Studies from established democracies indicate that high incumbency turnover aids representative democracy as new members bring innovation and quality. These studies further indicate that high turnover makes members of parliament responsive to their constituents. These views are coming from the old democracies where turnover is very low. New democracies especially in Africa, such as Malawi, experience high rates of turnover. Unfortunately this subject has not received much attention in the African region. This thesis therefore set out to find the effects under the latter environment.

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, through desk research, interviews and focus group discussions. The study examined the effects in four constituencies: two in the southern and two in the central regions of Malawi and came up with some interesting trends. There exists a slight relationship between constituents' satisfaction with an incumbent MP and his/her retention. Satisfaction of the constituents is key to the MPs reelection and in the constituencies studied, constituents expressed dissatisfaction with their MPs as individuals and those who got re-elected in previous elections got their chance due to party influence and financial capability as well as patrimonial tendencies.

Rent maximization is one of the direct effects of high incumbency turnover and involves representatives' deviating from constituents interests. Rent maximization that has been given in this study includes maximizing financial gains, defections and low roll-call participation. This thesis also show MPs rent maximization can lead to voter apathy. It further shows that, what drives the incumbent MPs to maximize rents in extreme cases of high turnover is the fact that they fear for their job security. The thesis further shows other effects such as the weakening of political parties. Consequently democracy weakens as people participation goes down.

When all the findings are pooled together this study concludes that effects of high incumbency turnover on representation both from constituents' expectations and the ideals of the word are numerous and adverse.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CDF	Constituency Development Fund
MP	Member of Parliament
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
UDF	United Democratic Front
DPP	Democratic Peoples' Party
RP	Republican Party
LCSE	Lilongwe City South
LNK	Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
RC	Retaining Constituency
NRC	Non Retaining Constituency

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Background

This research thesis sought to investigate the effects of high incumbency turnover of members of parliament on representation. In a representative democracy, representatives will normally seek mandate from the represented periodically at elections. This is to ensure that the voters have confidence in their representatives and that their interests are adequately represented in the legislative assembly. It is, however, generally believed that high incumbency turnover at elections is a sign of dissatisfaction on the part of voters. Such a situation creates an atmosphere of insecurity for representatives such that it adversely affects their duty of representation by among other things inducing representatives to maximize rents.

Rent maximization is a term that Przeworski et al¹ use to describe the behaviour of politicians when they divert their attention to things that may differ from their voters' preferences or mandate. It includes the times when they pursue something which is injurious to citizens. Rent maximization goes hand in hand with the term rent seeking meaning attempts to obtain and maintain wealth transfers. The word "rent" in this sense is not directly equivalent to its usual use meaning a payment on a lease, but rather stems

¹ 1999: 40

from Adam Smith's division of incomes into profit, wage, and rent.² Rent-seeking behavior is distinguished in theory from *profit-seeking* behavior, in which entities seek to extract value by engaging in mutually beneficial transactions.³ Critics of the concept point out that in practice, there may be difficulties distinguishing between beneficial profit seeking and detrimental rent seeking⁴. Rent, is obtained when a third party deprives one party to a transaction of access to otherwise accessible transaction opportunities, making nominally "consensual" transactions a rent-collection opportunity for the third party

Rent maximization, therefore, in the present context comes as representatives seek to fully utilize financial resources at their disposal for personal benefit and seek favours from government authorities with a view to enhance their business ventures. It also comes when representatives concentrate on personal ventures at the expense of service to the constituents and representation in the legislative assembly⁵. This is specifically referred to as shirking. A further sign of this is when representatives defect from their parties or independent status to the powerful parties, usually ruling parties to enjoy benefits dangled before them. Representatives will further maximize rents by representing interests of 'new constituencies' other than the voters. These 'new

² Ross.2007

³ Schenk (<http://ingrimayne.com>) retrieved 10/12/2009

⁴ Pasour (<http://mises.org/journals/rae/pdf/rae1>) retrieved 10/12/2009

⁵ ibid

constituencies may be leaders of political parties or organizations that they see as potential future employers or sources of new opportunity in the life after parliament⁶.

It is also widely believed that insecurity in high turnover environments contributes to political parties' loss of influence with constituents since confidence levels on the candidates that parties recruit, are very low.

This research thesis sought to examine whether high turnover constituencies, in the Malawian polity, experience effects such as rent maximization and weakening of political parties referred to above. The research was conducted in two constituencies in the southern region of Malawi and two in the central region that have displayed varied experiences in as far as incumbency turnover is concerned. In the south, one constituency, Thyolo central has been retaining its Member of Parliament (MP) in the past three elections, while the other one, Thyolo East has not retained a single MP. Similarly in the central region, Lilongwe Mpeni Nkhoma has consistently retained its member of Parliament while Lilongwe City South has not. While the study primarily sought to understand incumbency turnover through these case studies, the critical factors that account for these differences are also of interest in this study particularly as they bear on issues of representation.

This thesis recognizes the challenges associated with the definition of the word representation. It has therefore dedicated some space to unpack what different writers have written on the subject. The thesis has adopted the general definition by Hanna Pitkin who defines representation as an activity of making "citizens' voices, opinions, and

⁶ Moncrief, 1999:196

perspectives present in the public policy making process”⁷. Citizens’ voices, opinions and perspectives will vary from one polity to another and that is why this thesis took the issue of interests back to the local person so that the satisfaction they expressed for their MP’s behavior could be understood within that local context. This thesis believes it is through this process that the turnover puzzle in the polity understudy can best be explored.

1.2 Context of the Study

Malawi is divided into three regions: the North- hosting about 12 % of the population; the Centre - hosts 41 %; and the South- 47 % of the total population. Malawi’s population is estimated at 13.1million people⁸. Ever since independence the country’s economic performance has been dismal with the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) sometimes averaging 1.5 percent per annum and population of as much as 65 percent living below the poverty line.⁹ This economic situation has improved in the past four years however with GDP rising to as high as 9.7 percent and population living under the poverty line dropping to 45 percent according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) report¹⁰. Such improvements can mean nothing if the wealth created through the economic growth is not equitably distributed since unequal distribution creates a climate of potential conflict. One of the ways of ensuring equitable distribution of state resources is through a stable legislative branch of government.

⁷ Stanford encyclopedia 2006

⁸ <http://nso.malawi.net>

⁹ The Integrated Household Survey 2004/05

¹⁰ African Business Magazine (1 may, 2009) www.highbeam.com

1.2.1. Political Context: From 1964 to 1994

Malawi gained independence in 1964 and had a one party system until 1994 when the ‘second republic’ came into being with multiparty elections in 1994.

With the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) at the driving seat, Malawi adopted a new Constitution upon becoming a Republic in 1966, in which the most notable autocratic elements were the introduction of executive presidential system replacing the parliamentary system, and the simultaneous abolition of multiparty politics. Malawi had become a de-facto one party state until 1993, when two thirds of Malawians voted for the return of multiparty politics in a national referendum. The climax of this institutionalized autocracy, notes Lembani¹¹, was reached when Dr. Banda “reluctantly” accepted a resolution of the MCP convention in August 1970 to become Life President of the MCP and the State in 1971. He held this position until the 1994 electoral loss.

Political parties formed hereafter have inherited much from the MCP dictatorship era.

1.2.2. Political Context After 1994

The United Democratic Front (UDF) and other parties registered in the early 1990’s were initially formed as pressure groups to challenge the MCP dictatorship. By 1994, there were over 16 registered political parties while more than 20 political parties were registered in time for the 1999 general elections. By 2004 general elections, there were over 30 registered political parties in Malawi. Lembani summarizes three factors characterizing the emergence of political parties in Malawi as: (a) transient and election-oriented, (b) absence of clear ideologies, and (c) rudimentary structures for membership identification and mobilization strategies. This is in direct contrast to parties’ main

¹¹ 2006:6,

purpose of aggregating interest for common policy stands that calls for solid ideological base and good structures. The situation results in parties' poor electoral performance and failure to get parliamentary seats. Most political parties therefore become disillusioned and disappear into political oblivion, only to resurface at the next election. Over the years, political parties have lost people's confidence and the number of independent members in parliament has increased from 0 in 1994, then 4 in 1999¹² to 39 in 2004¹³. Concurrently incumbency turnover has increased in the same period as follows: 66 percent in 1999 and 75 percent in 2004.

While the high turnover rates are apparent across the country, the magnitude is different in different regions with the centre, Malawi Congress Party (MCP) stronghold, registering lower figures than the North and the South. The North has in the past been a stronghold for Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) and the south was dominated by the United Democratic Front (UDF). The coming in of the Democratic Peoples' Party (DPP) and other smaller parties has changed the dominance in the North and South while the centre apparently remains MCP dominated. This study being conducted in the context of this party dynamism also examines the links between incumbency turn over and party stability.

1.3 Statement of Research Problem

Since 1994 when Malawi returned to multiparty system of government, incumbency retention at elections has been very low, and worsening. Electoral results in the past two elections are a manifestation of how grave the situation is. In 2004 Malawi registered an

¹² Ott, Phiri and Patel, 2000: 213

¹³ The Malawi Government Gazzette 2004, (Vol XLI, No 34)

average turnover rate of over 75%¹⁴. However, the regional trends for the 1999 and 2004 general elections are as shown in table 1.1:

Table 1.1 Turnover in Malawi by region¹⁵

Years	North %	Centre %	South %
1999	64	62	73
2004	84	55	83

High rates in turnover of members of parliament, is not unique to Malawi. Most African countries record high turnover rates as well. Table 1.2 below shows turnover rates in some African countries. While the average turnover rate is 54, some countries like Botswana and Seychelles registered turnovers of as low as 32 percent. Malawi's 2004 average turnover of 75 percent is only surpassed by Zambia that prior to 2001 elections had factions forming within the ruling party and standing alone.

Turnover in other young democracies outside Africa is lower than the situation presented above but higher than that in the western democracies.¹⁶

¹⁴ Rakner, Bakken and Khembo 2007 :180

¹⁵ Source: Parliamentary Summaries 1994, 1999, 2004.

¹⁶ Öhman, 2005: 12

Table 1.0.2 Turnover variables in various African parliaments (%)¹⁷

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Pre electoral Turnover</i>	<i>Total turnover</i>
Botswana	1999	62	59
Botswana	2004	30	32
Gambia	2002	38	39
Ghana	2000	24	44
Ghana	2004	37	46
Kenya	1997	59	61
Kenya	2002	73	58
Mauritius	2000	50	73
Mauritius	2005	39	64
Seychelles	1998	32	32
Tanzania	2005	42	48
Zambia	2001	75	89
Zimbabwe	1995	47	47
Zimbabwe	2000	52	70
Zimbabwe	2005	33	39
Mean (weighted)		47	54

Rates of turnover in the developed world specifically in the Western world are even lower. Britain and the USA for example have had turn-over rates of less than 20 percent for more than fifty years¹⁸. When all these figures are compared therefore, the situation in Malawi becomes worrying as it portrays lack of confidence in the elected representatives and perhaps in the whole concept of representative democracy.

By preferring multiparty democracy in the referendum of 1993 Malawians wished for an effective representative democratic system through which the process of sharing the national resources equitably would be progressively instituted. High turn-over rates of representatives indicate very low confidence levels on the people that were entrusted with the representational responsibility and this therefore poses a threat to maintenance of the system the country opted for – representative democracy.

¹⁷ ibid

¹⁸ Norris and Lovenduski 1995: 30

Term-limit movements in many states in the United States of America, by favouring high legislative turnover, want ‘citizen legislators’ in order to encourage responsiveness in the constituencies. These movements are propelled by the fact that representatives in the USA just like other old democracies are assisted by the incumbency advantage and stay in office for long periods of time. Moncrief¹⁹, on the other hand contends that lower incumbency turn-over strengthens policy stability and oversight on other branches of government due to experience gained by the members of the legislature overtime while high incumbency rates have a reverse effect on representation. As Malawi has a citizenship with high expectation from, and low satisfaction with their MPs. The result has been high turnovers that get worse progressively. Such a situation brings insecurity on the incumbents and has potential for adverse consequences. According to Przeworski²⁰ one consequence in such a case is that MPs may compete for their posts only to maximize rents when they get in office.

This thesis therefore sought to establish whether Malawi’s high incumbency turnover can induce incumbent MPs to maximize rents. It also sought to establish if high incumbency turn over in the Malawi polity has other consequences on representation.

1.4. Research Objectives and Assumptions

The study therefore has the following objectives:

Overall Objective:

To explore effects of high incumbency turnover rates of members of parliament on constituency representation

¹⁹ 1999:187

²⁰ 1999: 40

Specific Objectives

- To compare the satisfaction of constituents with their MP's performance in high and low incumbency turnover constituencies
- To explore any relationships between high incumbency turnovers rates and MPs' rent maximization
- To explore other effects of high incumbency turnovers

Assumptions

This research study is built on the following assumptions:

- High turnover of MPs at elections is a sign of high variance between voters expectations and MPs' performance;
- High turnover rates create insecurity on MPs and drive them to seek maximum rents at the expense of serving constituents;
- High incumbency turnover adversely affects the quality of representation.

1.5 Significance of the study

Turnover rates of incumbents in the western democracies were at one time high. It took several interventions, such as the development of careerism and the improvement of the institution of parliament itself, to get to rates as low as they have now. It is the purpose of this study therefore to inform stakeholders in the field of representation about the current situation and possible consequences so that interventions may be brought in as Rosenthal²¹ states that deliberate interventions were mostly responsible for the stability in the legislatures in the USA.

²¹ 1998:50-54

1.6 Summary

The chapter has laid out the ground for examining the effects of incumbency turnover on representation by giving the background to the thesis. The context in which the study was conducted has been given and the problem the thesis is trying to solve has been highlighted. Being conducted under the new multiparty context after the dictatorship era and within the context of poor conditions of living, issues and challenges the study encountered can then be understood better and matched solutions proposed.

