

**DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT IN FOREIGN POLICY? ANALYSIS OF KEY
FACTORS THAT DETERMINE CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN THE
FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREIGN POLICY IN
MALAWI**

MASTER OF ARTS (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS

MAVUTO BAMUSI

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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MASTER OF ARTS (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS

By

**MAVUTO BAMUSI
BA (Political Science)-University of Malawi**

Submitted to the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, 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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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and it has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Acknowledgements have been duly made where other people's work has been used. I bear the responsibility of the contents of this paper.

MAVUTO BAMUSI

Full Legal Name

Signature

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.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Augustine Magolowondo, PhD

Main Supervisor

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Ernest Thindwa, M.A. (Senior Lecturer)

Second Supervisor

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Duwa, Nthambi and Chipatso.

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ABSTRACT

The process of democracy consolidation in many African countries since the early 1990s, has deepened with popular voices from civil society. Although civil society organizations (CSOs) come in different shapes and formations, the democratization process has very much benefited from a category of CSOs that work in the advocacy sector. Civil society has therefore come into play as the “third force” and policy advocacy has become an arena of concentration in the work of CSOs alongside the demands for participation in policy formulation, and to a certain extent, advocacy on policy implementation. The literature which has been reviewed in this study point to significant number of CSOs that are conducting policy advocacy in sectors such as education, health, environment, economic governance, and human rights. However, this study reveals a participation gap which translates to a democratic deficit as CSOs have a weak presence in the foreign policy sector. This study unearths the factors that determine the state of civil society presence in foreign policy, with a specific focus on the role of CSOs in the formulation and implementation of Malawi foreign policy. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to establish the extent to which CSOs participate in foreign policy processes. The gap in CSO advocacy in foreign policy has the potential problem of subjecting the sector to elite capture, and this could reverse popular participation and dampen prospects for the democratization of foreign policy in Malawi. This is a qualitative study and is designed around qualitative methods of data collection using interview guides administered, predominantly on Malawi CSO leaders and government officials. Apart from in-depth interviews, document analysis also forms the backbone for data collection in the study. The data is manually processed and is analyzed using the thematic analysis and trends analysis methods. In terms of findings, the study establishes the key determinants to CSO participation in the foreign policy process in Malawi. The study proposes a model for effective participation of CSOs in foreign policy and proceeds to highlight new areas of potential future research within the framework of civil society relations with the state on matters of foreign policy openness and accountability.

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ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AI	Amnesty International
APRM	Africa Peer Review Mechanism
ACP	African Caribbean and Pacific
AFRO-ITUC	African Regional Organization of the International Union Confederation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
APA	ASEAN Peoples Assembly
AYISE	Active Youth Initiative for Social Enhancement
ACSC	ASEAN Civil Society Conference
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China South Africa
BREXIT	Britain Exit (Exit of Britain from the European Union)
CARER	Center for Advice, Research and Education on Rights
CEPA	Center for Environmental Policy Advocacy
CEYCA	Center for Youth and Children Affairs
CYECE	Center for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education
CHRR	Center for Human Rights and Rehabilitation
CILIC	Civil Liberties Committee
CONGOMA	Council for NGOs in Malawi
CSONA	Civil Society Nutrition Alliance
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSEC	Civil Society Education Coalition
CSCQBE	Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CISANET	Civil Society Agriculture Network
CISONECC	Civil Society Network on Climate Change
CI	Consumer International

CUTS	Consumer Unity and Trust Society
DFID	Department for International Development
DDA	Doha Development Agenda
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community for Western African States
EOM	Election Observation Mission
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council
ESC	Economic and Social Committee (of the EU)
EJN	Economic Justice Network
FUM	Farmers Union of Malawi
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FCO	Foreign Common Office
FOCCISA	Fellowship of Christian Councils for Southern Africa
FND	Forum for National Development
GoM	Government of Malawi
G8	Group of 8 (wealthiest nations on earth)
G20	Group of 20 (wealthiest nations on earth)
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HRCC	Human Rights Consultative Committee
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
HRDC	Human Rights Defenders Coalition
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ICC	International Criminal Court
IPi	Institute for Policy Interaction
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ILO	International Labor Organization
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-sexual and Intersexual
MSP	Malawi Scotland Partnership

MABLEM	Movement for Black Economic Empowerment
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (and International Cooperation)
MIDEA	Malawi Institute of Democratic and Economic Affairs
MCTU	Malawi Congress of Trade Unions
MDAs	Ministry/Department/Agency
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MHEN	Malawi Health Equity Network
MCC	Millennium Challenge
MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MERCOSUR	<i>Mercador Comun del Sur</i> (Common Market of the South)
NDRM	National Disaster Relief Management
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NASFAM	National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi
NAP	National Advocacy Platform
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGOGCN	NGO Gender Coordination Network
NGOCCR	NGO Coalition of Child Rights
NRWU	Nyasaland Railway Workers Union
NHRI	National Human Rights Institutions
NWLG	National Women Lobby Group
NICE	National Initiative for Civic Education
NEST	National Elections Systems Trust
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OSISA	Open Society Institute for Southern Africa
OPC	Office of President and Cabinet
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
PRC	Peoples Republic of China
PAC	Public Affairs Committee
PEPFAR	Presidential Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief

PSC	Peace and Security Council
QMAM	Qadria Muslim Association of Malawi
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
RECs	Regional Economic Community
SAW	Society for the Advancement of Women
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SONA	State of the National Address
SADC-CNGO	SADC Council for NGOs
SADC	Southern Africa Development Council
SOTU	State of the Union
SAPST	Southern Africa Parliamentary Support Trust
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Sustainable Development
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WTO	World Trade Organization
WEF	World Economic Forum
WES	World Social Forum
WASCOF	West African Civil Society Forum
WILSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa
YONECO	Youthnet and Counselling
YAS	Youth and Society

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Civil society organisations (CSOs) across the globe are increasingly offsetting the democratic deficit and are fast occupying political and public policy space. Civil society is operating as another ‘branch of government’ or as the “Third Force” (Florin, 2000). The consequences of CSO actions and the tactics used by this Third Force continue to have a significant influence on politics, policy and society (Ellis, 2007).

CSOs are also increasingly mastering the art of providing systematic checks and balances on state, intergovernmental bodies and on supranational governments through their research-based advocacy, oversight and activism to address accountability deficits in global governance (Kahler and Lake, 2006). It is hard to envisage democratic consolidation without the role of civil society, and it is now clear that to comprehend democratic change around the world, one must study civil society (Diamond, 1994).

The role of civil society in foreign policy can be understood from the politico-historical metamorphosis of Malawi foreign policy. Malawi foreign policy has undergone evolution from the Kamuzu Banda regime (1964 to 1994) when foreign policy was a one-man show almost synonymous with the prevailing state of autocracy (Patel and Hajat, 2007). The first ever written foreign policy document for Malawi was in 2001 during the Bakili Muluzi administration. However, over the years Malawi Foreign Policy has undergone review since 2009 (Bamusi, 2012), a process that finally culminated into a new foreign policy document that was launched in 2019 (Malawi Government, 2019).

This research proposed to study the levels of democratic deficit in foreign policy through a deeper assessment of civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of Malawi Foreign Policy. Specifically, the research studies the factors

that determine participation or non-participation, and the extent of the democratic deficit in Malawi's foreign policy.

The aim of this chapter is to provide the background to the study, to highlight the nature of foreign policy and the space of civil society from the Kamuzu Banda regime all the way to the Peter Mutharika administration, a period covering the years 1964 to 2019. Another aim of the chapter is to provide an overview of the composition and structure of civil society, with a particular focus on Malawi CSO sector. In addition, the chapter introduces the Malawi foreign policy and the policy review process. In this regard, the chapter focuses on the background to the study, rationale, objectives and research hypothesis. The chapter concludes with an outline of the chapters of this thesis.

1.2 Background to the study

The conduct of international relations in Malawi and for many other countries is guided by foreign policy. Since political independence in 1964, Malawi has operated under different foreign policy frameworks. In addition, civil society in Malawi has undergone metamorphosis almost in tandem with political transitions.

1.2.1 Foreign policy during the era of Kamuzu Banda (1964 – 1994)

Kamuzu Banda ruled Malawi from 1964 to 1994 under a dictatorial and authoritarian regime which gave no space for civil society as the regime suppressed voices of dissent. Power politics and personality politics were key drivers of foreign policy (Sagawa, 2011). The political administration operated without a written foreign policy document. The earliest test on Malawi foreign policy terrain was in the very year September 1964, barely two months after Independence when a cabinet crisis happened.

Among other reasons, the cabinet crisis was precipitated by ideological differences, regionalism, and internal power struggles. Kamuzu Banda was inclined to the West, while some of his key ministers supported the Eastern bloc (Svasand and Khembo, 2007). The cabinet ministers demanded the immediate Africanization of Malawi's white dominated economy and urged Dr. Banda to take a hostile stance towards apartheid South Africa (HRCC, 2009). The cabinet ministers had become grossly

concerned that the running of the government had absolutely turned out to be a one-man show for Dr. Banda himself (Bamusi, 2012).

Since the cabinet crisis, Dr. Banda held and kept to himself key ministerial portfolios including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Justice (Mayall, 1970). The basic tool for diplomacy used by Dr. Banda was ‘contact and dialogue’ and the regime repudiated any penchant for the use of ‘force and sanctions’ (Patel and Hajat, 2007). Banda described his approach as discretionary alignment and neutralism, an approach that he felt would secure what was right or good for Malawi. Civil and political rights activism was restricted and even banned under the single party autocratic regime which had a record of serious human rights abuses (Human Rights Watch, 1989). In practice, civil society and popular participation were virtually non-existent and state power was exercised by largely an unaccountable government (Chirwa, 2000).

1.2.2 Foreign policy and civil society space during the Bakili Muluzi administration

Malawi transitioned into multiparty and pluralist politics in 1992. Pluralism saw with it the advent of populism, civil society activism, the mushrooming of CSOs and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In 1994, Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Front (UDF) took over power from Kamuzu Banda under the new democratic dispensation.

The Muluzi administration undertook to develop a new structure of relationships and engage dialogue with the international community based on mutual trust and respect for democratic values. The new government set out to design a foreign policy that would ensure socio-economic development of Malawi and place the country on a solid democratic foundation (Government of Malawi, 2000). During the Muluzi administration, the first ever foreign policy document was produced in 2000 with a shifting emphasis from ‘political diplomacy’ to ‘development diplomacy’ (Ibid. p11). Multiparty politics has seen a mushrooming of NGOs and civil society organisations. The Muluzi administration saw the proliferation of human rights NGOs and governance CSOs as human rights and good governance were embraced and fostered as donor conditionality for aid (Gibson, 1999). Malawi experienced a rise of human rights CSOs

such as Civil Liberties Committee (CILIC), Public Affairs Committee (PAC), Malawi Institute of Democratic and Economic Affairs (MIDEA), Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR), Centre for Advice, Research, and Education on Rights (CARER) and the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC). NGOs in Malawi have attracted considerable donor support as agencies that are believed to provide independent voices (Englund, 2006).

1.2.3 Foreign policy during the Bingu wa Mutharika administration (2004 to 2012)

Bingu wa Mutharika became president in 2005. In his first 5-year term in office, Bingu maintained excellent diplomatic relations with western countries. Malawi also improved relations with both bilateral and multilateral development partners including a cordial partnership with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

However, in his second term of office (2009-2012, unfinished term due to death), Bingu wa Mutharika had hostile relations with most of the Western countries. He expelled the British High Commissioner to Malawi Mr. Fergus Chochrane-Dyte in 2011. The British diplomat was declared *persona-non-grata* for criticizing Bingu in a leaked confidential diplomatic cable for “becoming increasingly autocratic and intolerant of criticism” (Potani, 2011).

The Bingu wa Mutharika administration also made landmark foreign policy decisions. The most prominent of such decisions was the diplomatic switch from Taiwan to Mainland China. China immediately promised grants and loans mainly in form of infrastructure projects such as the construction of the new Malawi Parliament building. Malawi government also closed the Libya embassy and opened new embassies in Brazil and Kuwait (HRCC, 2009).

Bingu wa Mutharika’s support for Africa and solidarity with its leadership was manifested when he invited Sudan president Omar Al-Bashir to a COMESA summit that took place on 14 and 15 October 2011 in Lilongwe, Malawi. Mutharika demonstrated boldness and solidarity because Al Bashir was wanted by the

International Criminal Court (ICC) for committing war crimes against humanity (Kalinga, 2012).

As a state-party to the Rome Statute of the ICC, Malawi was under obligation to surrender Al Bashir to the ICC. This is another incident where Malawi CSOs raised their voice demanding that Al Bashir should be handed over to the ICC although there was divided opinion as some CSOs raised issues to do with allegations that ICC favors and shields Western leaders. Malawi's failure to surrender the Sudanese president for prosecution strained Malawi's relations with the Western countries even further (Sani, 2012).

1.2.4 Foreign policy during the Joyce Banda administration (2012 to 2014)

The Joyce Banda administration was a 2-year period when foreign policy focused on repairing the bilateral and multilateral ties that were damaged during the Bingu wa Mutharika's 6-year rule. President Banda restored donor confidence as many donors had stopped aid against President Mutharika (The African Business, 2012).

The role of civil society during the Joyce Banda administration was merely that of a commentator and to some extent projecting advocacy voices and positions on certain matters. Civil society positions largely were in favor of Joyce Banda and backed the administration. For example, CSOs backed the position of government on the Lake Malawi boundary dispute with Tanzania, adding its weight to the claim that the whole lake belongs to Malawi. CSOs also applauded the restoration of relations with UK and the reintroduction of the US energy pact under the MCC (HRCC, 2012).

1.2.5 Foreign policy under the Peter Mutharika administration (2014 to 2020)

The Peter Mutharika administration continued with the Joyce Banda foreign policy stance and made no significant policy turns. The period 2014 to 2019 was characterized with intensified efforts to complete the review of the Malawi Foreign Policy document. The review process commenced in 2009 and took 10 years until the new policy was launched in 2019 (Malawi Government, 2019).

President Peter Mutharika consolidated the bilateral and multilateral gains Malawi made during the Joyce Banda administration and these include creating favorable conditions for the IMF program, cordial relations with Western countries, increased bilateral bond with the People's Republic of China (PRC), South Asian countries such as India, and also with the other BRICS states. Mutharika added that “but we are looking for new friends in the emerging economies such as Brazil, China, India, South Africa and Russia” (Kainja, 2014).

The foreign policy of Peter Mutharika had to carefully balance the shortcomings of his late brother Bingu at the same time consolidating the gains made by the Joyce Banda administration. For example, Peter Mutharika had to win the confidence of traditional donors who had lost trust in Malawi under Bingu, and also some who lost trust under Joyce Banda on account of the massive corruption and plunder of public funds named ‘cash gate’.

1.2.6 The Rise of civil society networks and policy advocacy in Malawi

Malawi civil society has since 2000 assumed additional roles on economic and social advocacy. The period has also seen the mushrooming of civil society networks such that the year 2000 could as well be termed ‘the era of the rise of civil society networks and coalitions in Malawi’ (James and Malunga, 2006). Examples of CSO networks include Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) which was established in 2001 as a remnant of the Jubilee 2000 Malawi debt cancellation campaign (Kubalasa, 2003). Other CSO networks include the NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGO-GCN) which was established to bring together and harmonise all gender advocacy and women empowerment CSOs (Kayuni and Muriaas, 2014).

The Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC) was established to promote and protect education rights through education advocacy and research. CSEC expanded its mandate to incorporate wider issues in education policy and reforms (Anders and Chirwa, 2018).

The health policy area is also covered by a civil society network called Malawi health Equity Network (MHEN), a non-profit civil society alliance of interested NGOs promoting equity and quality in health for all people in Malawi. MHEN works by

influencing policy and practice, through research, monitoring, information dissemination, advocacy and civic education (Njunga and Kasiya, 2006).

As one way of policy advocacy, the CSO networks conduct Malawi government budget advocacy through budget analysis, budget tracking and budget awareness. Leading CSO networks in this area include MEJN which carries out general budget and public finance policy advocacy on an annual basis. Similarly, MHEN and CSEC implement civil society led budget work from their respective sectoral angles. The NGOGCN carries out budget accountability from a gender-budget perspective as a novel aspect of gender mainstreaming and women empowerment in Malawi (Mbilizi, 2013).

1.2.7 Overview of Malawi foreign policy

The Malawi foreign policy is based on the 1995 Republican Constitution and the enshrined Bill of Rights. The first written foreign policy document was developed in 2000 amidst renewed hope and optimism for the future and a changing international environment. The foreign policy included a belief in the sovereign equality of states, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The policy is guidance by principles of the United Nations and other multilateral bodies in the conduct of international affairs (Bamusi, 2012).

The 2000 Malawi foreign policy also operated on the belief in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, and in the pursuit of good neighborly relations with all countries; belief in the reform of the international economic order, support and promotion of efforts towards a fair and equitable international trading system; commitment to the promotion of economic cooperation and regional integration (HRCC, 2009).

1.2.8 The review of Malawi foreign policy

Since its inception in 2000, the foreign policy had not undergone any review. Justifying the need for the review of the foreign policy, the 2009 HRCC Report revealed that there are weak linkages between the foreign policy and the *Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS)* – the overarching policy of Malawi’s development agenda.

Consequently, the review process commenced in 2009 for 10 years until the revised policy (*Second Edition of Malawi Foreign Policy*) was launched in 2019. The policy is aligned with the UN 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs) which also form the basis of the MGDS IV. The policy has also taken into account commitments and obligations made at the international level; such as the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Plan (RISDP), the African Union Agenda 2063 (Malawi Government, 2019).

An interesting feature of the second edition of the foreign policy is its realization on the need to inculcate the role on non-state actors in the policy processes. These include private sector, academia and the civil society. The 2019 second edition of Malawi foreign policy also places emphasis of the role of CSOs in the policy implementation. ‘Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) will play a significant role in political, socio-economic, and cultural issues. As non-state actors, they will play an advocacy role for the Foreign Policy, as well as, provide the necessary checks and balances in the adherence to international standards and best practices.’ (Malawi Government, 2019).

1.3 Rationale

Civil society is a critical platform for anchoring popular voice which is a key driver for the democratization process. CSOs are important agents for accountability and transparency, and they contribute to policy openness through advocacy, policy analysis and they provide platforms for popular participation. CSOs are active in demanding participation and accountability in political administration and in a whole range of public policy frameworks.

Foreign policy is part of the public policies which are critical to development and democracy at the global, regional and national level. A study of the key factors that determine the extent of civil society engagement with the foreign policy is important to unearth the critical accountability issues in the foreign policy sector. Of specific importance and interest is the study of the extent to which civil society participate in the foreign policy formulation and implementation processes. Such a study is also important as it contributes to pathways that could be used to increase popular participation, improve democratization and reduce the democratic deficit in foreign policy.

Currently, according to the literature review conducted in this study, there is currently no study that has fathomed deep into the role of CSOs in Malawi foreign policy, let alone on the levels of civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Therefore, the study will also contribute to the enrichment of academic knowledge around civil society and foreign policy interactions through the bridging of knowledge gaps and establishing pointers to further research in this area of study.

1.4 Hypothesis and research problem statement

The study sets out to either confirm or falsify the following hypothesis:

Weak civil society participation and low CSO participation in the formulation, implementation, and policy advocacy leads to accountability and democratization challenges in Malawi's foreign policy.

An assessment of relevant literature so far reviewed in this study shows that there is a prevalence of democratic deficit manifested through low involvement of CSOs in the foreign policy sector in Malawi. This is in sharp contrast to relatively higher civil society participation in foreign affairs at the global, continental, and regional integration levels. It is also in sharp contrast to the higher civic participation and CSO engagement at the national level, in other policy sectors such as health, education, agriculture, public finance and gender, just to mention some.

This signifies presence of problematic situation manifested through low levels of democratisation associated with Malawi's foreign policy therefore impacting on accountability in foreign affairs. The proxy for the low democratisation in this case is the low presence of civil society interventions in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy as shown the case of Malawi.

1.4.1 Practical Problem

Civil society and citizens have a minimal role in the foreign policy formulation and implementation. CSOs are also in the periphery in terms of participation in foreign policy processes in general. The roles of civil society are confined to wider policy advocacy, and CSOs are specialised in demanding accountability in traditional policy

areas such as health, education, agriculture, economic governance and human rights, to mention some.

Similarly, civil society oversight and accountability initiatives are weak and even non-existent in Malawi foreign policy sector. This is against the trend of more robust presence and participation of civil society in foreign affairs at the global, continental and at regional integration policy spaces.

1.4.2 Researchable Gap

An extensive combing through the relevant literature reveals that the main research gap consists in the low CSO participation and oversight in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. This is against the backdrop of a more vibrant civil society actors voice in other governance and developmental policy sectors, and also a higher level of participation of CSOs in global, continental, and regional policy affairs, as confirmed through the literature review.

Primarily, there is a research gap characterised by the missing voices of the people through civil society activism, and the research gap is further manifested by a lack of CSO accountability initiatives such as budget analysis and public expenditure tracking around Malawi's foreign policy sphere. The literature review suggests that there are no comprehensive studies that have researched on the question of the extent of civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, with the case of Malawi foreign policy in mind.

1.5 Research questions

This research study set out to address the following main questions and specific questions: The research question relates to the extent of democratisation in foreign policy, focusing on civil society participation as a proxy for policy democratisation.

