THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE VISA POLICY REFORM (2015) IN MALAWI

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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By

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DECLARATION

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

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Full Legal Name

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Signature

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Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL/CERTIFICATE

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

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Co-Supervisor

DEDICATION

For my Husband Mr. Louis Ulaya, my Father Mr. Cuthbert Rex Kausi, my Mother Mrs. Doreen Kausi and my Son Ethan Zikomo Ulaya, who have always believed in me.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to identify and examine the roles and interests of different actors in the 2015 visa policy reform process, and further seeks to examine the institutional context that governed the policy process in Malawi, after the Government of Malawi adopted a reformed visa policy which drew criticisms from different stakeholders, and whose policy process is not clear in the year 2015. The study used a qualitative research strategy. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants from different government ministries and departments, as well as the private sector. These key informants were identified using snowball sampling. In addition, secondary data was also collected from documents such as government reports, press releases and newspaper articles, among others. The study used thematic analysis to draw its findings. The study found the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security and the Ministry responsible for Finance as the main actors in the visa policy reform process, with an interest in revenue collection. The findings indicate that the private sector was not engaged in the adoption of the reform, it was however engaged during the policy reform implementation stage, after initiating its involvement. This is attributable to the influential role of informal institutions, such as norms in excluding other actors in public decision making with the aim of subduing conflicting views, as envisaged by institutional theory. The study found also that despite Malawi being party to a number of international conventions and protocols such as the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, diplomatic reciprocity took an upper hand in the policy's formulation. Nationals from Southern African Development Community member states which subject Malawians to visas, as also subjected to visas to enter Malawi's territory. The study therefore affirms with the notion of informal institutions subduing formal institutions in a policy process, as envisaged by critics of institutional theory.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organisations
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DHRMD	Department of Human Resource Management and Development
DoI	Department of Immigration
DoC	Drivers of Change
GoM	Government of Malawi
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
EPRDF	the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
MITC	the Malawi Investment and Trade Centre
MTC	the Malawi Tourism Council
MoFEPD	The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
MoFAIC	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MoHAIS	The Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security
MoTAT	The Ministry of Trade and Tourism
NBR	National Board Revenue
NSSSC	National Social Support Steering Committee
NSSSTC	National Social Support Technical Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PSRU	Public Sector Reforms Unit
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a background to the study of the visa policy in Malawi. The chapter further aims to provide a brief overview of the previous and current visa policy in Malawi. The chapter also focuses on the problem statement, objectives and research questions and rationale of the study.

1.2 Background to the study

Societies worldwide are confronted with enormous problems such as security, climate change, ill-health, unemployment and sustainable development (Aiafi, 2016). Addressing these problems are, however, prerequisites towards achieving sustainable development and governments ought to work towards addressing them. Dye (2013) defines public policy as government action or inaction. The outcome of a policy and its implementation is, however, dependent on several factors which are revealed by a study on the policy process (Aiafi, 2016). These include activities and representation of interest groups, personal views of both political office bearers and public officials, research and investigation, international relations and economic development among other factors (Marume, 2016). Dye (2013) asserts that the public policy process reveals activities that occur from the identification of problems, agenda setting, formulation, legitimation, implementation and evaluation. During this process, different actors are involved, including politicians, lobbyists, interest groups, bureaucrats and think tanks amongst other stakeholders (ibid). Their involvement is essential in ensuring that ownership, partnership, understanding and learning are built in the policy process (Aiafi, 2016). The public policy process should, in a nutshell, entail interactions between different stakeholders pursuing different interests (Howlett, Ramesh & Perl, 2009). In Malawi, international donor organisations are viewed as dominating actors in the adoption of public policies (Tambulasi, 2011). For example, a study on the social protection policy process reveals the policy design as driven and determined by donor agencies, in particular the Department for International Development and World Bank (Chinsinga, 2007). As Chinsinga (2007, p. 2) observes, “This is as a result of the lack of capacity among government agencies to provide necessary leadership, technical guidance and direction to the policy process”.

In 2015, the Government of Malawi (GoM) introduced a reformed visa policy, which requires foreigners from countries that subject Malawians to visas, to obtain visas to enter the country. Visa requirements are essential for guaranteeing national security, controlling immigration and crime, and exercising territorial sovereignty among others (Gros-Tchorbadjiyska, 2010). However, the reformed policy has met criticism from some stakeholders who fear that the policy will negatively affect the number of tourism travelers to the Malawi (Chitsulo, 2016).

Stakeholders in Malawi’s tourism sector view the reformed visa policy as an impingement towards the growth of the industry and subsequently the country’s economy (Phiri, 2015). It is important to note in this context that Malawi is poorly ranked as a destination of choice in the sub-Saharan Africa as well as globally (Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2015). Out of 136 economies across the world, Malawi is ranked 123 (Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2017). Nonetheless the effects of whether and how the reformed visa policy continue to affect the already constrained tourism industry remain unclear.

The general impression in the country is that other key actors were not involved in the reformed visa policy process in order to pursue the Government of Malawi’s interest. In addition to criticism from the tourism industry, there was indication of poor coordination between government departments and ministries in the implementation of the visa policy (Nankhonya, 2015a). For example, the Department of Immigration started collecting visa fees at a date earlier than the one which was set for the implementation of the reformed visa policy (ibid). Furthermore, there were unclear procedures on the payment of fees for obtaining the visas to Malawi among others, due to the poor coordination between the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (ibid). This thesis seeks to analyse the procedures and processes involved in the identification of the problem, agenda setting, formulation, legitimation and implementation of this reformed visa policy, using the World Bank Problem Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis. This analysis will provide a better understanding of the policy process in Malawi, which previous studies have revealed to be mainly donor driven.

1.3 Overview of previous visa policy's

A visa is an authorization by a state which permits entry into its territory (Gros-Tchorbadjiyska, 2010). The visa document grants the holder a temporary stay in the territory or permission to transit through it. According to Gros-Tchorbadjiyska (2010), its functions include guaranteeing national security, controlling immigration and crime, and exercising territorial sovereignty. In Malawi, visas are categorised into transit, gratis, single entry and multiple entry visas (Government of Malawi, 2015). The transit visa is issued to travelers passing through Malawi to another destination, with a validity period of 7 days (ibid). On the other hand, single entry visas grant a traveler permission to enter the country and apply for a visitors permit (ibid). The validity period of this visa is 3 months (ibid). The multiple entry visa however, allows nationals to make multiple entries into the country within 6 or 12 months from the date of issue (ibid). To obtain the transit, single and multiple entry visas, a traveler ought to provide necessary documentation (ibid).

On the other hand, a gratis visa is issued free to diplomats and government officials from countries that are required to obtain visas to enter Malawi (ibid). These visas are obtained at either Malawi missions abroad or at the country's port of entries (ibid). Depending on the purpose of visit, a traveler with a valid visa is then granted a visitors or business permit upon application, at the port of entry(ibid). However, only the number of days and entry endorsements, are made in the passports of travelers from countries which are not required to obtain visas to enter Malawi (ibid).

Before the visa policy was reformed in 2015, the visa policy in Malawi had no substantive changes (Malawi Immigration Act, 1964; Malawi Immigration Act, 2003). Nationals which had no visa requirements to enter Malawi, were issued permits at the port of entry (Malawi Immigration Act, 2003). On the other hand, it was a requirement for nationals required to obtain visas, to acquire the visas before travelling to Malawi, in order to apply for temporary employment, student and visitors permits upon entry. Visa free entry into Malawi was largely hinged on a country's membership to one the commonwealth (Malawi Immigration Act 2003). All nationals from countries in the commonwealth were granted visa free entry into Malawi. However, nationals from other countries were also granted visa free entry into Malawi based on the bilateral agreements. For example, in the year 2013, Hong Kong nationals were exempted from visa requirements into Malawi despite not the country not being a member state of the Commonwealth (Department of Immigration, 2013). The visa waiver was granted to Hong Kong Nationals because Malawians are not subjected to visa requirements to enter Hong Kong territory (ibid).

The implementing agency however encountered a number of challenges with the previous visa policy (Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security 2007). For example, the department had inadequate human and financial resources. Malawi's diplomatic missions abroad registered low numbers of Immigration Officers to undertake immigration work (ibid). This was despite the high demand for visas. Further to that, there were significant cases of fraudulent acquisition of visas and permits by foreign nationals, to enable them to stay in the country (ibid). These practices were viewed as a threat to the country's security (ibid).

Despite the aforementioned challenges and the changes in Malawi's visa policy overtime, there was a considerable increase in the number of visitors to Malawi from the period 2012 to 2015 (World Bank Group 2020, Government of Malawi 2015). On the contrary, tourist visitations to Malawi decreased during the same period (ibid). Whilst Malawi recorded 206,100 tourism arrivals in 2012, it recorded 165,000 tourist arrivals in 2014 and 145,644 in 2015 (Government of Malawi 2015). However, despite the decrease in the figures, tourist expenditure continued to register growth and subsequently intensifying the optimistic views of the tourism sector and the Government of Malawi, with regard to revenue collection (ibid)

However, it is important to note the dominance of regional tourism in Malawi tourism economy (Magombo 2011). Traditional regional tourists from Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe continue to dominate Malawi's tourism (ibid). The country has struggled to attract long haul international tourists because of strong competition from neighbouring countries like Tanzania and South Africa which have well established tourism infrastructure, direct flights and similar tourism products among others (ibid).

1.4 Overview of the reformed visa policy

The reformed visa policy introduced visas to a number of countries whose nationals were previously not subjected to visas. The following were however exempted from obtaining visas;

- All Diplomats accredited to Malawi;
- Holders of Diplomatic, Service or Official Passports on official government business; and
- Holders of Ordinary Passports on official government business (Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, 2015).

Table 1 as shown in the appendices further indicates the nationals who do not require visas when travelling to Malawi. The policy also requires some nationals to obtain visas before travelling to Malawi. However, it permits acquisition of the same visas at the port of entry for other nationals (ibid). Further to that, the policy increased the visa fees for different visa categories. For example, a single entry visa fee obtained at the port of entry is $75, which is an equivalence of MK55,050.00 (ibid).

