

**POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION INITIATIVES IN CHIKWAWA
DISTRICT, SOUTHERN MALAWI**

MASTER OF ARTS (DEVELOPMENT STUDIES) THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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MASTER OF ARTS (DEVELOPMENT STUDIES) THESIS

By

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Submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences in partial fulfilment for the award of a
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DECLARATION

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

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family and friends for their support throughout the study.

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This work is evidence of my effort and support I got from different people, and I am thankful to them.

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ABSTRACT

Community participation in disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives is one of the key challenges affecting meaningful implementation and sustainability of DRR in most developing countries despite concerted efforts to change this status quo (Mijoni and Izadkhah, 2009; Shaw, 2006; Wisner et al. 2004). Situating developmental change as political in nature as purported by Leftwich (2000). The study sets to examine how political economy factors drive limited participation of local people in different disaster risk reduction interventions in Chikwawa district. A pure qualitative study design was employed to examine the problem from the experiences of people involved or participated in different DRR interventions in three sampled traditional areas of Kasisi, Makhuwira and Maseya in the district. Four DRR interventions implemented by local and international organizations in the sampled areas were examined to understand the nature of local participation in those interventions, the influence of actors' interest, institutions (rules of the games) and structural factors among others in shaping participation dynamics in those interventions. A rational choice theory was used to interpret the research findings which were thematically analyzed using Atlas ti. The study established that limited space for local participation often characterized by co-option, and induced participation by material and cash incentives in pre-determined DRR interventions is mostly created and sustained by organizations who finance different interventions to satisfy their vested interests of controlling the disaster sector, and development in general. The study notes that, participation although sought for theoretically but practically meaningful participation which leads to empowerment and citizen control over development is blocked by external powerful development actors within the sector. This is made possible and sustained through supremacy of informal rules of the game, historical legacies and path dependent structural factors which puts local people control over development through meaningful participation at large at the mercy of powerful external actors who often provide financial support in most interventions in the country.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACPC	Area Civil Protection Committee
ADRM	Assistant Disaster Risk Management Officer
CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission of Malawi
CBDRM	Community Based Disaster Risk Management
CPC	Civil Protection Committee
DEC	District Executive Committee
DODMA	Department of Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FFA	Food For Asserts
GVH	Group Village Head
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
VCPC	Village Civil Protection Committee

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Community participation in disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives is one of the key challenges affecting meaningful implementation and sustainability of DRR in most developing countries (Mijoni & Izadkhah, 2009; Shaw, 2006). Mijoni and Izadkhah (2009) notes that most DRR interventions appear to cling to top-down approaches and are done at the community and not with the community. Despite this challenge, limited studies have been done to examine drivers of the problem. This study sets to examine the failure of meaningful local participation in disaster risk reduction interventions by examining purposively sampled DRR interventions in three traditional areas of Kasisi, Maseya, and Makhuwira in Chikwawa district, Southern Malawi.

Recognizing centrality of politics in development as cited by Leftwich (2000), the study situates the participation problem as a political problem. A political economy conceptual framework which captures how development change is brought about by interaction of different political economy factors such as institutions, interests, and structures just to mention a few has therefore been adopted to put the discussion in political context. Rational choice theory is the analytical framework of this study. In general, the theory postulates that actors are utility maximizers, that every action one undertakes is for maximization of his or her self-interest. The study adopts this theory in view of the hypothesis that any social action such as participation by actors is done in view of its perceived benefits for their utility maximization as postulated by rational theorists. Thus, barriers or failure of participation in disaster risk reduction interventions in this case is understood by largely analyzing actor's perception on participatory DRM.

Findings unveiled have implications on understanding challenges of local participation in disaster risk reduction initiatives and possibilities of improving them. This chapter outlines the focus of the study, background to locate the study gap, problem, objectives, study justification, and outline of the study chapters.

1.2 Study background

Disaster risk Management in many developing countries has undergone a paradigm shift from top-down, ad-hoc emergency response to bottom-up participatory approach (Maskrey, 2011; Mijoni & Izadkhah, 2009; Mwale, et al., 2014). This shift emerged as a result of scholars, policy makers and development practitioner's recognition on the significance of local participation in addressing disaster risk problems. Romanticization of adopting participatory approaches to development to catalyze local participation in development emerged during the Post World War II era where developed countries were engaged in reconstruction efforts in underdeveloped countries. Kanji and Greenwood (2001), and Wisner et al. (2004).

Several narratives, arguments and schools of thoughts are paddled on the importance of participatory development, with an overall belief of it being a greater pathway to sustainable development outcomes in developing counties (Bowen, 2008; Chambers, 1994b; Reid, 2000; Samah & Aref, 2011). It is this participatory development wave which equally influenced the rethinking of Disaster Risk Management approaches which for a long time has been characterized by emergency response and top down interventions. The reorientation towards participatory approaches brought a diverse of development actors mainly NGO's, aiming to complement the state/government developmental agenda (Hyden, 1997).

In Malawi, the works of NGOs in disaster sector is historically associated with humanitarian response to affected people when a disaster occur. Local and International organizations such as World Vision Malawi, Adventist Development Relief Agency, Action Aid, CARE, Red Cross, UNICEF, Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity and World Food Program (WfP) amongst others have over the years complemented government efforts in responding to various forms of disasters such as floods, earthquake, famine and many others across the country.

Other than humanitarian response, other organizations have been supporting different initiatives before, during and after disaster occurrence. These include initiatives on early warning systems for disaster preparedness, evacuation and support to households living in camps when a disaster occurs as part of response, as well as reconstruction activities immediately after disaster. For a long time, all these efforts have often been top down characterized by external development agents coming with pre-packaged interventions to support the seemingly voiceless and vulnerable people.

However, the emergency of participatory development wave, most of these organizations have shifted their programming from emergency top down humanitarian response towards adopting participatory approaches with the aim of ensuring that local people take a leading role in determining their needs and priorities (Chiusiwa, 2015). In Malawi, the paradigm shift in Disaster Risk Management towards community-based disaster programming is believed to be driven by the 1994 Phalombe flash floods locally famously known as “Napolo” (Chiusiwa, 2015).

This catastrophe triggered some institutional reforms such as enactment of the National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Act (1991), which guided creation of the national disaster sector coordination entity, Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA). These reforms facilitated creation of coordinating structures at different levels including local level where for the first-time community participation and involvement in disaster risk management was ensured through the local level civil protection committees (Chiusiwa, 2015).

Subsequently, the government of Malawi developed the National Disaster Risk Management policy (2015) to provide policy direction on the same. These instruments were developed to support various actors in the disaster sector on how to design their programs to resonate well with local aspirations for effective management of disaster risk against the traditional adhoc response approach which was proven to be less effective and more of firefighting when a disaster occur. Despite this enabling environment and efforts, various DRM interventions implemented at community level continue to be top-down (Shaw, 2012).