1.5.1 The main research question

What is the extent of CSO participation in the formulation and implementation of Malawi's foreign policy? The question addresses why there seem to be low CSO participation and what factors contribute to low civil society oversight around Malawi foreign policy.

1.5.2 Specific research questions

In line with the desire to get precise answers to the research problem posited above, the study sought to get answers on the following specific research questions:

- To what extent does civil society participate in foreign policy formulation and implementation?
- What are the key factors that determine the level of CSO participation in formulation and implementation of foreign policy, and what contributes to participation gaps?
- What are the common issues raised by CSOs and government in the context of the foreign policy democratisation process?
- What are the likely outcomes of low CSO interventions in the foreign policy sector?

1.6 Research objectives

This research study was governed by the following main and specific research objectives:

1.6.1 Main objective

The main research objective was to establish the extent of democratic deficit (using civil society participation as a proxy for democratisation) by analysing the key factors that determine CSO participation, advocacy and oversight functions in foreign policy.

1.6.2 Specific objectives

The study proceeded around the following specific objectives:

- To assess the extent of civil society participation in foreign policy formulation and implementation.

- To analyse the key factors that determine the level of CSO participation in foreign policy, and assess the participatory gaps that affect civil society oversight role.
- To assess the common issues raised by CSOs in the context of foreign policy advocacy.
- To establish the likely outcomes of low CSO interventions in the foreign policy sector.

1.7 Chapter outline

The following sections presents an outline of the chapters of the study.

Chapter One – Introduction

Background to the study, Brief overview of civil society, roles and foreign policy; Research Hypothesis, Problem Statement and Objectives of the study; Research Justification

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Theoretical and conceptual framework; Role of CSOs in foreign policy at global, regional and national level; The link between civil society participation and foreign policy outcomes

Summary of key outcomes from CSO participation and accountability initiatives in foreign policy

Chapter Three – Research Design and Methodology

Conceptualization and measurement, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Data collection methods and tools, Data analysis

Chapter Four – Analysis and Discussion of Study Findings: The Key Factors That Determine Civil Society Role in the formulation and implementation of Foreign Policy

The study will present the field findings from individual personal interviews, and those from the documentary analysis, and will subject the findings to a rigorous discussion.

Chapter Five – Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Academic Research

This chapter will present a summary of the study findings, and recommendations will be made. A proposed model for effective civil society participation in foreign policy will also be presented.

1.8 Chapter conclusion

The chapter has explained the particular focus of the study. The chapter has also given a brief background that encompasses an overview of civil society space during Malawi's political administrations from 1964 to 2019. The chapter proceeded to present a snapshot of Malawi foreign policy and the policy review process, as well as the CSO policy advocacy work with emphasis on foreign policy from the perspective of Malawi. In addition, the chapter discussed the background to the study, rationale, objectives, and research hypothesis. Finally, the chapter concluded with an outline of the thesis chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Civil society participation and oversight are fundamental to the democratisation process. Popular and civic participation in foreign policy affairs is critical for promoting and upholding democratic principles. This section provides an overview of literature that relates to pathways for CSOs interface with international relations. The section exposes literature gaps that are indicative of research gaps which are the major preoccupation of this study.

CSOs are increasingly regarded as building blocks for democratic consolidation. Larry Diamond (1994) succinctly observes that in this third wave of global democratisation, no phenomenon has vividly captured the imagination of democratic scholars, observers, and activists alike than “civil society”. The stimulus for democratization, and particularly the pressure to complete the process, have typically come from “the resurrection of civil society”, the restructuring of public space, and the mobilisation of all manner of independent groups and grassroots movements (Diamond, 1994).

CSOs provide avenues for alternative forms of representation, and they prove to be effective in oversight through their evidence-based policy advocacy and accountability work. The effective democratisation of foreign policy appears to hinge on the extent to which civil society leverage its actions in the sector, largely because of the strong link between democratisation and civil society. The likelihood that any political opening can evolve into a consolidated democracy appears to depend upon one condition: the emergence of a vibrant and robust civil society (Encarnacion, 2003).

The chapter reviews the relevant literature. Drawing on relevant studies, the chapter defines and discusses the concepts of civil society, foreign policy and national interest. The chapter also presents and discusses the theoretical framework for the study. The chapter proceeds to discuss the relevant literature that establishes a CSO-foreign policy nexus by discussing the role of civil society in foreign policy at the global, continental, sub-regional integration, and at national level. Malawi CSOs and Malawi foreign policy are given specific attention.

2.2 Defining and discussing the concept of civil society

There is continued debate on the definition of the term “civil society”. Defining civil society is not a simple task (VanDyck, 2017:1). The World Economic Forum (WEF) defines civil society as a diverse and ever wider ecosystem of individuals, communities and organisations (WEF, 2013). Michael Bratton defines civil society as a sphere of social interaction between the household and the state which is manifest in norms of community cooperation, structures of voluntary association, and networks of public communication (Bratton, 1994).

It is worth noting that many scholars and practitioners prefer the term civil society “sphere” than “sector” as the latter entails the delineation of boundary over civil society area of influence (WEF, 2013, p.5). This is probably why CIVICUS, in its operational definitional definition of civil society, has opted to define civil society as the “sphere” of institutions, organisations, and individuals located between the family, the state and the market, in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interest (CIVICUS, 2002).

The United Nations (UN) definitions of civil society vary across the UN agencies in line with the different functions and mandates. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) defines civil society as the sphere of cross-border relationships and activities carried out by collective actors that are independent from governments and private firms, operating outside the international reach of states and markets (UNRISD, 2005).

In line with the UNRISD definition, Mario Pianta (2005) extends that civil society is the sphere of social relations and the contested terrain where hegemonic projects are developed. Pianta emphasises the emergence of what is now called global – or transitional – civil society (Pianta, 2005). The European Union (EU) categorises civil society under the nomenclature of “non-state actors” (Lorenz, 2011). The EU refers to civil society as all forms of social action carried out by individuals or groups who are neither connected to, nor managed by, the state (Cooper, 2018).

The African Union (AU) takes a functional approach in defining civil society. Article 3 of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the AU identifies different ‘social and professional’ groups of the Member States. Recently, ECOSOCC has included African Diaspora organisations ‘in accordance with the definition approved by the Executive Council’ (African Union, 2004).

Of late, in Malawi, the definition of the term civil society has been associated with CSO networks and coalitions which have occupied a prominent stage especially in policy advocacy (INTRAC, 2008). Civil society networks have become a major player in global development (Church, 2003; Miller, 2005). Civil society organisation networks have been the prime organisational form for articulating voice (James and Malunga, 2006).

Government of Malawi (GoM) through the NGO laws takes a mixed definition where CSOs and NGOs are lumped together and it is the term “NGO” which is encapsulated in the legal framework. The Malawi NGO Act (2001) constructively defines an NGO as an institution constituted for public benefit purpose. In this case, ‘public benefit purpose’ involves developmental and charitable purposes including but not limited to educational, health, welfare, advocacy and related purposes (Malawi Government, 2001).

However, the definition in the NGO Act excludes activities of a church or religion, trade union, employers’ organisation or political party. This exclusion must be understood from the prevailing political atmosphere around 2001 as government was working to limit the critical voices. No wonder the NGO Act includes a clause for

suspension of any NGO whose operations are ‘political in nature’. Suffice to say that Malawi NGO law has a bias towards service delivery NGOs as opposed to advocacy NGOs which comprise a significant portion of CSOs whose activities stretch towards politicking and electioneering in nature.

This study observes that different definitions are suitable for different contexts and tailored to specific issue areas. However, for purposes of this research, the study will use the definition of CIVICUS. In the specific context of Malawi, civil society shall refer to groups of people operating as informal coalitions, or formal institutions duly registered with state authorities as NGOs, as CSOs networks and coalitions, or as interest groups working around a particular interest issue. Emphasis will also be placed on advocacy NGOs/CSOs and less on service delivery institutions.

2.3 Definition and discussion of the term ‘foreign policy’

The terms international relations, foreign policy, foreign affairs, and diplomatic relations are often used interchangeably and generally refer to relations between and among sovereign nations, associated with their bilateral and multilateral interactions interposed with roles of non-state actors. Hans Morgenthau states that a country’s foreign policy, also called foreign relations, or foreign affairs policy, consists of self-interest strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve goals within its international relations milieu (Morgenthau, 1967). However, this study focuses on foreign policy which refers to the general objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states (Frankel, 1963).

Foreign policy is concerned with the behaviour of states towards other states, and is further defined as “the discrete purposeful action that results from the political level of an individual or group of individuals (Bojang, 2018). Bojang also quotes George Modelski who defines foreign policy as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment (Ibid). According to Joseph Frankel, foreign policy consists of decisions and actions, which involves to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others. By this, foreign policy involves set of actions

that are made within state's borders, intended towards forces existing outside the country's borders (Frankel, 1963).

However, modern foreign affairs have gone beyond the state-centric traditional view of international relations as propounded by Morgenthau, to incorporate non-state actors and multilateral institutions. In this vein, Neack Laura has argued that other actors such as international cause groups, businesses, religious, and others prevalent in the international system formulate guidelines and goals that direct their actions towards other international actors (Laura, 2008).

Bojang establishes an important definitional link which is the main focus of this study, that due to the increase in interconnectedness and the rapid growth of globalisation, pressure groups have more interests in the foreign policies of states. By implication, Bojang is of the view that CSOs influence foreign policies when interacting with states at the international and domestic level (Bojang, 2018). This position is in sync with the view of Robert H. Thrice who observes that interest groups can be viewed as auxiliary actors that stand between the government and the mass public....and they have mobilised a diverse area ranging from business, labour, ethnic, health, environmental, human rights and many other civic interest groups (Thrice, 1978).

Foreign affairs and international relations are multi-actor spaces where states dominate the platform, followed by a plethora of non-state actors that include multinational corporations (MNCs), multilateral institutions, transnational civil society actors and national level CSOs. Civil society actors are increasingly occupying the foreign policy space at the global, continental, and regional level. However, there is mixed levels of CSO participation in foreign affairs at the national levels, an area which this is the focus of this study.

2.4 National interest

The primary purpose of foreign policy is to promote and defend national interests (Frazier, 2019). The concept of national interest is viewed by many scholars as a central theme for the conduct of national policies and the perennial standard by which political action must be judged and directed (Palmer and Norman, 2004: 68).

National interest includes a wide range of issues such as security from external aggression to securing economic interests and protecting its national identity. National interest also refers to “the total values and purposes of the state applied to a particular set of circumstances, and seen in relation to the means available for their realization” (Padelford and Lincoln, 1967: 209). National interests are the goals that states pursue to maximize what is selfishly best for their country (Kegley and Wittkopf, 2006:34).

The concept of national interest is embraced in this study because it is a tool for analysing foreign policy where it is interpreted as a version of public interest that CSOs also promote, indicating what is best for the nation in its relations with other states. Civil society implements programs and carries out advocacy activities that aim at anchoring the national interest.

2.5 Theoretical framework of the study

This study uses an eclectic approach and is built around four theoretical frameworks namely Marxist theory, elite theory, the concept of political settlement and pluralism. Karl Marx theorises on the notion of power and inequality through the lenses of the social class. CSOs are among key actors where each actor is pursuing the desire to protect and promote their interests. Just as Marx postulates, ‘class struggle’ emerges where members of the same class engage in common collective action (Levine, 2006).

The Marxist framework views foreign policy as an arena for class struggle and clash of class interests where elites flex their political and policy muscle to advance their interests. The national interest is essentially a representation of capitalist elite interests and the wishes of the powerful in a state. This is often at the expense of the majority people who are marginalised in public policy processes and benefits. CSOs therefore stand in as the voice of the voiceless to defend the rights of the less powerful classes or the peasants as put by Friedrich Engels in ‘The Peasant War’ (1926).

In line with the Marxist theory, the elite theory explains the dominance of powerful elite groups in public policy interactions. Elite theory is about power and entails that the more privileged actors in society will always behave in a manner that perpetuates their status in society. Alan Harding (1995) observes that elite theory is based on the hierarchical conception of society and concerns itself with the relations between the powerful and the powerless (Judge, Stoker and Wolman, 1995).

The foreign policy sphere is elitist in nature since actors privileged with technocratic, political and economic power are likely to have a greater influence on foreign policy decisions, resource allocation, outcomes and claim the associated policy benefits. Previous research on opinions related to foreign policy has reported that elites shape mass opinions (Cunningham and Moore, 1997).

The role of CSOs in foreign policy must therefore be viewed from this window where the CSOs are among the many policy actors. The presence of civil society in foreign policy adds an extra spanner into the wheel of complexity as civil society comes to the arena sometimes with its unruly politics. Complexity theory provides new insights into the behaviour of foreign policy actors where informal networking and interlocking relationships shape dynamic social and organisational environment representing life at the edge of chaos (Gilchrist, 2000).

The concept of political settlements also befittingly explains aspects of foreign policy where, as is the case with public policies, foreign policy represents an arena where formal and informal rules are at play. Foreign policy is played around agreements which the game of diplomacy is designed to revolve and these agreements are made among the influential foreign policy actors. Foreign policies are essentially a form of political settlements which are in essence elite settlements. (Burton and Higley, 1987).

Foreign policy is a political settlement that largely involves elite groups such as government technocrats, politicians, bureaucrats and private sector players. Consequently, foreign policy is an example of a political settlement where the majority citizens and populations are systematically left out and are pushed to the margins of the foreign policy processes and they are at the mercy of political and business elites.

The theory of pluralism is equally instrumental to understanding the foreign policy interactions between state and civil society actors. It is arguable that CSOs are an integral actor in the context of democratic pluralism where the notion of ‘democratic inclusion’ is sacrosanct and central to meaningful citizenship (Baubock, 2018). Therefore, pluralism carries with it the notions of participation, inclusivity and policy democratisation. Suffice to indicate that pluralism is directly associated with democratic tenets of tolerance, representation and multiplicity of voices of different actors in society such as political parties, trade unions, farmers’ organisations, media institutions and academic bodies (Lijphart, 1975).

The relevance of pluralism as a theoretical plank for understanding the state-society interaction on foreign policy cannot be over-emphasised. Pluralism is a more tenable theory, an option that has gained more relevance with the popularity of democracy and the ‘market’ idea (Jordan, 1990).

2.6 Interactions of civil society in foreign policy at the global level

The deepening wave of globalisation has witnessed the increase in civil society actions at the world stage with a focus on key global policy issues and challenges. For instance, the Ottawa Process led to the signing of an international treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines in December, 1997, representing a constructive partnership between government and the civil society (Cameron, 2011).

In the U.S, civil society has a role in global health policy and initiatives such as the global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (The Global Fund), and the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). CSOs are increasingly consulted and in some cases like the Global Fund, are involved in decision making (Doyle and Patel, 2007).

Similarly, there is an upsurge in the role of CSOs in Japanese foreign policy. Jain Purnendra observes that inevitably, who conducts foreign policy is also changing. Other actors are involved in conducting Japan’s international relations. The two most significant of these are subnational governments and NGOs (Purnendra, 2000).

One of the highly contested topics is whether ‘civil society’ exists in China. Often referred to as not-for-profit organizations (NPOs), Chinese ‘civil society’ is basically an extension of state functions where the NPOs implement delegated duties of government departments. Post-earthquake relief and recovery is one of the key areas of work by Chinese ‘civil society’ (Teets, 2009).

In South East Asia, the three countries of Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines have brought in new players in their foreign policy spheres. Foreign policy was the domain of small political elites and autocratic regimes. The democratisation process has led to the broadening of actor participation in the formulation of foreign policy, with roles of parliaments and civil society (Dosch, 2006).

In Malaysia, the public sector reforms in the 1990s led to the opening of policy windows for civil society participation. Malaysia’s foreign policy inclusivity happened during the premiership of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad whose administration opened up the foreign policy decision-making by engaging non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other non-state actors (Alatas, 2003).

The role and voices of CSOs have increased in the area of foreign trade policy, especially with the advent of globalisation (Vieira, 2016). One of the greatest global civil society advocacy actions in recent history was in 1999 in Seattle where activists protested the capitalist global trade regime under the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Since Seattle, participation of CSOs has become the rule rather than the exception as the WTO has opened up to civil society participation (Obrien et.al, 2000).

The World Social Forum (WSF), a summit of the people under various civil society groups and social movements is a platform that calls for an alternative to the capitalist and neo-liberal ideology (Patomaki and Teivainen, 2004). The WSF is a space for civil society groups to coordinate actions for global change. Since 2001, the WSF has brought together hundreds of thousands of activists from all parts of the world (Smith, 2004). The civil society voices aim at ending global inequality and aspire for a just world (Chase-Dunn, 2008).

Similarly, global civil society have come together to demand environmental justice (Naidoo, 2003). Since the Earth Summit of 1992 all the way to the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, the UN has taken steps to include CSOs as a prominent voice in climate change talks (Carr and Norman, 2008).

Global civil society are actively demanding improved governance and accountability in key global foreign policy and international institutions. CSOs are pushing for greater openness in the UN system to transform the UN Assembly into a 'Peoples Millennium Assembly' (Alger, 2002) and more transparency in the IMF and World Bank structures. These governance campaigns are aimed at fostering greater accountability in the global governance institutions and ensuring that civil society has '*a seat on the table*' in global foreign policy processes (Scholte, 2012).

2.7 Role of civil society in foreign policy at continental level

At the continental level there are CSO work in various sectors ranging from political, social and economic areas. In the African Union (AU), civil society is part of the ECOSOCC as provided for in the Statutes of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (African Union, 2004). Enhancing civil society participation is one of AU's objectives and principles. To achieve this objective, the AU Act created the ECOSOCC as an AU organ (AU, 2000). In a study conducted by Amani, an assessment is done of the involvement of NGOs in the AU in light of how this involvement has enhanced human rights promotion and protection (Amani, 2003).

In his analysis of the AU Act in institution-building in Africa, Maluwa addresses the question of civil society participation in the AU system (Maluwa, 2003). Similarly, Naldi and Magliveras (1999), and Parker and Rukare (2002) discuss the role of civil society participation in the AU. African leaders recognised the imperative of involving civil society in African integration through AU declarations, charters and treaties (Wakio, 2006).

African civil society also participates and implements advocacy work around the African Commission on Human and People's Rights which holds its sessions in Banjul, Gambia. The meetings provide a platform for dialogue involving state parties, national

human rights institutions (NHRIs), and non-governmental organisations (Stone-Lee, 2006).

The efforts by AU to reach out to civil society and to citizens are clearly manifested by the steps taken by the AU Commission which established the ‘African Citizens’ Directorate’, located in the office of the Chairperson of the AU Commission. The office is the focal point mandated to facilitate civil society contributions to the decision making processes of the AU. Other departments of the AU Commission also independently consult with civil society and seek their views on AU policy (Afrodad, 2007).

In addition, the AU has established the African Union-Civil Society Organisation Forum which allows CSOs to submit recommendations and take part in shaping the policy and direction of the AU. There has also been resistance to autonomous civil society meetings in the margins of the summits as the AU resists statements that are deemed too critical of member states or Commission positions (Kane and Mbelle, 2007).

The AU Agenda 2063 has also made implicit propositions for the role of the civil society. Agenda 2063 puts people first by embracing ‘people-centred and people-driven’ approaches where the role of civil society is implied (African Union, 2015).

Civil society in the European Union (EU) takes part in the monitoring and shaping of the process of European integration (Kastrat, 2018). Troubled by growing Euroscepticism, and by the populist upsurge, the Union has started to launch a major initiative to strengthen the involvement of citizens in the deliberations of its various institutions (Grote, 2020).

European civil society engage on a number of EU foreign policy issues. Article 15 of the Treaty on Functioning of the European Union recognises civil society’s role in EU’s good governance agenda. Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union stresses the need for the EU to have an open, transparent and regular dialogue with civil society organisations. The European Economic and Social Committee (ESC) represents civil

society at the EU level. The ESC to some extent mirrors the ECOSOCC of the African Union (Wakio, 2006).

The exit of Britain from the European Union known as BREXIT has increased civil society activism aimed at stopping or shaping the BREXIT (Parks, 2018). Street protests have created a sense of fear and violence which lie at the very heart of populism that is mostly driven by youth movements (Roberts, 2020).

The European Union and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (EU-ACP) group of countries enshrines the role of civil society in the Cotonou Agreement and in the Lome Convention. It was not until Lome IV, signed in 1990, that Non-State Actors (NSAs) were seen as legitimate players in the development process (Montoute, 2011). Although the role of civil society in EU trade agreements is one of *'David-Goliath'* scenario, CSOs have clearly influenced multilateral trade negotiations in forums such as the World Trade Organisation (Lorenz, 2011). The EU has adopted the participatory democracy frameworks which allows for citizen empowerment in influencing the trade policy agenda (Montoute, 2016).

Zimbabwe's EU trade agreements debate reflected two distinct civil society groups: 'collaborators' who emphasized direct interaction with the state in their engagement and participation in the process, and 'resisters' who repudiated any formal interaction and consultation, instead opting for confrontational tactical engagement. This not only prevented a collective, strategic CSOs engagement on the process, but also created dilemmas in pursuit of a fair EU trade agreement outcome (Kamidza, 2013).

2.8 Role of civil society in foreign policy at regional economic communities

Efforts by civil society to influence decision making at REC level have increased in strength as the RECs themselves have acquired a broader agenda and greater influence. The REC documents acknowledge the importance of civil society participation as demonstrated in **Box 2.7.1** below.