1.5 Problem statement

Over the years, Malawi has adopted a plethora of reforms in the public service initiated by different stakeholders (Luhanga, 2001). These stakeholders include the GoM, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society and donors among others (ibid). In the year 2015, the GoM reformed the visa policy, and requires foreigners from countries that subject Malawians to visas, to obtain visas to enter Malawi. This reformed visa policy is grounded on diplomatic reciprocity practices (Government of Malawi, 2016). As such, based on this reciprocal nature, the visa arrangements are subject to change (ibid).

It is important to note, however, that the development of policies and procedures for visas is closely linked to the promotion of tourism (The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2013). As such, stakeholders from the tourism sector among other stakeholders ought to be included in the visa policy process (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2014). However, there have been growing concerns in Malawi by the Tourism Sector, that the new visa policy will impact tourism negatively and will subsequently adversely affect the country's economy (Phiri, 2015). The tourism sector was of the view that the visa fees would reduce international tourism visits to Malawi, and subsequently tourism revenue which contributes to the country's gross domestic product (ibid).

The foregoing gives an impression that the interests of stakeholders of the tourism sector were outweighed in the policy process. This study therefore seeks to enquire whether GoM's interest, dominated the interests of other key stakeholders during the reformation of the visa policy, through a political economy lens. It further seeks to explore the interests and roles of other stakeholders in the visa policy reform process through the same lens. This study will subsequently fill the research gap that currently exists in policy making process in Malawi, which previous studies have alluded to be mainly donor driven and therefore provide a better understanding of the policy process in Malawi.

1.6 Objectives

1.6.1 Main objective

To analyse the visa policy reform in Malawi using political economy analysis

1.6.2 Specific objectives

- To examine the roles and interests different key stakeholders in the visa policy reform process.

- To assess the institutional context that governed the new visa policy process.

1.7 Research questions

The study seeks to analyse the role of different stakeholders and institutions in shaping the initiation, adoption, legitimation and implementation of the new visa policy. It thus seeks to address the following questions:

- How was the visa policy reform issue identified, defined, developed and put on the national policy agenda?

- Who were the key actors involved and how did they contribute to the development and formulation of the policy?

- How did institutions guide the reformed visa policy?

- What were the challenges in the implementation of the reformed visa policy?

1.8 Justification

In the year 2015, the Government of Malawi reformed the visa policy on a reciprocal basis (Government of Malawi, 2016). The reformed visa policy subjected visas to nationals from countries which require Malawians to visas (ibid). However, after this policy's inception, there were growing concerns from the tourism industry that the policy would negatively affect the industry (Phiri, 2015). The tourism industry is of the view that the visa fees will reduce international tourism visits to Malawi (ibid). This because tourists would opt to visit Malawi's neighbouring countries like Zambia and Tanzania, which have lower visa fees compared to Malawi (ibid). These concerns are still persistent two years after the introduction of the policy (Chirambo, 2018). It is important to also note that apart from the concerns from stakeholders of the tourism industry, a number of foreign mission's resident in Malawi were against the reciprocity nature of the reformed visa policy (Phiri, 2015). For example, the Embassy of United States of America in Malawi indicated their disapproval of the one-year maximum validity period of the Malawi visa for its nationals, against their 10 years' maximum validity period (Nankhonya, 2015b). The concerns from different stakeholders gives an impression that the GoM interests dominated in the visa policy reform process. Chinsinga (2007), however, argues that the success or failure of a policy is dependent on the policy process, particularly the engagement of different stakeholders. It is therefore vital for a policy process to engage different stakeholders.

It is against this background that this study seeks to enquire the processes of the new visa policy from the identification of the problem, agenda setting, formulation and implementation. A study of different stakeholders with different interests is essential in understanding the barriers and opportunities of the reformed visa policy. In addition, a political economy lens will as previously indicated, fill the research gap that currently exists in policy making process in Malawi, which previous studies have alluded to be mainly donor driven. The study will therefore further provide a better understanding of the policy process in Malawi.

1.9 Conclusion

The chapter has explained the particular focus of this study. The chapter has also given a brief overview of the previous and current visa policy in Malawi. Specifically, the chapter discussed the background to the study, objectives, problem statement and justification.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one highlighted that this study seeks to examine the roles and interests of different key stakeholders in the visa policy reform process and to assess the institutional context which governed the reform process. To attain these objectives, this chapter undertakes an in depth review of literature pertinent to the issues under study. This review has three sections aimed at providing maximum comprehension on the topic. The first section provides an insight on different political economy analysis frameworks by presenting commentary and critiques on them. On the other hand, the second section elaborates the approaches to public policy theories which were developed to explain and describe the policy process, the interaction of different actors in the policy making process and to predict policy outcomes among others. Lastly, the third section of this chapter will explore the political economy of reforms in different countries. However, literature available internationally and in Africa is of visa reforms, with no consolidated literature on the political economy of visa reforms. It is for this reason that the literature review is on the political economy of reforms in general, and not on specific visa reforms. The third section will further explore the role of institutions in guiding a policy reform.

2.2 Key concepts and political economy analysis frameworks

Most states prioritise economic development in their policies and design instruments for the attainment of that goal (Bagchi, 2000 in Botlhale et al., 2015). These instruments include, among others, establishing new formal institutions, and creating formal and informal networks of collaboration among citizens and officials (Botlhale et al., 2015). The functioning of such instruments are crucial for the outcome and potential impact of a public policy. Birkland (2014) further identifies factors that shape a public policy as being socially, institutionally, politically and economically inclined among other contexts. As such, a study on the policy process is of importance to determine the factors that affect a policy, anticipate problems in implementation and ultimately assist policy makers in their decision making (Acosta & Pettit, 2013). Harold Laswell, a pioneer of policy studies analysed the policy process as consisting of intelligence, promotion, perception, invocation, application, termination and appraisal phases (Howlett et al., 2009). However, Dye (2013) suggests the policy process as composed of problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, legitimation, implementation and evaluation stages.

The agenda setting stage helps policy makers decide which problems to address, on the other hand, policy formulation stage entails the process of identifying courses of action, often in pursuit of resolving problems (ibid). Another stage is policy implementation, which is a phase at which a policy is put into action (ibid). During these stipulated stages, which are however not always sequential, there is a constellation of different actors pursuing various interests and consequently modelling a policy (Howlett et al., 2009).

Political economy is concerned with the intersection of political and economic processes in a society (Corduneanu-Huci, Hamilton & Ferrer, 2013). It is particularly useful in understanding how interests, incentives and institutions shape how agents behave (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014). Corduneanu-Huci et al., (2013) describes these agents as political parties, bureaucracies, interest groups, and the civil society organisations, among others as key actors. Political economy is also essential in understanding the political processes and practices that hinder or encourage development outcomes (Hudson and Leftwich, 2014). A political economy analysis study, provides the analytical tools, methods and diagnostics essential for understanding and mapping this policy context (Corduneanu-Huci et al., 2013).

Political economy is also essential in understanding the roles of institutions in affecting development outcomes (ibid). Institutions are defined as formal and informal rules and norms that organize social, political and economic relations (North, 1990). Political economy therefore, is similarly important in understanding the impact values and ideas such as political ideologies and religion, have on political behavior and public policy (ibid).

As earlier mentioned, this thesis seeks to examine the roles and interests of different key stakeholders in the new visa policy process, and to assess the institutional context that governed it. These objectives therefore fall under the realm of Political Economy Analysis. As such, a Political Economy Analysis approach is ideal for meeting this thesis' objectives.

2.2.1 Department for International Development drivers of change

A number of donor agencies came up with different approaches which seek to understand the political economy environment within which policies are shaped. One such approach is the Department for International Development Drivers of Change. This approach analyses how policy and institutional reforms that benefit poor people emerge, endure or get obstructed (Leftwich, 2006). The framework targets the examination of historical legacies, organisations, institutions, as well as the political elements that shaped the context within which actors worked (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014; Tidemand, 2010). The analyses focus is on hidden relationships, financing and spending, institutions that are less acceptable but influential in different contexts, management and leadership, among others (Tidemand, 2010). This is beneficial in the awareness of risks in strategies and programmes (Leftwich, 2006).

However, it has had some limitations because of its inconsistency in methodology and variability in quality (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014). The analytical framework is not sufficiently disaggregated to enable a detailed political analysis (ibid). Hudson & Leftwich (2014) also observed that the findings from country studies are too vague in describing the political context. The Drivers of Change analysis is criticised for not identifying actual actors, political strategies, in addition to not offering practical solutions to the discovered problems (Booth et al., 2006; Hudson & Leftwich, 2014). In short, the

DoC does not provide a practical guidance to donors on how to work politically (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014).

2.2.2 World Bank problem driven governance and political economy analysis

Another analytical tool is World Bank Problem Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis. Unlike the DFID Drivers of Change which focuses on contextual analysis, this framework emphasizes on problem driven analysis (ibid). This approach involves identifying the problem, opportunity or vulnerability to be addressed, understanding the institutional or governance arrangements and thirdly understanding the political economy drivers (Desai, 2011). It seeks to investigate how institutional, structural and stakeholder variables interact and their impact on policy outcomes (ibid). The approach's analyses are on laws, regulations and stakeholder incentives among others (Tidemand, 2010).

Further to that, this analytical is beneficial due to its application of economics to politics (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014). It prevails on the assumption that political agents are utility maximisers, egoistic and rational beings (ibid). Subsequently, this analytical tools focus is also on incentives (ibid). "Incentives are an attractive solution to the problem of aligning the assumed private self-interest of politicians, bureaucrats, citizens and civil society organisations to produce better public goods outcomes" (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014, p. 47). In this regard, policy makers harness their self-interest and avoid engaging with political processes and relations of power that shape which institutions and incentives prevail (Eaton et al., 2010, in Hudson & Leftwich, 2014).

The thesis seeks to examine the roles and interests of different stakeholders, as well as assess the institutional context which governed the new visa policy. As earlier discussed, these fall under the realm of the World Bank Problem Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis framework. It is against this background that World Bank Problem Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis is the best analytical tool for this thesis. This tool has been used in diagnosing feasible solutions in Zambia's electricity or power sector reform (Fritz, Kaiser & Levy, 2009). The framework analysed the important role of the state owned Electricity company in Zambia. It further provided a potential feasible solution of making the company a full participant in the planning of the reforms.