Studies done by various scholars to broadly understand challenges of disaster risk management in developing countries clearly cite lack of local participation in disaster risk management, but do not adequately zero in to understand its dynamics and root cause. As noted by Twigg (2015), there is limited literature so far which has fully examined community-based disaster risk management from theory to practice in most developing countries. It is from this background that this study was driven to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence explaining why top down approaches still drive the DRM sector amidst calls and attempts to make the sector and its interventions participatory and bottom up.

1.3 Problem Statement

Local or community participation in disaster risk reduction initiatives is believed to be a greater pathway for sustainable disaster risk management. People living in disaster prone areas or affected by disasters are first respondents of disasters and are believed to be in a better position to identify their disaster related needs and their corresponding solutions. Several actors have been implementing DRR initiatives in many developing countries with and at local communities. However, global and regional disaster risk management studies in most developing countries by Maskrey (2006) and Coetzee and Niekerk, (2012), and Twigg (2015), among others raises participation of local people in such initiatives as one of the key challenges. Thus, despite paradigm shift for bottom up interventions Coetzee and Niekerk (2012) notes that communities are still treated as ‘recipients’ of help and not initiators.

In Malawi, studies done by Chiusiwa (2015), Mijoni and Izadkhah (2009) argues that limited participation has created a dependency syndrome, such that local people cling to disaster hotspot areas expecting relief teams when a disaster occur. Maskrey (2011) argues that, there is limited literature which fully examines this challenge in most developing countries. It is against this background that this study was sought to fill this gap by providing evidence and literature on drivers of nature of participation and drivers of limited participation in DRR interventions.

Recognizing that change in development is political in nature (Leftwich, 2000), the study adopted a problem driven political economy analytical framework to put the study into this perspective. To fully understand why there is limited participation in DRR

interventions, the study will firstly examine the nature of local participation in DRR interventions. It will also examine the influence of different political economy factors such as institutions, interest in bringing about limited participation of local people in different DRR interventions.

1.4 Research questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of local participation in disaster risk reduction interventions at community level.
- How do actors' interests influence limited local participation in disaster risk reduction initiatives at community level?
- How do institutions or rules of the game drive limited local participation in disaster risk reduction initiatives at community level?
- How do structural factors influence local participation in community based disaster risk management interventions?
- What other political economy factors influence local participation in community based disaster risk management interventions?

1.5 Study Objectives

1.5.1 Main objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine how political economy factors influence limited local participation in community-based disaster risk reduction interventions.

1.5.2 Specific objectives

- To explore nature of community participation in disaster risk reduction initiatives.
- To examine how actors' interests, influence local participation in DRR initiatives
- To investigate how institutions or 'rules of the game' shape local participation in disaster risk management initiatives.
- To analyze how structural factors, drive limited local participation in community-based disaster risk management initiatives.

1.6 Outline of study

The study is arranged into five chapters, each responding to the study question. Chapter one '*Introduction*' provides a general overview of the study through provision of study background, problem statement and objectives. Chapter two '*Literature Review*'

provides a discussion on relevant literature reviewed, inclusive of theories and scholarly debates related to participator development and disaster risk management and political economy which are central in the discussion. The chapter also reviews Rational Choice theory which guides analysis of the study findings.

Chapter three, '*Methodology*' provides a road map on how the study has been conducted. This include methods and approaches used to generate data and analyze the same to arrive at logical and relevant conclusions.

The fourth chapter, '*Presentation and Discussion of Research Findings*', presents a discussion on study findings presented per specific objective. Rational Choice theory has been used to guide analysis of study findings. Chapter five '*Conclusions and Recommendations*' provides conclusion and recommendations which have been presented as areas of further investigation emanating from the study findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature revolving around debates and discussions of scholars on community-based disaster risk management to from global, regional and Malawi context. This is done to locate the study gap. The chapter starts by presenting a discussion on the concept of community participation in participatory development as it forms the heart of the study. It also provides a discussion on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks governing the study, the political economy and rational choice theory respectively.

2.2 Community participation in participatory development

The concept of community participation is very important in this discussion as it sets the base of the study's interrogation of its application and manifestation in disaster risk management sector as provided in the study. Community participation emerged in development literature in the 1980's. It is belt on the belief that development processes can be meaningful and successful if and only if people facing the development challenges define their solutions and take lead in the entire processes (Mikelsen, 2005). The new approach coincided with the neo-liberal development policies such as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP's) that emphasized the decreasing role of the state in some aspects of service delivery (Lewis & Kanji, 2011). Imbued in participatory development, community participation in development emerged as a challenge to traditional top-down approaches to development which were seen to be unreliable and ineffective in development. Thus bottom-up community based and people centered approaches were preferred to be better approaches in development. Just like other scholarly concepts, the issue of participatory development with focus on community participation in development has been noted as ambiguous in terms of its definition, forms and scope (Frezer, 1999).

One key ambiguity on the concept of community participation rests on the definition of what a community entail. Against the widely held conception of community as a homogeneous group, Frazer (1999) and Mattessich and Monsey (2004) defines a community as a simply a group of people with shared common social values within a specified geographical locality. In disaster risk management perspective, community in this study basically refers to people living in rural areas of Chikwawa district who have experience in disaster occurrences, either as people affected or players who have supported various programs in Disaster Risk Management interventions.

2.2.1 Defining ‘participation’ in development studies

The concept of ‘participation’ is one of the central themes in participatory development. What participation mean differ from one user to the other as noted by Dulani (2003) In terms of its definition, different scholars have provided their unique understanding on the concept. Pretty (1996) for instance defines ‘participation’ as active involvement of the project beneficiaries in identifying, planning, implementing, managing and evaluating projects. Dulani (2003) extends that, activeness entails that local people take a leading role in influencing and controlling decisions about their development initiatives. Participation responds to the issue of ensuring local people control development processes. In case of development initiatives initiated by external development players can local people really have power to control the initiatives? This is a critical question most social researchers have grappled around with as far as the nature and extent of local control in external players development initiatives.

Participation is also conceptualized as a choice. Rifkin and Kangere (2002) states that “the right and responsibility of people to make choices over decisions which affect their lives. Here participation is understood within the perspective of development as a freedom as noted by Amartya Sen (1977). Brett (2003) sees participation as “an educational and empowering process in which people, in partnership with each other and those able to assist them, identify problems and needs, mobilize resources and assume responsibility to plan, manage, control and assess the individual and collective actions that they themselves decide upon.” Here, participation is seen as a tool for an end, a tool of making sure that the powerless have power and be able to control development processes.

As noted by Arnstein (1969) who wrote extensively on participation in power context,

‘Participation is about redistribution of power in which the have-nots of our society who are presently excluded from the political and economic processes are given power to have control and influence over matters that affect their lives’.