The question of focus was important in this thesis and hence the clarification of the objectives at the very beginning to avoid deviations. The inclusion of the significance of the study has been given to ensure that the effort put in this thesis was for some noble causes in the academic circles. The chapters that follow can therefore be understood better with the help of the background provided in the first chapter.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews conceptual framework and the actual literature on the subject of incumbency turn over. The general understanding of the term incumbency turnover is examined. The chapter brings to light arguments and counterarguments on the relevance of turn over to representation led by arguments from term-limit and non term limit schools of thought. The examination is further enhanced by bringing to light theories relevant to the subject. As the whole issue of turnover hinges on its effects on representation, the section has dedicated some space for scholarly review on the competing views on the word representation. This will help to put the current study in perspective as the targeted polity's understanding of representation will not be taken for granted but specified accordingly. The chapter ends with a summary of goals that representatives have over the years been known to have. This helps to keep the thesis focused especially in guiding the findings provided in the next chapter.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Pzeworski et al²² claim that what connects democracy and representation is the fact that under democracy governments are representative because they are elected following freely contested elections with widespread participation, and the entrenchment of political liberties in the system. They further claim that under these conditions governments or representatives will act in the *best interest* of the people. This claim is in

²² 1999

line with Hanna Pitkin's description of representation as an activity of making "citizens' voices, opinions, and perspectives present in the public policy making process"²³.

James Buchanan's Public Choice theory,²⁴ however, centers on the individual, described as a 'rational utility maximizer'. And in case of representation, voters are said to do their voting on self interest and politicians stand for office for income, power and prestige. This is a departure from the intention of representation as presented by Pitkin above. This departure however gets understood when one perceives Pitkin's description as a contract between the voter and the representative (principal and agent) whereby interests by the two parties have to meet somewhere. If they however do not, then the contract is broken and in case of representation, the representative gets fired at elections. High turnover figures of legislators in Malawi parliament at elections could be a result of such a situation.

While term-limit movements in many states in the United States of America wish for higher turnovers in their legislative assemblies with a view to produce 'citizen legislators' who will be responsive to constituents' interests, as opposed to 'careerist legislators', with 'public interest' to fulfill, this study argues differently. It argues in line with Pzeworski et al²⁵ who warn that rational beings will work on the economic principal of opportunity costs, that is, where standards are set very high (voter expectations) with less chances of retaining the position, as is the case in many constituencies in Malawi,

²³ Stanford encyclopedia 2006

²⁴ Howlett and Ramesh, 1995

²⁵ 1999

representatives will choose the lesser evil i.e. maximize the rents at the expense of the electorate.

The thrust in this study, therefore disputes Lipset's contention that "greater insecurity on incumbent legislative representatives means true democracy"²⁶. On the contrary this study advances the contention that high incumbency turn-over rates that connote high insecurity on incumbents job, encourages rent maximization. The thesis, therefore, contends that such a situation defeats the earlier claim that democracy has to advance peoples' interests. The study further examines other adverse effects this insecurity will have on representation.

2.3. Literature Review

Most of the literature examined looks at the practices from older democracies in the West. Only fewer relevant younger democracies and African studies have been mentioned mainly because not much work has been done on the subject on the continent. This is partly due to the fact that most African democracies have emerged in the 'third wave'²⁷ and are therefore relatively new and also because the term-limit' debate has not been as vibrant in African countries as compared to the older democracies especially the USA.

2.3.1 Incumbency Turn-over: Overview

Incumbency turnover has been described by Przeworski, Manin, and Stokes²⁸ as "total change in membership of the House of parliament between one election and the next" and

²⁶ Prewitt 1970

²⁷ According to Huntington's waves of democratization, third wave democratization is said to have occurred from the 1970s to date

²⁸ 1999:29

includes those leaving at by-elections, those retiring at general elections (voluntary) and those defeated at general elections (involuntary). Rhode's²⁹ premises, that all legislators are progressively ambitious but risk-averse. By this he simply means that if their perception of risk is great the natural thing to do is not to run or retire in case of incumbents. He further observes that there are some unfortunate ones who will not judge the conditions right and attempt to run only to get the boot. Both these cases are what amount to turnover where incumbents are involved, the former being voluntary and the latter, involuntary.

Voluntary exit from the system may be influenced by lack of motivation or incentives, on the part of incumbents³⁰, political party institutionalization and weakening party influence in the area, ambition of individual members as well as stronger challenger. The incumbent's view of risk of losing elections is influenced by the strength of his/her party in the constituency, thus if the influence is seen to be dwindling they will perceive their chances of winning to be slim. If the incentives attached to the position are not attractive as compared to alternative occupations incumbents are likely to retire early.

Involuntary exit (defeat at elections) is mostly said to be influenced by stronger challenger. The challenger has to be strong because there are many advantages held by incumbents in elections such as the ability to use one's office to do favours for individual constituents, increase one's visibility among the general public, generate financial support for future campaigns³¹. Hernson agrees with this contention and gives the

²⁹ 1978

³⁰ or rents described by Przerworski et al,1999

³¹ *ibid*

example of the USA congress where incumbency is said to be the most important determinant of elections³². Erikson³³ however, does not consider these as the only influencing factors for incumbent reelection but rather electoral appeal in such factors as stronger candidature³⁴ as well as party strength. He points out that success comes as a function of a causal relationship between incumbency and electoral success or appeal. According to this contention, incumbents can therefore only be beaten by skilled, well financed and high quality challengers, which most often is difficult to identify.

Involuntary exit starts at political party primary elections. Political parties will normally prepare for elections by coming up with candidates that will represent their ideologies. This process is important in determining the result of the actual elections because if the party features weak candidates, they reduce their chances of winning. If the system is corrupt and candidates are imposed on the people the party risks losing the elections and this has been the criticism in the primary elections in Malawi.³⁵ The lack of transparency at primary elections is said to be one of the contributing factors to turnover of MPs in Malawi. One would however argue that most MPs that have been shielded at primary elections were incumbents and, therefore, transparency would not change a thing if anything it will increase incumbency turn over at primary elections. Come the actual elections, there will already be few incumbents.

³² Ibid 1995

³³ 1971, 396

³⁴ in issue positioning and financially

³⁵ Rakner, Bakken and Khembo 2007; 196

Except for the last illustration, Most of the arguments above are originating from mainly one polity – The USA, but have been proved true in other democracies especially old democracies. What differs, however, is the prominence of one argument in one polity over others as causes of incumbency turn over. As statistics have shown above, new democracies present a different picture. With high turnover rates presented, incumbency does not seem to offer similar guarantees to reelection. Studies by Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)³⁶ Malawi Electoral Commission³⁷ and Afro-barometer studies³⁸ for example portray consistent agency loss between MPs and constituents in the polity over the years. In the CCJP research report 80.5 percent respondents indicated that MPs do not consult, 82.3 percent say they do not give feedback from parliament. Out of 18 African Countries Afro-barometer surveyed in 2005, Malawi reported highest expectations from MPs and lowest satisfaction with their performance. Of the 18, Malawi was rated last but one in satisfaction with democracy. With such high expectations, it is unlikely that incumbency will present better advantage to candidates at elections. In fact high turnover will be the likely result as it becomes difficult to satisfy those high expectations.

The question of whether high turnover level is good for representative democracy or not will obviously be answered differently from one polity to another especially in the two scenarios presented above as the effects of high turnover and low turnover will have differing effects on the two types of polities. The effects of turnover on representative

³⁶ CCJP-Malawi: 1996

³⁷ Elections results 1999,2004,2009 (MEC reports)

³⁸ Afro-barometer) (1995)

democracy tend to be confusing because representation itself is not a word whose definition has been unanimously accepted by scholars. To appreciate the debate on effects of incumbency turnover therefore, it is important to get exposed to the concept of representation.

2.3.2 Representation Defined

Specific duties of a member of the Malawian parliament (MP) are stated as legislation, representation and oversight³⁹. However when the MP does the oversight and legislation duties s/he does it on the behalf of the people s/he represents. Hence, whatever these ‘specific duties’ they engage in mean, their duty in the house is understandably generic representation. Our definition therefore takes into account this generic definition rather than the specific representation as presented within the duties of the Malawian MP.

The concept of representative democracy as we understand it today is a result of an extended period of debates from direct democracy via controversies as to whether political authority should be viewed in the ascending theory sense (originating from people and delegated to representatives) or in the descending theory’s sense (divinely sanctioned) to today’s controversies of whether a representative should act as a trustee or delegate of his/her constituents. This study feels duty bound to clarify the latter controversy as the Malawian voter has, in the Afro-barometer study⁴⁰, been portrayed as a responsiveness seeker and hence the high dissatisfaction levels on the part of the voter could point to the high incumbency turnovers at elections.

³⁹ Malawi National Assembly Strategic Plan 2006-2009;i

⁴⁰ Bratton and Logan, 2006:9

While medieval theorists like Thomas Aquinas⁴¹ supported the descending theory, today's practice of representative democracy follows what the three great theorists of "obligation", Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau⁴² advocated – that the "magistrate's crown is placed on his (or her) head by the hands of his (or her) subjects". The difference among these theorists is however whether one in authority should act as a trustee or delegate of the constituents. To this effect Hobbes defines a representative as an agent who has the right to commit his/her principal to whatever action or policies the agent thinks appropriate. Locke may not be very clear in his conceptualization and Rousseau may have supported direct democracy, however, it is clear that the two express the need for government decisions to directly reflect the will of the people - delegation. Though some modern theorists have taken extreme views on the continuum like Lippman⁴³ and Schumpeter⁴⁴ who contend that the duty of voters is to fill the office and not to direct the officeholder (trusteeship), there are many who try to strike a balance between the two views.

Hanna Pitkin⁴⁵ is known for her extensive work in the field of representation. She describes the concept as an activity of making citizens' voices, opinions, and perspectives present in the public policy making process. Pitkin has therefore outlined four views of representation namely: *Formalistic Representation*: institutional arrangements with two dimensions: authorization and accountability; *Symbolic Representation*: standing for the

⁴¹ Birch, 1971:31,32

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ 1956

⁴⁴ 1942

⁴⁵ cited in Stanford encyclopedia 2006

represented; *Descriptive Representation*: representative resembling the represented; and *Substantive Representation*: as an agent of, and as a substitute for the represented. Birch⁴⁶ has a similar categorization with slightly different terminological arrangement. He calls the first category authorization; the second is still symbolic, the third is called microcosmic like a sample in a research setting and the fourth he calls delegated representation. This thesis feels the latter terminology sounds more straight forward. Even though that is the case, this thesis utilizes terms from both authors for precision.

Although Pitkin and Birch did a commendable job in expounding the term to simplify the understanding of the concept of representation still many questions are asked like: how far should the represented entrust the representative with the freedom to make decisions on their behalf? Should the representative discard some decisions when s/he feels the represented have made them without adequate information and replace such decisions with their own 'reasonable' decisions? Who should the representative listen to between the political party and his/her constituents when the policy stance or preference of the two collide? The debate on turnover by term limit and non term limit movements and theories from scholars in the field offer more depth to issues in these questions.

2.3.3 Incumbency Turnover: Pros and Cons

Emergence of different views on whether high legislative turnover is positive or negative on representation depends mostly on trends in the polity. The old democracies have seen rates of legislative turn-over fall over the years. This has seen the birth of term-limit movements in the USA who have had success in some states in limiting the terms for their legislators. Non-term limit movements have grown strong over the negative

⁴⁶ 1993:69

effects the limiting of the terms for legislators has brought. The two movements are constantly at loggerheads and have their own arguments worth exploring.

According to supporters of term limit movement, legislators have grown increasingly distant from the public. Low rates of turnover have provided legislators with insulation from the public; the electoral connection thought to influence legislators to act in the best interests of their constituents, is no longer sufficient to guard against abuse⁴⁷. Term limit advocates want legislators who will enhance responsiveness to their constituents. And according to Matland and Studlar⁴⁸, the ability to bring about change in legislative personnel is important for theories of “elite circulation”, for creating opportunity structures for aspiring political leaders and insurgent groups, and for championing changes in public policy. Turnover, to this group, is necessary to maintain social stability by incorporating discontented groups (like minorities) and ambitious individuals. As different types of individuals, “either socio-economically or ideologically, come to occupy elite positions, policy preferences may differ and innovation may increase”. They provide an example, that increasing the representation of women leads to changes in policy priorities and outputs⁴⁹.

Non-term limit advocates widely agree among themselves that rapid turnover detracts from the performance of both the lawmaking and watchdog functions and weakens the institution of parliament. This group further sees long serving members as being useful in their leadership and expertise to the institution. Once ‘term limits’ removes these long-

⁴⁷ Carey, 1996

⁴⁸ 2004, 88,

⁴⁹ Wolbrecht, 2000

serving members, the effects of that, they claim, are profound. One example they give is that one of the term limits proponents' promises that was most appealing to voters was that it would bring more diversity to state legislatures⁵⁰. This claim has not happened. In terms of leadership they contend that leaders rise to the top more quickly than before, but stay for a briefer period and wield less influence than in the past. To them, the importance, and in some cases, the influence of legislative staff has grown under term limits. Legislators may lack the policy specific experience to effectively question departmental heads in committee hearings⁵¹. This group, therefore, supports the idea that legislators are important in enhancing issues of public interest rather than those that only benefit their constituents (voters). The non-term limit movement therefore believes that the experience old timers accumulate over their long service enables them not only to be stable leaders in their entities (eg political parties) but also to master the process of policy making.