2.3 Approaches to public policy studies

In order to find an appropriate framework of analysis for the political economy of the new visa policy reform in Malawi, there is need to look at relevant public policy theories. A number of public policy theories were developed to explain and describe the policy process, the interaction of different actors in the policy making process and to predict policy outcomes among others. The public choice theory is one public policy theory. It views the policy making process as a platform on which different actors engage in competitive rent-seeking behavior (Howlett et al., 2009). Thus, its primary assumption rests on individual political actors that are guided by self-interest in decision making (ibid). However, critics of public choice theory question its simplicity and logical assumptions. They argue that the public policy making process is complex (Howlett et al., 2009).

The pluralist approach also explains the policy process (ibid). The pluralist approach does not believe that all groups are equally influential or that they have equal access to government (Fox et al., 2006). Consequently, public policies are products of reconciliation and collaboration of competing interests by different groups (ibid). On the contrary, critics of this approach assert that these groups form an array of equivalent power centers in society(ibid). These groups consequently develop the capacity to influence government decision making (ibid). This approach is also criticised for the unclear role it envisages for the government in the public policy making.

Institutional theory was also developed to explain and describe the public policy process. John (1998) views institutions as the arena within which policy-making takes place. Institutions which include laws and rules as well as how political organisations, include and exclude political actors such as interest groups in public decision making. It is against this backdrop that these institutions affect policy through their capacity to promote coordination or not (ibid). However, critics of institutionalism state that actors often circumvent institutions in the pursuit of their interests. For example, resourceful interest groups strive to ensure politicians and bureaucrats respond to their interests regardless of the institutions in place (ibid). It is thus not sufficient to argue that policy outcomes are solely shaped by institutions. Institutions however, play a complimentary role by interacting with the power of interest groups and politicians (ibid).

This thesis seeks to examine the institutions that governed the visa reform policy process, the actors involved and their interests as well as the challenges and opportunities of the new visa policy. To this end, institutional theory will be applicable for the analysis of the new visa policy. This is because institutional theory facilitates an analysis of how both formal and informal institutions excludes or includes actors in public decision making (John, 1998). It further reveals how different actors pursued their interests within institutional contexts. This thesis will also use the World Bank Problem Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis as it analytical framework. This choice is based on its focus on investigating how institutional, structural and stakeholder variables interact and impact on policy outcomes (Desai, 2011).

2.4 Roles and interests of different actors in policy reforms

This section will explore the political economy of reforms in different countries. However, as previously indicated, literature available internationally and in Africa is of visa reforms, with no consolidated literature on the political economy of visa reforms. It is for this reason that the literature review is on the political economy of reforms in general and not on visa reforms.

2.4.1 Pension system reform in France

Public policy processes are contestation of different actors pursuing different interests. The outcome of policy processes is affected by actors, institutions and the ideas they hold (Howlett et al., 2009). The pension reform in France is an illustrative case of different stakeholders pursuing different interests (Tompson, 2009). In mid-2003, France adopted a major pension reform (ibid). This reform intended to reduce the inequalities that existed between private and public sector pension systems, to assure financial stability, in

addition to reducing the incentives for early retirement (ibid). The overall goal of this reform was therefore, to achieve harmonisation between private and public sector pension schemes (ibid).
However, the reform proposal drew opposition from employer unions in France (ibid). Despite this opposition, the government of France succeeded in extending the provision of the private sector pension system to the public sector (ibid). The government employed confrontation and consensus seeking in securing the adoption of this reform (ibid).

The success of this reform was attributable to the government's strategy of consultation and communication (ibid). The government went to great lengths to prepare the public opinion for the reform, in addition to consulting with a wide range of stakeholders such as unions and employers organisations, such as Frances principal trade union confederations (ibid). The series of consultations eventually yielded the unions support for the need of change in the pension scheme in the year 2002 (ibid).

Tompson (2009) observed that the unions have a capacity to influence public opinion due to public trust, despite having a unionisation below 10% of the labour force. Consequently, by early 2003, opinion polls indicated that public sector workers were ready to accept the realignment of their retirement schemes to that of the private sector (ibid).

In addition to the trust placed on the unions, the public discussion of the pension problems throughout the 1990s prepared public opinion for the 2003 reform (ibid). However, these consultations mainly involved the government entity (ibid). The work on pension policy proceeded largely within individual ministries (ibid). Meetings were conducted with responsible officials from different departments (ibid). The whole process was managed by the Prime Minister's office which saw the meetings taking place in two folds, director level and ministerial level meetings (ibid).

2.4.2 Cotton sector policy reforms in Burkina Faso

The World Bank proposed reforms in the cotton sector of Burkina Faso (World Bank, 2008). The reforms aimed the gradual liberalization of the sector by encouraging the entry of new companies and competition (ibid). This was in an effort to raise both output and farm-worker income (ibid).

In addition, the reforms would introduce performance contracts which would set output targets and further (ibid). Furthermore, the reforms would regulate the internal pricing systems to be in line with external market conditions (ibid).

The Government of Burkina Faso, farmer's union and the national cotton company, Sofitex, all supported the reform for different reasons (ibid). The Sofitex had a strong interest in the success of the reform because its failure would have discouraged producers, left the cotton unstable and create discontent within the farmer's union (ibid). In addition, it was agreed that the money from the transfer of assets would be diverted to the overall investment of the sector (ibid).

The Government was however in support of the reform because of the prospects of collecting sales tax (ibid). The Farmers Union also had a strong interest in the reforming of the Burkina Faso cotton sector because the terms of reference were designed in a way which allowed the union to retain minority shares in the private company (ibid). The alliance of support for the reform of the cotton sector generated a consensus driven process (ibid). However, the World Bank was not directly involved in the reform process and accepted the leading role of the government and Sofitex in the process (ibid). Nevertheless, the World Bank observed the entire process and provided advice where necessary (ibid). The impact of the reforms on the cotton sector were evident to be favourable (ibid). This was attributable to the consensus driven approach of the reform process, the favourable macro-economic and stable political environment, with limited turn over in key political positions (ibid).

2.4.3 The agriculture extension policy reform in Ethiopia

Berhanu & Poulton (2014) observes that many African governments neglect agricultural extension services. This is despite the commitment made by African Heads of State in 2003, to adopt sound policies for agricultural and rural development (ibid). Unlike, many of these governments, the government of Ethiopia has however portrayed significant progress towards investing in agricultural extension services (ibid). A study on the political economy of the agricultural extension services in Ethiopia explains this divergence from African norms (ibid). Berhanu & Poulton (2014) revealed the political drivers for the commitment of the Ethiopian government as enhancing productivity and production of smallholder farmers to stimulate broad based growth. However, Berhanu & Poulton (2014) further reveal the unstated objective as gaining political control throughout the country. Much as the government of Ethiopia invested in agriculture extension to increase small holder productivity, securing the peoples support for the government was another driving factor towards the increase in investment (ibid). The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front demonstrated its commitment towards agricultural extension due to the significance of agriculture in the country (ibid).

Thus, from the outset, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front had prioritized this sector with particular focus on empowering smallholder farmers (ibid). However, the government of Ethiopia's budgetary shortfalls had led to donor interventions in funding the extension programme (ibid). However, the donor support did not translate into dictating the terms of extension policy (ibid). Consequently, State agencies and state owned companies control the extension programme, with great resistance towards its liberalization as recommended by donors (ibid). The State control was to ensure that it penetrated into every village in the country in an effort to gain political control (ibid). The existence of extension workers who were not politically neutral due to the intertwinement of the Ethiopian State and ruling party structures ensured scrutiny and control of activities down to household activities (ibid). Berhanu & Poulton (2014) reveal that the extension workers were not appointed on merit but rather on political allegiance. This ensured that the extension workers were also engaged in other activities such as popularization of government policies, which can spill into campaigning on behalf of EPRDF.

Doercon et al. (2008) in Berhanu & Poulton (2014) observed that the extension investment achieved impact on the growth and poverty reduction in the country. On the other hand, significant inefficiencies were also evident (ibid). The roots of these inefficiencies were cited as being top down (ibid). The state control of the extension service from the reform adoption to implementation led to inefficiencies in the extension services (ibid).

2.4.4 Water sector policy reforms in Kenya

As earlier outlined, a study on the political economy provides a better understanding on how a policy is shaped (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014). In 2002, the government of Kenya introduced reforms in the water sector which saw the commercialization of water services among other changes (Francesco & Puig, 2011). This was coupled with an increase in financial resources invested in the sector among other initiatives which were inclined towards the management of water supply services delivery (ibid). However, despite these initiatives, the reforms objectives such as provision of good quality water are far from being realized (ibid). It is against this background that a study on the political economy of water sector reforms in Kenya, was conducted to understand the actors and factors that determined the outcomes of the reforms. The European Commission analytical tool was developed to identify key actors, stakeholders and governance issues that hamper or contribute towards improving sector reforms (Daniel, Michelle &Lindsey, 2011). This tool is among the tools developed in recognition that the governance of a sector and the interaction of institutions and politics have an impact on how services are delivered (ibid). It was thus adopted to analyse the political economy of water sector reforms in Kenya (ibid).

The analysis revealed the basis of the water sector reforms as the work of consultants supported by the World Bank (Francesco & Puig, 2011). It further revealed tension and conflicts between different actors which was a result of their rent-seeking activities (ibid). A wide range of actors showed interest in the water sector reforms to access financial

resources (ibid). These included CSOs competing for public resources and Official Development Assistant, Commercial Water Service Providers, Water Services Board for political attention, government subsidies and Official Development Assistant, parastatals competing for projects, functions and jobs, and other actors not traditionally involved in water, sanitation and sewerage activities but seeking different avenues to enter the booming sector (ibid). The intense engagement of these stakeholders subsequently led to over-institutionalisation, overlapping roles, lack of coordination among others (ibid). This was because eleven other Ministries were entrusted with some competence on water in one form or another, in addition to the establishment of new institutions (ibid).
Subsequently, the reforms objectives such as provision of good quality water are far from being realized (ibid)

2.5 Role of institutions in policy reforms

This section will explore the role of institutions in including or excluding actors in a policy reform process. It further explains how institutions guide a policy reform.