Using Arnstein (1969) definition of participation as bordering on power redistribution, to what extent are the powerful willing to redistribute this power to the powerless? In the context of failure of local participation in DRR interventions, will this be an issue of the powerful clinging on to power and make the powerless still powerless? This study will also bring in an examination on how power plays a role in determining participation dynamics in DRR initiatives.

2.2.3 Forms of participation

The different definitions of participation presented underscores the fact ambiguity of the concept. Several scholars have extended to simplify the understanding by classifying participation by presenting its different faces or forms. Chambers (2004) in Mikelsen, (2004) identified three forms; cosmetic, co-opting, and empowering. Cosmetic and co-opting form of participation is when local people are involved in pre-arranged interventions by external actors and have limited voice or control on the interventions. On the flipside, empowering participation, local people take control and make their own decisions about development. This is what White (1996) also refer to as *‘transformative participation’*. Here, the role of external agents is largely to deal with institutions and structures that perpetuate exclusion and marginalization. This is done to ensure that the less powerful gain as necessary power as possible to control development processes.

Another classification of participation based on its differential forms is found in the works of Pretty (1996) who developed what he calls a ‘ladder of citizen participation’. The ladder is divided into seven rungs with the lower rungs being passive participation and the upper part being the ideal participation or ‘genuine participation’ He describes each form of participation with corresponding characteristics as provided in the table 1 below. Classification of participation is a good starting point of examining participatory development problems (Cornwall, 2008). The classifications of the different forms of participation helps the study to explore and situation local participation in different

disaster risk management interventions in the study sites. This is very important base for discussion of subsequent objectives which largely looks at drivers of limited participation within political economy perspective. It also helps to put local participation in a measurable context.

Table 1: Classification of different forms of citizen participation (Pretty, 1994)

Type	Characteristic of each type
Self mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need but retain control over how resources are used.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes.
Functional participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people are only be co-opted to serve external goals.
Participation for material incentives	People participate by contributing resources, for example, labor, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. It is very common to see this called “participation”, yet people have no stake in project activities once incentives end
Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people’s responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information-gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on people’s views.
Manipulative participation	Participation is simply a pretense, with people’s representatives on official boards, but who are un-elected and have no power.

The upper part ‘*self-mobilization*’ is the ideal and sort for form of participation as far as participatory development is concerned. This is where local communities are active participants and are empowered to retain control at all levels of the development process (Pretty, 1996). On the other hand, ‘*passive or manipulated participation*’ also known

as *'tokenism'* is considered a form of participation but its features are largely top down. This is where control of decision-making power rests with planners, administrators and the community's elite, people are merely passive listeners to what is being planned for them (White, 1996). These are the forms of participation which some external development agents utilize whilst considering their interventions to be participatory.

2.2.4 Community participation from theory to practice

The concept of 'community participation' has been highly debated by scholars since its emergence in 1970's and 80's largely based on its manifestation from theory to practice (William, 2004). From theoretical perspective, community participation looks good, but evidence on practice suggests that the theoretical ideals are not easily materialized. From theoretical perspective, Botes et al. (2000) and Chambers (1994b) suggests that community participation can help to empower local people by developing their capacity, create a sense of ownership of the development process, enhance the goal of sustainability in long-term development and can help in breaking the mentality of dependency which characterizes some of development work

Greater participation can also promote interventions that are more responsive to the needs of the underprivileged in communities and better adapted to local conditions. Thus, participation is expected not only to improve the exchange of information among actors, but also to develop the bargaining power of the beneficiaries through involvement in project activities such as planning and decision making at all relevant levels (Bowen, 2008). Despite these perceived often theoretical benefits, several other scholars have criticized the concept of community participation in several areas. Cleaver (2001) notes that local participation, does not always lead to the claimed benefits. He terms the concept of participatory development in particular as *'an act of faith in development'*. A highly romanticized concept that many people fail to critique despite its shortfalls. Empowerment claims are also questioned by some critics. Mosse (2001) and Cornwall (2008) for instance argues that 'participatory methodologies such as PRA fail to change and challenge the bureaucratic, centralized and administrative structures in implementing organizations that control decision-making and resource allocation that even exclude participation'. Thus, with these structural bottlenecks, empowerment cannot be achieved.

Equally Cornwall (2008) notes that PRA practice seem not to be empowering, mainly in a collective sense as it is just used for extracting information of which this is a wrong application and is not supposed to be the case. Other critics of empowerment claims such as Cook and Kothari (2001), Kapoor (2005), and Mohan (2006), also note that rather than empowering those at the grassroots, community participation simply provides alternative methods for incorporating the poor into the projects of large agencies which essentially remain uncontrollable to those they are supposed to serve. On this, they see the idea of participatory development as flawed, idealistic and naïve. This claim is also evident in Mansuri and Rao (2004) assessment of World Bank funded community driven development projects where meaningful local participation was also unveiled as one of the key challenges.

Mohan (2008), also questioned participatory development as a tool for power struggle. He states that “despite participatory development been used as a tool for power struggle, to make powerless have the power, it has failed to achieve this by failing to address powerlessness drivers such as local leadership, and elites who control local politics amongst others”. Thus, these drivers remain significant even in many claimed participatory projects. Other scholars put a blame on approaches used as not being transformative (Gaventa, 2003; Hickey & Mohan, 2005; William, 2004).

While participation is important for the incorporation of local knowledge in development initiatives, Mosse (2001) argues against this conception by contending that what is considered as local knowledge is simply a reflection of local power relations. Thus, participation while expressed as the view of the poor or marginalized people, in reality this knowledge is manipulated by power relationships, consequently, what is claimed to be local knowledge is simply views of the minority powerful local elites who can easily hijack participatory processes. As Mkandawire (2001) notes, participatory development is a blinding tool to facilitate development as many people are not involved.

2.2.5 Towards Enhanced Local Participation in development

Participation to be effective, Mansuri and Rao (2004) argue that there is need for project design and implementation to be informed by carefully done political and social analyses.

In so doing, an understanding of social relationships, gender, power dynamics and other political factors need to be taken into consideration. This will ensure that participatory development agencies understand specific contextual conditions that can influence participation of the voiceless and the marginalized in communities. Cornwall (2008) argues that it is important to understand local communities not as homogenous group, but contexts characterized by different cultural, social and political systems.

Understanding these dynamics calls for an approach that regards participation as an inherently political process rather than a technique. Therefore, to achieve empowerment, William (2004) states that participation should be considered as a political puzzle as it is conditioned by the institutional framework and political backgrounds of the participants. Mansuri and Rao's assertions are significant in understanding local participation as both a product and a process informed by political economy dynamics. This is an area which has not been fully pursued by many scholars. Therefore, understanding of incentives, institutions, structures, power relations and other political economy drivers is very paramount to fully locate why it is hard for community participation to materialize as anticipated in theory. This study utilizes this scholarly gap to add literature and bring updated findings on community participation challenges in development from a political economy perspective. However, before thorough examination, a brief on Disaster Risk Management is presented below to technically put the study into the disaster risk management technical context.