In tracking different types of activities of the legislative body, Squire⁵² finds that newcomers and veterans may not differ much in terms of electoral margins or casework, but that the more senior members still carry the burden of the actual lawmaking activity. Squire further observes that there is some evidence of shirking among those who are retiring in the term limit scenarios: roll-call participation declines⁵³, as does constituent attention (as measured by trips home and staff allocations). In this same way where there

⁵⁰ Bowser 2005, 113,

⁵¹ *ibid*, 114

⁵² Squire, 1992a

⁵³ Squire, 1992a

is no term limit but high insecurity, when one knows they will not make it to the next parliament whether by term limits or high job insecurity (likelihood of loss at election), the effect he claims are similar.

A key characteristic of modern democracy is continuing responsiveness to citizens' preferences but the assumption is that citizens are rational so as to consider national interests in their preferences⁵⁴. Furthermore Pitkin makes a serious assumption that "a man's (and woman's) wishes and what is good for him will coincide". But if he wishes for something of which he lacks knowledge or the information on his wish is costly to obtain, will his/her wish be worth representing in parliament? And will his member of parliament be said to be representative if s/he is not responsive to such expressed wishes?⁵⁵ Stoke⁵⁶ thinks the MP will be. He calls such an action 'betrayal in good faith'. Pitkin adds that if individuals are not the best judges of their welfare, representatives should "act on their behalf not on their bequest" that is, 'what people ought to want' and not 'what they say they want' should prevail. The big risk however is that these actions in the short run may be unpopular and the architect may not see another term. In old democracies with low turn over the above risk does exist. Obviously in younger democracies with higher turnovers, the risk should be so big that only those without ambition for reelection can dare take it. It is therefore the polities with less (job) insecurity that may dare take such a move otherwise representation will always mean responsiveness to expressed wishes no matter what consequences this may bring.

⁵⁴ Birch, 1971, 66

⁵⁵ Pitkin, 1967:156

⁵⁶ Przerworski, 1999:11

When the above arguments are considered the challenge facing the representative, therefore lies in deciding whose preferences to take care of: people's expressed wishes or what he considers 'people ought to want'. Still the question: "Does the representative have to act as a trustee or a delegate" remains prominent. The other important issue to solve is the problem of contradictory preferences among subgroups of voters. Consideration of these issues is important because in dealing with high legislative turnover both the behavior of the representative and people's expectations have to be understood. If one or both these parties do not understand their roles representative democracy cannot work well. While blind obedience on the part of legislators may have long term adverse effects on the constituency, extreme trusteeship can also cost one chances of reelection. The following section shades some light on what different scholars have come up with as theories in this area of representation and turnover.

2.3.4 Turnover and Retention: Some Theories

At the heart of the concept of representation are the basic questions of who runs for the legislature and why, who wins and how, and what are the consequences (of the choices) for the voters. A second line of inquiry goes beyond the consideration of the concept as static and at the individual level and concentrates on the *process* of recruitment as "several selective phases"⁵⁷, and further emphasizes the political role of gatekeepers such as political parties and interest groups, as well as the mechanisms of selection (nomination and election)⁵⁸. These are considered to be important issues that

⁵⁷ Matthews 1984,563

⁵⁸ Moncrief, 1999:185

will influence the relation between the representative and the represented and hence turnover of representatives.

This section will therefore discuss these issues along with relevant theories and practices across different democracies with a view to enable us to see the causes of the behaviour of representatives and possibly predict the effects of the same. Theories discussed include rational actor, ambition and leadership.

While Przeworski⁵⁹ in one instant, backs politicians as being public-spirited and dedicating themselves fully to furthering the public interest, he gives their other side as people who want something different from and costly to citizens, whether just some goals that citizens do not share, like reelection, or completely private gains. Buchanan's public choice theory⁶⁰ leads an onslaught to the former claim by stating that people in general not only politicians are 'rational utility maximizers' whereby while voters cast their votes on self interest ie. for the elected to represent their interests, politicians stand for office for income, power and prestige. Apparently the latter theory has attracted a lot of academic interest and is further explored through rational actor and ambition theories.

Rational Actor Theory

The rational-actor model brings forward the conditions under which certain candidates will run, or (ambition) the conditions under which incumbents will act on progressive career ambition, but it has explained a good deal of the behavior of legislators within the institution by focusing on the reelection incentive of incumbents⁶¹. The rational actor

⁵⁹ 1999

⁶⁰ Howlett and Ramesh, 1995

⁶¹ e.g., Cain et al.1987; Fiorina 1977; Mayhew 1974; cited in Moncrief, 1999:180

model takes politicians (candidates) as rational beings who, using the available information weigh options based on their own personal goals and make a choice. In this model, what is important is that recruitment (candidacy) is viewed as the product of an individual's calculation about the chances of winning. In this case someone will run if they perceive that chances of winning are high. Jacobson's and Kernell's⁶² theory of strategic politicians compliments these assertions in stating that politicians will choose carefully when to run.

A criticism to this side of rational actor model has been its excessive focus on individual calculations that disregards the gradual but important changes in the political system itself, such as the changing relative attractiveness of different political offices⁶³, the nature of competition that leaves only one winner, the need for establishment of name recognition, long term perspective such as careerism, and incomplete information⁶⁴ on the part of the candidate. Ambition theory brings some addition considerations to the rational actor theory. Schlesinger is a well known scholar in this field of ambition and in the following paragraphs illustrates why ambition cannot go without mention in this field of representation and turn over.

Ambition

Clubb⁶⁵ makes the following observation: "It is risky, indeed, to generalize about state legislatures. The terrain is vast and its contours varied." However by concentrating on

⁶² 1981

⁶³ Canon 1990, 15; Fowler 1993,9

⁶⁴ Przerworski et al, 1999

⁶⁵ 1994, 484

certain basic elements in a specific polity conclusions can be made that may guide further studies in other polities. Based on the American legislative system, therefore, Schlesinger⁶⁶ cites the basic assumption of ambition theory as follows: “a politician's behavior is a response to his office goals. And will engage in political acts and make decisions appropriate to gaining office”. He further observes that his/her acts and decisions will vary depending on whether his/her ambition is discrete: an ambition to hold a specific office for a specified period, after which the individual will "withdraw from public life"; static: ambition to hold the same office for a long period of time; or progressive: a desire to "attain an office more important than the one he now seeks or is holding"⁶⁷. In terms of the latter, there is ambiguity as it is often intertwined with the notion of "careerism".

The questions to ask at this juncture may be: At what point does legislative service become a career? What are the institutional implications of the development of careerism? And what effect does the development of careerism have on legislative turnover or indeed vice versa? Being a careerist legislator means that one takes the job of representation as his/her career. With more members wanting to stay longer in parliament and progress, membership stabilizes, that is low levels of turnover are attained. This is the point at which Moncrief⁶⁸, in defense of low incumbency, states that lower incumbency turn-over “strengthens policy stability and oversight on other branches of

⁶⁶ 1965,6

⁶⁷ Moncrief, 1999: 181

⁶⁸ 1999:187

government” due to experience in the house. The members are likely to try to mould the organization to their own purposes⁶⁹ – good or bad.

While the claim that stability in the membership of the house may have contributed to professionalism in the US legislatures is strong among scholars, other scholars contend that professionalism came about through an explicit and concerted effort to transform state legislatures, which were viewed as decidedly inadequate institutions by mid-century. This school further claims that professionalism influenced stability in the house. Alan Rosenthal⁷⁰ says that the primary goal of this movement was to build legislative capacity. He⁷¹ argues that incentives have improved as a result of institutional capacity-building: Such incentives include: the improvement of facilities, the provision of services, the employment of staff, and the growing power of the legislative branch. Squire differentiates the two terms by viewing "professionalization" as an institutional characteristic, while "careerism" as an individual characteristic⁷². While benefits are greater (higher salaries, better working conditions), the costs are also higher. Longer sessions not only mean greater demands from the legislative job (and, often, more time away from family) but also greater opportunity costs (in terms of the loss of income from one's outside job). Both of these factors have been found to be important reasons for people leaving the legislature⁷³, and perhaps for joining it. However what is important in this discussion is the connection between professionalism and recruitment (candidate

⁶⁹ Swenson 1982

⁷⁰ 1998, 50-54

⁷¹ *ibid*, 62

⁷² Squire 1988

⁷³ see Blair and Henry 198 1 ;Francis and Baker 1986

emergence). The situation above will definitely attract some people and repel others from the legislature. It may attract careerists and repel “business people” (those looking for fast gains). In this case, Squire contends that the benefits of legislative service today in many states (USA), and the costs are such that the calculus works in favor of Democrats but not Republicans specifically because many Democrats have lower wage-earning potential in non-legislative posts⁷⁴. The motivation for the two groups will definitely differ.

In considering turnover effects therefore, factors attracting people to be candidates should take into account what type of candidates they will actually attract – ‘rent’ maximizers or public spirited. Questions like ‘will the environment of insecurity in a Malawian parliament attract those who want to serve people or those wanting to maximize their gains and move on to other things?’ This, for sure, has a bearing on the type of deliberations in parliament and policies that will result. The caliber of people attracted, just like in any organization, will define the path to development of the organization, in this case parliament and therefore development of democracy.

Leadership Theories

Neither the operation of the polity nor the public policies it produces can be fully understood without adequate theories of leadership. Prewitt and Nowlin⁷⁵ group these theories into: constituency, structural and career theories. In structural theories, the incumbent legislator, is part of a role-network, in ongoing social system. His location in this social structure limits his alternatives and constrains his choices. His incumbent behavior can be viewed as a response to his organizational position. This theory becomes

⁷⁴ Moncrief 1999:189

⁷⁵ 1969:299

relevant when one considers that most candidates will compete on party ticket or will be supported by individuals and organizations financially to gain their position. This places the candidate in a limiting social structure where questions on how far s/he goes in serving the constituents are asked as his/her investors also look up to him/her for their interests.

In career theories, the office behavior of the incumbent is in some manner seen as an extension of his prior political or occupational career. Current behavior is conditioned by pre-incumbency recruitment experiences, in particular the manner in which the politician was selected, trained for, and inducted into office. The understanding of and participation on policy issues, preferences for policy stand as well as one's responsiveness at the constituency level will be influenced by the process of development career-wise that the incumbent has undergone. One of the important issues in the American elections is the issue of policies on abortion and leaders with catholic backgrounds may not be trusted if they promise to pursue the pro abortion stand in policy processes.

In constituency theory, the officeholder responds to the pressures of the voters, of interest group leaders, of party personnel, or of his incumbent colleagues. Ambition theory adds that the constituency to which the incumbent responds need not be the one that elected him. A constituency in this case means those who control their tenure in office. Ambition theory further informs us that for those politicians aspiring to higher office, behavior is shaped in anticipation of the day when their constituency has shifted or expanded to those who control access to the desired office⁷⁶. Carey⁷⁷ sets out to show

⁷⁶ *ibid*: 301

⁷⁷ Moncrief, 1999:196

how pension-seeking (post-legislative appointive positions) affects legislative behavior. His conclusion that "legislators are responsive to those who control their future careers" raises interesting questions for Malawi such as whether parliamentarians will become more responsive to specific interest groups that might provide employment after the legislative career is terminated or become instrumentalistic in favour of powerful party leaders instead of serving people that elected them? What constituency theory reveals therefore is that politicians can easily divert their attention to things that may differ from their voters hence maximizing rents. The empirical challenge is, however, finding out how legislative behaviour is linked to the MP's perception of what the different constituencies can and will provide.

The importance of studying the theories above lies in the fact that they explain why incumbent MPs behave differently when they are in office, making them unpopular and hence increasing turnover. The incumbent's behaviour, whether as a rational actor, a careerist, a network player, a pension seeker, independent or affiliated to a political party will somehow be affected by gatekeepers such as political parties. The following section discusses political party's influence on representatives' behaviour and possible consequences.

2.3.5 Turnover and Party Politics

It is often easy to discuss issues of turnover and representation in general without paying attention to the role of the party in all these. However, the importance of the party to the representative democracy puzzle especially its influence on legislative turnover, cannot be overemphasized. In issues of candidate recruitment, interest aggregation for common policy stands, party discipline and caucuses as well as the way the party plays

the role in encouraging participation of citizen in policy formulation the party has proved its reason to exist despite resentment from individual centered polities.

Svasand and Khembo⁷⁸ cite one of the most important functions of parties as recruitment of candidates for parliamentary seats. In principle parties will recruit candidates that have the potential to win in their respective constituencies and to win, voters must appreciate their pre-incumbency behaviour. The influence of the party itself may as well assist the candidates to win but their retention will mostly depend on their behaviour while in office. Rate of turnover, therefore, to a great extent, depends on the quality of candidates recruited. In electoral systems characterized as candidate-centered the role of parties as recruiting and nominating agents is clearly constrained and the result is that "candidate emergence," replaces "candidate recruitment"⁷⁹ and this often a result of the party's loss of confidence. Candidate emergence implies the candidate has not been oriented through the party system but just decides to stand and parties in this case will accept anybody despite their past interaction with the party as long as they display the ability to win. This has implications on their policy stand when in parliament. Such a candidate may easily be influenced by other powerful parties in terms of policy stands as s/he will probably not be grounded in the party's ideology.

The role the party plays in a polity and its influence on candidates (discipline) also plays a big part in the direction of representation, policy and turnover in particular. Stepanova⁸⁰ states that there are three ways how party discipline contributes to good

⁷⁸ In Patel and Svasand, 2007:228

⁷⁹ Moncrief 1999:181

⁸⁰ 2007:2

governance: ensuring that government is held responsible for certain policy outcomes; ensuring representation of constituents' interests in the national policies and protecting individual members of parliament from the pressure of different interest groups. However, another view to the idea of caucuses argues that caucuses have become forums for dictatorial tendencies from leaders, and parties suffer loss of mandates at elections⁸¹ as a result. And Stepanova,⁸² puts a condition to this argument that this may happen in polities where parties have no culture of internal democracy. Problems will always arise if the party's interests or position on a policy starts to differ with the interests of constituents. And in Birch's words⁸³ it is not easy to "justify a system where elected representative(s) may be forced to vote for a policy which is contrary to the prevailing interests in (their) constituency, and contrary to his own personal judgement" about what is important for the country. In such a case theory states that in plurality-majority systems constituent interests often win out. Hence this will obviously influence turn over come elections.