2.5.1 Institutional arrangements of social protection in Malawi

Institutional arrangements play a critical role in the success of the social protection policy reform. According to Samson et al. (2010) in Holmes et al. (2018), institutional arrangements refer to the networks of entities and organisations involved in policy planning and implementation. These arrangements translate into institutional coordination, which is the alignment and involvement of all stakeholder activities (Holmes et al. 2018). The coordination between institutions involved in the planning and implementation of the reform, determines the success of a social protection policy reform (ibid). The stakeholders in the social protection policy reform include all actors at national and local level, as well as various development partners and local CSOs involved in the policy planning, and implementation of social protection reforms. Coordination at national level comprises the presidential office as well as line ministries responsible for social protection programmes and other interventions. It also involves CSO's, donors and development partners. Limited coordination of these stakeholders leads to policy's that are fragmented.

Furthermore, effective institutional arrangements mean that policies are housed in Ministries with the mandated responsibility, and that the capacity of the Ministry to undertake the programming and planning activities is adequate (World Bank, 2004, in Holmes et al., 2018).

The MoFEPD provides leadership and coordination on policy reforms for social protection programmes. A coordination structure was established to promote coordination of various social protection programmes and actors. The national level coordination structure comprises the Cabinet Committee on social development, National Social Support Steering Committee (NSSSC) which comprises principal secretaries, representatives of development partners and donors, and NGO's. The structure also has the National Social Support Technical group (NSST) which comprises government institutions, implementing institutions, development partners and civil society. Further to that, the coordination structure has Technical Working groups which comprises the line ministry, development partners and NGOs. Lastly, the structure has Task Forces group with participation from government institutions, donors and development partners as well.

However, Holmes et al 2018 observes that the committees did not meet regularly as required. For example, it was observed that the NSSSC was not functioning as expected because meetings were not held regularly as required (ibid). In addition, there was not sufficient time allocated to them in times when they were held (ibid). This was also evident in NSSTC where meetings did not take place regularly, and the members were absent in most meetings (ibid). Despite the outlined challenges, the structures offer different stakeholders the opportunity to communicate and disseminate information at national level. Effective and efficient institutional coordination structures are paramount to a success of a policy reform (ibid).

2.6 Conclusion and summary

The chapter has given the direction of the study through a review of relevant literature. The chapter has explained the concept of political economy, that is central to this study. It has also explained in great detail the concepts of political economy and institutions. The chapter has further discussed the roles and interests of different actors in a policy reform process by reviewing the policy processes in different countries. The chapter has also discussed the role of institutions in excluding or including policy actors. Furthermore, it has explained how the aforementioned affect the outcome of a policy reform.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this study was to analyse the visa policy reform in Malawi using political economy analysis. To meet this objective, this study entails understanding the roles and interests of different key stakeholders in the visa policy reform process. It also entails assessing the institutional context that governed the visa policy reform process. This thesis thus seeks to answer questions on how the public policy reform was identified, developed, implemented and evaluated. It also seeks to identify the key actors in the development and formulation of the new visa policy and lastly assess how institutions shaped he visa policy reform process. This chapter discusses the qualitative methodology used to achieve the research objectives, guided by the above mentioned research questions. The second section of this chapter discusses the technique of semi-structured interviews conducted to collect primary data and journals, official documents and other pertinent existing literature used to collect its secondary data. On the other hand, the third section of the chapter discusses the population which was not predetermined due to the snowball sampling method used to identify key informants. The fourth section further discusses thematic analytical approach which was used to analyse the primary data. Lastly, the fifth and sixth section present ethical considerations and methodological challenges respectively.

3.2 Research design

The aforementioned research questions are explanatory in nature as they seek to answer how the public policy reform was developed and formulated, and who the key stakeholders were in the different stages of the policy reform.

The nature of these questions necessitates the adoption of a qualitative method. This thesis will therefore use the qualitative methods to achieve its research objective.

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009). It involves collecting data in a natural setting which permits collaboration with the participants of a study (ibid). Due to this, researchers have a chance of learning about the problem or issue (ibid). Thiel (2007) asserts that a case study research is conducted in real life setting. Qualitative research gathers multiple forms of data through conducting interviews, observation and reviewing documents among others (ibid). Interviews are a qualitative research technique which involve asking open ended questions to converse with respondents and collect elicit data about a subject (ibid). The interviews are intended to understand respondent opinions in a well planned and executed series of questions and answers (ibid). Thiel (2007) further mentions interviews as one of the approaches which are used in case study research. They are a flexible way of gathering data, classified into structured and semi-structured interviews (ibid).

This study used semi-structured interviews to collect its primary data. This method was adopted because among other reasons, it ensures that the questions are aligned to the World Bank Problem Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis theoretical framework (ibid). Further to that, this type of interviews gives the researcher the liberty to probe where necessary and seek clarification of responses (Schneider, Whitehead, LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2013; Thiel, 2007). This ensures that the researcher gains better understanding of the topic in question. It is against this backdrop that primary data was used for purposes of meeting the objective of understanding the roles and interests of different key stakeholders as well as the institutional context which governed the new visa policy process, through administering semi structured interviews to key informants.

Whilst primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews to key informants, secondary data was collected from journals, official documents and existing literature to achieve the research objectives.

The official documents including government documents, newspaper articles and reports relevant to the new visa policy will assist in gaining more insight and understanding on it. Further to that, the official documents relating to the visa policy reform assisted in analysing the institutional context that shaped the visa policy reform process in Malawi. Theil (2007) states that existing data is advantageous because information is readily available. This in turn makes this research strategy efficient and cost-effective.

3.3 Population

As earlier mentioned, interviews are one of the flexible methods of collecting data adopted in case study research. In order to collect this data, a target population ought to be identified (Berg & Lune, 2004). A Target population is the entire group of people to which the researcher wishes to generalize the study findings (ibid).

3.4 Sampling method

The identification of a target population subsequently leads to gathering of data from selected participants chosen from the population through sampling (ibid). Sampling is the process of selecting a group of people with which to conduct a study (ibid). Snowball sampling is a method used in qualitative research (ibid). In this method, the researcher gathers information from one or a few respondents, and relies on these individuals for referrals to other significant individuals (Green & Thorogood, 2009 as cited in Schneider et al., 2013). This type of sampling is essential where individuals are not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies (ibid). It is against this backdrop that the study used snowball sampling method to select its participants. The study's population thus comprised institutions and people who were involved in the visa policy reform process. The institutions included the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC), the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (MoFEPD), the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security (MoHAIS), Ministry of Trade and Tourism (MoTAT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFAIC), Department of Immigration (DoI), the Malawi Investment Trade Centre (MITC) and the Malawi Tourism Council (MTC).

3.5 Data collection method

As earlier indicated, semi-structured interviews provide room for probing and seeking clarification of responses given (Schneider, Whitehead, LoBiondo-Wood & Haber 2013; Thiel, 2007). Semi-structured interviews as shown in Appendix 5 were thus conducted with two Chief Directors, a Deputy Director at the MoTAT and a retired Chief Director from the Ministry. On the other hand, one interview was conducted with a Director at the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRMD), and a Director at the Public Sector Reforms Units, both institutions under the OPC. Two Projects Officers, one Immigration Officer in Charge at a port of entry and two Immigration Officers from the Immigration Department were also interviewed. Further to that one Officer from the MoHAIS was also interviewed.

The semi structured interviews were also conducted with two Principal Economists at the MOFEPD, and two Economists at the same Ministry. Further to that an interviews were also conducted with the Chairperson of the MTC and a Director from the MITC. Two directors were also interviewed at the MOFAIC and two Principal Foreign Service Officers. A total of 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted. This sample size was not predetermined because the snowball sampling method relies on individauls for referrals of other key informants, as previously mentioned. According to Tuckett (2004) as cited in Schneider et al. (2013), the richness of data in qualitative studies is far more important than the number of participants. It is against this backdrop that the sample size of the study was not predetermined. The richness and context of the data collected, is evident when emerging data becomes repetitive in what is referred to as data saturation (Schneider et al., 2013).

As previously indicated, in addition to the primary data, secondary data was collected from government documents such as reports, circulars, letters, laws, agreements, press releases, policy documents, an act of parliament, a strategic plan and newspaper articles. This method of triangulation, which is a means of collecting data from different sources enhances the reliability and validity of the research (Thiel, 2007).

A purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the existing government documentation and newspaper articles.

The data collected from newspaper articles, government reports and circulars, press releases, was firstly selected from the months prior to the implementation of the new visa policy. Thereafter, it was selected from the years following the implementation of the new visa policy. Thiel (2007) states that it is more efficient to adopt this sampling method of utilizing data bearing the subject at hand, other than adopting a random sampling technique. On the other hand, data from laws, agreements, policy documents, an act of parliament and a strategic plan were collected based on their relevance to the visa policy.

3.6 Data analysis

The collected data was analysed manually using thematic analytical approach. Thematic analysis aims to identify patterns or themes in qualitative data (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). The themes identified are important or interesting to address research questions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). It provides a flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies and further provides a detailed and complex account of data (Nowell et al., 2017). To achieve this, preliminary codes were assigned to the interview and document data in order to describe content. These codes were assigned to relevant segments of data. Thereafter, the codes were organized into broader themes that were vital to the research questions as shown in Appendix 6. Themes are patterns which captures something significant or interesting (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). These themes were reviewed and subsequently, a detailed scope of each theme was developed.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical requirements were adhered to when conducting the research. A verbal consent was obtained from all participants by explaining the purpose of the study, before conducting the interview. The interviewees were also informed that their names would not appear in the writing process, and that the results were to be used for academic purposes only. The interviewees were then asked if they agreed to be interviewed.

3.8 Methodological challenges

The study had a number of methodological challenges which were incurred in collecting both primary and secondary data. A number of participants had problems of recalling the policy process. For example, some participants could not recall the number of meetings which had taken place during the new visa policy formulation. This was because the interviews were conducted three years after the policy's formulation. However, the multiple interviews and documentary sources assisted in mitigating this problem.