Box 2.7.1: SADC and civil society

Article 23 of the SADC Treaty reads: ‘In pursuance of the objectives of this Treaty, SADC shall seek to involve fully the people of the region and non-governmental organisations in the process of regional integration. SADC shall cooperate with and support the initiatives of the peoples of the region and non-governmental organisations contributing to the objectives of this Treaty in the areas of cooperation, in order to foster closer relations among the communities, associations and people of the region’.

Source: SADC Treaty

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In line with the SADC position towards civil society engagement, the SADC Council for Non-Governmental Organisations (SADC-CNGO) was created in 2002 as an institution recognised under the SADC Secretariat. SADC member states are also supposed to establish ‘national committees’ of government and civil society although these are not yet functional in all countries (Kane and Mbelle, 2007).

Andreas Godsater (2015) observes that scholars have recently begun to study civil society on the regional level more systematically. When regionalization of civil society is studied, it is often understood within processes of regional governance in which state actors craft regional institutions and policy frameworks to solve common problems. Yet most studies dealing with civil society in regional governance have a state-centric approach, focusing on the marginalisation of CSOs in such processes, treating them as rather passive actors (Godsater, 2015).

The SADC region has had key regional CSO bodies. An assessment of the potential of these regional civil society bodies reveals a number of inherent opportunities but also challenges. Tim Zajontz and Anthony Leysen (2015) identify four regional CSOs and

these are SADC-CNGO, the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC), the Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA), and the Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN). These regional civil society bodies are constrained by a lack of financial autonomy, and dependency on donor funding. Capacity is further hampered because the CSOs are managed by a small number of professional activists (Zajontz and Leysen, 2015).

Moreover, the organisations' representativeness and legitimacy among the regional populace is limited. There are also important ideological and strategic differences and lack of effective coordination which inhibits the creation of a broader, transformative regional civil society alliance (Godsater, 2015).

This is against the overwhelming evidence that regional civil society plays an increasingly important role in articulating popular contestation to neoliberal modes of governance in Southern Africa. The dynamics of regional civil society in SADC also show that regional integration processes are but a 'states only' domain. However, regional civil society constitutes a crucial feature of the Southern Africa region and is a force for transformation and policy change (Zajontz and Leysen, 2015).

CSOs participation in regional integration is affected by a number of challenges. SADC limits civil society involvement in decision making and policy formulation. Civil society's main role lies in service delivery and legitimating state-steered regional social policy at the expense of deeper, more genuinely participatory processes (Godsater and Soderbaum, 2016).

The Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) is another REC which is replete with civil society organisations. The West African Civil Society Forum (WASCOF) was established in 2003 as an outcome of a multi-stakeholder meeting convened to discuss and analyse issues of human security.

The ECOWAS meeting came up with resolutions and the ones related to civil society are captured in **Box 2.7.2** below.

Box 2.7.2: The West African Civil Society Forum

- A civil society unit within the Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS
- An autonomous civil society secretariat to facilitate liaison between West Africa's civil society organisations and ECOWAS institutions
- A regular assembly of West African peoples and organisations coinciding with the ECOWAS Ministerial meetings and Heads of State summits
- A joint taskforce between ECOWAS institutions and civil society to help in developing key strategic and resource mobilisation plans
- The functions of the WASCOF to include pursuing and promoting permanent dialogue and engagement between civil society organisations in the sub-region, ECOWAS, and national authorities, and supporting the process of regional integration

In a comparative study of civil society participation in regional integration in Africa, Theresa Reinold finds that the CSOs in ECOWAS are more robust and actively engaging in the regional body's policy advocacy compared to CSOs in the EAC and in SADC. Reinold establishes some of the key factors and conditions which influence CSO participation in RECs as including the availability and provision of support from member states, the presence of allies in the respective REC's bureaucracy, and characteristics of civil society itself (Reinold, 2019).

Within the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), there are also a number of civil society and NGO advocacy activities. However, the CSO role in COMESA is mostly restricted and limited to trade policy advocacy by groups such as the Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) and the Consumer International (CI), which partner with some local CSO networks such as the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) in Malawi (Mehta & Nanda, 2005). Nonetheless, the lack of a robust presence of CSO policy advocacy in COMESA is well noted (Disenyana, 2009).

The limited role of CSOs in COMESA is most likely attributed to the mammoth tasks civil society faces especially in trade policy. Civil society has contributed to

transforming negotiations from ‘closed clubs’ of state actors towards open(er) consultation processes (Lorenz, 2011).

On the Asian continent, CSOs play a policy activism role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Civil society organisations have asserted their claim for participation in regional governance in Southeast Asia through multiple forms held since the late-1990s. The two most enduring are the ASEAN People’s Assembly (APA) and the ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC), organised by the Solidarity for Asian People’s Advocacy network (Gerald, 2013).

Since its establishment in 1967, ASEAN has shown little interest in facilitating the participation of civil society in its decision-making processes. ASEAN was well known for its elitist tendencies. ASEAN also became this way because the problem of a democratic-deficit is not only caused by the Association itself, but also by the lack of pressure from civil society groups (Collins, 2008).

Recently, the Association has begun to realise the dissatisfaction among the intellectual elite and civil society groups regarding ASEAN’s closed and exclusive nature. There are now several networks and forums through which civil society groups can find a voice in ASEAN. In addition, CSO groups have been invited to provide input in various policy processes and civil society groups are eager to engage with ASEAN and its activities (Chandra, 2006).

By engaging with transnational civil society actors, ASEAN is gradually moving from being an “elite club” to a “people-centred” organisation resulting in improved potential to transform the persistent sovereign state system (Igarash, 2011).

Similarly, the South American intergovernmental body, known as MERCOSUR (*Mercador Comun del Sur* – ‘Common Market of the South’) has had its own experiences with civil society engagement and participation. The Mercosur 1995-2000 Action Plan stated that the strengthening of the integration process required more intensive participation on the part of civil society. However, it was only in 2003 that for the first time the participation of civil society was mentioned. CSO involvement with Latin America multilateralism is relatively well covered but the literature is of general character and deals essentially with summitry and free trade (Sanchez, 2007).

With a few exceptions, secondary sources contain limited material on the practical involvement of CSOs in regional organisations such as Mercosur (Mace, 2020).

Present dynamics of regionalism in Latin America and the Caribbean aim to reverse the exclusionary legacies of “Washington Consensus” yet lack a coordinated and coherent strategy for civil society in the reconstruction of regionalism in Latin America (Serbin, 2012).

There are now positive changes in the Mercosur-Civil society relations, and there is progress in embracing human rights principles. Mercosur has introduced binding and precise norms such as the Protocol of Human Rights (2005). Mercosur has also established bodies which promote civil society space and champion a broad range of human rights. Mercosur has increasingly fostered dialogue with civil society (Hoffman, 2015).

2.9 Civil society role in foreign policy at the national level – the case of Malawi

The Malawi civil society concentrated its work on the civil and political rights in the period 1995-2000 owing to the human rights atrocities from the autocratic regime (HRW, 1989). In practice, civil society and popular participation were virtually non-existent while state power was exercised by largely an unaccountable government (Chirwa et.al, 2000).

Since the political transition from single-party politics to plural multiparty politics in Malawi, there has been a mushrooming of NGOs and civil society organisations. The CSOs are working in different sectors of society ranging from the political governance, human rights, health, education, agriculture, environmental policy advocacy, and economic accountability, just to mention some. This section reviews and discusses some of the literature relating to selected policy advocacy efforts of Malawi CSOs.

The proliferation of human rights NGOs and governance CSOs was a natural reaction to the drive towards the annihilation of the authoritarian regime in the post-1993 Malawi. Human rights and good governance were embraced and fostered as donor conditionality for aid (Gibson, 1999).

Malawi experienced a rise of human rights CSOs such as Civil Liberties Committee (CILIC), Public Affairs Committee (PAC), Malawi Institute of Democratic and Economic Affairs (MIDEA), Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR), the Centre for Advice, Research, and Education on Rights (CARER) and the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC). A conspicuous feature of new democracies globally, NGOs have attracted considerable donor support as agencies that are believed to provide independent voices (Englund, 2006).

Related to the growth of the human rights CSOs was the mushrooming of youth sector NGOs. Between 1995 and 2000, Malawi registered notable CSOs such as the Centre for Youth and Children Affairs (CEYCA), Youth-Net and Counselling (YONECO), and the Active Youth Initiative for Social Enhancement (AYISE) just to mention some. These NGOs focus on promoting and protecting rights of young people including education rights, health rights and youth economic empowerment (Vold, 2013).

As a part of the CSOs in Malawi, trade unionism has its roots in the post-1993 political transition. The Labour Relations Act 1996 defines a trade union as a combination of persons, the principal purposes of which are the representation and promotion of employees (GoM, 1996). Trade unions operated in the underground during the Banda regime as they were not allowed. The wave of democratisation influenced the resurrection of unionism (Ihonvbere, 1997).

Similarly, gender advocacy and women empowerment NGOs have risen in Malawi within the same time period between 1995 and 2000. Although largely a patriarchal society, women activists, NGOs and feminist groups alike have been active agents in the struggle to ensure protection and promotion of gender related rights, and to ensure that women have equitable representation in leadership positions (Tiessen, 2008)

Malawi civil society has since 2000 increased focus on economic and social rights. Civil society policy advocacy targets education, health and HIV, environment and climate change, economic governance sectors. Civil society networks have been established along the sector area of priorities such that the year 2000 could as well be termed ‘the era of the rise of civil society networks and coalitions’ (James and Malunga, 2006).

Prominent CSO networks include Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) which was established in 2001 as a remnant of the Jubilee 2000 Malawi debt cancellation campaign (Kubalasa, 2003). MEJN also kicked off as a leading CSO network working to mobilise civil society participation in the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process and related campaigns for championing pro-poor budgets (Bamusi, 2007).

The NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGO-GCN) was established to bring together and harmonise all gender advocacy and women empowerment CSOs. NGOGCN operates under different thematic directorates such as the rights of children, education rights, and health rights in so far as they impact on gender rights (Kayuni and Muriaas, 2014). Another area of focus by the NGOGCN that is related to foreign policy is the monitoring of international gender protocols and instruments such as the SADC Gender Protocol (Morna, 2014).

The Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC) was to promote and protect education rights through education advocacy and research (Anders and Chirwa, 2018). CSEC also conducts education sector budget analysis for policy accountability, and supports policies for innovating financing for education (Nsapato, 2017). The civil society network also follows up on international commitments on education under the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs), AU Agenda 2063, and SADC commitments in the education sector (CSEC, 2017).

The environment sector has the Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC) whose objective is to coordinate civil society responses to climate change and related disasters. CISONECC also provides a platform for engagement with the government and other stakeholders for improved adaptation and mitigation to climate change impacts (Tembo-Nhlema, 2019). CISONECC is active in advocacy at the global climate conferences such as the 17th Conference of Parties (COP 17) which took place in South Africa (Hargreaves, 2012). Malawi health Equity Network (MHEN), is a leading CSO network in the health and has the vision for “All people in Malawi to have access to equitable, quality and responsive essential health care services with MHEN as the Health Equity Watch (Njunga and Kasiya, 2006).

There are other CSO networks such as the Malawi National Aids Association (MANASO), the NGO Child Rights Coalition (NGOCCR), the Malawi Network Against Trafficking (MANAT) and the Civil Society Nutrition Alliance –Malawi (CSONA).

As one way of policy advocacy, the CSO networks conduct Malawi government budget advocacy through budget analysis, budget tracking and budget awareness. Leading CSO networks in this area include MEJN which carries out general multi-sector budget advocacy on an annual basis. Similarly, MHEN and CSEC implement budget work from their respective sectoral angles. The NGOGCN carries out budget accountability from a gender-budget perspective as a novel aspect of gender mainstreaming and women empowerment in Malawi (Mbilizi, 2013).

The Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) – Malawi Chapter is a coalition of human rights CSOs with a specific focus on promoting and protecting human rights while also touching on accountability issues such as corruption and national integrity policy systems. The HRDC interfaces with Malawi foreign policy through civil society reports to UN Human Rights offices in Geneva and at the African Union in Banjul. HRDC engages with key diplomatic missions such as the UK, US, Norway, Germany and the EU to report human rights and governance issues, apart from engaging international entities such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (AI).

Similarly, the Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC), another CSO network on human rights and governance conducted a study on international relations in Malawi. Among other issues the study focused on the extent to which parliament participates in foreign policy, and made recommendations for people-centered foreign policy in Malawi (HRCC, 2009).

While Malawi CSOs and networks are actively implementing various policy, legal, and accountability interventions, the literature reviewed in this study exposes the lack of presence of robust CSO activism in the sector of foreign policy. The absence of a civil society network on foreign policy begs questions surrounding the extent of democratization and the issues of democratic deficit in Malawi's foreign affairs.

Similarly, issues of policy accountability and foreign policy budget accountability come to the lime light and the lack of civil society visibility in these spaces represents a democratic deficit that is exactly the main preoccupation of this study.

2.10 Determinants of foreign policy making and implementation

An understanding of the space of CSOs in foreign policy can be gauged from the factors that shape the states' foreign policies. The decisions of all foreign policy actions can be categorised at three basic levels of global, national and individual determinants (Kegley and Wittkopf, 2006: 59).

Moreover, the determinants of Malawi's foreign policy are external and internal factors (Patel and Hajat, 2007: 379-382). External factors include: international system, character of the world economy, international/regional groupings, multilateral organisations and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Internal factors include: geography, ideology and types of government, economy, socio cultural factors, public opinion, and leadership perceptions.

2.10.1 International system

Malawi under Dr. Banda adopted a strong pro-Western stance and thus was under the influence of the Western bloc in a bipolar international system. This stance was in the name of *realism*. At the end of the 1980's with the end of cold war, Malawi's foreign policy became more flexible and open. The collapse of the communist regime and the resurgence of democracy catalysed events in the African continent in general and the southern African region in particular (Sagawa, 2011: 132).

2.10.2 Character of world economy

The collapse of Communist regimes implied decline of the relevance of communism as an ideology and the subsequent triumph of capitalism which redefined the world economy along the precepts of free market economy, which was buttressed by greater connectivity and integration of global financial systems. Free market forces exerted irresistible influence that impelled countries like Malawi to shed their insularity and join the global financial community (Patel and Hajat, 2007).

2.10.3 International and regional groupings

Malawi's emergence from insularity can be gauged by its membership of, and increasing participation in international and regional groupings such as the United Nations (UN) Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), amongst others and subsequent ratification of numerous agreements, charters and covenants. Membership in these bodies was important to enhance the pace of social and economic development through new partnerships and collaborations between the state and non-state actors such as CSOs (Bamusi, 2012).

2.10.4 Multilateral organisations and international non-governmental organisations

The increasing presence of multilateral institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank has demanded more fiscal discipline and accountability on the part of Government. These institutions also kept a vigil on democratic governance and demand CSO participation in key policy processes. The expansion of the United Nations agencies over the years in areas of economic and social development has been significant and Malawi has substantially benefited from institutions such the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which also support civil society space and expansion (Patel and Hajat, 2007).

2.10.5 Internal factors

Patel and Hajat also identified internal factors that determine Malawi's foreign policy. These include geography as Malawi is a land-linked country, a situation that calls for peaceful coexistence with neighbouring countries such as Mozambique and Tanzania which have access to the sea as follows. Another internal factor is Ideology which plays an important role in international relations. During the Cold War era, the ideology factor was the main determinant of a state's global identity and economic status. The emergence of democratic ideology means that Malawi enjoys greater support from its democratic partners such as Britain, the EU, and USA by virtue of being one of the new democracies in Africa (Ibid: 380-382):

Economy is another internal factor that determines foreign policy. Malawi has historically, relied on foreign aid to combat endemic poverty and low levels of human development. This reliance has curtailed its independence and flexibility in formulating its own foreign policy. Patel and Hajat argue that it is imperative for Malawi to develop its capacity to attract Foreign Direct Investment, demand fair trade terms through the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and explore other avenues of economic growth such as developing tourism industry in order to attain flexibility in pursuing international relations. This is consistent with Malawi's foreign policy which focuses on development diplomacy (Malawi Government: Foreign Policy, 2000: 11).

Public opinion is another internal factor. The recent wave of democracy has necessitated greater sensitivity to public opinion in many areas, such as service delivery, government performance, fiscal probity, and international relations which were once held to the exclusive domains of autocratic heads of state. Leadership perception also plays a role in shaping foreign policy. Dr. Banda's fervent anglophile was translated into a perception that "white equals might equals right". This was demonstrated by such staunch allegiance to pro-Western interests to the exclusion of all else, whilst under Dr. Muluzi's administration doors were opened to a wider spectrum both within the region and without, including countries such as Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Libya.

2.11 Actors in foreign policy making in Malawi

Stakeholders in policymaking in Malawi include: political parties, civil society (the church, citizen groups, NGOs and professional associations), the media (print and electronic), international organisations (international financial institutions and donor agencies), the three branches of government (Legislature, Executive and judiciary) and the public at large. These stakeholders have roles which are summarised in the Table 2.10 below (Chinsinga, 2007: 364):

Table 2.10 Stakeholders in the policymaking process

Media	Act as a sounding board in their interactive relationship with the public opinion. The media often call attention to issues on which political action and policy making is required.
Political parties	Put forward interests, aspirations, and beliefs of their members into coherent ideological platforms, policy initiatives, and programmes. They therefore provide a forum through which the grassroots can offer inputs and exert influence over the policymaking process.
Civil society (the church, interest organisations or pressure groups or specific NGOS)	Offer the grassroots alternative channels of participation and influence in the policy making process in their respective in their respective spheres of influence. They operate in the fields of empowerment, human rights, gender equality, poverty reduction, political participation, sustainable development, economic governance and many more.
Judiciary	Determines and specifies not only government what Government cannot do but also what it must do in order to meet legal and constitutional requirements for policy decisions.
Executive	Initiates and implements policies to be legislated to parliament.
Parliament (Legislature)	Legislates policies and provides oversight in the implementation of policies. It is thus expected to aggregate and articulate citizens' choices,

	scrutinises policy proposals and provide legitimacy for policy decisions.
Public (citizens)	Exerts influence over the policy process through various channels at their disposal, for example, through representation in the Legislature, media, civil society, political parties, mass mobilization and demonstrations.
International organisations	Influence the realm of economic policies by playing a key role, since the country is heavily donor dependent. The allocation of resources to competing policy priorities is dependent primarily on donor preferences. The national budget without donor support is hardly viable.

Source: Chinsinga (2007)

2.12 Challenges in foreign policy implementation

A study conducted by the Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC) in 2009 on *People Centred and Participatory International Relations: Increasing Parliamentary Voice and Accountability in Foreign Affairs* identified the following challenges facing Malawi on international relations (HRCC, 2009: 39-41):

2.12.1 Low stakeholder participation

The study revealed that the international relations function of government is well known within government itself and within institutions that are directly implementing programs on related issues. Other stakeholders have partial understanding and this is mainly on account of the dominance of political diplomacy. International relations are less closely associated with the development discourse as it is associated with political representation of the country to the outside world.

2.12.2 Lack of awareness and information about Malawi's Foreign Policy

Key parliamentarians who belong on the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations also indicate that they have never set their eyes on the policy. This is a matter of concern considering that the policy is the key guiding document and that MPs should have been among the first to access the copies regardless of the point that most of the MPs are newly elected. Lack of knowledge on the existence of the policy is also acute among CSOs while a majority of government officials interviewed (with the exception of Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials) indicated that they have never seen the foreign policy document.

2.12.3 Politics as a main determinant of diplomatic ties

While Malawi is making progress towards de-politicization of the diplomatic service, there is still a long way to go to turn the service into a career based and professional determined area. Political considerations continue to become overriding factors in opening and closing of embassies just as politics largely determines the choice of Ambassadors, High Commissioners and even some key diplomatic staff. This is one key cause for the slow progress towards embracing of career diplomatic service in Malawi

2.12.4 Inadequate financial and human capital

Lack of financial and human resources by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters itself and its diplomatic missions abroad. The study further noted that there is a high vacancy rate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Headquarters as well as in the diplomatic establishments such that it is difficult to expect the same lean staff to spread itself too thinly across too many diplomatic assignments.

2.13 A discussion of the gaps in the literature related to CSO work in foreign policy

Civil society interface with foreign policy issues at the global level focuses much on activism and policy analysis that question the operations of global institutions. CSOs are pushing for accountability and transparency in key global entities such as the UN, the WTO, IMF. It is clear that CSOs are not an integral part of the decision making structures in these global institutions. Civil society merely operates as a street voice churning out its activism through street protests and other forms of popular activism. Although CSOs do not ‘sit on the table’ in the boardrooms of these global entities, there is some progress towards the establishment of windows for CSO engagement. These include the civil society liaison offices under the UN, IMF, and World Bank. Other international institutions have also initiated round tables for consultation with CSOs on topical issues of concern for civil society.

However, from the literature review, there is a civil society participation gap where CSOs are not regarded an integral actor in the formulation and implementation of key global policy decisions as these are largely the preserve of the global institutions and state actors. As projected by the elite theory, the participation gap arises from the elitist posture taken by the global entities. The Marxist theory also comes into play as the prominent global actors operate as a special class that is aligned to the neo-liberal and capitalist paradigms.