Sandbrook⁸⁴ defends the party as constituting the central intermediary structure in a democracy. He explains that strong parties augment both governmental responsiveness and the resolution of conflict by articulating and aggregating the demands of diverse constituencies in the form of public policies.⁸⁵ In addition, parties may broaden political participation, by disseminating political information and opinions and by mobilizing

⁸¹ Przerworski, 1999

⁸² 2007:2

⁸³ 1971; 97

⁸⁴ 1996, 70

⁸⁵ *ibid*,75

voters in elections. Finally, parties are valuable to the extent that they enhance government accountability when they expose counterproductive policies and abuses of power. He however, warns against fragmentation and transitory coalitions based on mercenary (instrumental) and personal considerations as these cannot build the basis for a durable democracy. He recommends the institutionalization of parties and a party system as these (organizations and the rules they embody) gain value in the eyes of the population, since if these actors regard the rules as valuable they will obey and defend them. This is in line with the argument on candidate emergence above.

He goes on to highlight that ‘poorly organized, shallowly rooted, personalistic vehicles (parties) engaged in clientelistic and/or communal appeals’, will not inspire respect. His advice is against the background that many of the party systems in Africa's new democracies resemble this model of a factional system. He observes the existence of polarization emerging from a fundamental disagreement - such as religious fundamentalism versus a secular state and concludes that with this, democracy becomes impossible. An institutionalized party can depolarize such situations.

Strong, cohesive parties therefore have the capacity to influence turnover reduction with a further influence on quality of representation and representatives while weak party system will see an increase in candidate emergence and hence increased turnover leading to disorganized policy directions.

2.3.6 Divided Loyalties (Career Goals of Representatives)

Hix, Raunio, Scully⁸⁶ have reviewed legislative behaviour in general, and behaviour in the European Parliament in particular, and concluded three different sorts of career goals influence representatives behaviour as follows:

Re-election seeking. Most MPs would like to be re-elected by local party organs, and then be successfully re-elected as a MPs in Parliament. This leads MPs to pursue actions in the Parliament that promote the interests of their constituents and/or the positions and wishes of their parties.

Policy seeking. MPs would like outputs from the parliament policy process that accord with their personal policy or ideological goals. This leads MPs to pursue actions in parliament that promote policy issues and legislative outcomes that are as close as possible to their ideal policy preferences (regardless of the preferences of their constituents and parties).

Office seeking. Many MPs would like to be promoted to positions of authority and prestige *within parliament*, such as chair of a committee, *rapporteur* on a key piece of legislation, or speaker or deputy in the house. This leads MPs to cater to the interests and wishes of those in positions of authority that control the assignment of these positions - such as party leaders and committee chairs.

These three policy goals summarize what the theories have above have tried to achieve in explaining why MPs will behave differently when they are elected into office. General theories of legislative behaviour have tended to assume the primacy of one of these goals over the others. Building on Mayhew⁸⁷, much writing on legislative behaviour

⁸⁶ 1999

⁸⁷ (1974)

in the US congressional has assumed the primacy of re-election over personal ideological aims or internal office goals within the US Congress. In other words, legislators are seen as seeking policy outputs and office positions as a means for securing re-election. It also applies that some will seek to change policy that requires a longer time by seeking to remain in parliament and the possible combinations of these goals are multiple. Again these goals need to be considered in perspective. The way the polity is structured will shape these goals. In terms of office goals for example, the situation in a country where the career path is not existent, that is where seniority in the house is not a factor to gaining better posts, office seeking will not be a drive for parliamentarians to seek election or reelection.

2.4 Summary

From the discussions in this chapter it is evident that high turnover of representatives in the national assembly has serious repercussions on representation. What is also prominent is the fact that representation is not such a straight forward term. People will understand it differently depending on which side they belong. Representatives and the represented may view the meaning of representation differently and in such a case expectations from constituents (responsiveness) will be different from what the representative offers (responsiveness + public interest + rents). High turnover will therefore result from the growing gap between the constituents' expectations and the behaviour of the incumbent representative.

The debate on term limits for the legislative Assemblies in the USA centers on whether high turnover rates for incumbent MPs are good for representative democracy or not. The term limit advocacy maintains that low turnover makes constituency attention

weaker. The younger democracies portray the opposite picture with high incumbency turnovers in their legislative assemblies. The ideals of representation have gained little support from theories that are based on the reality on the ground especially for younger democracies. Rational actor, ambition as well as leadership theories all state variables suggest that high incumbency turnover entails insecurity on the part of incumbents. This in turn has various effects. It will shape the way people view representation. Representatives will likely seek to maximize rents. Constituencies will therefore likely experience shirking, candidate emergence, and other behaviours that amount to rent maximizations.

Poor political party organization does not make intraparty democracy feasible either resulting in patronage politics. With candidate emergence, constituents view the political parties differently. There is loss of trust. Career goals of representatives will be constrained by the fear of removal at the next election. They may as well serve interests of those who are likely to give them jobs after their office.

High incumbency turn over may have different effects depending on challenges in the polity. Third world polities have more challenges in their young democracy and are bound to have adverse effects from such high turnover. This thesis therefore tries to explore if the high incumbency turnover has similar effects on the targeted constituencies in the Malawi polity.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the design and methodology used to generate data that informed this thesis. Sampling method used and data collection methods have been clarified and the reasons for the choice of the specific methodologies explained. The chapter further explains how literature was used and gives the ethical issues that were considered in conducting the interviews and focus group discussions. Limitations of the study have been included so that future studies on the topic become aware of the challenges to be overcome to make a difference.

3.2 Design

This study took the form of a comparative design as four cases: two in the south and two in the centre; in each case one constituency being retaining and the other non retaining were compared using same research instruments.⁸⁸ Some prefer to call such designs, multiple case studies as Bryman observes.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Hantrais 1996

⁸⁹ 2001: 51

3.3 Sampling

The baseline data on incumbency turnover in Malawi clearly showed patterns. One significant pattern was that, much as the Northern and Southern parts of Malawi had similarly high turnover figures, that of the central parts looked lower. Sampling of the cases therefore had to consider this factor. Therefore even when selecting samples in these parts they (RCs and NRCs) could only be compared better if they had much similar cultural settings. The study therefore used purposeful sampling⁹⁰ with these factors playing the key role in the selection.

3.4 Data Collection

The study used mostly qualitative method of data collection. A little quantitative data was also collected through desk research. Both primary and secondary data was collected through three methods: Secondary data was collected through desk research; interviews with key informants and focus group discussions formed the core of the primary data collection methods.

Secondary Data

Desk Research

In the secondary data, electoral results for the past three elections, Afro-barometer studies as well as CCJP studies provide evidence of high incumbency turnover and are mostly in quantitative form. Studying electoral data for the past three elections helped to establish patterns in extreme cases (retaining and non retaining constituencies). A study of parliamentary hansards was done to establish trends in parliamentary deliberations and the actual participation by the targeted members of parliament. The focus of individual parliamentarians in their deliberations had the potential to point out the extent of how

⁹⁰ Trochim2006,

prone they might be to rent maximization as well as effectiveness of new members of parliament versus the experienced members. Members' dedication in participation in parliamentary deliberations may point out whether they are ready to dedicate their time to present views of constituents to the public policy making process. Some electoral data and data on constituency activities of parliamentarians had to be obtained from documents at the district and city assemblies. Such data was also useful in pointing out whether the focus of the MP's activities were on the constituency or elsewhere.

Primary data

This study centered on gaining insight into the effects of high incumbency turnover of parliamentarians. Qualitative methods of data collection were found to be useful as issues being explored are sensitive to some people especially politicians while with other methods, the concerned parties might have wished to hide the truth. To obtain the facts therefore required deeper interviews as well as focus group discussions.

Interviews

Incumbent members of parliament were the primary targets for interviews. It is however difficult to obtain objective data from them especially in the election year⁹¹ as MPs would try to sell their best sides only. To check this, former members of parliament were also interviewed. Other members in the constituency were interviewed as well including two members of the constituency committees for two dominant parties (one from each) in the constituencies. And since most constituency committees are dominated by men even though women are very active in party politics, two party women leaders one from each of the two leading parties were also interviewed. Usually leading parties in

⁹¹ as was the case with this study with elections coming in the first half of the following year- 2009

specific areas tend to be adversaries and are likely to present different views. Getting views from the two leading party women ensured that the data should be reliable and not biased.

With the use of mapping, each constituency was segmented into three areas: close to the home of the MP, further away and furthest away from the MP's home. The assumption here is that people who live closer to the MPs home would comprise their relations who most likely get benefits directly from the MPs. Their views alone might be partial. Hence this process was carried out in order to gain views from people across the constituency. It was these segments that were used in interviewing group village heads and conducting focus group discussions.

Other than the elected members in the community, village heads also command respect from the people they lead and therefore hold views that reflect the wider thinking of their villages as they are close to the people⁹². One group village head at each of the constituency's three segments was therefore interviewed. These interviews were meant to get information from these leaders on how the MPs in their areas interact with constituents and the general satisfaction of the constituents with the elected members of the legislature. Such interviews would also provide hints on the levels of rent maximization by the MPs. Further interviews were conducted at offices of the district commissioners (Lilongwe and Thyolo) and city assembly (Lilongwe) to find out how the MPs work with the local assembly. Such interviews were specifically aimed at gauging how the MPs use the decentralization structures in their quest to reach the grassroots. This was done with the background knowledge that constituencies in Malawi are so big

⁹² Chiweza in Patel and Svasand 2007:159

that such structures become useful if someone has to reach out to all corners of the constituency and also in spreading resources impartially.

Focus Group Discussions

This study took a further step in trying to collect balanced data through focus group discussions. This was important because focus group discussions allow more views to be heard from diverse people and the debates that characterize the discussions stimulate more deeper thinking from the participants and this is likely to generate more and substantive data.

Three Focus Group Discussions were conducted in each of the four constituencies. The selection of the locations followed areas of group village heads listed for interview as above. The focus discussion groups therefore comprised mainly Village Development committees (VDCs) and Area Development Committees (ADCs) – the two groups being duly elected groups in the areas as stipulated in the Malawi decentralization policy. In all these areas, special discussions were arranged for women and the youth to get their views also. In the focus discussions, other than getting the participants' satisfaction levels with their MP, the study was also interested in the constituents' understanding of the concept – representation, as well as their expectations from their MP. This would guide the analysis of the findings other than merely assuming that their understanding is the same as what scholars have written. Issues discussed in the interviews and discussions are highlighted in Appendix II.

3.5 Use of Literature

After the inception of the initial ideas for this thesis, literature review assisted in guiding specific areas of research. By examining works of different scholars on the

subjects of representation, legislative turn over and term limit debates, possible causes and effects of high incumbency turnover were outlined. Theories that these scholars have developed following studies in different polities provided ground for the thesis to come up with assumptions that further guided the research.

3.6 Analysis

Data collected was analyzed using content analysis.

The data collected was arranged and analyzed following the objectives of the study. Hence the three sections of satisfaction, rent maximization and other effects of high incumbency turnover were adopted as the main sections in the analysis. Data gathered through interviews and focus group discussions in each of the four constituencies was therefore analyzed within these three thematic areas. Experiences from each constituency were compared and trends established to compare with the assumptions that the study makes. Conclusions were therefore drawn in agreement or disputing the claims that the thesis makes.

The unit of analysis for the study is the constituency.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study took into account ethical considerations as outlined by Diener and Crandall.⁹³ It ensured that interviews were carried out with prior permission of the authorities in institutions (where institutions were involved) and consent of the interviewees. No privacy was invaded for the interviewees and they were done without deception as interviewees were briefed clearly on the purpose of the study before the

⁹³ 1978

interviews. Presentation of the findings tried to avoid unnecessary exposure of interviewees' identities to avoid any harm to their images.

3.8 Limitations of The Study

Just as Patton⁹⁴ notes: 'there are no perfect research designs', this study was no without limitations. People usually do not turn up on time in the villages, with limited resources to arrange meetings the researcher had to follow a definite program to visit different places arranged to ensure as much efficiency as possible. The result was that sometimes the researcher would end up interviewing less numbers of people due to the demands of the next activity on the programme. The other problem concerns Malawians' orientation in participation in political debates. Due to the long period of dictatorship, some people in villages still tend to be reserved in their participation in political conversations or debates. This posed a challenge in extracting the real sense of what people were expressing as one would not be sure whether they said things out of fear or not. This was aggravated by the fact that the interviews took place during the election year when such interviews become a sensitive issue as many people become suspicious of interviewers' motives.

Despite these problems there were a good number of places where levels of understanding were reasonable which ensured the validity and reliability of the study.

3.9 Summary

In order to ensure validity and reliability, this thesis took the issue of design and methodology seriously and has tried to explain through this chapter, step by step, the methodology used and reasons for selecting specific methodology. Findings in the next

⁹⁴ 1990: 162

chapter can therefore be explained better when the design and methodology is understood.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 Study Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This study was set to investigate effects of high incumbency turnover in the targeted constituencies of Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma, Lilongwe City South East, Thyolo East and Thyolo Central. One major area the study has singled out is rent maximization. Other effects are also explored such as the effects to the political parties as gate keepers in the policy formulation process and representative democracy as a whole. The study however starts by establishing whether satisfaction levels with members of parliament are responsible for turnover rates.