Another challenge was incurred because most interviewees had been re-assigned to other Ministries and Organisations when the interviews were conducted. As such, these interviewees' responses were inclined towards promoting the interests of their re-assigned organisations. Nevertheless, the interviewees were assured of confidentiality of their responses.

Further to that, it was also difficult to interview a number of referred individuals who had retired from the GoM service. On the other hand, some individuals were not available, whilst others were not willing to be interviewed. However, minutes of meetings of the new visa policy formulation were difficult to access with regards to secondary data. The meetings of these minutes were restricted to authorized staff at the Immigration Department. On the other hand, the minutes of the meetings could not be traced in the other Ministries.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodology and design that the study uses to analyse the political economy of the visa policy in Malawi. The chapter has discussed the population and sampling method used to select the participants of the study. It has further explained the data collection and data analysis method of the study. The chapter has also presented the study's ethical considerations and methodological challenges.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the findings from the primary and secondary data collected. It has two main sections, section one presents findings on the roles and interests of different key stakeholders during the policy reform stages. These include how the visa policy reform issue was identified and put on the agenda. Furthermore, this section also seeks to identify the key actors involved and their interests in the development and formulation of the policy. The findings are from interviews conducted with key informants as shown in Table 2. in the appendices. The analyses are also from a report from the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism on the new visa policy, a strategic plan of the Ministry responsible for Home Affairs and Internal Security, World Bank Annual Economic Reports and the new visa policy document. On the other hand, the second section analyses the formal and informal institutions which governed the visa policy. The analyses are from the interview findings conducted with key informants, reports from the Immigration Department, and analyses of different rules and laws, such as the Constitution, an Act of Parliament, International Convention and Protocols.

The analyses revealed that the visa policy reform process was mainly driven by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security's, Department of Immigration, and the Ministry responsible for Finance, Economic Planning and Development with particular reference to the agenda setting and formulation of the policy reform, in order to meet its annual revenue collection target. The study reveals that other key government ministries and the private sector were not involved in the agenda setting and formulation of the policy reform.

The study on the visa reform process also revealed that the norm of diplomatic reciprocity, as well as different laws, protocols and were pivotal in the formulation of the visa policy reform.

4.2 Stages of the visa policy reform

4.2.1 The agenda setting of the reformed visa policy

The Immigration Department has annual revenue collection targets set by the Ministry responsible for Finance, Economic Planning and Development. A key informant revealed that the Department of Immigration did not meet its revenue collection target in the 2014/2015 financial year. The department collected MK3.5 billion against a target of MK3.5 billion (Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, 2007). This revenue was collected through passport and visa fees, among other revenue collecting avenues (Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, 2007). A key informant from the Department of Immigration revealed that the underperformance was despite the increase in ordinary passport fees from MK15,000.00 to MK45,000.00 in the year 2014, among other revenue generating initiatives. From this standpoint, the Ministry had to explore other revenue generating opportunities, apart from the increase in passport fees. In this regard, an increase in visa fees was viewed as an opportunity to meet the annual target.

However, as previously indicated, visa requirements were exempted for member states of the Commonwealth, and other countries based on the GoM assessment before the year 2015. Nonetheless, the GoM made exemptions on the visa waiver, to a number of nationals from Commonwealth member states. For example, interviewees revealed that nationals from Nigeria, Pakistan and India were subjected to visa requirements into Malawi, despite being member states of the Commonwealth.

On the other hand, interviewees also revealed that nationals from the United States of America and Zimbabwe were also exempted from visa requirements into Malawi despite the two countries non-allegiance to the Commonwealth. Interviews further showed that the exemption was based on the cordial relationship that existed between Malawi and the two countries. Further to that, in 2013, the GoM granted a visa free status into Malawi for Hong Kong nationals, despite the country not being a member of the Commonwealth (Department of Immigration, 2013). The visa waiver was granted to Hong Kong nationals because Malawian nationals are not subjected to visa requirements to enter the territory of Hong Kong (ibid). However, the countries which were subjected to visa requirements to enter Malawi's territory, registered low number of visitors in the years 2014 and 2015 (Tourism Statistics, 2014). Table 3. as shown in the appendices depicts the number of nationals from different countries visiting Malawi for different purposes.

As evident in Table 3., nationals from Marshall Islands, Burkina Faso, Mongolia, Togo, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Luxembourg, Algeria and Nepal, among other countries registered the lowest numbers of visitors in Malawi in the years 2014 and 2015, before the visa policy reform. These nationals were subjected to visa requirements to enter the territory of Malawi.

Nevertheless, during the same period, nationals from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, United States of America, United Kingdom, Mozambique, Australia, Netherlands and Germany, among other countries, registered the highest numbers of visitors in Malawi. However, nationals from these countries, were not subjected to visa requirements to enter the territory of Malawi.

In this regard, it can be inferred that the Department viewed the introduction of visa fees, to nationals from countries which registered the highest levels of visitors in Malawi, to have higher prospects of increasing revenue collection. This was as opposed to solely subjecting those nationals from countries which had registered low numbers of visitors in Malawi, in the year 2014 and 2015 to visa fees.

Interviews with key informants revealed that the Department of Immigration conducted a number of internal meetings on the matter. The meetings which were attended by Economists from the Ministry responsible for Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Directors from the Department responsible for Human Resource

Management and Development, the Public Sector Reforms Unit, an Economist from the Ministry responsible for Home Affairs and Internal Security proposed the introduction of visas, and visa fees to different categories of foreigners intending to travel to Malawi. This was after the observation that Malawians are subjected to different visa requirements in a number of countries.

Interviewees pointed out that the meetings concluded to introduce visas based on the diplomatic reciprocity aspect, in addition to increasing revenue collection. An Official from the Ministry of Home Affairs commented the following;

> "We were interested in the new visa policy because of the charges"

In affirming this assertion, a Director from the Department of Human Resource Management commented the following;

> "Advantages of a policy need to outweigh the disadvantages, the Government needs resources to attract tourists. The policy was important for revenue collection".

Out of 21 of key informants who attended the meetings on the visa policy reform, 18 attest that the reforms primary goal was revenue collection. It is against this background that it is worth arguing that the introduction of the new visa policy in 2015, was an effort to meet the Department of Immigration's annual target on revenue collection. Further to that, 7 out of 11 key respondents interviewed and attended the meetings on the proposition of the visa policy reform also revealed that the Department of Immigration as the only actor during the agenda-setting stage. According to Thoeing (2011), organisations that handle public affairs define who the legitimate participant is, which processes would be able to induce actual change, and which the acceptable agendas are in institutionalism. In as much as the perceived challenge of visa requirements was encountered by Malawians, there was no demand for action by neither their representatives nor other policy actors. The Chairperson from the Malawi Tourism Council explained "we only got to hear of introduction of the policy through a press release". The problem was nevertheless, recognized by a sole actor, the GoM through the Department of Immigration.

The interest in the revenue collection is in line with the Government of Burkina Faso's initiative towards the liberalization of the cotton sector, by encouraging entry of new companies (World Bank, 2008). However, the leading role of the GoM in the introduction of the visa reform is not consistent with the donor driven cotton sector reform process in Burkina Faso. Unlike the visa reform in Malawi, the cotton sector reform in Burkina Faso was championed by the World Bank and eventually supported by the Government of Burkina Faso and other stakeholders, like the farmer's union and the national cotton company due to the prospects of revenue collection (ibid).

However, unlike the Government of Malawi, the Government of Burkina Faso utilized a consensus driven approach by involving relevant actors like the farmer's union and the national cotton company in the initial stages of reform process (ibid). The impact of the reforms on the cotton sector were subsequently evident to be favourable, due to this consensus driven approach among others (ibid).

4.2.2 Formulation of the reformed visa policy

Interviews showed that the Department of Immigration invited different Ministries to consultative meetings on the proposed visa policy reform in Malawi. These included Officials from the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, the Department of Immigration under the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, and auxiliaries of the Office of the President and Cabinet such as the Public Sector Reforms Unit, the Department of Human Resource and Management and the National Intelligence Bureau.

Interviewees further show that during these meetings, the Department of Immigration introduced the agenda for the visa policy reform. All interviewees who attended these meetings which were chaired by the Department of Immigration, indicated their support of the introduction of the new visa policy because of the prospects of increasing revenue collection. Further to that, 9 out of 21 respondents nonetheless, revealed enhancement of security in the country as an advantage of the policy reform. However, 11 of the 21 key respondents who attended the meetings on the proposed visa policy reform, and 5 out of the 11 respondents revealed enhancement of security as another prominent aspect of discussion of the need for policy reform during these meetings. In addition, 13 out of the 21, of the interviewees also stated diplomatic reciprocity as another reason for the reform. However, 11 of the 21 key respondents attended the meetings on the proposed visa policy reform, and 7 of the 11 respondents stated diplomatic reciprocity as another basis of the need for a reform. Similarly, the press release from the Department of Immigration provided the basis of the visa arrangements as diplomatic reciprocity (GoM, 2016). Interviews with key informants further show that the policy holder, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security thus recommended the nationals to be placed under the three different categories of visa requirements. The categorization of visa requirements for different nationals, were largely based on the prospects of increasing revenue collected through visa fees, as earlier mentioned.

A draft policy paper was eventually a product of these meetings (GoM, 2015). The draft policy paper was submitted to the Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security and thereafter, to the Office of the President and Cabinet for approval. However, the draft policy had a number of amendments. For example, the draft policy provided for a number of nationals to obtain the visas beforehand. On the other hand, the final policy required the same nationals to obtain the visas beforehand or have prior authorization that they would obtain the visas on arrival (GoM, 2015). Furthermore, the final policy included a number of nationals from countries in a category of those required to obtain visas in advance to obtain visas on arrival (GoM, 2016). Whilst the draft policy had 25 countries under this category, the final policy had 53 countries. The inclusion comprised nationals from Algeria, Angola, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, India, Niger, Nepal, Morocco, Mauritania, Ghana, Osman, Qatar, Turkey, Yemen, Ukraine, Togo, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. The nationals from the aforementioned countries were required to obtain visas at the port of entry in the draft policy (GoM, 2015). Table 4. below, shows the number of countries which were subjected and not subjected to visa requirements before and after the year 2015.