The systematic exclusion of civil society from participation in the formulation and implementation of key global foreign policy decisions is also reminiscent of a globalist ‘political settlement’ that is anchored on the neoliberal platform. This is true, for example in the case of the IMF, World Bank and the WTO as these entities are dominated and captured by the eight richest countries on earth (the G8) and to some extent by some that are in the G20.

At the continental level, the literature review appears to suggest more progressive steps towards integration of civil society in foreign policy processes. The case of the African Union where the formation of ECOSOCC as a platform for CSO participation is a landmark example. Through ECOSOCC, civil society is able to input into a number of AU processes such as the peace and security organ. The same applies to the European

Union, the ASEAN and the MERCOSUR where special platforms have been established as windows for civil society interaction with foreign policy mechanisms.

However, the literature review reveals a gap that is similar to the CSO interface with foreign policy issues at the global level where civil society voices are largely a ‘side show’ and not fully made part and parcel of the mainstream decision making and implementation structures of the continental bodies. CSOs constitute parallel forms of continental advocacy platforms and foreign policy decision making through petitions, communiques, and street protests. Policy formulation and implementation of key decisions is still largely a preserve of state actors and state parties. The role of civil society to a large extent stops at ‘making input’ into the formulation of policies and decisions, and the input is at the mercy of the state parties who have the discretion to take the input on board or simply discard it.

The lip service approach to civil society inclusion in the continental bodies reflects a deep sense of elitism in the functioning of the institutions. State systems and officials largely dominate decision making processes while implementation and execution is also largely the preserve of the state parties with invisible roles of CSOs. The exclusionist posture assumed by the continental bodies is in sharp contrast to the democratic participation theories such as pluralism where CSOs are not fully integrated in the policy decision making and implementation processes.

The literature review reveals a gap where CSOs are at the mercy of state parties and have to wait to be invited by the state entities in order to participate. The treaties establishing the continental bodies such as the AU Treaty represent solid form of political settlements that are grounded in legal norms to systemically recognize state parties as legally acceptable entities in decision making and implementation while the treaties merely assign peripheral functions and roles to CSOs.

The literature reviewed further reveals that at the level of regional economic communities, the state of civil society interplay with foreign policy activities is also characterized with participatory gaps. Although steps have been taken to establish mechanisms and platforms for CSO voices to be heard, it is clear that civil society is

still regarded as a parallel structure whose input can at times be dismissed for different reasons which include perceptions that CSOs are platforms unruly politics and regime change. Such perceptions are common in SADC especially when CSOs raise issues connected to problematic regimes and countries such as Zimbabwe and Eswathini (Swaziland).

However, the literature review also reveals areas of progress and steps towards civil society inclusion as is the case with the establishment of the SADC Council for NGO, an entity within the SADC Secretariat. ECOWAS is even more progressive in institutionalizing civil society functions into its organizational and administrative structures. ASEAN has made progressive steps to transition from an exclusively elitist club to a platform that has opened up to CSOs. Nonetheless, the literature still reveals a gap where CSOs are not accorded the full participation rights and the space in the formulation of key policy decisions and implementation of key actions is restricted.

The dominance of state parties in the formulation and implementation of foreign policies and programs, again resonates with the elitism and exclusive tendencies observed at the global and continental levels. Elite theory therefore takes center stage in explaining the foreign policy dynamics. Similarly, the dominance of state actors runs contrary to the dictates of democratic participation theories such as pluralism and waters down the democratic values of inclusiveness in the foreign policy formulation and implementation.

The general fabric of political settlements frameworks also comes into play from the point of view of the treaties that have established the RECs which are essentially ‘gentleman’s’ agreements among state parties. CSOs and other stakeholders become secondary if not distant players in the course of formulation and implementation of REC decisions and programs. Clearly, the literature that has been reviewed in this study point to CSO participation gaps in the RECs. Civil society are merely assigned the roles of ‘contributing input’ (sometimes after rigorous research and analysis) which can be dismissed even for unrelated reasons, and CSOs are condemned to organizing street protests and arranging parallel events on the sidelines of official REC processes.

The literature review on possible civil society participation in Malawi foreign policy also reveals serious gaps. Malawi civil society is active in the public policy arena, general governance and in human rights activism. However, the literature shows a gap of Malawi CSO participation in foreign policy. The literature also reveals a gap in terms of absence of specific programs and dedicated CSOs, NGOs, or civil society networks in the field of foreign policy. Malawi NGOs and CSO networks only touch on selected aspects of foreign policy such as issues of human trafficking and migration, as well as advocacy for the ratification and domestication of international protocols and conventions.

Malawi civil society policy advocacy covers social sector policies such education where CSOs under the network of CSEC are active; health policies where MHEN is one of the prominent CSO advocacy networks; the agriculture, food security and nutrition policy sectors are well served by the civil society coalitions of CISANET and CSONA; while the human rights sector has a range of CSOs such as HRCC and HRDC. The Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) is a leading civil society coalition on economic and public finance policy. Malawi civil society has extended its grip to almost all the critical public policy areas where participation in policy formulation and implementation is visible albeit to varying degrees.

Clearly, the literature reviewed shows no presence of an NGO, a CSO, or civil society network that is primarily established to pursue foreign policy advocacy. In addition, Malawi CSOs are more prominent on foreign policy activities when it comes to carrying out such tasks on the global, continental and at the level of RECs. Malawi CSOs participate in global issues such as at the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Similarly, presence of Malawi CSOs is felt at the continental level such as at the AU. The same applies at the regional level where for instance Malawi CSOs are present in the SADC advocacy activities as well as in COMESA.

This pattern is consistent with the elite theory where foreign policy at the national level is regarded an arena for the elite which is dominated by Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a hub of elite officials on account of their experience and education which are underlying bases for systematic and structural exclusion of groups such as civil society.

Democratic participation theories such as pluralism also explain this behavioral pattern, albeit in the corollary, where the dominance of some actors and the non-inclusion of civil society represents non-conformity to the body of pluralist theories.

This also reinforces the Marxist theories where foreign policy could be regarded a preserve of a certain class of actors in society who advance the policy agenda to secure and protect their class interests. The absence of Malawi civil society in foreign policy formulation and implementation could also be explained through the lenses of political settlement theory considering that such minimal CSO role could be a manifestation of a deep seated political settlement which has defined civil society as a stranger and an unwanted element that must systemically be eliminated and barred from entering the foreign policy space.

2.14 Summary of the outcomes emanating from the state of play of the civil society and foreign policy interactions

This study understands civil society as the “sphere” of institutions, organisations, and individuals located between the family, the state and the market, in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests (CIVICUS, 2002). The study proceeds to underscore the point that it is hard to envisage democratic consolidation without the role of civil society, and it is now clear that to comprehend democratic change around the world, one must study civil society (Diamond, 1994). However, the many conceptual frameworks and continued debate on the term ‘civil society’, confirm that defining civil society is not a simple task (VanDyck, 2017:1).

The concept of foreign policy connotes blueprints or guidelines that states use to guide their interactions with other states as well as multilateral institutions together with non-state actors such as civil society that are increasingly claiming their space in the foreign policy arena. This study leans on the understanding of foreign policy as a set of guidelines that govern the behaviour of states towards other states (Bojang, 2018). Foreign policy consists of decisions and actions, which involves to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others. By this, foreign policy involves actions that are made within state’s borders, intended towards forces existing outside the country’s borders (Frankel, 1963).

In an effort to get a deeper understanding of the state of play between civil society and foreign policy, the study takes an eclectic approach as it combines key theories and conceptual frameworks namely elite theory, Marxist theory, political establishment, and the democracy theory of pluralism. The study advances the view that foreign policy interactions are captured in elitist tendencies where the lead actors use foreign policy as a platform for advancing elite interests (Cunningham and Moore, 1997). In line with Marxist theory, the elite operate as a special class in society (Carver, 1991), a kind of bourgeoisie bent at perpetuating class interests while systematically alienating civil society actors which represents the majority interests from participating in foreign policy formulation and implementation.

The study invokes the pluralist theory in such a way that the structural exclusion of civil society widens the democratic deficit and undermines the democratic values which include pluralism, a theory that views democratic participation as being anchored in multiplicity of voice of actors such as civil society (Baubock, 2018). Foreign policy is a form a political settlement among the elite that has established formal rules (such as treaties among state parties) and informal rules to structurally marginalise civil society from participation in policy formulation and implementation processes.

The literature review exposes gaps which include that civil society is not fully integrated in the formulation of foreign policy decisions, programs, and in the implementation of key actions. The trend is common at all levels from the global, continental, regional as well as national level. The literature review also reveals a trend where CSOs are pushed to participating in side events of global, continental and regional summits and other major international conferences involving state parties as entities officially sanctioned under treaty.

On another note, the literature review shows instances where special windows have been opened to facilitate civil society integration in foreign policy participation processes at the global level such as the UN civil society liaison office; at the continental level such as the AU ECOSOCC; and at the regional level such as the SADC NGO forum. At the national level, as in the case of Malawi, the literature review reveals a plethora of civil society actors participating in the formulation and implementation of

various public policies such as health, education, economic policy and human rights advocacy. However, Malawi civil society is non-existent in the foreign policy arena as the literature points to the absence of civil society involvement in the formulation and implementation of Malawi foreign policy.

2.15 Conclusion of the chapter

The chapter has given the general direction of the study through a review of the relevant literature. Drawing on relevant studies, the chapter has defined and explained in greater detail the concepts that are central to this study such as concept of civil society, foreign policy and national interest. The chapter has also presented and discussed the conceptual and theoretical framework for the study by discussing the elite theory, Marxist theory, political establishments, and the democratic participation theory of pluralism. The chapter also has discussed at length the relevant literature that establishes a CSO-foreign policy nexus by discussing the role of civil society in foreign policy at the global, continental, regional integration, and at the national level where the case of Malawi foreign policy and Malawi civil society has been an area of special focus.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This is largely a qualitative study design which is built on the philosophical research foundation of an epistemological approach to research methods (Bhaskar, 1989). Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and more importantly how we can generate it (Cardinal and Hayward, 2004). Furthermore, the study is grounded in *interpretivism* (Okasha, 2002), as it is a descriptive study designed to dig deeper and generate knowledge (Robson, 2002) on the question of civil society participation in foreign policy and on how CSOs take part in the formulation and implementation of Malawi foreign policy.

The overall aim of this chapter is to give a description of the research design and the methodology used in the study. The chapter discusses the research design, sampling techniques, data collection methods, presentation and analysis techniques.

3.2 Research design

A research design is a blueprint, or an outline for conducting the study in such a way that maximum control will be exercised over factors that would interfere with the validity of the research results (Polit and Hugler, 1999: 155). A research design is therefore the researcher's overall plan for obtaining answers to the research questions guiding the study. Designing a study helps researchers to plan and implement the study in a way that will help them obtain the intended results, thus increasing the chances of obtaining information that could be associated with the real situation (Burns and Grove, 1993: 223).

This study has used epistemological processes to inform the methodological approach rooted in the research design (Moser, 1967). Epistemology has in this case been central

to the researcher's understanding of reality regarding the nature and extent of civil society participation in foreign policy. The study is grounded in interpretivism as it is a highly qualitative research which has employed a descriptive research design (Gill and Johnson, 2002) in analyzing the factors that determine the democratic deficit through civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy in Malawi. Interpretivism is an epistemology that advocates necessity on the part of the researcher to understand differences in the roles of humans as social actors (Aram and Salipante, 2003).

Remenyi et al (1998:35) stress the necessity to study 'the details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them'. This is often associated with the term constructionism, or *social constructionism* (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This follows the interpretivist position that it is necessary to explore the subjective meanings motivating the actions of social actors in order for the researcher to be able to understand these actions (Denzin, 2001). This study borrows this framework and is designed to understand how CSOs construct their views around foreign policy. The study is also designed to interpret the roles, interactions, and behaviors of civil society as social actors in the foreign policy sphere.

The research design further operates on the basis of constructivism as the study deals with multiple realities which are deemed to be socially constructed (Hughes, 1990). The research uses soft data in addressing the research questions and embraces thick description while focusing on depth as well as specificity of the research themes as they unfold (Tsoukas, 1994). The purpose of a descriptive research design is to provide perceptions and views of respondents about the phenomenon under study (Burns and Grove, 1993: 293). Descriptive research design relies heavily on interview of respondents and data available in secondary sources (Malek and Massoud, 2011).

As a qualitative study, this research bears in mind that this can be a highly subjective and value laden area in line with the *standpoint theory* where one is inclined to define and construct reality based on where they stand (Cresswell, 2008). As such, the researcher proceeded with caution by embracing the values of a socially responsible researcher or a facilitator of the generation of knowledge, operating with caution and

minimum bias. The research design was also constructed in a way that leads to results that stand the test of ‘political-ethical’ validity (Bandolier, 2012). The critical behaviors required for attaining acceptable degrees of validity include transparency about the values or bias, democratically negotiated processes such as consensus around data, and transparency as well as replicability of the methods (Gower, 1997).

3.3 Target study population

Social science research considers a population as any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher (Gill and Johnson, 2002). The population can all be individuals of particular type, or a more restricted part of that group (Best and Khan, 1989: 13). The complete set of people or entities is called the population. The smaller subset of the population is called a sample. The idea is to obtain information that can be used to make inferences about the whole population of interest while saving resources, including time and money. A target population can be defined as that group which the researcher wishes to generalize or apply the study results (Gay, 1992).

In this study, the target population comprises civil society organizations and leaders representing different sectors of policy work, and CSO activists, senior government officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Finance, the NGO Board, and the Office of President and Cabinet (OPC). The senior government officials from these departments were purposively selected because they have various roles which impact the implementation of foreign policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has an additional responsibility as a lead entity in the formulation, implementation and review of the Malawi foreign policy.

The civil society responses comprise the primary input for the study. CSO voices are a center of analysis to the study. Civil society dynamics are the core subject matter in this research. Their views on foreign policy matters, and their perceptions on factors surrounding participation in the formulation and implementation of the Malawi foreign policy are of critical importance to the study. The views of government officials are

equally essential to the study as they specifically help to validate, justify, balance, and correct the CSO responses.

3.4 Sample and sampling technique

A sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis (Best and Kahn, 1989). Sampling essentially refers to choosing a portion of the targeted population for research (Buchanan and Boddy, 1988). It is the process of identifying a small set of people to participate as respondents in a study (Robson, 2002). Ideally one would want to collect data from “everyone” but resource constraints and other limitations necessitate considering a small but representative group of respondents. The primary advantages of sampling are feasibility and coverage (Rubin and Rubin, 1995).

In this study, the primary targeted population of study is CSOs in Malawi. However, the sampling frame is narrowed down to the list of CSOs and NGOs that are on the membership list of the Council for NGOs in Malawi (CONGOMA) and the NGO Board of Malawi as entities mandated by statute in the management of NGOs in Malawi (Malawi Government, 2001). A sampling frame is basically a scaled down version of the study population. The CONGOMA and NGO Board lists therefore represent the scaled down subset of all NGOs in Malawi and represent lists of all NGOs or CSO leaders with the probability to be included in the study.

This study went further to ponder over the issue of sample size as a critical aspect of the research design (Marshall, 1996). However, this being a qualitative study, it was not necessary to start off with a predetermined sample size as is the case with quantitative studies (Marshall et al, 2013). In this regard, the study considered views from respondents (CSO/NGO leaders) and government officials until the point of saturation was reached (Coyne, 2008).

The study used *non-probability sampling technique* where not all elements (CSOs) in the sampling frame (the CONGOMA and NGO Board list) stood equal chances of being selected for study (Harsh, 2011). The study comes across two main types of non-probability sampling techniques namely *convenience sampling* and *purposive sampling*

(Robinson, 2014. This study settled on the latter. Particular categories of CSOs were of interest and were consequently targeted for study.

The targeting focused on CSOs that are considered well versed with the issues under study, and also CSOs with known history of experience working in public policy advocacy and in the foreign policy sector or aspects of it. The research therefore used expert sampling and purposive sampling techniques to select the elements for study (Luborsky and Rubinstein, 1995). The two techniques were also used to select Malawi government officials included in the sample. The study does not touch on sensitive issues such that it was not necessary to use the snowballing sampling frame which is often deployed in researching sensitive topics (Chaim, 2008).

According to SAGE Dictionary of Social Research (2006), purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling technique in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Purposive sampling technique ensures balance of group sizes when multiple groups are to be selected, however samples are not easily defensible as being representative of populations due to potential subjectivity of the researcher (Black, 1999).

Respondents to this study were therefore sampled out based on their experience with civil society work and CSO policy advocacy, and also based on expert knowledge on issues pertaining to Malawi foreign policy. It is on this basis that most of the respondents were purposively selected from the civil society organizations and CSO networks that are directly engaging government and other stakeholders on public policies and legislation. Similarly, the respondents included senior government officials who are involved in the foreign policy formulation and implementation.

3.5 Data collection methods and tools

The main data collection methods used were *in-depth interviews* and *key informant interviews* (KII) and documentary analysis. These are appropriate for qualitative study designs (Miles, 1990). The researcher carried out in-depth interviews which involved face to face encounters with the respondents aimed at understanding the informants'

perspective on the issues under study, in their own words. The in-depth interviews also allowed leeway for deeper questioning and probing to get to the bottom of the issues while maintaining focus (Moser and Korstjens, 2018).

The KII were rolled out to solicit expert responses by targeting well informed respondents in the field of civil society policy advocacy and ‘elites’ (Kumar, 1989) in foreign policy. The KII were conducted as in-depth interviews to generate as much information as possible, and were also exploratory in nature (Marshall, 1996). In terms of data collection tools, the research was done using two tools namely a semi-structured interview guide, and through documentary analysis.

3.5.1 An interview guide

An interview guide is a data gathering instrument which is deployed on a qualitative research design (Galletta, 2013). The study used a semi-structured interview guide which spelt out areas of discussion where the respondent provided answers in line with the issue areas. Using the interview guide, the respondents had the liberty to be as descriptive and explanatory in their responses and could express themselves in their own words (Boyce and Neale, 2006).

An interview guide also affords the respondents the choice to remain anonymous and provide answers without fear of identification. The interview guide allows data to be collected on a broad range of topics within a limited period, and it allows for more probing (Patton, 2002). It carries flexible sets of questions tied to the study objectives that allows probing and exercise of judgement. The interview guide carries a standard format for all subjects and is independent of the interviewer’s mood (Brink and Wood, 1998).

In this study, two semi-structured interview guides were designed. The first interview guide was specifically for civil society organization leaders, and the second interview guide was for government officials. The semi-structured interview guide contained both close and open ended questions and were administered in order to get an insight on the levels of democratic deficit in foreign policy by measuring the extent to which civil society participates in the formulation and implementation of Malawi foreign policy.

The interview guides were administered both through physical contact in a one-on-one interface as well as through phone interviews and electronic mail interface, mainly as a way of observing social distance as required under the Covid-19 measures. The main advantage of administering the interview guide through phone conversation, electronic mail and social media is that the interviews were ably conducted without the need to physically interact with a majority of the respondents and this was time efficient.

However, some of the disadvantages are that the response rate was slow as some respondents took longer to return the interview guides with the responses. As Brink (1996) observes, some of the disadvantages of mailed questionnaire is that some of the items may be left unanswered and subjects must be literate (Brink, 1996). However, the researcher was able to overcome the problem of slow response rate through continuous follow ups by telephone. Some of the interview guides were therefore administered through telephone interviews by the researcher. A total of 56 interview guides were dispatched to the purposefully sampled and targeted population of respondents, out of which 47 were responded to, representing 83.9 % response rate.

3.5.2 Document analysis

Another tool for collecting data in a qualitative research design is document analysis (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Cobin and Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007).

To enhance the primary source of data collection, this study also collected secondary data using this method of document analysis. Specifically, the method involved reviewing government official documents, journal articles, books, newspaper articles and online resources. These were documents that carried various themes on foreign policy, civil society and policy advocacy. They include Malawi government policy documents and reports, constitution of the Republic of Malawi, civil society publications, and global, continental and regional documents that touch on civil society

and role in foreign policy issues. Document analysis yields data - experts, quotations or entire passages – that are then organized into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis (Labuschagne, 2003).

3.6 Methods of data analysis used in the study

Research designs require that collected data is organized in a meaningful way, and this is referred to as data analysis (Liamputong, 2009). Through analytic processes, this study has turned voluminous data into understandable and insightful analysis. The study sets out the different approaches that were used to make sense of the collected data (Huberman and Miles, 2002). These data analysis methods include *thematic analysis*, *narrative analysis*, and *trends analysis* (Richie and Spencer, 1994).

This study used thematic analysis and trends analysis methods which were preferred as the researcher needed to capture the trends and all the essential elements of the themes emerging from the data. A rigorous analysis of the data using the thematic analysis method has used a model of qualitative data analysis which follows the five steps: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Castelberry and Nolen, 2018).

3.7 Limitations of the methodology

The methodology that was used in this study right from sampling the target population all the way to the method of administering the interview guide might have a number of limitations such as time constraints. The Covid-19 environment in which the study was taking place affected access to libraries for document access, and also restricted physical interaction with respondents for interviews.

In addition, the two Malawi presidential elections, one in May 2019 which was nullified by the Malawi courts, leading to the holding of a fresh election in June 2020, meant that many CSOs and government officials were preoccupied with the polls and the uncertainty associated with the electoral outcome. Consequently, there was nothing that the researcher could have done, except to strictly adhere to the standard principals of research.