4.2 Constituents' views on Representation: Expectations versus Satisfaction

Theories in the above chapter would have us believe that high turnover will result from constituents being dissatisfied with MPs' performance and vice versa. Afrobarometer studies⁹⁵ have actually indicated that, Malawi reported highest expectations from MPs and lowest satisfaction with their performance. This study sought to confirm this contention and sought views from different subjects from high and low turnover constituencies in the south and central regions. Values people had in participating in representative democracy and their expectations on MPs assisted this study in gauging what representation meant to them so that the rest of effects would be compared to

⁹⁵ Afrobarometer, 1995

relevant terminology as defined by subjects. Interviews and focus group discussions yielded the results that follow.

4.2.1 Retaining Constituencies (RCs)

a. Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma constituency

The constituency located in the central region that had maintained support for Malawi Congress Party (MCP). The constituency had maintained its MP since 1972. Constituents expected their representative to do the following: to belong to Malawi Congress Party (MCP), listen to people on development issues and do things after consulting them and consult them before and after parliament not only during campaign period, MP had to ask for development projects in parliament and represent their wishes in parliament. The MP has also to live in the constituency. The following is what one respondent said in reply to the interviewer's question:

“Kuno Nkwa kongeresi basi olo utayimira mwala tiusankha bola pakhale tambala wakuda” (this is the Malawi Congress party area. Even if a stone has to represent us we shall vote for it as long as there is a sign of a black cock- symbol for MCP).

This study found out that the MP for the area was a prominent member of Malawi Congress Party. He however did not live in his constituency. The MP claimed to have a party person as a link to constituents and to harbour plans to have a constituency office within the constituency. In terms of consultations before and after parliamentary meetings, chiefs and local party officials backed him. They claimed that the MP did visit and consult them on projects and they showed the researcher some development projects he had initiated through the constituency development fund such as bridges, teachers houses and school blocks. Some local people in the discussion groups especially

teachers' and elderly people belonging to village development committees agreed on the development work but were not very satisfied with the consultation process where only party officials and chiefs were involved in what the MP called joint meetings. The youth felt the MP and the party did not care about them and that they were not incorporated into the party structures. There was a further different view at the trading centre⁹⁶ where constituents claimed that the MP does not visit at all. Apparently the trading center harboured people from different areas and not only those from the Nkhoma rural areas. The arrangements with the chiefs and party leaders at 'joint meetings' might not have been possible in places like this trading center.

It seemed clear from these revelations that the MP, following the constituency theory had segmented the constituency and is targeting the people who matter and with influence. He has carefully selected chiefs and party leaders because he saw them as 'constituencies' with influence. This was further evidenced by the responses that came from across the constituency to the question why they had maintained him all along. The response even at the trading center, was that anybody standing for MCP in the area would win. The reason for being biased towards the MCP was that the other parties belonged to other regions while MCP was their own. They cited Alliance for Democracy as belonging to the North and United Democratic Front, to the South. For them representation was primarily descriptive⁹⁷ and the rest became secondary and the party is a strong factor for reelection.

⁹⁶ Around Nkhoma Hospital

⁹⁷ Hanna Pitkin in Stanford encyclopedia 2006

While the party is a strong instrument for interest aggregation and can assist one to get reelected, Stepanova⁹⁸ who introduces this idea has put a condition of ‘internal democracy within the party’ for this to work. In the villages of the constituency, focus discussion groups admitted that they did not really get chances to voice out their preferred candidates at primary elections, and that the party’s hierarchy would decide things for them⁹⁹, they felt obliged to support the candidates partly by instructions from their chiefs. Few people attributed the loyalty of voters to high ignorance levels in the areas under study while other minorities mentioned the lack of activeness of other parties than the MCP and hence offering weak competition to the incumbent. Neglecting the population at the trading centre as well as the greater population in the constituency could have repercussions where the trusted ‘joint meeting’ members (non elected chiefs and long serving party leaders) would be out of touch with the people. Frequent elections within parties and inclusion of the youth and women in party structures is what makes maintenance of the party’s influence easier otherwise the arrangement could lead to the MP losing track of peoples’ interests and turnover can result.

b. Thyolo Central

Thyolo being in the Southern region of Malawi had for a long time been a strong hold of the United Democratic Front till President Bingu wa Mutharika left the party to form his Democratic Progressive Party in 2005.

While many of the values of people in Thyolo central were not different from those of Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma in their views on representation, like the need for development

⁹⁸ 2007:2

⁹⁹ former MP for Lilongwe City South East agrees entirely

projects and being consulted before and after parliament, they differed in the way they valued the party as criterion for choosing a representative. Constituents in Thyolo Central did not stress this party factor and were much divided in party membership especially between the two parties of Democratic Progressive party (DPP) and United Democratic Front (UDF). In fact all the focus group discussions did not mention the party but always mentioned the MP as an individual. This shows that the political party idea was not strong and that in choosing a representative in the area an individual would be considered more on their own merits than the merits of the party they belonged to. For scholars in the field of political parties, this would mean that those political parties are not institutionalized yet and there is more to be done and more time needed for the parties to gain the confidence of the people. This thesis has highlighted the importance of parties in aggregating interests and encouraging the participation of constituents in the policy making. The absence of political parties is therefore a danger to the retention of the incumbent.

Despite the weakened party status, the MP for the area had been retained since 1994. Respondents in the area also expressed strong preference for communal goods to personal gifts. The MP for the area was fond of giving the latter - at the time of the interview with him there were over one hundred constituents seeking handouts at his office. This thesis was therefore interested in the reasons for his retention especially considering the fact that these views were coming mostly from two of the three places where interviews and discussions were held. People mentioned his charitable works in paying for school fees for school going needy pupils, and buying coffins for bereaved needy constituents. The handouts, the study learned, intensified whenever elections were close and people got

taken up with the cash offers. There were also many who stated that he had brought boreholes to the area during the Bakili Muluzi rule. The MP himself acknowledged that he was able to give people boreholes under Malawi Social Action Fund programme (MASAF) since he had been closer to the president and being a senior member of the ruling party (UDF treasurer general). The existence of politics of patrimony was also acknowledged by former MPs for Thyolo East and Lilongwe City South East. This enabled the incumbents close to the former president to have adequate resources with which to influence election results. Such resources as reflected by Przerworski supported by Henson above add on to one's incumbency advantage.

But are the hand outs in the best interest of the people? Or did his ability to get elected also translate into good representation in parliament. The handouts may be effective in the short term, but people's real needs are often determined in the longer term. And according to what respondents indicate, the incumbent's retention was not going to be automatic since the ruling regime had changed and the extent of patronage in the new system was not expected to be as high as before.

4.2.2. Non retaining constituencies (NRCs)

Thyolo East

The values of people in non retaining constituencies may have been influenced by their experiences with the past MPs. However the interviews revealed that basic values were similar to those in the other two constituencies above except the party factor. In addition to these values, people in Thyolo East, just like in Central, wanted an MP who could identify with them (descriptive representation). At this point the people in two focus discussion groups actually voiced their tiredness for coloured people as their MPs.

This followed the election of the father of the incumbent in 1994, who had not delivered. Perhaps new to this study was the value that the MP had to be present and speak in parliament. The remark followed their complaint that the incumbent rarely spoke in parliament. Table 4.2 below tracks how targeted MPs deliberated in parliament during the period under study.

On the performance of the incumbent, people showed they had broken links with him. The MP himself made indications that he had broken links with the people he represented and blamed it on the party officials who came to his house begging for money instead of assisting him in aggregating interests in the communities. The incumbent never conducted meetings to listen to constituents let alone chiefs. Similarly former MPs had not spoken much in parliament and conducted no meetings to interact with constituents. They had not initiated development projects and didn't assist self help projects. Some MPs, like the incumbent, stayed in the constituency, while others once elected left the constituency for the cities citing 'begging' by constituents as a reason for leaving. On how they won elections, the answer again like in Thyolo Central was money hand outs during campaigns.

Thyolo East presents a typical example of what Przeworski calls rent maximization. According to him where the MP sees his chances of reelection slim s/he will maximize rents. The constant failure for MPs in the area to get reelected made him give up any hope for reelection hence his behavior of not holding meetings and low participation in parliamentary deliberations. One may argue that the latter could be a result of low knowledge of issues but this is an area that needs more investigation. However the choice of representatives who cannot speak in parliament may be the result of high incumbency

turnover whereby candidates just emerge¹⁰⁰ as opposed to proper recruitment (by the party).

It is not surprising therefore that during primary elections the incumbent decided not to stand to pave way for a stronger candidate. This is an extreme case known as voluntary turnover. By his behavior during his term, one can conclude that he had already made up his mind on voluntarily retiring. What then could push him to work in the interest of his constituents who caused the job security threat to him by their behavior of not reelecting incumbents?

Lilongwe City South East. (LCSE)

By the time interviews were completed in this constituency, the MP had just passed away. This surely meant more turn over in the term, one that deprived the study the test on retention after the constituency did not retain any incumbent MP in the past three elections. The deceased MP had been appointed on an MCP ticket apparently without the trouble of campaigning.

Interviews and FGDs in the constituency revealed that the electorate felt that MPs had been opportunistic. MPs did not deliver development projects and never even consulted when going to parliament to hear peoples' points of view on pertinent issues like section 65 controversy in 2008 and the impeachment in 2006 and 2007. MPs also let them down by defecting to ruling parties without the constituents' blessing as was the case with the MP who came before the incumbent (the deceased). On the reason for electing the incumbent and former MPs, Lilongwe City South East presented an interesting and sometimes confusing scenario. Being in the semi urban area there were mixed tribes in

¹⁰⁰ Moncrief 1999:181

this constituency, however, the Chewa, dominant by far have been associated with the Malawi Congress Party according to a study by Ferree and Horowitz¹⁰¹. The former MP for the constituency agreed on the existence of preference for descriptive representation and cited his winning the constituency mandate on the same reason. When he defected to the ruling UDF party, he came face to face with reality as he lost to a candidate, the incumbent¹⁰², who neither conducted a party campaign meeting nor gave people any handouts but won by a majority vote. The former MP had a constituency office in Chilinde, was providing transport for the sick and during funerals, all from constituency allowance but the party factor and his subsequent defection from MCP worked against his reelection effort. As for the winning of the UDF in the first term in 1994, he attributed to the excitement about change whereby the whole Lilongwe city voted for the new and vibrant UDF party candidates. Constituents support was based on being with them during funerals – material support they would value at occasions like these was in things like coffins, food stuffs and transport; assisting in taking the sick to hospital, regular party meetings, visiting their areas, some wanted to see you speaking or ask questions in parliament on their problems; and be known at the local party. This is purely responsiveness.

Defection from the party on whose ticket one was elected to be an MP is viewed as betrayal and the reason was that constituents viewed it as seeking ministerial posts or a chance for their private businesses to win government tenders, hence rent seeking.

¹⁰¹ 2007: 5

¹⁰² now deceased

4.2.3 Comparison of the Constituencies.

Values of constituents in all the four constituencies seemed similar with the major difference being the party factor that was very present in the central region. In addition to representation issues they preferred an MP who could develop their areas. The responses point to the fact that the primary duty of an MP was perceived as initiating development projects in the constituency. Development is however given as a primary task for councilors¹⁰³ while MPs concentrate on legislation. It also connotes, as respondents claimed, that people had no knowledge about the duties of an MP. Yet issues on development projects in parliament are always referred to local assemblies entailing that these are irrelevant questions for the house. Those who have to serve people's expectations have to do so from their pockets since even the district assemblies to whom they are referred claim not to possess adequate resources for the demanded development. The question of representing expressive preferences versus what constituents 'ought to' want therefore is very evident in this case because as Birch¹⁰⁴ advises, civic education is one of the functions of a representative. Without this function turn over will continue to worsen.

MPs interviewed agreed but they expressed fear that if they did as prescribed they would lose popularity. This was so especially in Thyolo because campaigns were done with handouts and telling people their stated roles would appear as a scapegoat for not assisting in their immediate needs. Przeworski's¹⁰⁵ contention that a representative

¹⁰³ Guidebook on Decentralization and Local Government in Malawi: 26

¹⁰⁴ 1993

¹⁰⁵ 1999:15

“convinced that long term future necessitates short term sacrifices is representative if (s)he does act courageously” may in this case be applicable, however the ‘short term sacrifices’ entail suicide for one’s legislative career. But before agreeing further with the scholar one must also consider that there is evidence that interaction between MPs and their constituents is lacking. In the retaining constituencies, constituents though not satisfied to higher levels indicated that they noticed periodic presence of the MP while in NRCs, they did not. To assume, that people will not like it when you tell them the truth about your roles is therefore fallacious.

In general, constituents’ expectations have been high especially on development delivery in their areas connoting the bias towards responsiveness. Promises from MPs have also been high as competition gets hot especially in targeted constituencies in the southern region. As expected, these MPs not being direct agents of development projects, delivery has been very low. Unfortunately Malawi had, since 2005, no local assembly councilors, who would have borne some of the blame for lack of development in the areas. This created a gap that aggravated the peoples’ frustration. Particular interests need to be politically represented in special ways¹⁰⁶ and the presence of councilors, as constituents, observed might have made it possible for developmental interests to be represented appropriately at the district assemblies.

The main difference between the southern and central regions was the influence of the party. In the south the parties were relatively new and unstable at the grassroots and hence did not carry as much influence as in the central region constituencies. This subject is discussed further in the sections that follow.

¹⁰⁶ Brennan and Lomasky, 1993:214

The targeted constituencies reveal a lot in terms of expectation from constituents and performance of MPs. But of utmost interest to this thesis is the revelation about effects the atmosphere of high incumbency turnover has had on constituency representation. These have been summarized in the following sections as rent maximization, and other effects where issue of political parties features high.