2.3 Disaster Risk Management

From ancient times the world has been experiencing different forms of disasters. Earthquakes, landslides, floods, drought, and bush fires amongst others have claimed lives, and disturbed socio-economic development of many countries. According to UNDRR (2018), a '*disaster*' is defined as a sudden, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human, material, and economic or environmental losses that exceed the community's or society's ability to cope using its own resources. Though often caused by nature, *disasters* can have human origins. Some of the main natural disasters include volcano, wildfire, landslide, earthquake, and drought.

Efforts are done in many countries to manage disasters. Several interventions are done to help people and nations prepare and prevent disaster occurrence, respond when disaster occur, as well as recover from effects of disaster. This study focuses on floods disaster, examining how local people participate in various interventions on disaster risk reduction. UNDRR 2018 report estimated that the effects of floods reduce annual Gross Domestic Product by 1.7% and over 200 thousand people are killed by floods annually. In Malawi, flooding is the common disaster in Malawi accounting for over 40% of the recorded disasters (Nilson & Chavula, 2010). According to disaster profile of Malawi which records incidences of natural disasters since 1945, between 1967 and 2018, 20 incidences of severe flooding have been reported (Government of Malawi, 2015).

In a country where 85% of the population is rural and the economy is overwhelming agro-based, the almost annual flooding occurrences significantly impact livelihoods as they directly affect income generated from agriculture (Nilson et al., 2010; Nkomwa et al., 2014). Recurrent floods also damage infrastructure and impact local communities' social, economic, cultural and psychological values (Mijoni & Izadkhah, 2009; Nilson., et al., 2010). The projected future increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in the region (Malunga, 2011), coupled with a lack of coping capacity means that this situation will worsen unless more effective disaster risk management strategies are devised.

2.3.1 Approaches to disaster risk management

Management of natural disasters has evolved in many countries from the initial one time disaster response, characterized by humanitarian response during disaster occurrences, towards recognizing that disaster risk management is not a once off intervention (Wisner, 2004). The later recognizes management of disaster as an ongoing process encompassing interventions in four categorized phases of a disaster which include preparedness, response, recovery and impact mitigation. In all these phases different disaster risk reduction interventions are employed. At preparation stage, interventions include all activities undertaken to ensure that whenever a disaster occur local people should be able to survive and restore their livelihoods.

Disaster response phase covers activities undertaken when a disaster occurs. These include evacuation and rescue, provision of relief to affected households and individuals among others, Disaster recovery interventions include all activities aimed at helping affected households or people to bounce back to their normal families after the disaster strike. These include infrastructure reconstructions amongst others. However, in a number of studies done it was noted that local people or communities do not take a leading role in most of these interventions. Such that interventions still are implemented as top down. For instance, studies by Haider (1991) in Dhaka, Bangladesh found that, local people are failing to move from disaster prone areas because the initiative has been top down, without taking into consideration local interest.

Equally in Malawi, Jere (2015) found a similar case in the Lower Shire districts of Nsanje and Chikwawa where local people reluctance to permanently move to uplands is partially due to government failure to engage on how the process will go. These scenarios showcase that disaster risk management is still top down against the advocated bottom-up participatory approach which is believed to be a great pathway for sustainable management of disaster.

2.3.2 Community based disaster risk management

Community based disaster risk reduction presents a bottom-up approach in disaster risk reduction, where communities at risk transition from subjects to objects of disaster risk management (Maskrey, 2011). Local communities are recognized as a resource, with a great deal to offer in terms of local knowledge, skills and capacities (Dekens, 2007; Dumar, 2010; Scolobig et al., 2015). In a process of CB-DRR, communities at risk take an active role in risk identification, selection and prioritization of solutions, project implementation, monitoring and operation.

Due to participatory processes and inclusive approach, evidence to date indicates that CB-DRM approaches deliver multiple benefits, including: more sustainable solutions, strengthened local capacities, increased local resilience and cohesion, and empowered communities (Gero et al., 2011; Maskrey, 1989; 2011, Shaw, 2006). Zahari et al. (2013), also note that, community members are the first responders of disasters as such engaging them as part of management of disasters is key for effective solutions. DRR interventions became most effective when done at community level where specific local needs, resources and capacities are met.

Community based disaster risk management interventions have a potential to lead to more sustainable solutions and increased local resilience, vulnerability reduction, strengthening of local capacities, local ownership and increased local cohesion (Gero, et al., 2011; Meskrey, 2014; Shaw, 2006). Unlike other participatory interventions, community participation in DRM is pursued as a tool for empowerment (Maskrey, 2011), that involvement of local people is meant to empower them with skills, knowledge, and capacity to manage disasters.

However, as pointed out by other participatory scholars, evidence in many participatory interventions suggest that empowerment is often assumed and rarely achieved due to socio-political factors at play in many communities. CB-DRM approach is centered on communities' taking control of disaster risk reduction processes (Dube, 2015; Twigg, 2009). This is where communities are the managers while external parties such as NGOs are the facilitators (IIRR & Cordaid, 2013). In this case, community participation in the context of some DRR scholars implies community power, or control as reflected in Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation. Despite its popularization by development scholars and NGOs through various interventions, community participation in DRR has been understudied (Kusumasari & Alam, 2012; Pearce, 2003; Shaw, 2009). The limited literature available acknowledges the numerous bottlenecks affecting local participation in DRR but it does not adequately address other key important parameters triggering community participation bottlenecks in DRR.

A study by Habiba (2013) on CBDRM practices in Bangladesh revealed elite capture as one of the bottlenecks of CBDRM interventions. He argued, DRR administrators are not willing to accept the opinion of illiterate and local people instead work with the experienced elites. Maskrey (2011) and Shaw (2006) on the other hand note that very often, participatory approaches are done "at community level rather than with community or local ownership" which can hinder previously mentioned long-term sustainability of solutions and community ownership. Further critique of the approach includes: the level of community involvement is often unsatisfactory; CB-DRR is often not incorporated in policies at local and national levels; the underlying causes of vulnerability are not tackled (e.g. access to land, inequality); often the lack of resources, political will and technical cap.

A comparative case study conducted in Italy, Netherlands and United Kingdom by Whehn et al. (2015), found that participation during different phases of the disaster cycle (prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery) is limited both in terms of the respective roles and types of interactions between citizen and authorities and the impact of citizen participation on decision-making. He argued that different authorities have differing perceptions of citizen participation in flood risk management in terms of their roles and influence. The study also found that these perceptions are related to the importance that the authorities place on the different stages of the disaster cycle. This understanding is crucial for identifying the potential of citizen observatories to foster greater citizen engagement and participation

Peters (2017a) also observed top down tendencies by NGO's in DRR programming in China and some Asian countries. The situation is not different in some Southern African countries such as Zambia and Zimbabwe where Phiri, et al. (2015), blames NGOs as the main problem on non-participatory DRR interventions. He argued, "Often NGOs came with already packaged programs and community engagement is very minimal." However, Phiri does not provide the nature of this engagement between NGOs and local people and why NGOs bring and implement pre-packaged interventions in the name of community based DRR projects. This study will examine this area by looking at interests of these organizations when they are engaging local people in community based DRR interventions.