The method of posting the questionnaires through email has its own shortfalls such as lack of clarity in some of the responses. However, this was taken care of by following up with a telephone interview. This also ended up being costly to the researcher.

3.8 Conclusion of the chapter

This research is largely a qualitative study and it has used purposive sampling techniques. The study has used interview guides and document analysis as data collection instruments. The data has been analyzed using trends analysis and thematic analysis. This chapter has outlined the techniques used in sampling the target population, instruments used in data collection, and the methods used in data analysis. The chapter has also outlined the limitations associated with the methodology used.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: THE KEY FACTORS THAT DETERMINE CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study and analysis which are then subjected to an in-depth discussion. First, the chapter outlines in summary the key characteristics of the respondents in order to give a context of the civil society and government institutional environment within which the findings are located. Secondly, the detailed study findings are presented in alignment with the study objectives and in sync with the research questions.

The study findings respond to the research questions around the extent of a democratic deficit in foreign policy through an analysis of the factors that determine civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of Malawi foreign policy. Thirdly, this is followed by a section that presents a rigorous thematic analysis based on specific codes assigned to particular themes emerging as common trends leading to an observed pattern. This is then followed with a discussion of the research findings. The chapter closes with a conclusion.

4.2 Organizational composition and characteristics of study respondents

The study focused on respondents that are mainly in the two broad categories of civil society organizations and government institutions. A total of 70 interview guides received positive responses of which 46 were CSO respondents representing 65.7 % while 24 were government respondents representing 34.3 %. The distribution of respondents by type of institution is shown in the Table below.

Table 4.1 Distribution of respondents by type of institution

Ministry/Department	Frequency	Percentage
Civil Society Organisations	46	65.7%
Government	24	34.3%
Total	70	100

Source: Field data

4.2.1 Characteristics of civil society respondents

The civil society respondents were identified as CSO leaders and a specific interview guide was administered to this category of respondents. See **Appendix 3** which shows the list of civil society respondents identified by institution, and the general sectoral focus of the institution, and the type of organization (whether a stand-alone NGO or a CSO network).

4.2.1.1 Rate of response to interviews and composition of CSO respondents by type

The researcher issued a total of 51 interview guides to civil society leaders. However, 46 interview guides were responded to and these include the interview guides that were followed up through phone and email interviews. This represents a CSO response rate of 90.1 % as presented in Figure 4.1.1 below.

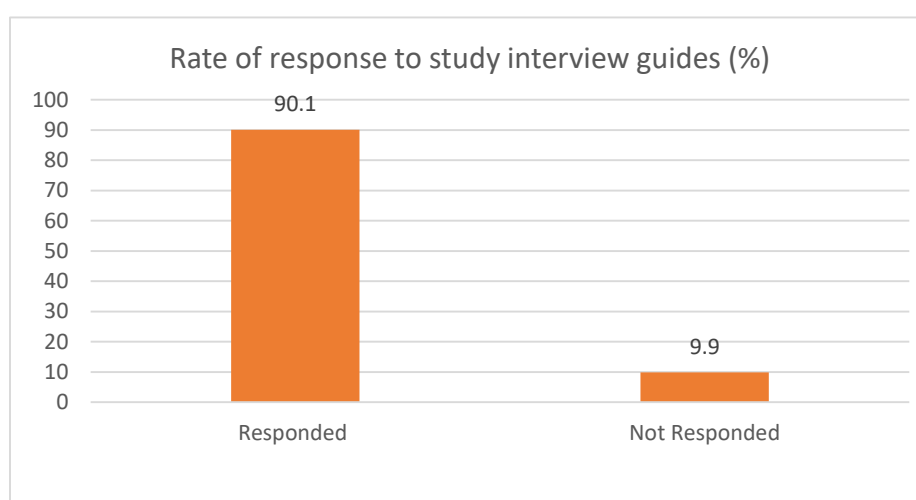


Figure: 4.1.1 Rate of response to interview guides

Source: Researcher

In addition, the Figure 4.1.2 below shows that out of the total 46 interviews, 27 respondents (58.6 %) are stand- alone CSOs while 41.3 % are civil society networks, association or coalitions with a membership base.

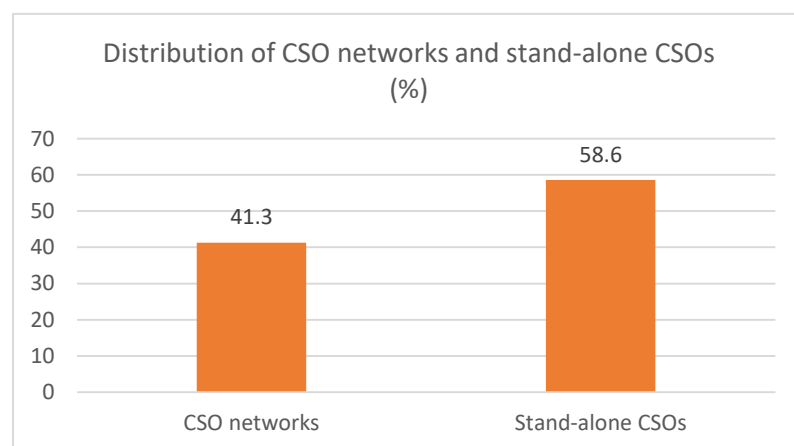


Figure 4.1.2 Distribution of CSO networks and stand-alone CSOs

Source: Researcher

4.2.1.2 Composition of CSO respondents by secular or faith identity

Although Malawi is a secular state by constitutional order, the nature of pluralistic society entails the coexistence of secular institutions side by side faith based entities. Both categories have an influence on the democratic processes in the country and they freely enjoy their freedoms of association to varying degrees. Accordingly, the CSO respondents were in two broad categories along the secular and faith divide. Out of the total CSOs that responded to the interview, 15.2 % are faith based CSOs. This means that a majority of CSO respondents (84.8 %) have a secular identity according to their legal registration as the 4.1.3 below shows.

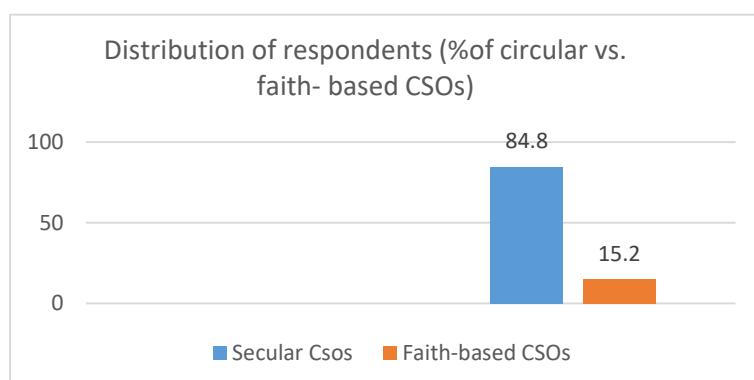


Figure 4.1.3 Distribution of respondents

Source: Researcher

Faith identity is an important factor in analyzing CSO activities since some faiths do not allow their affiliated organizations to engage in certain types of interventions. For example, policy advocacy on abortion policy or policies encouraging Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) and same sex marriages may be a no go zone for some CSOs on account of their underlying faith and doctrinal platforms. A foreign policy that for instance encourages international relations with organizations or entities that favor positions which are antithetical to such faith-based CSOs may therefore be cause for foreign policy squabbles.

4.2.1.3 Composition of CSO respondents by policy sector of primary focus

The CSO respondents comprise organizations which work in different sectors of public policy. For purposes of this study, general sector categories have been used with wide sector scope and boundaries without narrowing down to specific sub-sectors or specific organizational mandates of the CSOs under study.

Such sectors therefore include health, education, youth, gender and others as shown in the Table 4.1.1 below:

Table 4.1.1 Distribution of respondents by sector

Sector	Frequency	Percentage
General Public Policy	9	19.5%
Governance and Human Rights	7	15.2%
Youth Policy	4	8.7%
Environment Policy	4	8.7%
Health Policy	3	6.5%
HIV and AIDS Policy	3	6.5%
Education Policy	3	6.5%
Child Policy	3	6.5%
Gender Policy	3	6.5%
Economic Policy	3	6.5%
Labour Policy	1	2.1%
Communication and Information Policy	1	2.1%
Foreign Policy	1	2.1%
Disability	1	2.1%
Total	46	100

Source: Field data

From Table 4.1.1 above, the majority of the respondents are CSOs which carry out policy work in general policy areas without specific focus on a particular sector of specialization. These CSOs comprise 19.5 % of all respondents. This is seconded by the governance and human rights sector where 15.2 % of the total respondents are CSOs that specialize in governance and human rights advocacy.

CSOs working in the youth policy and environment policy advocacy comprise a third category in order of frequency where 8.7 % of the total respondents are in youth and environment sectors each. There are six policy sectors which have an equal number of CSO respondents that provided responses to the interviews. The sectors account for 6.5 % each of the total number of respondents. These are education policy, health policy, child policy, HIV and AIDS policy, gender policy and economic policy. Interestingly, a majority of these CSOs are networks, implying the concentration of CSOs when one takes into account the network membership behind them.

Lastly, there are four policy sectors with the least number of respondents, implying fewer CSOs working in the policy areas. These are labor sector, communication and information sector, disability sector, and foreign policy sector. Foreign policy is among the least represented in the sample. This could be explained by a number of reasons including that there are few CSOs that have an exclusive focus on foreign policy as their specialized area of work. Out of the 46 CSOs sampled and interviewed, only the Malawi-Scotland Partnership (MSP) can be categorized as foreign policy CSO.

However, this is only from the point of view of the legal identity of the organization as the MSP still falls short of an entity that exclusively dedicates itself to the Malawi foreign policy. It is also important to note that a number of CSO respondents only address minor aspects of the Malawi foreign policy and they do not have programs or projects that wholesomely tackle foreign policy.

4.2.2 Characteristics of government respondents

The government respondents comprised officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Finance, the NGO Board, and Office of President and Cabinet. The NGO Board is categorized as a government

entity by virtue of it being a government regulatory body for NGOs. Table 4.1.2 below shows distribution of the government respondents by Ministry or department.

Table 4.1.2: Distribution of government respondents by ministry or department

Ministry/Department	Frequency	Percentage
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including diplomatic missions)	12	50.0%
Ministry of Finance (including Debt and Aid Department)	5	20.8%
Ministry of Trade	4	16.6%
OPC	3	12.5%
NGO Board	2	8.3%
Total	24	100

Source: Field data

The table above indicates that a majority (50 %) of the government respondents are from MoFA. This is justified by the fact that MoFA is the parent Ministry and a direct policy holder responsible for foreign policy formulation and implementation. Respondents from Ministry of Finance account for 20.8 % of the total government respondents, and the interviews also targeted senior officials from the department of Debt and Aid as these functions are mentioned in the Malawi foreign policy document.

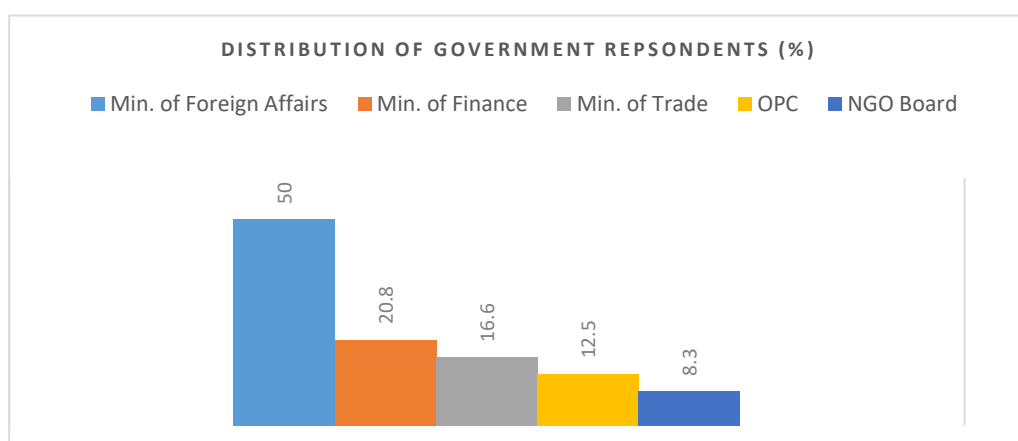


Figure 4.1.4 Distribution of government respondents

Source: Researcher

Figure 4.1.4 above shows that respondents from the Ministry of Trade and OPC account for 16.6 % and 12.5 % respectively. The NGO Board, a government regulatory body for NGOs and CSO operations had 2 respondents that were interviewed representing 8.3 % of the total government respondents.

4.3 Findings on the main mandates of the respondents' organizations

This section presents snapshots of the main mandates or organizational objectives of the respondent institutions. The aim of the section is to highlight the extent to which the organizations link their programs with foreign policy processes.

4.3.1 Summary of organizational mandates from selected CSO respondents

The CSO responses present a diverse spectrum of organizational mandates. The respondents represent CSOs that are largely engaged in policy advocacy as opposed to service delivery.

The Table 4.2.1 below present summaries of selected CSO network mandates by sector of policy work:

Table 4.2.1: Consolidated organizational mandates of a cross-section of CSOs

Sector	Selected main CSOs/Networks	Summary/consolidated mandates
Governance and Human Rights	Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC)	Promoting and protecting human and peoples, rights, governance, and accountability
Education	Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC)	Promoting equity and quality in education through evidence based advocacy
Health	Malawi Health Equity Network (MHEN)	Advocating and lobbying for health systems that promote the delivery of equitable and quality health care services
Gender	NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN)	Promoting gender equity and equal opportunities for men and women, and promoting the rights of girls
Environment	Civil Society Network on Environment and Climate Change (CISONECC)	Ensuring sustainable development through promotion of environmental governance and mitigating the impacts of climate change
Children	NGO Child Rights Coalition (NGOCCR)	Advocating the best interest of the child through the promotion and protection of the rights of children
Economic Policies	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	Promoting economic justice and accountability in public finance systems

Source: Field Data

4.3.1.1 The Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC)

The governance and human rights sector has a number of CSOs and coalitions of NGOs operating in this policy space. The HRCC is among the key CSO networks coordinating human rights advocacy. The Malawi Human Rights Consultative Committee (MHRCC) was set up in July 1995 by 8 pioneers (among them Church Institutions,

Human Rights NGOs and the Law Society of Malawi) after identifying the need to work together in areas of human rights, advocacy and information sharing.

The HRCC is a network of local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) that have sufficient interest in protecting people's rights, promoting the human rights agenda, and safeguarding governance (in all aspects) and the rule of law. Its organizational membership has a geographical spread and programme outreach extending to all 28 districts of Malawi. Some Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are also within the HRCC membership and this represents a balance of rural, town and city coverage.

MHRCC was formed with core objective of ; To advocate for the protection and promotion of Human Rights; To share information and experiences among member-institutions and organisations which are involved in similar activities at regional, national and international level; To monitor documents and reports on the level of adherence and respect for Human Rights; To build capacity of member institutions ;To mobilize resources for member institutions in support of the implementation of the MHRCC strategic plan; and To enhance monitoring, documenting and reporting on issues of human rights.

HRCC is a Network membership organisation which has further subscription/membership to reputable national bodies. Such bodies include the National Advocacy Platform, which is a further national CSO platform where matters of governance, social justice, Rule of law are being jointly addressed. Of particular interest to this work, is NAP's work around Malawi's' ratified instruments under the African Union. NAP has done extensive work on AU instruments as a result the nation is adopting strategies to replicate the same in all Instruments Malawi ratified either at SADC or Un level (HRCC/SAPSIT, 2018).

4.3.1.2 Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC)

Established in 2000, CSEC is a lead non - state actor on education policy advocacy in Malawi. CSEC is an alliance of presently 82 diverse independent and voluntary organizations such as non - governmental organizations, community based organizations,

trade unions and faith based organizations and research centres which promote right to quality education in Malawi.

In pursuance of its vision, CSEC aims at changing underlying policy, legislation and practice that undermine the right to education while at the same time strengthen government's education systems, and support the development of infrastructure. CSEC dedicates its collective efforts in ensuring equity in education through advocacy work as well as research, budget tracking and analysis, capacity building and service delivery.

CSEC also endeavors to mobilize communities into critical masses for change in their respective communities, and advocate for support to the schools. Finally, CSEC works across all sectors of education: early childhood education, basic education, secondary education, tertiary education, adult education and lifelong learning.

4.3.1.3 Malawi Health Equity Network (MHEN)

MHEN is an independent, membership non-profit making alliance of over 90 civil society organizations (CSO) and a few individuals in the health sector (throughout Malawi) interested in promoting equitable access to quality, affordable and responsive health care services in Malawi. It achieves this through influencing policy formulation, review, and practice. Strategies used by MHEN include lobby and evidence-based advocacy, research, civic education and information sharing.

The strategic objectives of MHEN include: to advocate for strategically pro-poor health policies; to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of health policies with special emphasis on marginalized and vulnerable groups; to undertake appropriate research for advocacy, sensitization and awareness creation; to promote health rights for both patients and health service providers.

4.3.2.4 NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN)

NGO Gender Coordination Network (Malawi) The NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGO GCN) was established in 1998 with the objective of coordinating activities of NGO dealing with gender related and women's rights issues in Malawi. Its membership includes NGOs dealing with gender and women issues in Malawi. The

NGO GCN is the only network dealing with gender issues in Malawi and has diversity in the membership and issues addressed. It is therefore a legitimate voice on national gender issues. The Mission statement of the NGOGCN is a network that exists to promote gender equality and equity in Malawi through co-ordination, lobbying, advocacy, information sharing and capacity building of its members.

4.3.2.5 Civil Society Network on Environment and Climate Change (CISONECC)

CISONECC is a network established in 2008, comprising 38 network members. The objective of the Network is to coordinate civil society responses to climate change and related disasters, and provide a platform for engagement with the government and other stakeholders on climate change and related fields for improved adaptation and mitigation to climate change impacts.

CISONECC became a Southern Voices Partner in 2009 after participating in discussions related to the COP 15. The Network is involved in policy research and advocacy, and during the past three years it has successfully influenced the development of many different policies, such as the National Disaster Risk Management (NDRM) Policy, the National Climate change policy and National Meteorological Policy, and the initial processes of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

As part of its mandate to coordinate civil society networks and collaborate with relevant stakeholders, CISONECC facilitates dialogue during international processes such as the UN climate negotiations. Further, the Network is represented on various national level committees, and it participates in national climate change related campaigns.

4.3.2.6 Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)

Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) is a leading coalition of civil society organizations, trade unions, faith-based organizations, community based organization and professional associations, among others committed to championing participatory economic governance. MEJN's theory of change centers on empowerment of ordinary citizens to enable them to participate fully and effectively in public policy processes and demand performance accountability and transparency from duty bearers in addition

to building linkages and synergies among duty bearers, rights holders and the non-state actors. Core work involves analysis and monitoring of the national budget and ensuring that government and donor policies focus on the majority poor.

4.3.3 Mandate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Development diplomacy is all about economic competitiveness in a global political and economic set up. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays the role of courting and forging strategic economic partnerships which would bring economic and development benefits to Malawi.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also acts as a main link between Malawi and the rest of the world including multilateral organisations. It is the government organ responsible for formulating, implementing and monitoring the foreign policy of the Government of Republic of Malawi. The Ministry plays a leading role in facilitating the promotion of good economic, political and social relations between the country and other countries and international organisations.

The Ministry is organised into the Ministry Headquarters and 17 diplomatic missions and consulate generals abroad. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is mandated to promote Malawi's interests abroad by formulating, interpreting, implementing and monitoring the Malawi Governments policy with an emphasis on development diplomacy (Malawi Government, 2019).

Malawi's foreign missions, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry also play a greater role in making sure that the country is sold to potential investors and also bring attention to the world out there the existing tourism, trade and investment opportunities in the country.

To achieve its objectives, the Ministry works in close liaison with the relevant ministries, departments, parastatal organisations, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. While the line ministries, departments and other organisations carry out their sectoral work under their mandates, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays a

facilitator role in the relationships between these institutions and other countries and international organisations. The Ministry also maintains close working relationships with foreign missions and international organisations accredited to Malawi (Ibid).

The Ministry through its departments attends international meetings and makes follow-ups on the status of implementation of various issues that are agreed upon at various international fora with relevant stakeholders. In carrying out its mandate the Ministry pursues these objectives:

- To facilitate economic activities relating to trade, tourism and investment;
- To coordinate activities related to regional and international cooperation and integration;
- To facilitate the promotion and maintenance of sound and effective socio-political relations between Malawi and the rest of the world;
- To facilitate government effort in the promotion of peace and international security;
- To facilitate mobilization of aid and technical assistance from bilateral and multilateral donors.

4.3.4 Ministry of Industry, Trade and Private Sector Development

The Ministry of Industry Trade and Private Sector Development promotes development diplomacy by facilitating international trade and foreign investment initiatives. The ministry promote, support, and facilitate the development of industry, trade and private sector in both existing and potential growth sectors thereby increasing supply of value-added goods and services for domestic and international markets while sustaining comparative advantage¹. The Ministry in its quest to promote development diplomacy and the objectives of Malawi's foreign policy advances foreign investment and international trade (export market) related endeavours. The ministry also undertakes the following responsibilities (Malawi Government, 2011: 2).

- Creating awareness and positive image of Malawi a viable and credible investment destination and source of quality products;
- Holding targeted investment missions in key cities to which Malawi embassies are accredited to;
- Coordination of investment and trade fairs

- Addressing investment and trade enquiries and making follow ups;
- Disseminating information to potential investors about opportunities available in Malawi and the accompanied investment incentives;
- Support business and government delegations.