Table 4. Summary of Visa Requirements

	Number of Countries Before the 2015 Reformed Visa Policy	Number of Countries After the 2015 Reformed Visa Policy
Visas Required	130	160
Visas Not Required	64	34

Source: The 2003 Immigration Act and GoM 2016

It is important to note that 32 countries out of the 64 countries which were exempted from visa requirements before the year 2015, were still exempted from visa requirements into Malawi after the year 2015 (The Malawi Immigration Act, 2003; GoM, 2016). These countries include Botswana, Seychelles, Belize, Jamaica, Fiji, Dominica and Nauru among others (ibid). On the other hand, Israel and Northern Ireland were included on the list of countries whose nationals are exempted from visa requirements into Malawi (ibid). As earlier mentioned, visa requirements into Malawi were exempted for member states of the Commonwealth, and other countries based on the GoM assessment before the year 2015. However, nationals from Nigeria, Pakistan and India were not granted visa waivers into Malawi despite being member states of the Commonwealth due to security reasons. After the visa policy reform, being a national from a member state of the Commonwealth did not translate into a visa requirement exemption to enter into the territory of Malawi. These exemptions were however made to member states of COMESA and SADC, except those countries which subject Malawian nationals to a visa within SADC and COMESA. Other countries were also exempted from visa requirements based on the GoM's assessment inclined towards diplomatic reciprocity.

However, interviewees indicated that despite the policy paper being a product of collaboration between different Ministries, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, seconded by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development took a

leading role in the new visa policy formulation. The involvement of government actors only, in the policy reform formulation, is another reflection of institutional theory.
The theory envisages the definition of legitimate participants by organisations by excluding and including different actors (John, 1998; Thoeing, 2011).

The interest of the Ministry responsible for Finance, Economic Planning and Development in the policy formulation, particularly the visa fees draws attention to the country's economic performance in the years 2014 and 2015. During this period, development partners such as the DFID, withdrew their budgetary support to Malawi (Khunga, 2015). This meant that the government had a substantial decline in funds which it controlled. In that regard, visa fees were viewed as a revenue generating opportunity for the country. It can therefore be argued that meeting budget was at the helm of the visa policy formulation. According to institutional theory, people functioning within institutions behave as they do because of normative standards rather than their desire to maximize individual utilities (Peters, 2000). Subsequently, members behave in response to the basic components of institutional structures (ibid). "The individuals who interact with the institutions have their own well-ordered set of preferences that remain largely unchanged by any institutional involvement they may have" (Peter, 2000, p.3).

4.2.3 Implementation of the reformed visa policy

Interviewees showed that there was conflicting information regarding visa requirements for Malawi, immediately after the adoption of the policy. For example, Malawi embassies abroad advised those nationals from countries which were required to obtain visas well in advance or have prior authorisation, and those intending to travel to Malawi to obtain visas on arrival. On the other hand, the policy required them to obtain the visa prior to travel. As a result, people cancelled their flights to Malawi, particularly for tourism visits. Interviewees also revealed challenges in the manual visa processing system, which led to delays in issuing visas at the port of entries.

As a result, the Ministry of Trade and Tourism engaged the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security on the new visa policy. Interviewees from Ministry's responsible for of

Trade and Tourism, Home Affairs and Internal Security and the Malawi Tourism Council indicated that the Ministry Responsible for Trade and Tourism expressed their disapproval on the new visa fees. In addition, the Ministry of Trade and Tourism communicated the non-supportive sentiments of the umbrella body of Tourism in Malawi and the Malawi Tourism Council, on the visa fees. All key informants from the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism, Malawi Investment and Trade Centre, and the Malawi Tourism Council viewed the visa fee as unconducive for the promotion of Tourism in Malawi. However, 16 out of 21 respondents were of a contrary view. These 16 respondents were from the Ministry's responsible for Home Affairs and Internal Security, Economic Planning and Development and the Office of the President and Cabinet.

Subsequently, it was indicated from the interviews that a technical committee which comprised the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism, the Department of Immigration, the Malawi Tourism Council, and chaired by the Ministry responsible for Home Affairs and Internal Security was set up. This committee was tasked to discuss the implications of the visa reform on tourism and submit their recommendations to a committee of Principal Secretaries of Home Affairs, Trade and Tourism for consideration and submission to the Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security. It is however worth pointing out that the interviews revealed that Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism, was only included in the decision making process due to its initiative.

An interview with a former Chief Director from the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism stated the following:

> "We worked with the Malawi Tourism Council Board of Trustees, had a meeting with the Minister responsible for Tourism, and together requested for a meeting with the Minister of Home Affairs at that time. They directed that a technical committee comprising of Immigration, Tourism Department, and Malawi Tourism Council to be chaired by Home Affairs be established to discuss the implication of the new Visa Regime and

> submit recommendations to a Committee of Principal Secretaries of Home Affairs, Immigration, Ministry of Tourism for consideration and submission to the Minister of Home Affairs for direction".

It can therefore be argued that involvement of the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism and the Malawi Tourism Council was through the Ministry of Trade and Tourism's initiative. This shows that the GoM was in control of the policy reform process, despite having no wide consultations within the government entity. This is also attributable to the influential role of informal institutions in excluding stakeholders in public decision making, as envisaged by institutional theory (Thoeing, 2011). These findings are different from the Government of France's initiative during the process of reforming it's pension system, aimed to harmonise the private and public sector pension schemes. Despite opposition to reform the pension system by the Employer Union's. The Government of France's strategy of consultation and communication with a wide range of stakeholders, attributed to the acceptance of the pension reform by public workers, and consequently the success of the reform.

The non-involvement of the Ministry of Trade and Tourism is also different from the water sector reforms in Kenya. The water sector reform process had intense engagement of different stakeholders, including those which were not traditionally involved in the water sector (Francesco & Puig, 2011). The involvement of multiple actors is attributed to the need to access financial resources. The intense engagement of these different actors subsequently led to over-institutionalisation, overlapping roles, lack of coordination of the reform strategy among others (ibid). Subsequently, the reforms objectives such as provision of good quality water have not been met.

As shown in a report on the Impact of the New Visa Regime on Tourism in Malawi, the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism made several recommendations on the visa requirements to the committee (The Ministry of Trade and Tourism, 2015).

The Ministry recommended the pending of the introduction of the new visas and visa fees to 3 months (ibid). Further to that, a visa waiver for all tourists in a prepaid package tour, which would be valid till December, 2015 was also recommended (ibid). The Ministry also suggested a reduction of visa fees from $75 to $50 (ibid). This suggested reduction was in comparison with the visa fees of neighboring countries such as Tanzania and Zambia. The aforementioned recommendations were in pursuance of promoting tourism in Malawi. As such, a visa waiver was granted to all tourists intending to travel to Malawi in a prepaid package tour. Nonetheless, two years after the recommendations were made, there has been an initiative by the GoM to reduce the visa fee from $75 to $50 (Sangala, 2018). The institutional theory is reflective in the influential role of the state in the visa policy reform. As earlier alluded, institutions exclude and include actors in public decision making (John, 1998).

4.3 Institutions which governed the visa policy reform

4.3.1 Formal and informal institutions

The policy is also guided by the 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, the 1964 Immigration Act, the 2005 SADC protocol on facilitation of movement of persons, the 1998 COMESA Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, the Right of Establishment and Residence, the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

For example, the Malawi Constitution provides that the State shall govern in accordance with the law of nations and the rule of law, and also actively support the further development of regional and international affairs (Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994, 2010, s.13). Further to that, the constitution also provides for incorporating any international agreements ratified by an Act of Parliament, to form part of the law of the Republic of Malawi. It is against the provisions of this section that visa policy making was also guided by international protocols and laws (Constitution the Republic of Malawi 1994, 2010, s.211). This is because Malawi is party to a number of agreements, as a result of its multilateral relations.

Furthermore, due to Malawi's ratification of both the SADC and COMESA protocols on free movement of persons, the GoM is required to subject all nationals from the two blocs, visa free entry into Malawi's territory (COMESA, 2018; SADC, 2018).

The institutional theory states that the outcomes of public policies do not only reflect the interests of the strongest social forces, however, they are also shaped by existing and past arrangements (Thoenig, 2011). For example, political and administrative organisations, conventions and procedures regulating the relationships between actors and the state, are path dependent (ibid).

However, the new visa policy only grants visa free status to nationals from COMESA and SADC member states, who do not subject Malawians to visa requirements into their territories. This practice of diplomatic reciprocity is a feature informal institutions. Akerlund (2016) affirms reciprocity as a feature of informal institutions. As earlier mentioned, informal institutions circumvent formal institutions in policy making (Howlett et al., 2009). According to critiques of institutional theory, the policy process is not solely guided by institutions (ibid). Similarly, despite being guided by the aforementioned protocols, an informal institution in the form of diplomatic reciprocity also played a critical role in the visa policy formulation.

As earlier stated, the visa policy exempts diplomats accredited to Malawi and holders of diplomatic passports coming to Malawi on official business from visa fees. The exemptions of the aforementioned are entrenched in the 1961 Vienna convention on diplomatic relations and 1963 Vienna convention consular relations, to which Malawi is party to (Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations 1961; Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963).

As such, despite being a national from a country which is required to obtain a visa well in advance or have prior authorisation of the new visa policy in Malawi, a Diplomat or a holder of a Diplomatic passport coming to Malawi for official business is not required to obtain and pay for an entry visa into Malawi. However, unlike the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations which exempts all diplomatic agents from paying visas, the reformed visa policy specifies the exemptions of these diplomatic agents. It states that only those diplomats accredited to Malawi and holders of diplomatic passports visiting Malawi on official business, ought to be exempted from visa fees. It can therefore be argued that the reformed visa policy partially conformed to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, on exempting diplomats from paying visa fees. However, an informal rule which did not exempt all diplomats from paying visa fees, took an upper hand in guiding the formulation of the policy.