4.3 Rent Maximization

One of the main issues this thesis was testing is the assumption that rent maximization is higher in high turnover constituencies. Przeworski's definition of rent maximization, that is, representatives diverting their attention to things that may differ from their voters' interests or even doing something whose pursuit is injurious to citizens, is very evident in this study as illustrated in the paragraphs below¹⁰⁷. Rent maximization, if we go by Buchanan's public choice theory, should be present in all constituencies since representatives just like their subjects have their own self interest. In Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma for instance, the MP cherished his office of speaker to which he was elected in 2006, and admitted to have had ambition to gaining the post. He had also been the head of various committees in the previous terms. This may not have been his voters' goal. However, the extent of diversion and the amount of damage the diversion would inflict on the constituents differentiates the high turnover and low turnover constituencies. This section therefore looks at the more serious diversions that make constituents complain such as shirking, defections, financial gains, instrumentalism, low roll-call participation

¹⁰⁷ Przeworski, 1999: 40

4.3.1 Financial Gains

Constituents in NRCs thought MPs compete for financial gains. They claimed that representatives run for office to have gainful employment. This was verified as true by former MPs for the two non retaining constituencies in Thyolo and Lilongwe who said if they went back to parliament they would be ‘clever financially’ and that during the first year they would ensure that they invest wisely from the proceeds from parliament. Parliament gives MPs their salaries and allowances but also resources for use in visits to the constituency such as allowances for fuel and constituency development fund (CDF) whose use is almost completely at the discretion of the MP. MPs’ salaries on the other hand, have increased over the years¹⁰⁸ and the insecurity of the office brought about by fear of electoral loss exposes these resources to the danger of misuse. Table 4.1 below compares between salaries of a principal secretary in the civil service with that of an MP obtained from Malawi National Assembly and Department of Human resources Management and Development.

As can be observed from the table, the salaries for the most senior civil servant have were almost half of that of an MP between 1994 and 2004 when one considers the total package. The 2004 salary was almost \$2,200 translating into \$73 per day for the representative when more than 50% of the represented survived on less than \$1 per day¹⁰⁹. MPs approved for themselves an extra 500 litres of fuel per month in 2008 for their trips to the constituencies. When one added the new allowance to the pay the new gross became over MK400,000 which was almost \$3000 and hence \$100 per day.

¹⁰⁸ MPs propose and approve their salaries for executive to implement.

¹⁰⁹ The Integrated Household Survey 2004/05 puts it at 52.4%

Table 4.1. MP versus PS salaries¹¹⁰

Year	MP's Salary (Malawi Kwacha per annum)	Principal Secretary's Salary
1994	120,000 plus allowances	42,000 plus allowances
1999	144,000 plus allowances	84,000 plus allowances
2004	3,000,000 all inclusive	1,751,844 all inclusive

Parliament decisions including those on salaries were made collectively and procedurally and it was difficult to prove cases of rent maximization. However, what was clear was that the higher-than-average perks of parliament would act as one of the biggest factors that attracted people to vie for those offices. The evidence from two former MPs (Thyolo East and Lilongwe City South East) who expressed the desire to stand again due to improved conditions and openly expressed the target of looking at personal investments first if they had another chance as MPs clearly represented a wider thinking in the high incumbency turn over constituencies.

Respondents in all constituencies, except the incumbent MPs themselves, decried lack of transparency in the use of the resources and mostly concluded that they were being used for personal things. In Lilongwe City South East, Thyolo East and Central constituencies, constituents mostly had no idea of the resources that come and neither did they know where they went. Yet on the ground in all these constituencies there was something being implemented from the CDF when one consulted the district assembly offices. In Lilongwe Mpeni Nkhoma however projects being implemented were conspicuous to most respondents in the rural area and the running of the CDF was left in

¹¹⁰ Malawi parliament circulars and civil servants' salaries circulars

the hands of a committee although they were only involved at the implementation level and may not be in a position to know how much money was involved.

In the constituencies resources may indeed have been abused or not, which this study did not make an attempt to establish due to technicalities that would be involved, but the final question lies in what did constituents look for in the administration of these resources? The answer is transparency and ownership. They wanted their MP to inform them of the resources available and hear from them what their priorities were. This is clearly a case of responsiveness. The contention by the term limit advocates that high turnover encourages responsiveness therefore did not work in the targeted constituencies and this was worse in the high turnover constituencies. As MPs continue to divert from constituents' interests, Przerworski will consider the representative as a rent seeker.

Types of projects the MPs implemented in the four constituencies were different in that in NRCs the projects were small, temporary and numerous with a view to leave an impression in many areas that they were doing something while in RCs they were mostly permanent as their longer stay afforded them to be focused. A visit to district assemblies revealed that NRCs had implemented many projects involving maintenance of small bridges while RCs implemented such projects like construction and maintenance of teachers' houses and school blocks and bore holes. Such behavior also amounts to rent maximization because it meant to just give an impression that something was happening when it was just a cover up.

On the other hand many (including party supporters) who felt cheated by the MPs on the pre-election promises would seek to make gains from the generous candidates during the campaigns for the next elections as they claim this to be the only payback time. They

would give the incumbent false impression of the support s/he had and when given resources they distributed among themselves instead of giving the appropriate targets. The incumbent therefore discovered the reality on the ground after results announcement.

4.3.2 Shirking

Another way of maximizing rents is through shirking. Shirking happens when a member of parliament uses the time s/he is supposed to be serving the constituents on personal things thereby neglecting his/her duties. The office of an MP goes with its own expectations. From the duties of an MP according to the constitution of Malawi as alluded to earlier in the script, duties that come up clearly are those of legislation, representation and oversight. Every MP is therefore expected to be present in parliament when the house is seating to perform these duties. To perform them well they must also spend some time with constituents to learn or get updated on their interests. Failure to do these amounts to shirking.

While the MP for Nkhoma was said to be busy with his office, he had visited the constituency sometimes just like the Thyolo Central MP. In Lilongwe City South East and Thyolo East shirking was recorded higher. MPs in retaining constituencies (RCs) tended to make their presence felt through constituency offices or agents or periodic visits and these were absent in NRCs. Shirking in NRCs was observed at the beginning of the term unlike the shirking discussed by term limit advocates that should happen at the end as the representative knows s/he will not seek another term.¹¹¹ The reason in this case was given by both incumbent and former MPs for Thyolo East where the practice was common. They contended that this was an attempt to run away from debts accumulated

¹¹¹ Moncrief, 1999.

during elections. They also accused party officials and constituents of bothering them with begging. This may partly be a result of nonexistence of regulations on funding for campaigns for candidates. New comers cannot sustain the hand out practice and need space to recover financially.

Shirking denies constituents representation as their interests are not heard as expected in delegated representation.

4.3.3 Defections

Defections without consultations (meetings) with constituents, usually to the ruling party, have been higher in non retaining constituencies (NRCs). In both NRCs there was a record of defection while Thyolo central experienced a defection but both correspondents (constituents and the incumbent) claimed that the MP took some time to explain to the constituents before making the move. In Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma, no defection has been experienced since the 1970s. Former as well as incumbent MPs who had defected from their parties to the ruling party defended their actions as a response to constituents' demands or decision by the party to work with the ruling government¹¹². Constituents however accused them of seeking ministerial posts in government as well as financial gains through award of contracts to their businesses.

“amangofuna mipando yonona ndi mabbizinesi mbomamo” (they just want big posts and business opportunities in government).

They based their argument on the fact that the movement of these defectors has always been to the ruling party. Claims that an MP had defected following requests from constituents could not easily be substantiated as there was no formal methodology they

¹¹² (the case of Chikadza- Lilongwe City South East

could use other than fresh elections to gain fresh mandate. Recorded defections were often to a party of different ideologies and policy stands from the former party. This therefore amounts to abuse of the mandate given by voters at elections and according to the constituency theory the defectors had chosen to serve a new constituency other than one that put them in office. The politics of patrimony referred to by the MP for Thyolo Central may in part be what encourages defection. In this case the MPs and their constituencies gained for being close to the president. Such is the case of reelection seekers and this rent maximization benefits both the MP and constituents. In the NRCs however both MPs sought personal gains mostly ministerial posts which they gained and only benefited themselves. This rent maximization is what Przerworski articulated as unhealthy to representative democracy.

4.3.4 Instrumentalism

Instrumentalism becomes an issue where MPs especially new ones support policies of their party presidents without consulting their constituents. Respondents indicated that this is the case in most constituencies. They indicated that their MPs did not consult them even in big issues such as approval and refusal of budgets and the famous anti defection constitutional provision –section 65. Nkhoma constituency, however, indicated that consultations on such issues took place at a higher level. The joint meetings of local party leaders and traditional leaders were the forums that the MP used to hear the views of the constituents. Perhaps younger MPs become instrumental thinking that the party presidents control their futures as constituency theory states. The cost they pay however is high as they have to come back to voters to seek fresh mandate at the end of term.

As this thesis compared findings between NRCs and RCs, MPs from the latter tended to be more independent in their deliberations in parliament assisted by the little consultations they made. However in the former where defections were more, the MPs served their new masters with loyalty to the extent of forgetting their ‘original’ constituency.

4.3.5 Roll call participation

Roll call participation in parliament by the MPs under study showed some interesting trends in that the Southern Region MPs under study showed that they did not value deliberations on major policies. Both of them preferred to be present during the sessions and times they asked about projects from their constituencies. They said they would rather be in their constituency than waste that time. This reply shows dedication to the reelection goals rather than the other goals of policy and office. However for Thyolo Central, the reelection drive became apparent as the MP spent most of the time giving handouts at his office. But for Thyolo East MP who was absent to constituents the only possible reason for absenting himself in these sessions could only be speculated as attendance to personal business – which is rent maximization at its best as constituents cannot have a chance to get their views through into the policy making process.

Table 4.2 traces how active and on what type of issues the representatives were between 2004 and 2007 from a selection of parliamentary Hansards.

Table 4.2. A Record of Participation Levels in Parliament by Targeted MPs

Constituency	No. of times spoken	Issue type	Remarks
Thyolo Central (RC)	6	4 times on serious motions- namely budget, section 65, questioning contract. 2 times on jokes	Experience seems to drive him to contribute. Level of unserious discussions seems substantial.
Lilongwe Mpeni Nkhoma (RC)	5	All times on serious business. On discipline of the house, Nangwale's confirmation, situation in district assemblies	He became speaker in 2006 and all records are for 2004 and 2005. Spoke only on serious issues and standing orders
Lilongwe City South East (NRC)	5	4 times on finance and budget bills, once on section 65.	Though young in parliament but his background as PS for finance made him contribute more on financial issues.
Thyolo East (NRC)	1	Once on Thyolo - Bangula Road	He spoke only once

When the above table (4.2) is considered it is clear that experience drove the MPs to contribute better in the national assembly. The seriousness of the issues one contributes on will be aided by levels of education or pre-incumbency experience as Prewitt and Nowlin have earlier stated. It is clear from the MP from Thyolo East that he lacked both hence his inactivity.

Roll call participation for central region (MCP) MPs was very sound though one is from NRC while the other from RC. Respondents thought this was a result of the interest the MP had on national issues. Staff at the national assembly thought it was about how the MPs understood their duties and perhaps what they viewed as expectations from their constituents. The central region MPs cited national duty as their reason for being present in the policy deliberations. They also contended that whatever they deliberated on had a direct impact on their constituencies such as method to use in the fertilizer subsidy

administration. A closer look at the participation of the central region new comer will show that his background as a secretary to the treasury enabled him to participate in parliament and hence his participation was mostly in financial issues.

Backbenchers (newcomers) everywhere are not major actors in policy processes, however they are required to participate in the house, committee and caucus activities¹¹³. As representatives their failure to participate deprives the constituents of their right to be heard in the policy formulation processes. New comers in this case become disadvantaged as they have to undergo orientation processes and take time to gain confidence in the house. In the NRCs by the time they get to this stage they are closer to the next elections.

As the study shows in the next section the role of the party as an instrument for interest aggregation should be a bigger factor in determining whether an MP will get interested in such national issues or not.

4.3.6 Voter Apathy.

When constituents view office seekers as rent seekers as shown above one of the results will be apathy at elections. The following table 4.3 is a compilation of voter participation in the past three elections. While 1999 registered more voters than 1994, the increase was lower in 2004 and lowest in 2005. 2009 has registered 5.9 million. This is against the electoral body's hopes of registering at least seven million voters.

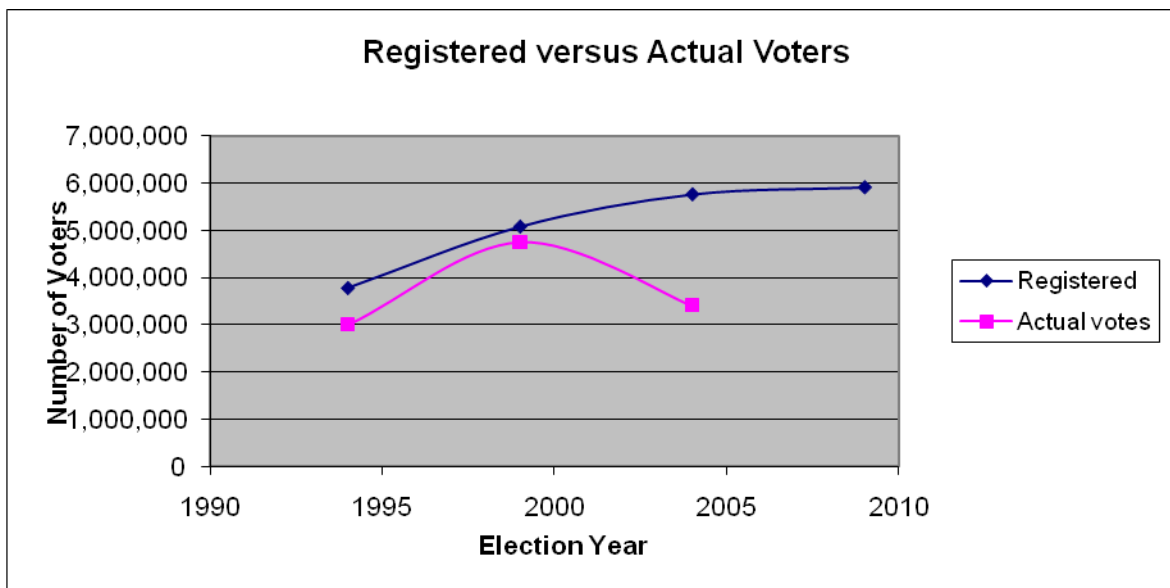
¹¹³ Clarke and Price 1980

Table 4.3. Voter Turnout for Three Elections

Year	Registered	Actual votes	percentage	Total Seats	Independents
1994	3,775,256	3,004,835	80.54	177	0
1999	5,071,822	4,755,422	93.75	192	4
2004	5,752,028	3,413,565	59.35	187	40
2009	5,900,000	Not yet	-	193	-

Perhaps of much significance in the subject of apathy are the trends in the actual votes against the registered voters. The trend of registration of voters in the four elections and the actual voting for the three elections is more vivid in the graph (figure 4.1) below.