Study done by Chiusiwa (2015) on CBDRM practices in Malawi also found that DRR interventions are done at community but not with the community. Thus DRR practitioners often outside of communities came to implement various programs with local people in their own localities without even involving them, these interventions are seen to be community based because of the implementation geographical factor but not necessarily based on actual involvement of the targeted people.

Studies presented here provide a clear reflection of the scholarly gaps in the context of local participation in the context of disaster risk management. As a budding scholarly discipline, not much scholarly research has not been done to explore dynamics of community-based disaster risk management.

The study greatly recognizes that participatory development is political in nature as it involves several players acting together for a perceived common good. I take this premise therefore to investigate the limitations of local participation in DRR which have been clearly acknowledged by other studies and examine them using political economy lens. This dimension is very important with an understanding that development outcomes are political in nature.

2.4 Theoretical framework

In line with the study objectives which examines local participation in development, which is a social action, the study adopts a rational choice theory to guide the discussion and analysis of study findings. rational choice theory befits this study as it primary looks at determinants of human behavior. In this case, different political economy drivers will be examined to understand their influence towards local participation in Disaster Risk Management interventions.

2.4.1 Rational choice theory

Rational choice theory, also referred to as choice theory, or rational action theory, is a theory for modelling human behavior from a social and economic perspective (Ogu, 2013). The theory's origin can be traced from the classical works of economist Adam Smith who through his book *'An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations'* (1776) developed the concepts of the 'self-interest' and 'the invisible hand' a metaphor of unforeseen forces which controls the free market economy (Ganti, 2021).

Smith was influenced by philosopher Thomas Hobbes' 'Leviathan' (1651) whose thesis premised on that political institution functioning is a result of individual choices. Moving from pure economics sociologists George Homan and James Coleman in the 1950's promoted it in relation to social exchange, stating social behavior is derived from rational calculation of an exchange of costs and rewards (Zifirouski, 2016). Since inception and subsequent development in the social science field, rational choice theory has evolved over time but its fundamental principles on determinants of human action has largely remained constant. Basically, the theory is belt on a general premise that human beings are rational actors who pursue actions that maximizes their self-interest (Abell, 2000; Green & Shapiro, 1994).

Other theory contributors such as Scott (2000) states that actors subject their actions to a cost benefit analysis before executing them. Abell (2000) further argues that amidst alternatives, actors choose actions that they believe brings them social outcomes that optimizes their preferences under subjectively conceived constraints. Thus, individuals chose actions that are is likely to give them the greatest satisfaction or rewards. That is the reward of a relationship or action must outweigh the costs for the action to be undertaken Gilboa (2012). Consequently, people pull out of relationships when the value of the reward diminishes below the value of the costs incurred. by arguing that actors chose If the rewards outweigh the costs,

Viewing this as an economic model of examining human behavior, Scott (2000) perceives human interaction as a social interaction or a process of social exchange involving the exchange of approval of valued behaviors. He argues that, social exchange relations are also power relations as the resources that people bring to the social relation are rarely equal. Outcome of any exchange will therefore depend upon the relative power of the participants.

The rational choice theory fits well with the scope of the study as it is well aligned to help in understanding the behavior of various actors in working towards promoting and blocking local participation in various DRR interventions. Its centrality on utility maximization as the key driver of actor's choices of actions demonstrated through behavior is very key in this study as it will in identifying and examining actors vested interests towards participatory disaster risk management. The theory is also well aligned with the specific objectives of the study which investigates how different political economy driver such as institutions, structures and interests shape the behavior of different actors in working towards promoting local participation in disaster risk reduction interventions. Therefore, the rational choice theory provides a good theoretical ground to fully examine the study problem.

2.4.1.1 Criticisms and strengths of Rational choice theory

Despite its prominence in Social Sciences, schools point out theoretical and empirical shortfalls of the theory. Burns and Roszkowski (2016) for instance questions the assumptions of individuals as self-centered rational decision makers, as unrealistic and problematic.

They argue that;

‘The assumption of perceiving human actors as independent and utility maximizers ignores the influential role of other external factors such as institutions, norms, values, and other cultural constraints embedded in a social system which equally influence decision making and shape human behavior.’ (p.197)

For them, other than utility maximization, human actions are also driven by social factors. This is often ignored part as far as modeling human action is concerned using this theory which is skewed on the economic angle. Webler, et al. (2000) however notes overwhelming evidence that factors other than self-interest such as concern for others in interpersonal relations, institutionalized roles, values and culture are central to human judgment and action. However, the theory strongly maintains that macro level structures and institutions can be explained from the models of individual social action. Abell (1996) from the social network perspective conceptualizes society and its structural foundations of norms and values as a product of aggregated interaction between social actors. Cook and Whitmeyer (1992) argues, “features of social life that are conventionally called ‘social structures’ although they appear to have a life of its own are simply chains of interconnected individual actions”. Abell (1996) on the other hand notes that social norms and values are an expression of an aggregated individual interests of preferences about their society. On the same, Homens (1969) note that:

‘Society is made by men.....the secret of society is that it was made by men [sic.], and there is nothing in society but what men put there,

On norms and values, the theory is in line with objective three of the study which examines how institutions, referred to as ‘rules of the game’ affect local participation in DRR. The arguments raised in this criticism will help in examining how informal institutions specifically shape local participation in DRR. Ogu (2013) criticizes the theory by questioning the definition and application of the concept of rationality in the theory. He argues, the theory fails to properly define what rationality is, and fails to explain individual choices in times of incomplete preferences. He claims that, rational choice theory adopts a more specific narrower definition of ‘rationality’, which simply reduces individuals’ acts to a mere cost benefit analysis.

Scott (2000) argues that the theory also fails to explain social order manifested in collective action which reflects an adherence to social norms and values as guides to human behavior. He referred this as ‘Hobbesian problem of social order’. The bone of contention is a quest to respond to the question, if actions are self-interested, how is social life possible? According to these scholars the theory therefore fails to explain cooperation of individuals in groups in joint action where individuals may choose something which benefit others more than themselves, thereby overriding their self-interest?

This criticism is important in view of social life where values of collective action are at the heart of many societies especially rural life in developing countries. However, in defense of staunch utility maximizer advocates in rational choice theory, Olson (1965) in Scott (2000) suggests that collective action is possible as it is largely sustained through what he calls ‘selective incentives. This is where collective action is achieved through perceived individual interests and benefits. Determinants of collective action as presented, drive a larger part of analysis of study findings in this study considering that local participation challenges in Community Based Disaster Risk Management interventions are largely collective action challenges. Fundamentally this debate also helps to analyze how different political economy factors such as interest, structures, incentives, and institutions facilitate or block local participation of local people in DRR as a manifestation of collective action.