Furthermore, the new visa policy exempts foreign nationals visiting Malawi on official government business from buying visas (Department of Immigration, 2015). This is an international norm which is practiced in a number of countries. For example, government officials entering New Zealand and Sri Lanka, are exempted from paying for visa fees (Immigration New Zealand, 2018; Department of Immigration and Emigration of Sri Lanka, 2018).

It can therefore be argued that the new visa policy formulation was guided by both formal and informal institutions. As earlier outlined, institutional theory views the policy making process as shaped by different rules and laws (Howlett et al., 2009). The visa policy making in Malawi is a good example where institutions played a significant role. However, the theory has also been criticized because it overlooks the fact that actors circumvent these laws, to pursue their interests (ibid). In this regard, institutions are not an independent influence in the policy process (ibid).

This critique is evident in the overarching role diplomatic reciprocity practice, on the compliance of the SADC and COMESA protocols on free movement of persons in the new visa policy. Further to that, the exemption of diplomats as provided for in the two conventions have been narrowed down to only those diplomats accredited to Malawi, and holders of diplomatic passports visiting Malawi on official business. In addition, the international norm of exempting government officials visiting Malawi on government business has also prominence in the policy.

4.3.2 Institutional arrangements for the visa policy reform

The non-involvement of the private sector in the visa reform process is also attributable to the role informal institutions. Institutional arrangements of public sector reforms in Malawi require a multisectoral approach, under the leadership of the Office of the President and Cabinet (Government of Malawi, 2018). It necessitates involving stakeholders in the executive arm of government, statutory corporations, private sector, NGOs, media, civil society organisations among others. However, in the past, the involvement of private sector reforms has been minimal (ibid). This norm is also evident in the visa policy reform. 90% of the key informants revealed that there were no consultative meetings with the private sector during the policy reform agenda setting and formulation. A Director from the Malawi Tourism Council explained "We learnt of the introduction through a press release". Nonetheless, there are stipulated procedures for reforming policies in Malawi (ibid). The Office of the President and Cabinet is responsible for the formulation of public sector reforms (ibid). It is mandated to provide policy direction and coordination of public sector reforms. Further to that, the Private Sector Development Policy 2008, provides guidelines to policy shaping in Malawi. It also entrusts the GoM to play the role of promoting collaboration and formulation of policies and laws (ibid). This mandate ought to be fulfilled with full recognition that all sector policies and laws have a direct or indirect effect on private sector growth and development (ibid). To this effect, the private sector and NGOs are also given a role to contribute constructively to policy formulation at sectoral and national level in the policy (ibid). Nonetheless, the private sector was involved in the visa policy implementation. 90% of the respondents alluded that the private sector was involved after they had raised concerns of the reform.

It can therefore be argued that informal institutions undermined the formal institutions in the visa policy agenda setting and formulation. On the other hand, formal institutions played an upper hand during the reform implementation. This is evident in of the multi-sectoral approach of involving the private sector in the reform implementation process, as articulated in the Public Sector Reform Policy.

4.4 Conclusion

The chapter presented research findings by discussing the roles and interest of different actors in the visa policy reform process. The study findings revealed that the visa policy reform process was mainly driven by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security's, Department of Immigration, with particular reference to the agenda setting and formulation of the policy reform, in order to meet its annual revenue collection target. On the other hand, the Ministry responsible for Finance Economic Planning and Development, was also involved in the initial stages of the policy formulation with similar interests in the revenue collection aspect of the reform. The study reveals that other key government ministries and the private sector were not involved in the agenda setting and formulation of the policy reform. However, the reform outcomes were of consequence results to these ministries. These are the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism, and the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The study also found that in pursuing the course of revenue generation, the GoM saw an opportunity to also amend the policy on the basis of enhancing security and diplomatic reciprocity. The visa reform was therefore also guided by the norm of diplomatic reciprocity, as well as different laws, protocols and were pivotal in the formulation of the visa policy reform. As a result, Nationals from countries which required Malawians to obtain visas into their country were also subjected to visas into Malawi in the policy reform, as an act of diplomatic reciprocity. The study on the visa policy reform hence revealed that both formal and informal institutions shaped policy reform, however, the informal institutions were evident to have played an upper hand.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to summarise the findings from chapter 4. The chapter examined the roles and interests of different stakeholders in the visa policy reform process. It further assessed the institutional context which governed the visa policy reform process. This chapter also provides an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of the findings and further provides an insight for future research.

5.2 Summary of key findings

5.2.1 Roles and interests of stakeholders

The study utilized qualitative tools of data collection and analysis. It used semi-structured interviews to key informants to collect its primary data. On the other hand, secondary data was collected from official documents and existing literature pertaining to the visa policy reform. The study findings identified the actors that were involved in the visa policy reform process in Malawi. The findings revealed that the visa policy reform process was mainly driven by the GoM, with particular reference to the agenda setting and formulation of the policy reform. These findings contradict the views in Tambulasi (2011), that the international donor community are dominating actors in the adoption of public policies in Malawi. The study found that different Ministries and Departments were involved during the initial stages of the policy reform, whilst pursuing different interests. For example, the Department of Immigration introduced the visa policy reform agenda, in order to meet its annual revenue collection target. On the other hand, the Ministry responsible for Finance Economic Planning and Development, being the purse holder of the GoM was similarly interested in the revenue collection aspect of the reform.

Furthermore, these findings affirm the assertions that reforms are shaped by the contestation of different interests as alluded by Howlett et al. (2009). The above mentioned findings address the question on how the visa policy reform issue was identified, defined, developed and put on national agenda. Furthermore, these findings provide an understanding on the key actors involved and how they contributed to the development and formulation of the policy.

Chinsinga (2007), however, argues that the success or failure of a policy is dependent on the policy making process, particularly the engagement of different actors. It is therefore vital for a policy process to engage different actors. The study findings on the contrary, indicate that the involvement of other actors, which are integral part of a good policy process were not evident in two stages of the visa policy reform process. The study reveals that other key government ministries were not involved in the agenda setting and formulation of the policy reform. However, the reform outcomes were of consequence results to these ministries. These are the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism, and the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Further to that, the study shows that the private sector was also not involved in the reform formulation stage. This is in contradiction to Aiafi (2016), assertions that a good policy ought to involve different actors. The importance of the engagement of different actors is also evident by the multi-sectoral approach stipulated in the Malawi National Public Sector Reform Policy (2018-2022). This policy however also discloses the marginalization of the private sector in Malawi in a number of reform policy processes. This norm was also evident in the visa policy reform formulation.

The non-involvement of other actors in the reform formulation is in line with the assertions of institutional theory. The theory argues that institutions have the capability to include and exclude other actors in the policy process. Based on institutional theory, the exclusion of the private sector and other government ministries was a manifestation of the role of informal institutions in the policy process.

The study further shows that the private sector such as the Malawi Tourism Council and other government Ministries, the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Trade and Tourism were not included in the visa reform agenda setting and formulation. The exclusion and inclusion of different actors in a policy process is in line with the notions of Institutional theory. As earlier indicated, institutional theory views institutions as the arena within which policy reforms take place (John, 1998). The institutions are responsible for inclusion and exclusion of different actors in the policy process (ibid). This was also manifested in the exclusion of the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism and the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the private sector in the visa policy reform agenda setting and formulation. Despite the Public Sector Policy Reform document stipulating a multi-sectoral approach in the process (GoM, 2018). The study reveals that the norm of not including the private sector which has been evident in Malawi in the past, played an upper hand in the policy process. The study hence affirms the notion of informal institutions subduing formal institutions as stipulated in Institutional Theory.

However, the non-involvement of the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism and the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Private sector translated into challenges in the implementation process. There was lack of communication between the different government Ministries and departments. Subsequently, the Malawi Missions abroad which are an auxiliary of the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, a driving force for the visa arrangements for nationals in category 1 had little knowledge on the reform. Suffice to state that the marginalized actors were eventually involved before the implementation of the visa policy reform. Subsequently, the reform implementation was postponed to 3 months from its effective date. Further to that, a waiver was granted for tourists who had pre-booked their travel arrangements into Malawi. In addition, 3 years after the adoption of this reform, the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism in collaboration with the Private sector have since been appealing for a reduction in the visa fee.

Subsequently, plans to reduce the single entry visa fee from \$75 to \$50 are under way. The study's findings confirm revelations from other studies that different actors pursue different interests.

The Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism and the private sector's efforts in reducing the visa fee from \$75 to \$50, was in relation to promoting a conducive environment for tourism in Malawi. On the other hand, the Department of Immigration was interested in meeting its annual revenue collection target through the revised visa arrangements, whereas the Ministry responsible for Finance, Economic Planning and Development was interested in its purse. These obstacles address the research question on the challenges encountered during the implementation stage. On the other hand, the involvement of the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism during the policy reform implementation and its non-involvement during the reform formulation addresses the research questions on the key actors involved and they contributed to the development and formulation of the policy.

Having found that the non-involvement of the Ministry responsible for Trade and Tourism and the private sector in the visa policy reform formulation translated into appeals in the visa arrangements as well as delays in the implementation process, it is therefore important for the entire reform policy process to have a multi-sectoral approach. As previously indicated, the engagement of different stakeholders is vital for the success of a policy (Chinsinga, 2007). The challenges encountered during the implementation of the visa reform, due to the non-involvement of other actors, therefore confirm findings from other studies which argue for the engagement of different stakeholders in the policy process. The private sector and all actors which are to be affected by the reform therefore ought to be engaged in all stages of a policy process.

5.2.2 Formal and informal institutions

The study also found that in pursuing the course of revenue generation, the GoM saw an opportunity to also amend the policy on the basis of enhancing security and diplomatic reciprocity. However, revenue collection was at the helm of the reform process. The study found that the visa policy reform was incremental of already existing visa arrangements in Malawi. The visa requirements for the initial visa policy, were largely based on existing diplomatic relations among others. Nationals from commonwealth countries were exempted to obtain visas into Malawi in the previous visa policy. In addition, nationals from other countries were exempted from visa requirements based on bilateral ties with Malawi. Similarly, the visa policy reform was guided by the norm of diplomatic reciprocity. Nationals from countries which required Malawians to obtain visas into their country were also subjected to visas into Malawi in the policy reform, as an act of diplomatic reciprocity.