Fig. 4.1. Trends in voter registration



The fallout is more noticeable by the actual votes cast line. While from 1994 to 1999 there was an increase in the number of registered voters who actually voted, there was a

clear downturn in 2004. The slump was by 34.4 percent. This is not a minor slump. Much as the effect of the ‘presidential vote stay away’ may affect the turnout, on which this study has not found evidence, the parliamentary vote does contribute more and respondents in this study have alluded to that fact.

One of the consequences of high turnover therefore is voter apathy.

4.4 Other Effects/ Consequences:

This study in addition to examining the rent maximization as an effect of high incumbency turn over, examines other possible effects on representation. These may be closely or remotely connected to the rent maximization effect. These effects manifest themselves in many ways but below are some areas that this study has singled out. These include effect of change in composition of parliament, representation type that emerges, the effect incumbency has on reelection seekers, candidate quality and determinants of victory in elections and parties as gate keepers.

4.4.1 New Blood, New Ideas

The ushering in of 75 percent of new membership in the house in 2004 was quite a significant move in that new ideas would emerge in the house. Whether the new ideas would be progressive then becomes the question to deal with. From one respondent at the national assembly, this was a good development as some well qualified members joined the house and their knowledge added innovation to the running of the house. However another office at the same institution did not favour high turnover as it involved a lot of training all over again and as alluded to above, for the new members to participate adequately in the house’s policy processes it takes a bit of time and by the time they are about to get to their best, it is time to start campaigning for the next elections.

Constituents' wishes on this subject varied from RCs to NRCs. NRCs wanted MPs with mature character who would not abandon their interests and they would not hesitate to remove any one not seen to adhere to their values. Some respondents in a resigned mood would only say they liked to change MPs to allow others to enjoy the benefits of the office. They did not want to keep the very same rent maximizers. This was a result of loss of hope of getting an MP who could deliver on their wishes. In the RCs most had the desire to change however in Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma they had the fear of the unknown for the new comer especially if not from their party. They therefore preferred their own MP who still stuck to the party.

The idea of bringing in new ideas to the legislative assembly may be good. However, the study, having looked at the trends in contributions by debutantes, concludes that high turnover is not a sure way of changing ideas in the house for the better. Time is often lost in orientations and what with patrimony that results into instrumentalism. The overall effect on representation is surely not progression but the opposite.

4.4.2 From Authorization to Descriptive Representation

Frustration of voters forced them to lose trust on other candidates and now people wanted candidates they could identify with no matter what their policy stands and capabilities would be. Representation shifted from authorization and accountability to descriptive and microcosmic. Thyolo's two constituencies understudy expressed their wish for a 'real black' MP other than people of colour while Lilongwe's two constituencies want someone from their own party and same tribe and region.

In analyzing these reactions one needs to have a sober mind and realize sometimes people will say things emotionally. But they will do so for a reason. This study therefore

sees this mode of descriptive representation that proves to be on the rise as an adverse effect that follows the atmosphere of voters' dissatisfaction with the representatives. Though some constituencies have constantly maintained their MPs the atmosphere in those constituencies is still fragile and those MPs' jobs are not secure. Thin lines separate them from turnover and these are: the party in Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma and money and patrimony in Thyolo Central as evidence has shown.

4.4.3 Incumbency Effect

While the effect of incumbency in the older democracies is such that it guarantees one reelection¹¹⁴, this study finds that the frustration in high turnover constituencies was almost a guarantee of election loss for incumbents. High expectations of voters aggravated by unrealistic promises by office seekers and the perceived higher salaries and privileges for MPs made incumbents vulnerable and exposed. Failure to fulfill one's promises and voters' expectations invited rebuke from the very voters. Incumbents were therefore treated as liars and it was difficult to again convince the voters to put one back in office. This was evident in Thyolo East and Lilongwe City South East. Incumbency effect tended to be harboured under the umbrella of the strong party in Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma and patrimony in Thyolo Central. It was evident that the latter two would rely on how long the party and patrimony factors could hold. Therefore this thesis concludes that incumbency effect could not be the force behind reelection in these constituencies.

¹¹⁴ Erikson, 1971: 391

4.4.4 Financial Factor for Winning and Candidate Quality

Financial might and other patrimonial factors proved to be important factors in winning elections other than issue positioning. Issue positioning could not be claimed where consultations were absent. Former MPs admitted that there was more financial input in campaigns in NRCs and more business minded people competing. Respondents for Thyolo constituencies under study also agreed with this contention by disclosing that there were some preferred candidates who could not win in the previous elections due to lack of funds for campaign (they gave names). There could not therefore be elite circulation in the leadership circles that term limit advocates as in Martland and Studler¹¹⁵. In such a case only the rich could dare compete.

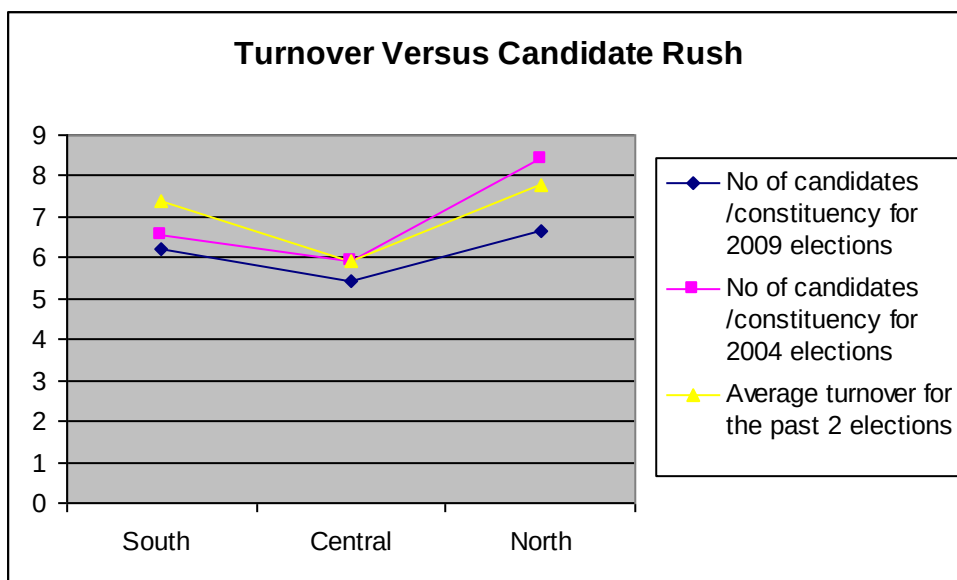
Capable and bonafide, as well as career candidates would often refrain from running because they were only assured of the first term, but rent seekers looking for business opportunity and capital would. This is in agreement with Rhode's¹¹⁶ premise that all legislators (or those seeking to run) are progressively ambitious, but risk-averse. Under such circumstances most people who in good jobs would calculate the risk of running and not getting elected or getting elected only to be dislodged after one term in office against keeping their jobs and ripping the long-term results. One of the rejected candidates whom some party respondents claimed to have requested to consider standing again in Thyolo East, declined the offer for fear of insecurity as he had secured a more permanent job.

¹¹⁵ 2004, 88

¹¹⁶ 1978

The insecurity that the stage in NRCs displays is enough to scare would be candidates leaving the unemployed, retirees, that is rent seekers looking for an opportunity for occupation, to get in the cue. Figure 4.2 below shows the average number per constituency competing at elections. The northern and southern regions with high turnover rates registered more candidates than the central region meaning that more people joined the competition for the seat when they perceived that they had a chance for election as was the case in NRCs. Pooling the regions was necessary as the data showed consistency in the trends of turnover in these regions for the three elections under study.

Fig. 4.2. Candidate Rush



From the figure one still sees stiff competition in all regions even the central at more than five candidates per constituency. The rush is an indication that challengers do not fear incumbency effect at elections. An electoral commission official gave the influx of candidates as the reason for the commission to hike their nomination fees for 2009 elections from MK 5,000 to MK100,000 so that only those serious enough to become

representatives of the people can run. Whether this was a solution to the influx problem, or would just create rich elite representatives, has to be proved in the longer term.

4.4.5 The Gate Keepers: The Political Party

Political parties are also referred to as gatekeepers for their roles in aggregating interests and candidate selection. However, in NRCs parties tend to have a weaker grip on supporters. Voters have supported independent candidates when the party candidates disappoint them due to lack of party cohesion on issue positioning. Thyolo East MPs clearly did not come from local party hierarchies. Thyolo Central used to have stronger cohesion of party followers but with the entry of a new party (DPP) the situation drastically changed. The fact that the incumbent having served for three consecutive terms lost primary elections and that constituents accused him of winning because of handouts to party supporters signified that the constituency was still in transition and could not be described along with the rest of retaining constituencies.

Bowser¹¹⁷, reveals claims by advocates of term limit that high turnover brings dynamism to leadership including that of parties. The Malawian scenario is such that those in influential leadership positions in the party had maintained their seat in parliament for at least the previous three elections. This meant constituencies that suffered high turnovers were those belonging to minors in the party structures and therefore their fall could not change much in the leadership circles. This might however instead bring the fears of the constituency theory further and result in more patronage where the newcomers worship the leaders - their new constituency 'to have and to hold'. With this situation MPs would lose touch of their first lover –the constituency (voters).

¹¹⁷ 2005, 113

The situation would be worse for constituencies with candidate emergence as lack of connectivity with the local party would expose the candidates to more patronage. Party caucuses in such cases become a source of policy stands in favour of party leaders rather than forums to aggregate interests from different constituencies.

While candidate emergency was very apparent in the south, the central region still had candidate recruitment. Candidates, according to incumbent MPs and local party officials and a former MP for Lilongwe City South East, had to be recognized at the local level before to get approval to contest as party candidates. This explains why MP for Lilongwe Mpeni Nkhoma won primary elections despite disapproval from top party officials. His approval came from leadership at the local party. His further progress would depend on whether these local leaders were still in touch with the grassroots (voters). Indicators in this thesis are negative on that. This speaks volumes on the levels of internal democracy in the parties. There is an extent to which the party president can maneuver things to get them his way. There is equally an extent to which the local party leaders can manipulate voters. Democracy is important at both levels.

4.5 Rent Maximization and Constituency Representation

Having discussed several effects above it is evident that rent maximization, in the different forms as illustrated, stands out as the biggest effect. It is therefore fair to summarize the general picture of how the study rates rent maximization in the constituencies studied.

Rent maximization involves more than abuse of resources at the disposal of the MPs. It also involves taking advantage of the situation. Out of the four constituencies, the Lilongwe Mpeni Nkhoma MP may be rated as a ‘non rent maximizer’ however the fact

that his re-election earned him a post of speaker and had held several positions during his service in parliament, he can also be taken as a rent maximizer. This is because his time was divided between constituency duties and parliament management. The rest of the MPs can be said to be maximizers as well but their maximization can be categorized. The following matrix gives a location of maximization levels against their responsibility to the constituency.

Fig. 4.3. Constituency Representation versus Rent Maximization Matrix

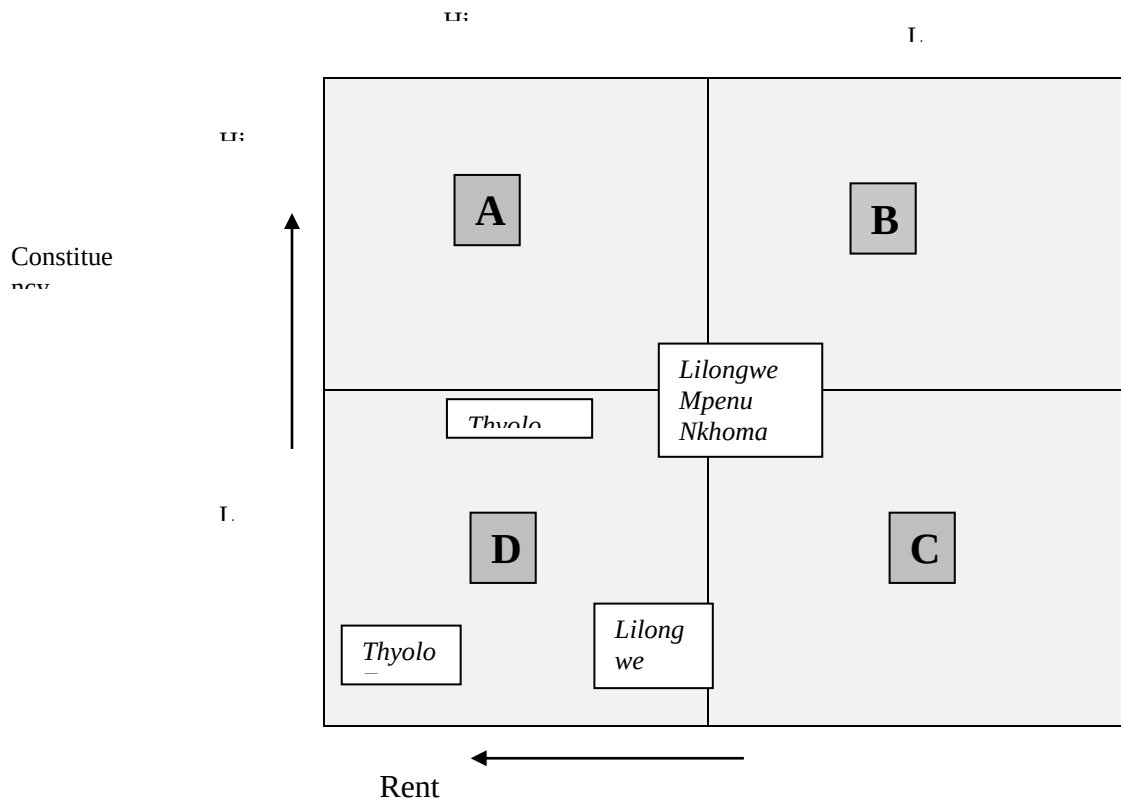
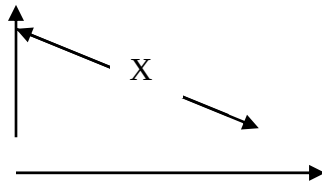


Figure 4.3 presents different scenarios in the combinations of constituency representation versus rent maximization. From the four positions (boxes) A – D, we can locate our constituencies depending on how biased ones behavior seems. A and C are two extremes where both representation and rents are high and low respectively. As the study

shows, it is very difficult to find one constituency fitting in either of these. When you spend time on constituents the rent maximization is reduced and vice versa. Just like the constituency theory you cannot serve the two ‘constituencies at the same time’. Thyolo East is one good example where this is illustrated as rent maximization is at the highest and constituency attention at the lowest. If we have to illustrate this relationship it would appear as in the diagram below.