The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Private Sector Development carry out the outlined mandate through its Trade Attaches who are placed in some of the Malawi's missions abroad. The ministry of Trade and Industry in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation strives to promote development diplomacy through trade and investment promotion initiatives.

4.3.5 Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Culture

The Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Culture promotes development diplomacy by promoting tourism in Malawi. The ministry has some its officers that are located in some of the Malawi's missions abroad to undertake tourism promotion activities. The ministry works to develop and promote tourism, conserve and manage wildlife, uphold and promote Malawi's national identity through study, conservation and preservation of national heritage for the country's sustainable economic and social growth (Malawi Government: Ministry of Tourism, 2011: 285). The Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Culture through a number of Trade attaches that are strategically placed in Malawi's missions abroad promotes foreign policy objectives which emphasizes on development diplomacy through (Ibid: 23-24).

Conducting an image audits to appreciate perceptions about Malawi in host and/or surrounding countries.

- Developing and promoting the tourism industry in a sustainable manner in order to increase the contribution of tourism to economic growth and foreign exchange earnings.
- Promotion of Malawi's gastronomy, cultural dress, arts, products and key tourist attractions at each mission's open days.
- Initiating tourism bilateral relations through exploitation potential tourism markets

- Develop and maintain an up-to-date database of Tour Operators, Travel Agents and Travel Media packaging Malawi.
- Promote and facilitate tourism investment into Malawi
- Encourage Malawi nationals abroad to invest in Malawi tourism projects and also travel to Malawi.
- Provide platform for tourism events at which Malawi nationals are encouraged to bring along friends and colleagues.

4.3.6 Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning & Development has the mandate to formulate economic and fiscal policies that seek to manage government financial and material resources and provide strategic guidance on economic and development planning based on accurate and reliable statistics for attainment of socio-economic development.

The Ministry headquarters provides leadership for the whole Ministry. The Ministry headquarters is headed by the Secretary to the Treasury. The Ministry of Finance has the vision to achieve sustainable high economic growth, macroeconomic stability and sound financial management for socio-economic development; and provide reliable statistics.

The Ministry's mission is to provide socio-economic policies based on high quality and timely statistics; mobilize and prudently manage public financial and material resources in order to achieve sustainable economic growth and development.

The Debt and Aid Management Division in the Ministry of Finance is the primary agent of the Government of Malawi that is responsible for contracting and managing the country's public debt. It is responsible for the compilation and dissemination of public debt statistics. Comprehensive and timely public sector debt statistics allow the government and other stakeholders to monitor the evolution of the public sector's debt liabilities and its debt-service obligations over time.

Debt statistics provide early warning signals of possible debt-servicing problems and serve as an indicator of the sustainability of government and public corporations' policies. In addition, public debt statistics serve as essential inputs for government budget preparation, for approval by parliament, for execution, for forecasting, and for compiling other macroeconomic statistics

4.3.7 The Malawi NGO Board

The NGO Board is a statutory body established by Section 6 of Non-Governmental Organizations Act 2001 (Cap 5:05 of Laws of Malawi) to register and regulate the operations of NGOs/CSOs in Malawi. The objectives of the NGO Board are:

- (a) To promote the development of a strong independent civil society in Malawi and to facilitate the formation and effective functioning of the NGOs for public benefit purposes
- (b) To create a conducive environment for NGO development through government provision of incentives
- (c) To promote donor and public confidence in the NGO sector and to encourage the development of an NGO Code of conduct, incorporating principles of fiduciary integrity, public accountability, democratic decision-making developmental synergy, non-discrimination and beneficiary equity
- (d) To facilitate a relationship between NGOs and the government involving constructive collaboration and partnership in furtherance of public interest and
- (e) To affirm the human rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of the Republic of Malawi

4.4 Findings on civil society participation in foreign policy

This section presents findings on civil society participation in foreign policy issues based on feedback provided by respondents. The section covers areas such as general CSO participation in international advocacy and campaigns, the extent of alignment of CSO strategic plans to foreign policy work, and covers responses on the actual participation of civil society in the formulation and implementation of Malawi foreign policy.

4.4.1 Civil society participation and financing in international programs

The study findings reveal that all CSOs (100 %) responded that they take part in international campaigns or programs. Participation in the international campaigns is dependent on the nature of work of the respective CSOs. For example, CSOs participate in the UN general assembly (UNGA), African Union (AU) and SADC summit side meetings. However, the study finds that the participation of the CSOs in international conferences is in most cases fully funded by the organizers such as the UN, AU and SADC and this makes it easier for the CSOs to participate.

Furthermore, the financial support is mostly provided by foreign based institutions while local funding sources are in a minority. The Table below shows selected international events in which a cross section of Malawi CSOs participate.

Table 4.3.1 Cross-section of CSO participation in international programs

CSO/Network	International Program, Event or Campaign	Selected Source of Financing
Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	Southern Africa Peoples Solidarity Network (SAPSN) – sidelines of SADC summit	Foreign: Open Society for Southern Africa (OSISA)
NGO Child Rights Coalition	“The First Call of the Child”	Foreign: United Nations
Public Affairs Committee	Economic, Social Council (ECOSOCC)	Foreign: African Union (AU)
Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU)	International Labor Organization (ILO) events	Foreign: International Labor Organization
Center for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA)	UN Climate Change Conference (UNCCC)	Foreign: UN
Health Rights Advocacy	Global Fund campaign	Foreign: Global Fund

Source: Field Data

The study therefore finds that civil society participation in international programs is mostly foreign financed. This resonates with the general trends where CSOs in Malawi are largely funded by external donors, a situation that has led to a donor dependency syndrome. CSO participation in international conferences, events and programs is therefore at the mercy of external financing agencies, a situation that can compromise or weaken civil society independence and objectivity in foreign policy participation.

4.4.2 Integration of foreign policy work in CSO strategic plans

The study finds that there is no civil society organization that has a strategic plan with a dedicated component on foreign policy work. The strategic plans for CSOs only touch on selected aspects of foreign policy without making direct reference to the policy. For example, CSO strategic plans have a component on international networking, participation and international advocacy. This component allows the CSOs to interface with aspects of foreign policy such as CSOs campaigning around trade justice issues, global health issues, compliance with international conventions and protocols.

Some of the reasons the CSO respondents mention for not integrating wholesale the foreign policy work in their strategic plans include:

- Funding partners (donors) show low interest to support foreign policy work
- Lack of interest by CSOs to venture into full scale foreign policy advocacy
- Inadequate knowledge and expertise on foreign policy issues

The study therefore observes that a majority of CSOs do not consider foreign policy as a priority sector of civil society work. Therefore, this scenario translates into low drive for CSOs to participate in the foreign policy processes due to the absence of strategic recognition. The low CSO interaction with foreign policy at the strategic level is further confirmed as the study reveals that 37 CSO respondents out of the total 46 respondents say that they have never seen the Malawi foreign policy document.

This means that 80.4 % of CSO respondents have never seen the Malawi foreign policy document. However, 91.3 % of the CSOs indicate that they have at least heard about the foreign policy document although among them there are those who have never seen a copy (soft or hard copy) of the policy document.

The Table 4.3.2 below shows the proportions of CSO respondents that have seen the Malawi foreign policy.

Table 4.3.2 Proportion of CSOs that have ever seen the Malawi policy document

	Number	% Proportion
Seen the Foreign Policy	37	80.4 %
Never Seen the Foreign Policy	9	19.6 %
Total	46	100 %

Source: Field Data

4.5 Participation in the formulation and implementation of the Malawi foreign policy

As observed in the preceding sections, the first Malawi foreign policy document was formulated and launched in 2000. A review process begun in 2009 and this culminated into an overhaul of the initial policy document of 2000 and resulted into the formulation of the Second Edition of the Malawi foreign policy which was launched in 2019. This section presents findings on the extent of civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of the foreign policy.

4.5.1 Extent of Civil society participation in foreign policy formulation

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation indicate that various stakeholders were consulted in the development of the Second Edition of the Malawi Foreign Policy, the actual number of CSOs consulted is unclear. However, the study CSO respondents indicate that only 7 CSO respondents out of the 46 respondents say they have ever participated in one way or the other in the formulation or review of the Malawi foreign policy. These include the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) which is a lead CSO actor in the AU ECOSOCC representing Malawi in Addis Ababa, the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) a lead body on the SADC national implementation committees, the Institute for Policy Interaction (IPI) - a CSO policy think tank, and the Council for NGOs in Malawi (CONGOMA) at the secretariat level.

The study therefore finds that civil society participation in the formulation and review of the Malawi foreign policy is low as only 15.2 % of the respondents indicate that they

have taken part or consulted in the policy formulation and review processes. A significant majority of CSOs (84.8 %) report that they have never participated, and have never been invited to take part in the formulation and review of foreign policy.

It is important to indicate that when probed further, the CSO respondents who indicated that they have ever been consulted in the policy formulation and review mostly talk about participating in stakeholder consultation meetings. On the other hand, some indicate that they were met with small teams of officials from the MoFA. Interestingly also, the 15.2 % of the CSO respondents include those that indicated they were consulted although this only happened during the formulation of the Diaspora Engagement Policy, a subset of the main Foreign Policy.

The study therefore finds that civil society participation in the formulation of Malawi foreign policy was low, lacking in depth, and incomprehensive. Table 4.4.1 below and Figure 4.4.1 below show the distribution of CSO respondents based on their participation or non-participation in the policy formulation or review.

Table 4.4.1 Distribution of CSO participation in Foreign Policy formulation and review

	Number	% Proportion
CSOs participated	7	15.2 %
CSOs not participated	39	84.8 %
Total	46	100 %

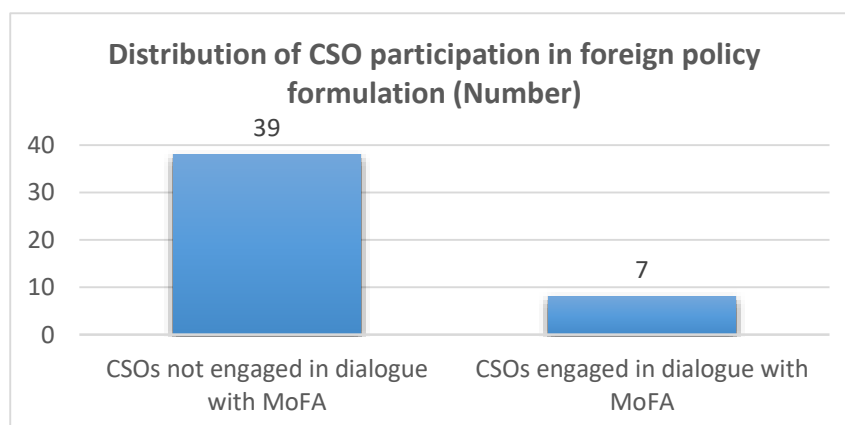


Figure 4.4.1 Distribution of CSO participation

Source: Researcher

4.5.2 Extent of civil society participation in the implementation of foreign policy

The study finds that no civil society organization takes part in the implementation of Malawi foreign policy. This is contrary to the provisions of the policy which indicate that CSOs will be part of the implementation institutional framework. The Second Edition of Malawi Foreign Policy (2019, p.20) states that:

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) will play a significant role in political, socio-economic, and cultural issues. As non-state actors, they will play an advocacy role for the Foreign Policy, as well as, provide the necessary checks and balances in the adherence to international standards and best practices

The study further reveals that there is lack of deliberate steps on the part of the Malawi government to designate implementation responsibilities and roles to CSOs. This is reinforced by the CSOs lack of interest, lack of awareness and lack of technical expertise on the policy, a combination of factors that push CSOs to the margins of participation in foreign policy implementation.

Although this is the case, the study comes across a few CSOs that implement programs and activities which resonate with some aspects of the foreign policy without defining such actions as necessarily implying the direct implementation of foreign policy. The study finds that 76 percent of the CSO respondents indicate that they in one way or

another implement programs that have some semblance of the foreign policy activities. Such a significant proportion of CSOs imply that there is untapped potential among CSOs to participate in foreign policy implementation. Table 4.4.2 below shows the extent of CSOs participation in foreign policy.

Table 4.4.2 Distribution of CSO participation in Foreign Policy implementation

	Number	% Proportion
CSOs implementing foreign policy in full	0	100 %
CSOs implementing some aspects of foreign policy only	35	76.0 %

Source: Field Data

4.5.3 CSO engagement in dialogue with Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials or diplomats

The study recognizes the importance of dialogue as a critical aspect to democratic participation. Dialogue between CSOs and MoFA is one way of ensuring the democratization of foreign policy. However, the study finds out that only 8 CSO respondents indicate that they have ever engaged in a dialogue with MoFA or heads of diplomatic missions over foreign policy issues. This means that a majority of CSOs (76.6 %) do not or have never been in any dialogue with MoFA over foreign policy issues or indeed on any other related matters as the Figure 4.4.2 below shows.

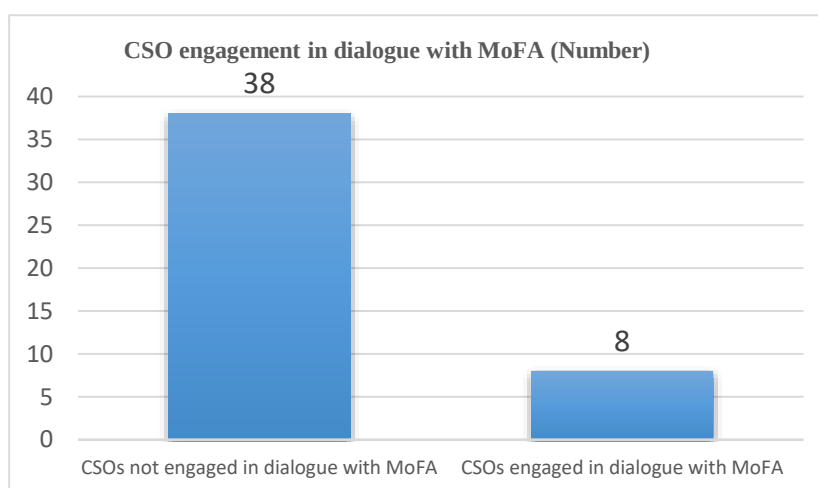


Figure 4.4.2 CSO engagement in dialogue

Source: Researchers

The 17.4 percent CSO respondents that indicate they have ever engaged MoFA in dialogue are highlighted in Table 4.4.3 below together with their specific areas of engagement:

Table 4.4.3 CSOs that engage MoFA in policy dialogue

1	National Initiative for Civic Education	SADC National Committees
2	Public Affairs Committee	Diaspora Engagement Policy
3	Malawi Economic Justice Network	AU protocols under State of the Union (SOTU) project
4	National Advocacy Platform	AU protocols under State of the Union (SOTU) project
5	Movement for Black Economic Empowerment	Welfare of Malawians and investors staying in South Africa
6	Human Rights Consultative Committee	Welfare of Malawian woman arrested in China
7	Center for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education	Preparation of a position paper on HIV and AIDS in readiness of a UN session
8	Civil Society Education Coalition	AU protocols under State of the Union (SOTU) project

Source: Field Data

4.5.4 Extent of CSO policy advocacy work on foreign policy

The study findings further indicate that some of the CSOs in section 4.4.3 above also conduct policy advocacy in the areas of dialogue stipulated above. The following CSO initiatives have more visible foreign policy advocacy initiatives albeit that the advocacy only targets small sections of the Malawi foreign policy and not the full policy.

- **State of The Union (SOTU) project:** This is a project run by the National Advocacy Platform (NAP), a coalition of CSOs advocating the ratification of protocols and conventions under the African Union (AU).
- **Audit of Ratification and Domestication of Regional and International Legal Instruments by Malawi:** This is a foreign policy advocacy project

implemented by the Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC) in partnership with the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust (SAPST) of Zimbabwe.

- **Study on People Centered and Participatory International Relations: Increasing Parliamentary Voice and Accountability in Foreign Affairs:** A 2009 advocacy study report produced by the Human Rights Consultative Committee as basis for engagement, dialogue and policy advocacy with MoFA and Malawi parliamentarians.
- **Advocacy on SADC regional integration and participation in the SADC national committees:** an initiative led by the National Initiative for Civic Education to increase awareness and participation in SADC processes in collaboration with MoFA.
- **Mainstreaming the voices and interests of Malawi in the AU through the ECOSOCC:** a platform where Malawi CSOs are represented by Public Affairs Committee and a point of policy advocacy with MoFA and AU by this quasi faith based CSO.

The study therefore finds that there is no single CSO that conducts policy advocacy in full targeting the whole foreign policy. The CSOs take a piecemeal approach and only cover small aspects of the policy, often without making direct reference to the foreign policy itself. This *a blind approach* to foreign policy advocacy. It is largely uncoordinated, driven by external donor interests and not strongly anchored in the desire to foster the achievement of the full foreign policy outcomes.

Specifically, 6 CSOs responded and demonstrated that they carry out policy advocacy on issues related to Malawi foreign policy although in the piece meal fashion. This represents only 13 percent of the CSOs. A majority (87 %) of CSOs do not carry out any form of policy advocacy on foreign policy as the Figure 4.4.4 below shows.

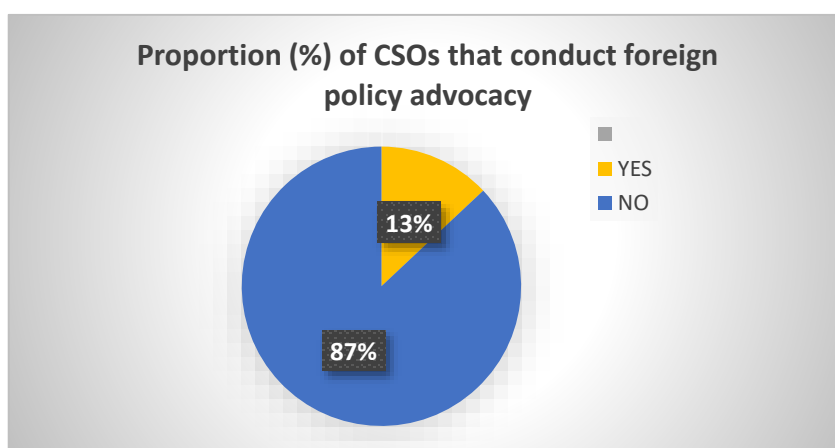


Figure 4.4.4 Proportion of CSOs in foreign policy advocacy

Source: Researcher

4.5.5 Conduct of foreign policy analysis by civil society

Further to the findings above, the study reveals that foreign policy is a neglected sector in as far conduct of policy analysis by CSOs is concerned. All the CSO respondents indicate that they have never carried out a policy analysis of the Malawi foreign policy. However, the study finds some CSO initiatives that only come close to a policy analysis although they fall short of a comprehensive and holistic foreign policy analysis.

An example is the 2009 HRCC *Study on People Centered and Participatory International Relations: Increasing Parliamentary Voice and Accountability in Foreign Affairs* which had a section that assessed the 2000 foreign policy document. The study therefore finds that no CSO has ever carried out a foreign policy audit. Similarly, no civil society organization has done an assessment of the foreign policy review process which took place over the 10-year period the review took place from 2009 to 2019. In addition, since the Second Edition of the Malawi foreign policy document was launched in 2019, no CSO has to date conducted any policy analysis.

4.5.6 Findings on CSO role in public funds accountability in foreign policy sector

The study comes across a number of civil society initiatives on promoting budget openness and public finance accountability in other sectors of public policy. The initiatives include budget analysis, assessments of budget performance, public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS) and a number of anti-corruption campaigns.

The study identifies the CSOs that conduct such budget accountability actions and they are listed in the Table 4.4.6 below.

Table 4.4.6 CSOs budget accountability initiatives

Name of CSO	Policy sector	Budget accountability initiative
Malawi Health Equity Network	Health	Health Sector Budget Analysis
Civil Society Education Coalition	Education	Education Sector Budget Analysis, PETS on district education budgets
NGO Gender Coordination Network	Gender and children	Gender Budget Analysis
Malawi Economic Justice Network	General budget frameworks	General Budget analysis, PETS, Local Development Fund (LDF) and Constituency Development Fund (CDF)
NGO Coalition on Child Rights	Children	Child Budget Analysis

Source: Field Data

The study finds that there is no CSO that conduct budget accountability initiatives in the sector of foreign policy. In particular, CSOs do not carry out budget analysis relating to the budgets allocated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. CSOs do not track expenditures associated with the public funds spent on foreign policy programs and activities, and this includes funds spent in Malawi diplomatic missions (embassies) abroad.

This is contrary to annual audit reports produced by the National Audit Office (NAO) which reveal accountability gaps in the revenue and expenditures associated with foreign policy activities especially financial accountability issues in the diplomatic missions abroad. The study finds that CSOs such as MEJN, HRCC and a few other CSOs make observations about the accountability gaps in foreign policy spending. However, the observations are made just immediately after the NAO releases its audit

reports and then the momentum dies down without meaningful sustained voice and accountability campaigns.

Consequently, such CSO observations are not as detailed to qualify to be called a budget analysis or public funds audit analysis, and they often are short statements made in the media. As a lead budget advocacy coalition, MEJN only carries a small section about foreign policy budgets that is often embedded in the main budget analyses document. This renders any CSO foreign policy budget accountability and advocacy so obscure, invisible and lacking in continuity.