2.5 Conceptual framework: Political economy

The study is informed by concepts drawn from political economy field. Political economy is a field in social sciences explains development outcomes from political and economic factors such as power, institutions, structures, interests, and incentives amongst others in shaping development trajectories. (Unsworth, 2009). Politics here is concerned with the contestation on decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources (Leftwich, 2000). According to Leftwich and Hudson (2014) political economy field has evolved into three distinct phases. The first phase (1990’s) was a response to the Berg report, where development problems were tied to good governance concerns. Focus therefore was not only on addressing technical related problems, but also on administrative, managerial capacity and subsequent public sector management reforms.

The second and third generation political economy recognized other factors such as historical legacies, structural conditions, broad power relationships, stakeholder analysis of agents and institutional arrangement that frame development outcomes (Copestake & Williams, 2012; Jones et al., 2012; Moncrieffe & Luttrell, 2005). The third generation primarily is a shift from country level ‘contextual analysis’ to problem specific analysis. This is the framework which this study as it is problem specific in disaster risk reduction interventions. Other political economy analytical frameworks include Politics of Development, and Drivers of change. Fritz and Levy, (2009) identify common features of these frameworks.

They all provide context for explaining development trajectories from political and economic factors. They have almost similar three analytical steps which include problem identification, mapping of actors and examination of how different political economy factors interact. However, these frameworks differ in terms of level of their application. For instance, politics of development is usually applied at country specific level, whilst drivers of change is often applied at sector level. On the other hand, problem driven political economy analysis is often done at micro-problem focusing on a specified problem. This study draws its concepts from the problem driven analytical framework which focuses on three political economy features of institutions, structures and interests. Other political economy concepts such as power, incentives, and historical legacies have been utilized to reinforce the analysis.

2.5.1 Developmental change from a political economy perspective

Development and its outcomes in political economy perspective is understood to be political in nature (Leftwich, 2000). Thus, the prevalent use of top-down approaches against the desired participatory with consequential limited participation of local people in disaster risk management processes necessitates a political interrogation to understand its underlying drivers. As stated by Chinsinga (2008), while establishing or changing a status quo, there are bound to be winners and losers. This will necessitate a contestation, with some actors trying to safeguard their diverse, and highly contested vested interest. Actors using different forms resources to either influence the change if it's in their favor or block if it is not in their favor (Leftwich & Hogg, 2007).

The utilized resources in political economy perspective might be power, authority, among others.

On the other hand, it must be pointed out that, change in development is also attributed to other political economy factors such as path dependence, historical legacies, structures, and institutions. Challenges of local participation as the desired change in disaster risk management interventions within the political economy perspective can therefore be well understood by examining this power struggle. Identify who stands to win and who stands to lose from this paradigm shift. This will enable us to fully appreciate the status quo and actions of various actors in promoting or blocking local participation in such interventions.

2.5.2 The concept of institutions

The concept of institutions in political economy is key in our discussion as it reflects analysis of the second specific objective of the study. Institutions are ‘rules of the game’ (North, 1990). The notion that ‘institutions matter for development’ has been widely accepted by several institutionalist scholars (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). Institutions are a focus in this study because they provide a context for interaction of political actors (Booth, 2011b).

Helmke and Levitsky (2004), classified institutions into two; formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions as codified laws and officially sanctioned rules. On the other hand, informal institutions constitute ‘rules that are created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels and often through personal, social and ethnic ties. While they are not widely accepted as legitimate, however, they are recognized as ‘rules in operation’ (in use) or ‘rules in force’ (Ostrom, 1997).

Furthermore, Helmke and Levitsky (2004) notes that, informal rules are created in a quest by the powerless to gain some power to easily advance their interest in a context where power and resources are unevenly distributed, as such they are expected to produce winners and losers. According to Rodrik et al (2004) and Posner (1998) informal institutions are context specific. Apart from their differences, Helmke and Levitsky (2004) notes that formal institutions interact in four broader terms namely, complementary, accommodating, substitutive and competing.

In complementarity interaction, formal and informal institutions converge, and the formal institutions are effective. In this case informal institutions “fill in gaps” either by addressing contingencies not dealt with in the formal rules or by facilitating the pursuit of individual goals within the formal institutional framework with the aim of enhancing efficiency.

Secondly, the informal institutions may accommodate the formal ones when they diverge and when formal institutions are effective. Institutions in this case co-exist and drive the outcome that is not entirely intended by the formal rules. Accommodative informal institutions are often created by actors who dislike outcomes generated by the formal rules but are unable to change or openly violate those rules.

Thirdly, there is what they call competitive interaction. This is when formal institutions are ineffective. For instance, when the formal law: policies or procedures are poorly enforced or ignored by authorities, thereby creating a room for actors to ignore or violate them. In this case, informal institutions structure incentives in ways that are incompatible with the formal rules; to follow one rule, actors must violate another. Clientelism, patrimonialism, clan politics, and corruption are among the most familiar examples. (Colding & Folke, 2001).

Finally, formal and informal institutions also interact in a substitutive way. This is a case where informal institutions substitute formal institutions for the lack of effectiveness. Substitutive institutions tend to emerge where state structures are weak or lack authority (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). For example, actors create informal structures not because they dislike the formal rules, but because the existing rules—and rule-making processes—lack credibility. Another motivation for creating informal institutions is the pursuit of goals not considered publicly acceptable (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004). Local participation in disaster risk management, as a change from a top-down disaster risk management approach can equally be viewed as an institutional change. Change in the formal rules in which disaster management should be handled. However, Chinsinga (2008) notes that, promoting and facilitating institutional change is not easy task as the process is deeply imbued political process that involves winners and losers.

He argues that there are bound to be winners and losers in the course of establishing or changing institutions as existing institutional arrangements are not neutral; they advantage others whilst distributing disadvantage to others and they express a mobilization of bias in some way or the other.

That's why institutional change is highly contested by diverse interests and with different degrees of power, influence, and authority, creating in the process winners and losers (Leftwich & Hogg, 2007). An understanding of local participation as an institutional reform will help this discussion how actors are blocking this reform. Who stands to win and who stands to benefit from this reform? What resources they are using to advance their agenda and what should be done to change the status quo.

Understanding local participation challenges in DRR interventions requires identifying and examining rules governing local participation in different disaster risk reduction interventions and how they promote or block local genuine and meaningful participation of local people in such interventions. The analysis also further goes to understand how different actors utilize or ignore these rules to advance their interests as rational actors taking into consideration the rational choice theory governing the study.