Fig. 4.4. Rent Maximization and constituency attention relationship.



It should however be noted that point X in figure 4.4 is possible where both rent maximization and constituency representation are being given attention like the case of Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma in the previous diagram.

4.6 Conclusion

Findings in this thesis are quite revealing. Though not clear-cut in all aspects, the question of whether incumbency turnover has effects on representation can, in the context of the four constituencies under study, be answered positively. The question of whether the effects are good or bad for representation, however, may not be promptly answered since different dimensions record different results. Effects range from rent maximization to political party dynamics. It is only through understanding implications of turn over

contextually that meaningful conclusions can be drawn. The next chapter tries to set the pace in translating the findings and drawing conclusions.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 Conclusions and Implications

5.1 Introduction

The thesis set out to investigate the effects of high turnover on representation. It had to however first verify some facts on the causes of high turnover in the constituency under study. Based on the assumptions made, some interesting trends have been established in the four constituencies that were targeted. The following paragraphs summarize the findings and give implications of these findings in accordance with theories examined.

5.2 Satisfaction Levels and Turnover

The thesis established a slight relationship between satisfaction with an incumbent MP and his/her retention. The constituents have intentions to remove the MPs they are not satisfied with. An extreme example can be given of Thyolo East constituency where MPs have not lasted for more than one term. Dissatisfaction is also recorded in another non retention constituency namely Lilongwe City South East (LCSE). In both cases the MP did not spend much energy with constituency duties. It is therefore no wonder that these constituencies have changed their MPs at every election.

In the other two retaining constituencies, however, satisfaction levels were not high either, but not as low as in the NRCs. Under ordinary circumstances, though, these MPs would have met the same fate as in NRCs. The differences were however the party in Lilongwe Mpenu Nkhoma and resources and patrimony in the Thyolo Central

constituency. The test on this would be taking away the party and the resource factors from the candidates and letting them compete on equal footage. The expectation of this study is that both candidates would not make it where challengers exist. The study therefore concludes that satisfaction of the constituents is key to the MPs reelection and the incumbents under study are not closer to satisfaction levels that qualify them for reelection on their own. The party in this case was not as much used as an instrument for interest aggregation but more for voter identity.

The absence of councilors in the local assemblies, whose duty is primarily to attend to developmental activities at the local level has made the work of MPs unbearable as there is no one with whom to share the burden of blame. The result is inevitably increasing turnover. Incumbency in this case becomes not an advantage like in the developed democracies but a disadvantage.

5.3 Rent Maximization and Constituency Representation

Rent maximization that has been given in this study includes shirking of constituency duties, maximizing financial gains through salaries and unaccountability of resources meant to assist in serving constituents, defecting to other political parties without consulting voters, instrumentalism in parliamentary deliberations, and low roll-call participation. The study has also shown that this can lead to voter apathy. From the interviews conducted the study has been able to show that what drives the incumbent MPs to maximize rents is the fact that they fear for their job security. Former MPs did not hesitate to agree with constituents in the discussion groups that given another chance they would take care of their investments first as the other term is not guaranteed.

5.4 Other Effects of High Incumbency Turnover

This study has further shown that there are other effects that high incumbency turnover has on representation. The study has illustrated that dissatisfaction in high turnover environments also affects voters' perception of representation from preference for authorization or delegated type of representation to descriptive representation whereby people who identify with them (race or tribe etc.) are the only ones that can be voted into office. Politics of patronage often dominates such circumstances. In fragile political environments like Africa such cleavages have the potential to polarize people within the polity based on races and religion. When such situations prevail democracy becomes meaningless

The study has also shown that high turnover attracts a lot of competition in the constituencies and the result is that financial muscle of candidates becomes the key factor for winning. This has the potential to affect candidate quality and hence quality of deliberations in the national assembly. Importance of a political party has been highlighted as well. Parties in general have had no impact on interest aggregation because of patrimony and instrumentalism. They have not therefore been able to support their candidates especially in the high turnover constituencies. MCP on the other hand has shown some stability and its support for candidates significantly increased their chance of winning but this was a result of descriptive representation. With parties not acting as instruments for interest aggregation at constituency level, democracy weakens as people participation in policy formulation declines.

When all the findings are pooled together this study concludes that effects of high incumbency turnover on representation, in polities where democracy is new, both from

constituents' expectations and the ideals of the word are numerous and adverse and rent maximization leads the pack. The bottom line cause of this situation is shown by the study as politics of patronage..

5.5 Implications

“A population has lots of expectations on their MPs after the multi-party system of government is adopted. MPs delivery cannot match with the expectations as the country is poor and power to control resources lies with some ruling elite (probably from the ruling party). The MPs lose their seats. Next generations of MPs feel insecure in their seats. They decide to maximize rents as their probable maximum stay in parliament is short. Frustration on the part of constituents drives them to either apathy or vote for immediate benefits. Legislative career attracts more businessmen looking for quick contracts.....”

The situation described here creates a vicious circle difficult to break. Constituents, who are the voters, will eventually suffer and democracy can easily be toppled by dictatorship. Interventions like the one in the US legislatures (as claimed by US scholars) where explicit and concerted efforts transform state legislatures, as careerism was deliberately installed bringing stability to the legislatures. Continued patronage in political parties and constituencies poses a danger of encouraging the rent maximization as MPs' new constituencies become their party leaders and as constituents continue to rally behind MPs that can give them immediate financial returns. Perhaps deliberate efforts in the Malawi Polity would be in examining the party and electoral systems that would help instill the need to strengthen political parties, other than just leaders, to lean

on strong ideologies. This way, people can vote representatives in office based on the mandate given other than just rely of the accountability factor.

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Appendix 1. Research Tools

Interview Guidelines for key Informants

Section A : for the Incumbent MP

Objective 1. To make a comparison between high turnover and low turnover constituencies in terms of satisfaction of constituents with their MP's performance.

1. What do you consider as qualities of a good representative?
2. Based on your answer above, do you think you have been a good representative? Please explain your reasons.
3. When you were campaigning for office (MP) what did you wish to attain?
What did you promise your constituents?
Have you so far attained your goal? What have you done for your constituents
(If yes can you mention the areas where you have made progress, If not what has been the problem?)
4. Your constituency has elected you to your post for the past few elections, what could be the possible reasons?
5. What are the factors that influence retention or lack of retention of MPS in your area. What role does the party play in the success or failure of retention of MPS?
6. How long do you intend to hold your office?

Objective 2. To explore any relationships between high incumbency turnovers and MPs' rent maximization

1. Do you handle any resources provided by government, through parliament meant for the constituency?
2. How do you ensure they reach the constituency and are equally distributed?
3. Do you think your constituents are happy with this process? How do you know?

4. How many projects have you initiated in your constituency with the support of the said resources?
5. How do you collect ideas from your constituency for presentation in the national assembly? Who do you consult? Do you have a constituency office?
6. What issues do you present at your party caucuses?
7. Where do you reside most of the time?
8. Have you changed parties since you got elected? Why?
9. If you had doubts on your retention (which might mean that you would lose your job) would there be any motivation for you to still deliver all the resources to your constituency? Mention the motivation?
10. What benefits do you personally get through holding this office? What are your ambitions in your office, (constituency)?

Objective 3: To explore other consequences of high incumbency turnovers

1. How long have you been a member of your party?
2. How were you identified as a candidate for your party?
3. What have been the trends in your party in terms of membership for the past three elections? Has party cohesion been strong or not? What could be the possible reasons?
4. Do you easily come to agree on one policy stand in party caucuses before parliament meetings?
5. What role does your party leader play in your policy stands?
6. Do you think parliament is getting stronger or weaker since you got into office?
7. What are the major plans parliament has that you know in strengthening itself?
8. Do you think high turnover of parliamentarians is good for representative democracy?
9. When in parliament what would you prefer to spend more time discussing national issues or constituency issues?
10. Do you think people of Malawi are being adequately represented?

Section B : For the former MP

Objective 1. To make a comparison between high turnover and low turnover constituencies in terms of satisfaction of constituents with their MP's performance.

1. What do you consider as qualities of a good representative?
2. Based on your answer above, do you think you were a good representative? Please explain your reasons.
3. When you were campaigning for office (MP) what did you wish to attain? What did you promise your constituents?
4. Did you attain your goal? What have you done for your constituents (If yes can you mention the areas where you have made progress, If not what has been the problem?)
5. Your constituency did not retain you to your post, what could be the possible reasons?
6. What are the factors that influence lack of retention of MPS in your area. What role does the party play in the success or failure of retention of MPS?
7. How long did you hold your office?

Objective 2. To explore any relationships between high incumbency turnovers and MPs' rent maximization

1. Did you handle any resources provided by government, through parliament meant for the constituency?
2. How did you ensure they reached the constituency and were equally distributed?
3. Do you think your constituents were happy with this process? How do you know?
4. How many projects have you initiated in your constituency with the support of the said resources?
5. How did you collect ideas from your constituency for presentation in the national assembly? Who did you consult? Did you have a constituency office?

6. What issues did you present at your party caucuses?
7. Where did you reside most of the time during your tenure?
8. Did you change parties during your tenure? Why?
9. If you went back in office what would you do?
10. What benefits did you personally get through holding this office? What were your ambitions in your office, (constituency)?

Objective 3: To explore other consequences of high incumbency turnovers

1. How long have you been a member of your party?
2. How were you identified as a candidate for your party?
3. What have been the trends in your party in terms of membership for the past three elections? Has party cohesion been strong or not? What could be the possible reasons?
4. Did you easily come to agree on one policy stand in party caucuses before parliament meetings?
5. What role does your party leader play in your policy stands?
6. Do you think parliament is getting stronger or weaker? Please explain.
7. What were the major plans parliament had that you know in strengthening itself?
8. Do you think high turn over of parliamentarians is good for representative democracy?
9. When in parliament did you prefer to spend more time discussing national issues or constituency issues?
10. Do you think people of Malawi are being adequately represented?

Section C: For Other Key Informants And Focus Discussion Groups

1. For the past 3 elections your constituency has (not) reelected incumbent MPs. What is the reason for that?
2. Do you think the incumbent MP will get reelected in next year's elections? What makes you think so?
3. Do people in this constituency believe that by changing representatives every time they have elections they will be represented better? Why?
4. What are the qualities of a good MP as a representative? Based on your answer above, are the MPS who have been in office in this constituency been good representatives?
5. Do you have any idea of what resources MPs are given by government to be delivered to you? What resources actually get to you or are used by constituents?
6. Are the resources equally distributed amongst all areas in the constituencies? If not, Why?
7. How does your MP get your interests for presentation in parliament? Does he hold meetings? Where do those meetings take place? Do they involve the whole constituency or just some villages within the constituency?
8. Why do you think people contest for the post of MP?
9. How do MPs in the constituency get identified to stand? Does the party play any role? How do people view the party here?
10. Do you think the Malawi parliament has been effective in the multiparty era? Please Mention the successes or failures?

Section D: For the District Commissioner or Chief Executive

1. How is the participation of MPs in the district/ city activities?
2. How is their participation in activities that concern their constituencies such as the constituency development fund?
3. How have the MPs been implementing activities in the CDF? Which MPs have done what?
4. Have you been provided with means to monitor these activities? And if so what has been your observation?
5. What other areas does the assembly work with the MPs? Do you consider them effective?

Section E: for Parliament Secretariat

1. What bills/policies or proposals have gone through parliament whereby resources have been requested to support constituencies via MPs for the past three terms?
2. Do you think the institution of parliament is improving in the multiparty era? Can you mention the areas?
3. Do you think it is advantageous to have many new MPs at each election? Explain your answer.
4. How do you compare the deliberations between young (in experience) and old MPs in the house?

Appendix 2. List of Parliamentary Hansards Examined.

003	30 June, 2004	022	19 July, 2005
008	11 April, 2005	001	3 April, 2006
008	17 June, 2005	012	20 April, 2006
020	15 July, 2005	003	8 June, 2006
025	22 July, 2005	001	19 Feb, 2007
001	30 March, 2005	015	12 March, 2007
009	12 April, 2005	002	22 May, 2007
016	11 July, 2005		