4.6 Factors that enable or challenge civil society participation in foreign policy

This section discusses the key factors that enable or challenge the participation of civil society in the foreign policy space. Specifically, these are factors that determine the extent of CSO participation in the formulation and implementation of Malawi foreign policy. The section presents the aggregated factors as highlighted by the respondents to the study, and they are categorized as external and internal factors.

4.6.1 External factors that determine extent of civil society participation in foreign policy

These are factors that exist within the operative environment of civil society and they are external determinants to participation in foreign policy formulation and implementation.

4.6.1.1 Closed policy space:

CSO respondents unanimously observe that the foreign policy arena is regarded as a preserve of government officials. The study finds that there is no direct interface between government and CSOs and that there is no deliberately established entry point for CSO engagement. MoFA therefore does not open up the space to CSOs as they are considered as outsiders with nothing to offer constructively to foreign policy formulation and implementation processes. Respondents claim that foreign policy is like a secret system and a closed system that systematically excludes civil society actors.

4.6.1.2 CSOs have no constituency:

The study finds that government officials regard CSOs as having no constituency and no jurisdiction over foreign affairs, and therefore lacking the legitimacy to participate and be involved in foreign policy formulation and implementation. Government officials feel that CSOs should stay away from foreign policy and often ask the question *who does civil society represent?*

4.6.1.3 Foreign policy is too state-centric:

Respondents to the study consider foreign policy as a state centric business. Malawi foreign policy interactions put state actors at the forefront of all policy processes. Civil society participation is at the mercy of government. Little recognition is given to CSOs which government perceives as antagonistic and mostly bent at criticizing as well as frustrating the attainment of policy goals. Majority of CSO respondents observe that foreign policy is under state capture.

4.6.1.4 Foreign policy is not a donor funding priority:

Unlike policy sectors such as health, education, environment and agriculture (just to mention some), the study finds that the foreign policy sector has not been defined as a priority area for civil society financing. Respondents observe that this creates a constraint for CSOs to venture into a policy arena which is not funded as doing so would affect the institutional survival and future of the CSOs.

4.6.1.5 Foreign policy is a distant area for CSOs:

The study establishes that there is little policy interaction characterized with less traffic between state actors on one hand and CSOs on the other hand. Foreign policy is not adequately profiled or marketed by the lead government ministry (MoFA). As such there is low awareness on foreign policy which is also not well understood. Respondents put matters bluntly as they observe that *foreign policy does not exist among CSOs*. This affects exchange of knowledge and information thereby widening information and knowledge gaps on the part of civil society in as far as foreign policy issues are concerned. There is a serious '*knowledge malnutrition*' on foreign policy affecting civil society. As a result, the value of participating in foreign policy processes

is not well appreciated by the CSOs themselves. The study establishes that CSOs are structurally crowded out of the foreign policy space.

4.6.2 Internal factors that determine extent of civil society participation in foreign policy

The study establishes a number of factors that are internal to civil society which determine the extent of CSO participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. The interaction between the external and internal factors create an environment that provides basis for a clear understanding of the determinants of the democratic deficit in Malawi foreign policy.

4.6.2.1 CSO capacity levels in foreign policy:

The study finds that a significant proportion of civil society actors lack the knowledge and skills to participate in foreign policy which is regarded as a technical policy area that is beyond the expertise of civil society activists. The study also establishes that CSOs have human resource with low technical competency to muster foreign policy issues.

4.6.2.2 CSO interest in foreign policy:

The study establishes that CSOs demonstrate low interest and passion to venture into foreign policy programming. CSO respondents claim that foreign policy is simply an unattractive policy arena to work in.

4.6.2.3 Lack of funding:

CSO respondents claim that there is serious lack of funding opportunities to finance foreign policy activism. This challenge relates to the low strategic interest by development partners (donors) to finance CSO work on foreign policy. Country strategic plans for traditional donors in Malawi are silent on financing for foreign policy activism. The issue also relates to CSOs own lack of drive to fundraise for foreign policy work. CSOs are also too donor dependent and their program logic is driven by donor interests. Respondents observe that donor dependency erodes the ability of CSOs to make independent program and strategic planning decisions that could effective design of foreign policy interventions. The study establishes that donor conditions

hamper efforts to facilitate civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of Malawi foreign policy.

4.6.2.4 Lack of drive to engage MoFA:

The study finds that the majority of CSOs lack the drive to proactively engage government on foreign policy issues. With the exception of a few initiatives such as the State of the Union (SOTU) audit of AU protocols, the HRCC study on international relations, the NICE project on SADC regional integration, and the PAC initiative on ECOSOCC, the study establishes that many CSOs lack the drive, passion and interest to interact with the MoFA.

4.6.2.5 Absence of foreign policy component in CSO strategic plans:

Respondents claim (in connection with the issue of lack of funding highlighted above) that the majority of CSOs have completely no strategic pillars on foreign policy as an area of their programmatic focus. The few CSOs that at least have something on foreign policy do so because their strategic plans only scantily make reference to some aspects that resonate with foreign policy, such as international advocacy and international networking. The study finds that majority of CSOs spend time attending international conferences that are mostly donor funded in areas that have been defined by donor interests as opposed to being defined by the CSOs' strategic interests. CSOs therefore tackle foreign policy issues through *a piecemeal approach and in a hit-and-run fashion* as each CSO works in isolation in a largely uncoordinated format.

4.6.2.6 Absence of a civil society body or network that specializes and exclusively focuses on foreign policy:

The study finds that unlike in other key public policy sector areas which have seen the establishment of corresponding CSO sectoral networks and stand-alone CSOs, the foreign policy sector is an 'orphaned' sector with completely no CSO and without a civil society sectoral network. The study further observes that the absence of such a CSO means there is no issue-specialization and no continuous policy learning. In addition, respondents affirm that government has no clear point of contact and this weakens information sharing, diminishes chances for policy interaction, dampens prospects for knowledge sharing, and frustrates possibilities for policy partnerships.

4.6.2.7 Polarization and politicization of civil society:

The study reveals that another internal factor that is affecting civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy relates to the state of polarization of CSOs. Civil society actors are divided along several lines of cleavage. Partisan political interests are a main source of cleavage and these affect CSOs ability to undertake neutral and objective foreign policy work. The study further finds that government officials do not fully trust CSOs because of these partisan tendencies as, for example, pro-opposition CSOs are perceived to be too critical of government and therefore deemed incompatible to the foreign policy agenda. Pro-government CSOs are embraced although they are perceived as compromisers, comprador elites, and as weak links for providing checks and balances as well as policy oversight.

4.6.3 Foreign policy as an elitist process

The study finds that all (100 %) of the civil society respondents say that foreign policy is a highly elite-driven sector. Foreign policy is dominated by elite actors and elite interests. The study further establishes that a few people drive the foreign policy of Malawi. Foreign policy is less inclusive of other stakeholders especially civil society. Respondents affirm that CSOs are largely ignored from participation in the policy formulation and implementation. This is in sharp contrast to the proclamation in the Second Edition of the Malawi Foreign Policy about broadening stakeholder involvement and CSO participation.

4.6.3.1 Extent of foreign policy elite capture

The study establishes that the Malawi foreign policy is under elite capture. This implies that the foreign policy processes largely include the participation of a smaller group of people and institutions that are of a particular class in society based on academic qualifications, experience, political class, association and political connections, and also based on technocratic competencies, among other attributes.

These attributes are mostly absent among the majority population and citizenry in Malawi. This leads to significant policy exclusion of the majority population and citizenry and other less endowed groups that are pushed to the margins of foreign

policy participation. The study finds that CSOs are not part of the elite structure. The elitist nature of foreign policy means that CSOs are equally pushed to the margins of policy formulation and implementation.

4.6.3.2 Main elite groups that have captured foreign policy space

In terms of the key elite groups that have captured the foreign policy space, the study finds the following as prominent and were frequently mentioned by respondents, as shown in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Main elite groups that have captured foreign policy space

Elite group	Explanation
Government officials – mainly MoFA technocrats and diplomatic staff	This elite group takes advantage of its status as a lead policy holder, has specialized training, political connections and academic qualifications.
Politicians	Mainly those in ruling political parties that form government. They have the executive power to make diplomatic appointments.
International organizations, donors and foreign diplomatic missions	Interactions around foreign policy are also monopolized by specialized entities such as SADC, AU, COMESA, and UN.
Business groups and private sector captains	Foreign policy is largely viewed a ‘capitalist oriented’ arena for people with money. The business elite consider bilateral and multilateral ties as avenues for expanding their businesses abroad by exploiting state-business relations (Chingaipe, 2010).
Academic groups	Specialized academic groups, think tanks, research institutions, universities and students comprise a foreign policy elite group.
Members of the diaspora	MoFA has developed a specific Diaspora Engagement Policy and this emphasizes the recognition given to this ‘elite’ group.

Source: Field Data

4.6.3.2 *Key factors that motivate the elite to monopolize foreign policy space*

The study comes across a number of factors that motivate elite groups to exclude civil society from participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. The study respondents highlight the following as the main driving reasons for pushing CSOs to the periphery of foreign policy processes:

- *The fear for exposure:* elite groups, especially government technocrats and politicians want civil society away from foreign policy for fear that CSOs will expose them in the alleged corruption and perceived mismanagement especially in the diplomatic missions abroad.
- *Protecting elite interests and opportunities:* elite groups feel that integrating civil society in the mainstream foreign policy processes would jeopardize the defined elite interests and antagonize the privileged opportunities associated with the policy. CSOs are viewed as disruptive and lacking the ‘discipline’ and their actions would shake the political settlement established among the elite to make foreign policy a club for the privileged few. The elites do not want civil society anywhere near them as the CSOs would challenge their interests and destabilize the foundations of their political settlement.
- *Protecting benefits, privileges and luxury:* The elite groups consider foreign policy as an exclusive arena for them and that foreign policy offers them rare benefits, privileges and luxury which must not be shared with CSO groups. The benefits include monetary incentives, attending international events and conferences, specialized trainings, interactions with policy stakeholders domestically and abroad, and appointments to diplomatic missions. In general, the elite groups put narrow economic interests, individualistic financial interests, and self-serving monetary interests above national interests. ‘*These elites are greedy. They feel they know it all*’.
- *Power, control and veil of secrecy:* This mainly applies to government technocrats and even more to politicians who often use public policy as a tool for exerting power and authority. Foreign policy is therefore used as a platform

for flexing political power and control over groups such as CSOs who are pushed away from the center of power. The elite deliberately withdraw knowledge and withhold information so that they strengthen their foothold and continue to monopolize the foreign policy space. The political and technocratic elites benefit from a weak civil society and tactfully exacerbate the veil of secrecy.

4.7 An assessment of common advocacy and accountability issues raised by CSOs around foreign policy

This section highlights the study findings bordering on what respondents indicate are the priority foreign policy advocacy and accountability issues which are central to facilitate civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. The section provides important hints necessary for addressing the democratic deficit in foreign policy.

4.7.1 Civil society accountability initiatives on foreign policy

The study finds that it is necessary for civil society groups to invest in initiatives that will enhance accountability in foreign policy. Specifically, the study respondents point to the importance of conducting public financial accountability initiatives such as foreign policy budget analysis, public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS), and general foreign policy analysis. The study finds that CSOs are important actors in fast-tracking integrity processes in foreign policy and that accountability is a critical aspect for democratizing the foreign policy space through civil society participation.

4.7.1 The responsibility of government

The study finds that government is not doing enough to open and guarantee the space for civil society to participate in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Study respondents therefore indicate that it is imperative for government, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to open up foreign policy to CSOs. Specifically, the responsibility of MoFA is to establish a clear desk for CSO engagement within the Ministry in form of a civil society liaison office just like MoFA has a special desk officer for media relations.

The study respondents also point to the need for MoFA to set aside a budget line for supporting CSOs on key foreign policy actions that demand civil society involvement. The study observes that constant engagement between government and CSOs will facilitate information exchange, transfer of knowledge and capacity that are critical to bridging the democratic deficit in foreign policy.

4.7.2 The responsibility of civil society

The study finds that the task to facilitate foreign policy participation is not the responsibility of government alone. Civil society actors have to undertake certain key actions as outlined below:

- ***Generate interest:*** the study respondents encourage CSOs to generate interest in foreign policy issues just like CSOs do with other public policies.
- ***Create space in strategic plans:*** CSOs are also expected to embrace foreign policy as a priority area of intervention and this must clearly be highlighted in organizational strategic plans.
- ***Proactive engagement with government:*** The study finds that CSOs can contribute to the opening up of foreign policy space if they take a proactive approach, knock on the doors of government and demand their right to participation.
- ***Active fundraising:*** The study establishes that CSOs will be able to engage in foreign policy participation and advocacy if it engages in active fundraising efforts that are also important for guaranteeing CSO independence from external interests.
- ***Recruitment and training:*** CSOs will benefit from constructive participation in foreign policy formulation and implementation if it hires competent staff and train its personnel on the technicalities surrounding the policy.
- ***Learning and networking processes:*** Deliberately network with CSOs and think tanks that specialize in foreign policy work domestically and abroad. These include fellow CSOs, academic institutions, specialized think tanks, and eminent individuals such as active and retired diplomats.
- ***Increase coordination and internal accountability:*** The study encourages CSOs to address internal divisions and polarization especially along the lines of party political affiliations. Instead CSOs must increase coordination, expand

their collective voice and unity of purpose. In addition, effective participation of CSOs is dependent on the trust and integrity levels within CSOs themselves. Civil society needs to address issues of internal governance and accountability, address the perceptions of corruption and mismanagement that the study respondents indicate are common within some CSOs.

4.7.3 The responsibility of other stakeholders

The study identifies other stakeholders over which respondents charge them with responsibilities that are equally critical to unlocking the windows for civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

- *Development partners:* the study identifies the need for donors to establishing more flexible financing windows that could allow CSOs to access funding for foreign policy work. Donors are also encouraged to provide linkages which CSOs can use to identify partners that can provide capacity support in various forms.
- *Academic institutions and think tanks:* the study establishes that the sustainability of CSO participation in foreign policy is dependent on continuous exposure to technical and well researched information which can be supplied by academic institutions, research entities and foreign policy think tanks.
- *Private sector bodies and foundations:* the study finds that the business institutions can also play a pivotal role in establishing strategic partnerships with CSOs, define the common national interest, and jointly strike a balance between business interests and national interests. Private foundations can also be a source of funding for CSO foreign policy interventions.

4.7.4 The special case for establishing a civil society coalition on foreign policy

The study finds that CSO participation in formulation and implementation of public policies is more effective where there is a dedicated civil society network that specializes in the sector policy. As highlighted in preceding Sections of this study, Malawi civil society are present in almost all the key policy sectors such as education, health, environment, gender, economic justice, and others. The sectoral networks

provide platforms for policy interactions, research, advocacy and they are readily available channels for CSO policy participation.

Therefore, the evidence available through this study suggests that an effective way for civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy is through the establishment of a coalition of CSOs that specializes on foreign policy process. The civil society network on foreign policy could act as the first point of contact and interface with government, regional, continental and global bodies. The CSO network could also facilitate information sharing as it will be a hub from which critical information will be distributed to all CSOs.

The coalition would also have research functions where evidence can be generated for advocacy and for constructive engagement. In this way, the civil society network on foreign policy will be a platform for mobilization of CSOs towards systematic participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. The CSO network will be an effective platform for civic participation, mobilization, and accountability initiatives which are central to addressing the democratic deficit in foreign policy.

4.8 The likely outcomes of low civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy

This section discusses the effects and outcomes of low civil society participation in foreign policy processes. The study identifies a number of effects which culminate to undermining the democratization of the foreign policy sector. First, low participation undermines the pluralist structure and stakeholder voice. This further leads to centralization of policies and erodes policy ownership by CSOs and citizens. Second, low civil society participation creates fertile ground for increased policy elitism. In this case, the broader interests of the majority, or the national interests are shortchanged and replaced with narrow elitist interests.

Third, the study finds that low civil society participation in foreign policy is a recipe for serious corruption, mismanagement and other forms of accountability challenges. This is the case because absence of strong civil society translates to weak policy

oversight. Lastly, low civil society participation leads to government operating with a business as usual mindset on account of the absence of checks and balances. This could be an incentive for further deepening of a political settlement and a policy conspiracy against the people. Low civil society participation accelerates the political capture of foreign policy instead of nurturing a people-centered foreign policy that operates on the wheels of development diplomacy.

4.9 Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter has presented study findings based on the responses from the civil society and government respondents. Civil society participation in international events that are related to foreign policy goals have been discussed where the study finds that all CSOs take part in these international events. However, there is heavy reliance on donor financing for civil society attendance to international fora. The study also establishes that a significant majority of CSOs do not participate in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. If anything, civil society organizations only implement selected pillars of foreign policy without making direct reference to the full policy. Similarly, the study finds that CSOs do not conduct foreign policy analysis. There is also absence of civil society led public finance accountability initiatives such as budget analysis and public expenditure tracking surveys focusing on foreign policy.

The chapter has highlighted the key determinants to civil society participation in foreign policy and these include external and internal factors that slow down participation. The study observes that the foreign policy space is captured by elite actors. The MoFA technocrats are among the elite entities that the study finds to monopolize policy space. The chapter has disclosed a set of actions that are expected to be done in order to make foreign policy a democratic space with civil society participation.

The chapter has also highlighted the main study finding that there is a democratic deficit in form of low civil society participation in foreign policy. This has an effect on accountability in foreign policy processes. In order to increase civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, the chapter has ended with the study findings that suggest the establishment of a civil society network on foreign policy. The civil society sectoral network will also be a vehicle for increased

CSO coordination, a point of contact with government, more especially with MoFA, and an effective advocacy platform for increased accountability and inclusiveness in the foreign policy sector.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to summarize the major issues discussed in this study and suggest some conclusions. Secondly, the chapter aims at proposing recommendations based on the field findings from the sets of interview guides deployed to the sampled civil society leaders and purposively selected Malawi government officials. More importantly, based on the literature reviewed in this study as well as the discussion on the findings, the study proposes a model for effective civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

5.2 Conclusion

The study has contributed new knowledge to the academic arena as the research has shown that civil society participation in public policy processes is not a new phenomenon. The presence of civil society continues to transform the policy landscape into a multi-actor process which at times comes with own policy complexities and chaos. As a matter of fact, the study establishes that the role of civil society is increasing in the international relations sphere, a space that was traditionally regarded and jealously regarded as the preserve of state actors.

Civil society participation in global affairs and international events is strongly observed covering virtually all key sectors of global policy such as general governance of the UN, global health issues, education, food and agriculture, environment and climate change, economic, trade, and investment areas, peace and security, just to mention some

Similarly, the study has contributed new knowledge by showing that participation of civil society is visible in key processes at the continental level such as in the African Union where the ECOSOCC is a deliberately established window for CSO participation, among other windows. The same applies at the regional integration level

such as SADC and ECOWAS where spaces have been created to facilitate civil society participation.

However, the study finds that although windows have been opened for CSO participation in global, continental and regional foreign policy affairs, a significant number of CSOs are still confined to side events, parallel or shadow summits (also called peoples summits), and street protests. Heads of state and government officials still dominate critical decision making foreign policy spaces such as the UNGA, AU summit and SADC summit which are official processes. Civil society has not fully integrated into these official spaces. Often the attendance or participation of CSOs is one without voice. This is where the civil society delegates are categorized as mere 'observers' and without voting rights thereby reducing CSOs as passive elements in global, continental, and regional foreign policy affairs.

The study findings are in line with the theoretical framework where among other observations, the study concludes that while steps are being taken to accommodate civil society, elite elements continue to dominate the spaces for foreign affairs. Elitism is observed in major sectors of foreign policy interactions where government bureaucrats and technocrats, as well as state officials seem to have established a political settlement with corporate interests and capitalist elements to structurally close off CSOs from participating in the formulation and adoption of key resolutions. Pluralism is embraced only as a way fulfilling certain democratic demands and governance conditions which require civil society participation. However, there is less meaningful integration of CSO voices in the substantive deliberations as they take place in the formal and official processes.

This was a qualitative study design which used purposive sampling method. The design is justified by the nature of research problem and research questions which pointed to the need for a more exploratory study combined with iterative means when collecting data through interviews by use of semi-structured interview guides.

In line with the specific objectives and as supported through the literature review, the study makes the following conclusions:

5.2.1 Open space for civil society participation in global, continental and regional affairs

There is significant level of CSO participation in foreign affairs and international affairs at the global, continental, and regional integration levels. The increased level of participation is facilitated by the deliberate open and inclusive policies pursued and implemented by the host foreign policy bodies such as the UN, AU and SADC. Civil society participation at these three levels is also catalyzed by availability of financing, mostly from the host bodies but also from other financiers whose goals are aligned to the interests of the global, continental and regional integration processes.

5.2.2 Low civil society participation in foreign policy processes

On the contrary, there is critically low participation of civil society in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy as is the case with Malawi CSOs and Malawi foreign policy. The few CSOs that have some semblance of foreign policy work only do so either blindly without making direct reference to the formal foreign policy processes, or they do so by tackling selected aspects of the foreign policy. In addition, CSOs in Malawi have never conducted a full scale foreign policy analysis. Similarly, civil society has never undertaken comprehensive budget analysis and tracking of expenditures associated with the implementation of foreign policy decisions at the MoFA headquarters level or in the embassies and diplomatic missions abroad. The absence of CSO participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, and the absence of CSO accountability enforcing initiatives seem to suggest that there are accountability gaps and possibilities of corruption and mismanagement in the foreign policy sector.