2.5.3 Incentives

One of the determinants of particular development outcomes based on actor's behavior is an examination of the determinants of their actions. Actions by actors are propelled by perceived rewards and punishments that accrue from pursuing a certain course of action. Also referred as incentives (Leftwich & Sen, 2011). Rules of the game often generate or define incentives for a particular course of action either as remunerative (i.e. material reward), coercive (i.e. enforcement of rules) or moral (i.e. social norms and behavior) (Roberts, 2006). Adhikari et al. (2014) provides a connection of types of incentives and motivations for participation in an organization drawn from the works of Clark and Wilson (1961). He suggests that participation is determined by three types of incentives; material incentives (also called rational or utilitarian incentives) that provide private goods in the form of direct services or tangible rewards that have a monetary value to members for individual consumption.

Social incentives (also called affiliate or solidarity incentives) that provide the opportunity to socialize, gain social prestige and access to recreational activities only available to members; and normative incentives (also called purposive incentives) that provide public goods, as a result of collective efforts. The notion of incentives is very important in this study because they correspond to Rational Choice theory premises which subjects rational actor's actions based on their quest to maximize his self-interest, and ideally these are perceived benefited based on cost benefit analysis of any action and its alternatives.

Incentives in this case will help in examining why actors behave the way they do. This helps in understanding the question what drives local people to participate in DRR interventions and understanding what drives other actors to make DRR community based with focus on local participation. Responses to this underlying question provides a good understanding of manifestation of local participation including its bottlenecks.

2.5.4 Structures

One of the criticisms of Rational Choice Theory is that it subjects actors' actions, pursuit of self-interests purely based on cost-benefit analysis and ignoring other factors which drives this. Thelen and Steinmo (1992) acknowledges that actors live in society made up of values and norms and other contextual factors constitute what political economists refer to as structures. Hay (2002) generally defines 'Structures' as the context, or setting of social, political, and economic events and their acquired meaning. Helmke and Levitsky (2004) notes that structure is the medium for actors' interaction. In political economy analysis, understanding development outcomes requires an understanding of how structures emerge, and how it mediates actors' interaction. Analysis of structures will be utilized in this study to fully understand how relevant social, economic, geographic and political factors shape local participation in disaster risk management.

2.5.5 Actors/stakeholders interests

Actors also referred to as political agents or stakeholders are key and of the fundamental entities in political economy analysis. Actors influence developmental outcomes. PEA recognizes the unequal power relations and underlying conflicts between actors within the development domain. Often stakeholders have declared and undeclared interest which guide their conduct and interaction with others (Buse et al., 2012). The concept of interest in Political Economy is typically used to refer to either 'self-interest' of individual actors, institutions, or specific groups of actors, or the national interest of a country or state. In its simplest form, behavior that conforms to an actor's interest is action that is deemed to be utility maximizing with the conscious aim of gaining certain rewards, achieving preferences that match a given actors favored outcome or avoiding costs based on clearly conceived ranking of preferences (Broone, 2014). Understanding an actor's interests is very important in understanding local participation dynamics in CBDRR.

Thus, in political economy perspective the configuration of local participation in disaster risk management is influenced and driven by political processes resulting from the interaction and contestation of these diverse interests (both hidden and declared interests). Other political economy factors are merely utilized as driving factors that shape how these actors interact to advance their self-centered agenda. In this regard understanding the various motivations of actors in participatory DRR will help in understanding the prevalent experiences of local participation in DRR interventions.

2.5.6 The concept of Power in political economy

The concept of power is equally another key political economy concept in this discussion. Although not directly focused in this study, but it plays a critical role in understanding drivers of actor's actions. Generally, the decisions that people make are subjected to the level and amount of power they have. This power is manifested in different forms and is exercised in different ways. Conceptualizing manifestation and exercise of power, Luke's (1974) classifies power into three forms; formal or decision making power, informal power or non-decision making power, and invisible power/internalized power. Luke's (1974) argues that the hidden power is often understudied but critical in African development. This study will also attempt to understand the manifestation of this hidden power in driving the prevalent participation

problems in disaster risk management interventions studies. On formal power/decision making power, power is understood to be formal, observable especially in decision making processes, and legitimately exercised by individuals or groups of people sourced from formal institutions such as official procedures, systems, processes and laws. Using formal power, the powerful exercise influence on the way the less powerful should act. This conceptualization of power is drawn from the works of Dehl (1957)

Informal power/non-decision-making power is the opposite and a critique of formal/decision making power. Drawing from the works of Bachrach and Baratz (1962) this focuses on informal processes controlled by the powerful that are not recognized by the formal structures. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) define non-decision making as “the practice of limiting the scope of actual decision making to safe issues by manipulating the dominant community values, myths and political institutions and procedures.”

According to Chasukwa (2018) the major argument in this second face of power is that agenda-setting plays a role in the exercise of power because of its ability to bring certain items to a discussion whilst at the same time keeping other issues away from the debate. He further notes that, the second face of power gives much more attention to the controlling of agenda regarding what is to be tabled for discussion – and what is sieved out such that it does not make it onto the agenda.

Therefore, as pointed out by Heinsohn (2004), non-decision-making power is exercised through a mobilization of bias that involves, “excluding items from an agenda, creating selective precedents, defining matters as a private affair, excluding others by endless red tape, creating committees that never reach decisions, or ‘losing files’. It also entails manipulating existing formal institutions to create new rules of the game (institutional bricolage or hybridity (Cleaver, 2002).

The final form of power is invisible power/internalized power. Drawn from the works of Luke’s (1974) this form of power is exercised by domination through socially imbedded cultural values and norms (Swartz, 2007). In this type of power, the domination by the powerful over the less privileged prevails without even the knowledge of the less powerful (Pettit, 2013). Swartz (2007) in Chasukwa (2018)

defines domination as the capacity to secure compliance to domination through the shaping of beliefs and desires by imposing internal constraints under historically changing circumstances. The domination under false consciousness comply to domination with the full conviction that the powerful are actually making decisions in accordance with their 'real interests'. Due to internalization, the less powerful have blind loyalty, such that they are not aware of their 'real interests' (Csarzar, 2004).

Heinsohn (2004) note that other than blind loyalty, mobilization of bias, and formal institutions, other resources of power include financial, technical, knowledge or human workforce that individuals, groups of people and institutions possess. However, he argues that these are only powerful when they have been utilized to get other people to do what they would not otherwise have done. Thus, in general terms the issue of power concerns the how one influences over the other using formal or informal mechanisms to achieve his or her self-interest. The concept of power expounds more on the rational choice theory as it provides a picture on a key resource which actors utilize to advance their interest. As a contestation on who gets what, the issue of power is very paramount in this study.

The various conceptualizations of power as provided in this discussion are important in the study as they help to understand the kind of resources various actors utilize to advance their agenda in participatory disaster risk management. If local participation is a challenge, what are the interest of various stakeholders? Whose interests prevail and what form of power do the actors utilize to advance their interests, whether to participate or not to participate in DRR interventions? These are some of the crucial issues, the concept of power will.