The visa arrangements were hence modified largely hinging on diplomatic relations. This is in line with Stein, Thelen & Longstreth (1992 in Peters, 2000), idea of path dependency in institutional theory. The theory argues that existing institutions have profound influence over policy outcomes, hence well-suited to explain the persistence of policies. The findings hence revealed that informal institutions played a leading role than the formal institutions in the policy reform making.

Critics of institutional theory assert that informal institutions subdue formal institutions in a policy process (John, 1998). They further assert that actors often circumvent formal institutions in order to pursue their interests (ibid). The study on the visa policy reform revealed that both formal and informal institutions shaped policy reform. Nonetheless, the study further affirms with the notion of informal institutions subduing formal institutions in a policy process. It has been revealed that informal institutions played a leading role in the formulation of the visa policy reform. This is because, in as much as different laws, protocols and were pivotal in the formulation of the visa policy reform. For example, exemptions of COMESA and SADC nationals from obtaining visas into Malawi. Diplomatic reciprocity also played an upper hand. The COMESA protocol on free movement of persons did not bind the visa requirements to a number of nationals. In this regard, only those nationals from COMESA member states which did not require Malawians to obtain visas into their countries, were also exempted from obtaining visas into Malawi. This study hence reveals that the visa policy reform partially adhered to formal institutions, however informal institutions played an upper hand in the policy reform. In this regard, both formal and informal institutions are relevant for the understanding of a policy reform. The role of the informal institutions in subduing formal institutions provides an understanding on how institutions guided the reformed visa policy.

5.2.3 Future research

The study on the political economy of visa reforms provides a better understanding of the reform process in Malawi which previous studies have revealed to be mainly driven. The visa reform policy process, is a good example demonstrating policy ownership by the Government of Malawi. However, taking into consideration the claims from the Tourism Sector that visa policy reform, particularly the visa fees will negatively affect the tourism sector. A study on the impact of the visa fees on the tourism sector in Malawi ought to be a considered as a future area of research.

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Table 1. Countries whose nationals do not need visas when travelling to Malawi

Country
Antigua and Barbuda
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Botswana
Dominica
Jamaica
Kenya
Kiribati
Lesotho
Malaysia
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Nauru
Northern Ireland
Samo (Western)
Seychelles
Figi
Gambia
Grenada
Hong Kong
Israel
South Africa
Ireland
St Kitts Nevas
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Swaziland
Tanzania
Trinidad and Tobago
Tuvalu
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Source: Department of Immigration 2016

Table 2. List of key informants and the positions held in different organisations

Organisation	Position	Number of Key Informants
Ministry of Trade and Tourism	Chief Director	2
Ministry of Trade and Tourism	Deputy Director	1
Ministry of Trade and Tourism	Retired Chief Director	1
Office of the President and Cabinet, Department of Human Resource Management and Development	Director	1
Office of the President and Cabinet, Public Sector Reforms Unit	Deputy Director	1
Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, Department of Immigration	Immigration Officer in Charge at port of entry	1
Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, Department of Immigration	Projects Officer	2
Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, Department of Immigration	Immigration Officer	2
Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security	Economists	1
Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development	Principal Economists	2
Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development	Economists	1
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Directors	2
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Principal Foreign Service Officers	2
Malawi Tourism Council	Chairperson	1
Malawi Investment and Trade Centre	Director	1

Table 3. Annual numbers of nationals visiting Malawi in the years and 2014 and 2015

Country	Visitors in Malawi in 2014	Visitors in Malawi in the year 2015
Afghanistan	90	72
Albania	20	N/A
Algeria	90	29
Angola	291	186
Argentina	269	287
Australia	8819	7500
Austria	716	731
Bahamas	22	29
Bahrain	45	14
Bangladesh	179	57
Barbados	246	301
Belgium	2417	2596
Bermuda	N/A	14
Botswana	3492	3470
Brazil	649	846
Belize	112	143
Benin	N/A	0
British Indian Ocean	45	57
British Virgin Islands	537	545
Bulgaria	291	N/A
Burundi	560	315
Ethiopia	45	315
Cameroon	90	100
Canada	8394	7256
Cape Verde	22	N/A
Sri Lanka	269	229
Chad	45	N/A
Chile	N/A	14
China	3156	2768
Comoros	22	N/A
Congo	739	545
Congo-Zaire	67	29
Costa-Rica	22	N/A
Cyprus	N/A	57
Czech Republic	179	115
Dominican Republic	N/A	N/A
Denmark	2373	2108
Ecuador	22	N/A
Equatorial Guinea	N/A	29

Estonia	45	29
Finland	761	817
France	3693	3313
Djibouti	157	57
Gabon	112	115
Gambia	313	143
Germany	8908	8361
Ghana	2126	990
Greece	269	516
Greenland	N/A	N/A
Guam	N/A	14
Guinea	179	129
Hong Kong	134	129
Honduras	N/A	57
Hungary	224	86
Iceland	448	559
India	5506	5249
Indonesia	67	14
Iran Islamic Republic	67	29
Ireland	4141	3184
Israel	783	760
Italy	6245	5492
Cote d'Ivoire	201	86
Jamaica	22	29
Japan	3134	2739
Jordan	22	N/A
Kenya	15937	12046
Korea, Democratic	470	344
Korea, Republic	358	789
Kuwait	134	57
Lebanon	448	402
Lesotho	649	602
Latvia	45	N/A
Liberia	45	N/A
Libya	179	115
Luxembourg	134	86
Madagascar	291	172
Malaysia	157	215
Mali	1052	559
Malta	45	29
Martinique	22	29
Mauritania	425	459
Mauritius	269	215

Mexico	45	100
Mongolia	22	14
Morocco	269	272
Mozambique	264968	274122
Namibia	1253	1248
Nepal	90	57
Netherlands	12199	11315
New Zealand	1477	1592
Niger	22	N/A
Nigeria	2395	1491
Norway	3268	3268
Marshall Islands	45	57
Oman	N/A	29
Pakistan	1500	1334
Paraguay	67	86
Peru	157	143
Philippines	134	129
Poland	381	143
Portugal	1455	1262
Guinea Bissau	45	N/A
Reunion	N/A	14
Romania	179	158
Russian Federation	112	315
Rwanda	940	889
Sao Tome & Principe	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	112	14
Senegal	358	287
Seychelles	112	129
Sierra Leone	134	43
Singapore	90	158
Slovakia	22	N/A
Vietnam		14
Slovenia	67	29
Somalia	90	100
South Africa	94366	110409
Zimbabwe	88099	96957
Spain	2261	1907
Sudan	269	258
Suriname	N/A	43
Swaziland	1410	1420
Sweden	2216	1778
Switzerland	2350	2036
Syria	N/A	57

Thailand	269	158
Togo	22	14
Trinidad & Tobago	22	29
United Arab Emirates	627	574
Tunisia	201	459
Turkey	224	359
Turks and Caicos Islands	22	14
Uganda	3425	2753
Ukraine	N/A	0
Egypt	336	301
United Kingdom	50876	44886
Channel Islands	22	14
United Republic of Tanzania	70058	56445
United States of America	36462	35995
United States of Virgin Islands	22	29
Burkina Faso	112	172
Uruguay	22	N/A
Taiwan	N/A	N/A
Yemen	67	57
Serbia & Montenegro	N/A	14
Zambia	80914	68792

Sources: Malawi Tourism Report 2014 and Malawi Tourism Report 2015

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Questions

1. How did you learn of the initiative of changing the visa policy?
2. Did you attend any consultative meetings on the new visa policy making? (If no skip to question 4)
3. Who called for these meetings?
4. What was your take or position on the introduction of the new visa policy? (e.g. oppose, support or neutral)
5. Did you work with other stakeholders to pursue your course or position? if yes to what extent did you work with them?
6. Did you share this position with relevant authorities? if yes how?
7. What were your perceived advantages of implementing the new visa policy on your organization?
8. What were your perceived disadvantages of implementing the new visa policy on your organization?
9. What was your perceived impact of maintaining the policy's status quo on your organization?
10. Was this position based on any research? If yes do u have a copy of this research?
11. Who had the final say on the policy?
12. When officials in the department have ideas regarding the visa issue, what are the channels of communicating?
13. Did the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security's mandate on issuing visas affect your input towards the new visa policy? If yes how?
14. Name 5 nationals which frequently visit as tourists in Malawi?
15. Do these nationals require visas to visit Malawi?
16. Have there been reduction in numbers on tourists visiting Malawi from countries that are now required to pay visa fees? If yes, give examples of countries from which the decline in tourists has been observed.
17. How many of these tourists which now require to pay visa fees visited?

18. How many of these tourists which now require to pay visa fees visited during the peaks months of the years 2016 and 2017?
19. If there are any changes, Do you consider the new visa policy as one of the reasons for the changes?
20. Are these views substantiated with complaints or appraisals from tourists?
21. Are there any issues you would like to share?

APPENDIX 2: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Themes	Subthemes	Description	Typical quote	Frequency
Consultation	Agenda setting	One actor during this stage	The Department of Immigration took us on board when they were ready for its formulation	7
	Intra departmental stakeholder Meetings	Intra departmental meetings conducted with other ministries	I was invited to a meeting by the Department of Immigration, through the Public Sector Reforms Unit	11
	Consultative meetings with private sector	Private Sector was taken on board after the adoption of the reform	The meetings took place after we raised our concern over the visa fees	19
	Establishment of committees			0
	Research on the need for a reform			0
Interests of actors	Advantages of the reform	Revenue collection	We were interested in the visa fee for the charges	18

		Security aspect	The policy would enhance security of Malawi as a whole, it broadens the screening of who comes into the country	9
		Diplomatic reciprocity	Malawians travelling to other countries face challenges to obtain visas, why should nationals from those countries enter Malawi visa free?	13
	Disadvantages of policy reform	Procedure delays	The approval process could have delays	3
		Unconducive to the tourism sector	It is hard to sale Malawi as a destination when the visa fees are higher than neighbouring countries	5
Roles of actors	Recommendations on visa fees		We recommended a decline in the visa fees	5
			Support of the visa policy reform	11