5.2.3 External determinants of low foreign policy participation

Civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy is affected by a number of factors within the external and internal operative environment. There is minimal openness on the part of government especially MoFA where the foreign policy sector is shrouded in secrecy and exclusionist tendencies. This is compounded by the elitism associated with foreign policy where a few individuals and small set of institutions yield power and control over policy decisions, directions and implementation. The elite also include politicians and business players who use foreign

policy to advance their interests which are often at odds with the wider national interest. The systematic and structural exclusion of civil society from foreign policy formulation and implementation is evident through unwillingness by MoFA to engage and share information with CSOs. Such exclusionist posture is motivated by the desire to ensure reduced oversight much to the advantage of the elite to continue exploiting the policy space unchecked which is a way of maximizing their interests and power.

5.2.4 Internal determinants of low foreign policy participation

A set of internal factors also militate against civil society pursuit for participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. General lack of interest among CSOs is a prime factor which is fueled by inadequate knowledge, insufficient information on foreign policy issues, and lack of financing for CSOs to facilitate participation in foreign policy work. However, the general lack of coordination among CSOs themselves to pool their efforts together for joint pursuit of foreign policy advocacy is probably the most glaring of the internal factors as CSOs in Malawi are often likely to be divided and polarized across lines of political party affiliation. Competition more often than cooperation dominates CSOs as they scramble for financing, recognition, dominance and power.

5.2.5 The deepening democratic deficit

The foreign policy space is marked with a democratic deficit where the supply of foreign policy information to CSOs is low. This is in contrast to the high demand for participation and for accountability which are necessary for the democratization of foreign policy. Low civil society participation, weak and almost non-existent CSO driven accountability initiatives, and a general political settlement among the elite to systematically exclude CSOs from participation in the foreign policy formulation and implementation, all contribute to the widening democratic deficit in the foreign policy arena.

5.3 Recommendations

This section provides a set of recommendations classified as general recommendations. A specific recommendation is presented in form of a model for effective civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

5.3.1 General Recommendations

Considering that civil society is critical to the democratization of foreign policy, and in view of the need to broaden the space for CSO participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, the study makes the following general recommendations:

5.3.1.1 Government should open up:

The study recommends that government must open up and guarantee the space for civil society to participate in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Study respondents therefore indicate that it is imperative for government, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to open up foreign policy to CSOs.

5.3.1.2 Establish special desk for civil society liaison:

The study recommends the setting up of a desk for CSO engagement within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in order to facilitate engagement and information sharing with the civil society.

5.3.1.3 Special budget allocation for CSOs:

The study also points to the need for government to set aside a budget line for supporting CSOs participation and implementation of key foreign policy actions that demand civil society involvement.

5.3.1.4 Periodic meetings and engagement sessions:

The study observes and recommends that constant engagement between government and CSOs will facilitate information exchange, transfer of knowledge and capacity building that are critical to bridging the democratic deficit in foreign policy.

5.3.1.5 Generate interest:

The study recommends that the task to facilitate foreign policy participation does not lie with government alone. Civil society actors themselves have important roles to play. They must generate interest in foreign policy and become a more visible policy stakeholder.

5.3.16 Create space in strategic plans:

CSOs are also expected to embrace foreign policy as a priority area of intervention and this must clearly be highlighted in organizational strategic plans.

5.3.1.7 Proactive engagement with government:

The study recommends that CSOs themselves should contribute to the opening up of foreign policy space by taking a proactive approach and knock on the doors of government and demand the right to participation.

5.3.1.8 Active fundraising:

The study recommends that for CSOs to effectively engage in foreign policy participation, they must undertake active fundraising efforts that are also important for guaranteeing CSO independence from external interests and forces.

5.3.1.9 Increase coordination and internal accountability:

The study recommends CSOs to address internal divisions and polarization especially along the lines of party political affiliations. Instead CSOs must increase coordination, expand their collective voice and unity of purpose. In addition, civil society needs to address issues of internal governance and accountability, address the perceptions of corruption and mismanagement that the study respondents indicate are common within some CSOs.

5.3.1.10 Development partners:

The study recommends that donors must establish more flexible financing windows that could allow CSOs to access funding for foreign policy work. Donors are also encouraged to provide linkages which CSOs can use to identify partners that can provide capacity support in various forms.

5.3.1.11 Academic institutions and think tanks:

The study recommends that there must be continuous CSO exposure to technical and well researched information which can be supplied by academic institutions, research entities and foreign policy think tanks.

5.3.1.12 Private sector bodies and foundations:

The study recommends that business institutions must play a pivotal role in establishing strategic partnerships with CSOs, define the common national interest, and jointly strike a balance between business interests and national interests. Private foundations should also be a source of funding for CSO foreign policy interventions.

5.3.2 The model for effective participation of civil society in foreign policy formulation and implementation

The study contributes to academic knowledge by recommending a model for effective civil society participation in foreign policy processes. The model has four key components. These are a *civil society liaison desk* in Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; a *special fund* for facilitating CSO participation and advocacy; a *think tank* comprising academic and independent policy research institutions; and a *civil society network on foreign policy* that acts as a hub for all CSO work on foreign affairs. Figure 5.2 below summarizes the model.

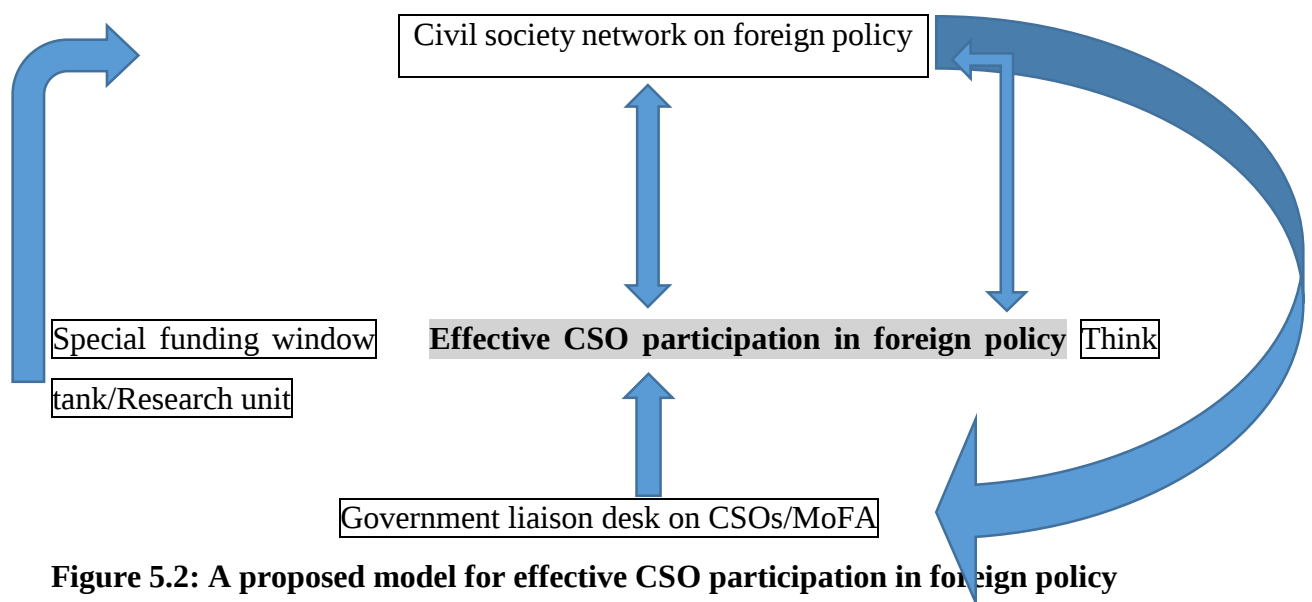


Figure 5.2: A proposed model for effective CSO participation in foreign policy

Source: Researcher

As highlighted in Figure 5.2 above, the proposed model has four main functions that all feed into the process of generating efficiency towards facilitating the participation of civil society in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

First, *the civil society network on foreign policy*: this is a proposed focal point for all civil society advocacy work on foreign policy. The CSO coalition will be a rallying point for specialization and mobilization on foreign policy processes. The civil society network on foreign policy shall act as the first point of contact and interface with government. The network could also facilitate information sharing as it will be a hub from which critical information will be distributed to all CSOs. The CSO network will be an effective platform for civic participation, mobilization, and accountability initiatives which are central to addressing the democratic deficit in foreign policy.

Second, *the think tank*: The effectiveness of civil society participation in foreign policy needs to be supported with research functions where evidence can be generated for advocacy and for constructive engagement. The think tank shall therefore deliver the research function and conduct critical assessments and analyses of key foreign policy issues. In this way, the civil society network on foreign policy will be empowered with technical and professional information for meaningful foreign policy interactions.

Third, *the government desk for civil society liaison*: The model suggests the location of the liaison office to be in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The liaison office will be the first point of call for CSOs when engaging government on foreign policy. The desk will facilitate information sharing between government and CSOs. The office will be the ‘home’ of civil society within the MoFA.

Fourth, is *the special funding window*: This is a special financing portal deliberately created to provide financial resources that can enable the effective participation of CSOs in foreign policy. The funds could be jointly managed by government, selected CSO team, and the private sector. Such a joint multi-stakeholder arrangement will help to balance the interests and ensure that no single unit dominates others. The fund could attract donations from the private sector, CSO contributions, and a special budgetary allocation from government under the MoFA budget vote. The special funding window

will finance the foreign policy interventions of the CSO network on foreign policy. The fund will also contribute to the costs associated with the research operations of the think tank.

5.3.3 Areas for further research

In the course of this research on the democratic deficit and civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, the study has exposed gaps, has excavated new information, and has stumbled across areas that require further research. Such further research questions are:

- What are the key drivers for decentralization of the foreign policy sector?
- To what extent do foreign policy promises count in the voting processes in developing countries such as Malawi?
- Do civil societies truly represent the voiceless in their push for participation in foreign policy, or CSOs pursue own narrow interests?
- To what extent and under what conditions do civil society leaders become informal diplomats and unofficial executors of foreign policy?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CSO LEADERS

ASSESSING THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT IN MALAWI'S FOREIGN POLICY

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATE IN FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Interview Guide 1 (Civil Society leaders)

Note: This interview is for CSO leaders that are in senior managerial position or have considerable influence in advocacy processes in Malawi.

Introduction

My name is **Mavuto Bamusi**, a student at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. I am doing an academic research on the extent to which civil society participate and demand accountability in foreign policy processes. The research is being done in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts Degree in Political Science. You have been selected to participate in this study. May I please encourage you to feel free to share your perceptions and experience. Your responses will be treated anonymously and all information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, unless you give explicit consent to mention your name. This interview will take approximately 20 minutes.

1. Personal information (tick)

- a. Name of Interviewee, and name of Organization

Interviewee:

Organization:

b. Type of CSO/NGO

Stand-alone CSO/NGO [] or CSO Network/coalition []

Service Delivery CSO/NGO [] or Advocacy CSO/NGO []

c. Length of Service in Civil Society (number of years or months)

Number of years in the current CSO/NGO job.....

Number of years in civil society/NGO work in general.....

2. Briefly share the main mandate and objectives of your organization

3. OBJECTIVE 1: The extent of civil society participation in Foreign Policy issues

a. Do you or does your organization participate in international campaigns or programs?

Yes [], no []

b. If yes, give a few examples?

c. Who supports or finances your participation, Names of financiers if available?

-
-
-
- d. Does Your Organizational Work Plan or Strategic Plan have components on foreign policy or related programs?

- e. Have you ever seen the Malawi Foreign Policy document?
- f. Have you ever heard about Malawi Foreign Policy?
- g. Have you ever participated in the formulation or review of Malawi Foreign Policy?
- h. Have or your organization ever participated in the implementation of the decisions or actions outlined in the Malawi Foreign Policy
- i. Do you or your organization interact or engage or dialogue with Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials or Malawi diplomats?

If yes, explain, on what issues.

- j. Does your organization conduct any program activities or advocacy around Malawi Foreign Policy?

If Yes, please elaborate

- k. Does your organization conduct any policy analysis on Malawi Foreign Policy?

If yes, explain

-
1. Does your organization conduct budget analysis on Malawi Foreign Policy, or any actions related to financial accountability such as Public Expenditure Tracking (PETS)?

If yes, explain

4. OBJECTIVE 2: Assessment of key factors enabling or challenging civil society space in foreign policy

- a. What do you think are the external factors that lead to the current stated levels of CSO participation in foreign policy formulation and implementation?
- b. What are the internal challenges (factors that relate to internal issues within your CSOs) that affect CSO participation in formulation and implementation of foreign policy
- c. Do you think that the current space for foreign policy processes is largely elite driven?

If yes, who do you think are the main elite groups that have captured the foreign policy space?

What do you think motivates the elite to monopolize and close off civil society from foreign policy participation?

- d. Is civil society given space (if at all) to take part in foreign policy processes and advocacy?
- e. Have you ever been invited to any foreign policy related event by MoFA or its embassies or to any meeting with civil society?

5. OBJECTIVE 3: An assessment of common advocacy and accountability issues raised by CSOs around foreign policy

-
- a. Do you think that it is important for CSOs to participate and undertake accountability processes such as budget analysis and PETS around foreign policy?

Yes [], no []

- b. If yes, explain:
- c. What recommendations can you suggest for opening up CSO participation and accountability advocacy in foreign policy?

What should government do?

What should CSOs do?

What should other stakeholders do?

6. OBJECTIVE 4: What are the likely outcomes of low civil society participation in foreign policy processes?

7. Any comment?

This is the end of the interview. I thank you very much for your participation

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

ASSESSING THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT IN MALAWI'S FOREIGN POLICY

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATE IN FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Interview Guide 2 (Government Officials)

Note: This interview is for senior government officials, especially those in the Malawi Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its diplomatic missions abroad.

Introduction

My name is **Mavuto Bamusi**, a student at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. I am doing an academic research on the extent to which civil society participate and demand accountability in foreign policy processes. The research is being done in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts Degree in Political Science. You have been selected to participate in this study. May I please encourage you to feel free to share your perceptions and experience. Your responses will be treated anonymously and all information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, unless you give explicit consent to mention your name. This interview will take approximately 25 minutes.

8. Personal information (tick)

a. Name of Interviewee

Interviewee:

b. Ministry/ Department

.....

c. Length of Service in Government (number of years or months)

Number of years in the current job.....

Number of years in the civil/public service in
general.....

9. Briefly share the main mandate and objectives of your Ministry/Department

**10. OBJECTIVE 1: The extent of civil society participation in Foreign Policy
issues**

a. Does your Ministry/Department allow for the participation of CSOs/NGOs
in international programs such as Summits or conferences?

Yes [], no []

b. If yes, give a few examples?

c. Who supports or finance the CSO/NGO participation, Names of financiers
if available?

-
-
-
- d. Does your Ministry/Department have a deliberate strategy or policy for CSO/NGO participation or inclusion especially on foreign policy or related programs?

- e. Have you ever shared the Malawi Foreign Policy document with CSOs? If Yes, explain how.

- f. Have you ever held a policy dialogue with CSOs on Malawi Foreign Policy? If yes, elaborate.

- g. Have you ever involved CSOs in the formulation or review of Malawi Foreign Policy?

- h. Does your Ministry/Department interact or engage or dialogue with CSOs on foreign policy or diplomatic issues?

If yes, explain, on what issues.

- i. Have you ever involved CSOs in the implementation of the Malawi Foreign Policy or decisions associated it the policy?

If Yes, please elaborate

- j. Do you know of any CSOs that conduct any policy analysis on Malawi Foreign Policy? Do you think it is important for CSOs to do this?

If yes, explain

-
- k. Do you know of any CSOs that conduct budget analysis on Malawi Foreign Policy, or any actions related to foreign policy budget analysis? Do you think it is important for CSOs to do this?

If yes, explain

- l. Do you know of any CSOs that track expenditures in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its diplomatic missions abroad? Does any CSO carry out public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS) on foreign policy expenditures? Is it important for CSOs to do this?

If Yes, please elaborate

11. OBJECTIVE 2: Assessment of key factors enabling or challenging civil society space in foreign policy

- a. What do you think are the external factors that lead to the current stated levels of CSO participation in foreign policy formulation and implementation?
- b. What are the internal challenges (factors that relate to internal issues within your CSOs) that affect civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of Malawi Foreign Policy?

- c. Do you think that the current space for foreign policy processes is largely elite driven?

If yes, who do you think are the main elite groups that have captured the foreign policy space?

What do you think are the reasons that scare off CSOs from robust foreign policy participation and advocacy?

- d. Is civil society given adequate space (if at all) to take part in foreign policy processes and advocacy?

-
- e. Has your Ministry/Department ever invited CSOs to any foreign policy related event organized by your Ministry/Department, or other government departments, or the embassies?

If Yes, which are some of the CSOs invited, and what was the event?

12. OBJECTIVE 3: An assessment of common advocacy and accountability issues raised by CSOs around foreign policy

- a. Do you think that it is important for CSOs to participate and undertake accountability processes such as budget analysis and PETS around foreign policy?

Yes [☐], No [☐]

- b. If yes, explain:
- c. What recommendations can you suggest for opening up CSO participation and accountability advocacy in foreign policy?
- What should government do?
- What should CSOs do?
- What should other stakeholders do?

13. OBJECTIVE 4: What are the likely outcomes of low civil society participation in foreign policy processes?

14. Any comment? _____

This is the end of the interview. I thank you very much for your participation

APPENDIX 3

LIST OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS INTERVIEWED, THEIR SECTOR COMPOSITION, TYPE AND CHARACTERISTICS

No.	Name	Type (N for Network and S for stand-alone NGO)	Sector	Secular or Faith-based (by registration)	% as Sector
1	Council for NGOs in Malawi (CONGOMA)	N	General Public Policy	Secular	
2	Institute for Policy Interaction (IPI)	S	General public policy	Secular	
3	Public Affairs Committee (PAC)	N	Governance	Faith based	
4	Mzuzu Youth Association	S	Youth policy	Secular	
5	National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE)	S	General policy	Secular	
6	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace	S	General policy	Faith based	
7	National Advocacy Platform (NAP)	N	General policy	Secular	
8	Qadria Muslim Association of Malawi (QMAM)	S	General policy	Faith based	
9	Malawi-Scotland Partnership (MSP)	S	Foreign policy	Secular	
10	Center for Youth and Children Affairs (CEYCA)	S	Youth and Child policy	Secular	
11	Health Rights and Advocacy	S	Health policy	Secular	
12	IM Swedish	S	General policy	Secular	
13	Church and Society (Livingstonia Synod)	S	Governance	Faith based	

14	Umunthu Foundation	S	HIV and AIDS	Secular	
15	Center for Human Rights Education and Awareness (CHREEA)	S	Human Rights	Secular	
16	Eye of the Child	S	Child Policy	Secular	
17	Malawi Health Equity Network (MHEN)	N	Health	Secular	
18	Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC)	N	Human Rights and Governance	Secular	
19	MISA Malawi	N	Communication and Information	Secular	
20	Center for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE)	S	Youth policy	Secular	
21	Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC)	N	Human Rights and Governance	Secular	
22	Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU)	N	Labor policy	Secular	
23	Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC)	N	Education policy	Secular	
24	Center for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA)	S	Environmental policy	Secular	
25	Youth and Society (YAS)	S	Youth policy	Secular	
26	Center for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR)	S	Human Rights	Secular	
27	National Elections Systems Trust (NEST)	S	Election (Governance)	Secular	
28	NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN)	N	Gender policy		

29	Malawi Watch	S	Governance	Secular	
30	Center for Conflict and Women Development (CECOWDA)	S	Gender	Secular	
31	NGO Child Right Coalition (NGOCCR)	N	Child policy	Secular	
32	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	N	Economic policy	Secular	
33	Civil Society Network on Environment and Climate Change (CISONECC)	N	Environment policy	Secular	
34	Natural Resources Justice Network (NRJN)	N	Environment and Energy policy	Secular	
35	Association of Persons with Albinism	N	Disability	Secular	
36	Forum for National Development (FND)	S	Governance	Secular	
37	Movement for Black Economic Empowerment (MABLEM)	N	Economic policy	Secular	
38	Church and Society of the Blantyre Synod	S	General governance	Faith based	
39	Foundation for Community Support (FOCUS)	S	Environmental policy	Secular	
40	APAUSE – Mzuzu	S	Economic empowerment	Secular	
41	Center for Victimized Women and Counselling (CAVWOC)	S	Gender	Secular	
42	Malawi Network of Religious leaders against Aids (MANERELA)	N	Health, HIV and AIDS	Faith based	

43	Malawi Aids Network (MANET+)	N	Health, HIV and AIDS	Secular	
44	Center for the Development of People (CEDEP)	S	Health and Minority Rights policy	Secular	
45	Edukans	S	Education	Secular	
46	Muslim Association of Malawi (MAM)	N	General policy	Faith based	

Source: Field Data

APPENDIX 4

LIST OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS INTERVIEWED

No.	Ministry/Department	Number of officials (Individual respondents)
1	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	12
2	Ministry of Trade, Industry and Private Sector Development	4
3	Office of President and Cabinet (OPC)	3
4	Ministry of Finance	5
5	NGO Board - a department under Ministry of Gender	2