Despite a growing recognition on the primary of hidden power in Malawi and the African continent as a dominant factor shaping development as noted by Chasukwa (2018), Tambulasi (2011), Mkandawire (2005), Lemke (2003) this study looks at the influence of the three suggested types of power to have a holistic picture of the subject matter. However, the study recognizes the dominance of informal institutions that facilitate the exercise of hidden power for patronage as one of the defining features of politics and development in Africa.

2.5.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature on participatory development from theory to practice. This discussion was very important as it provided a base for subsequent discussion on community-based disaster risk management which is basically an application of participatory approaches in disaster risk management sector. The primary argument on this sub-section was that participatory development is more rhetorical than practical.

A subsequent discussion on community-based disaster risk management was also meant to showcase global, regional and local trends on how local participation is fairing in disaster risk management interventions. From the cited scholarly works, it was evident that despite a paradigm shift in disaster risk management interventions remains top-down. This is where the study focuses on, to investigate drivers of this problem from a political economy perspective.

Finally, the chapter also discussed on the rationale of using rational choice theory and political economy conceptual framework. The underlying argument on political economy attachment in this discussion is emanating from the fact that development outcomes are political in nature. Therefore, it was necessary to utilize relevant political economy conceptual frameworks to put the discussion in political context.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a roadmap of methods used to conduct this study. It includes a discussion on research design, study area, data collection process and analysis, as well as a reflection on ethical considerations and identification of study limitations and how they were addressed. The research design section provides a discussion on qualitative research methods that has been adopted to guide the study. The study area section provides a discussion of the study area and case studies selected. Subsequently, data collection section provides a discussion on tools used to collect data and data sources. While, data analysis section, presents a discussion on how collected data was analyzed to generate study findings for construction of arguments, conclusions and recommendations in line with respective study objectives.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure” (Kothari, 2008). This study is guided by a subjective-interpretive qualitative research design since arguments and conclusions have been belt from the respondent’s experiences of the subject matter under study. Thus, study findings are subjective and based on respondent’s experience of the studied problem. targeted population within its own subjective context. Therefore, qualitative research is very suitable for this study as it enables the research to develop a high level of detail from the studied phenomenon as noted by Creswell (2009) and (Punch, 1998).

3.3 The case study approach

The case study approach has been adopted to in this study to capture as more detailed information as possible from the respondents. This approach is aligned to the study because it will help in examining the studies phenomenon “within its real-life context” as noted by Yin (2009).

However, one of the major weaknesses of case study approaches in social research as pointed out by Stake (2005) are on internal and external validity. The extent in which case findings can be generalized. Nevertheless, this limitation with single case study designs since every case study is unique, and generalizations cannot be made on the basis of single case. (Yin, 2009)

To ensure internal and external validity of data, triangulation principle was utilized. This involved collecting data from multiple case sources, as well as using different instruments. Different disaster risk reductions interventions were examined to triangulate the findings. These interventions were spread across different areas in Chikwawa district to strengthen further the validity and reliability issue. This helped in coming up with logical conclusions. Therefore, although findings generated in this research cannot be wholly generalized to every case, however the findings are reliable and valid in explaining similar research problems. The table 3 below outlines different disaster risk reduction interventions which were examined in the study.

3.4 Sampling technique

A sample technique is a definite plan, technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the wider study population of interest (Kothari, 2008). The study used non-probability sampling method also known as purposive sampling. As a qualitative study requiring in-depth understanding of the study issues from the respondent’s feelings, opinions and perspectives, purposive sampling, it was important for the researcher to carefully select study participants with perceives knowledge and expertise in the subject matter. The study used purposive sampling when conducting key-informant interviews as well as focus group discussions.

3.5 Data collection process

Data was collected using primary and secondary data sources. Primary or field-based data was collected between May-September, 2019 in Chikwawa district. A total of 38 Key Informant Interviews (KII) and 10 Focus Group Discussions (FGD's) were conducted with purposively sampled participants in Chikwawa district. Study participants included residents of disaster-prone areas in the sampled areas of the study. These included chiefs, members of disaster governance structures such as villages civil protection committees (VCPC's) as well as participants of different disaster risk reduction interventions implemented in those communities in the past five years. At district level, the study sought input from different sector heads under Chikwawa district council, members of the district civil protection committee, as well as officials from different organizations whose interventions were found and sampled in the targeted communities studied.

The study also had input from different stakeholders at national level. These included officials from department of disaster risk management affairs, as well as development partners key in disaster management in Malawi such as UNDP, DfID, and USAID. The mixture of these data sources enabled data triangulation to ensure validity, reliability and completeness (Creswell, 1995). Triangulation was also important in dealing with bias inherent in particular data collection instruments (Yin, 2009). Secondary data sources included information sourced from published academic articles, government reports, electronic journals and many already processed materials.

3.6 Data collection tools

Different data collection instruments were used in the study. This was done to enrich depth, validity and reliability of study findings. Primary data was collected using Key informant interviews and focus group discussions. These tools are important as far as understanding participant's opinions, feelings and observations on a particular subject matter is concerned as also noted by Kumar (2015). Secondary data was collected through document reviews where published documents on participatory development, Disaster Risk Management and many other related issues of the study were analyzed through literature review process to locate the study gap, as well as enrich analysis of study findings to arrive at logical conclusions.

3.6.1 Key Informant interviews

The study also conducted thirty-eight key informant interviews to collect information from a wide range of people. Key informant interview as noted by Crabtree and Cohen (2006) is one form of in-depth interviews which allow respondents the freedom to express their views in their own terms; they provide reliable, comparable data. semi structured interview guide was developed and administered to address objectives two, three and four. Key Informant Interviews were conducted to solicit expert opinion on community participation in DRR interventions as well as other issues affecting management of disaster risk in Chikwawa and Malawi as a country and at global level. KII provided an opportunity to participants to express themselves based on their understanding of community-based disaster risk management, specifically focusing on drivers and limitations of local or community participation in different interventions. This led to identification and understanding of how different political economy factors have contributed towards limited community participation in different disaster risk management interventions.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) composed of about six to ten people were administered in the study sites. FGDs were useful in this study as they allow participants to “interact in a discussion on a particular topic, agree with other interviewees in some respects and disagree in others and raise new issues and concerns” (Kumar, 2005). Furthermore, it was necessary to use FGD’s in the study as they provide a platform for in-depth discussion where respondents expressed their opinions, feelings, and examine the phenomenon under discussion in a detailed manner “within its real life context” (Yin, 2009). The researcher trained a team of five research assistants to help in this process as FGD’s are sometimes tricky due to group dynamics challenges pointed out by Punch (1998).

3.6.3 Document reviews

Document review also formed part of the data collection process of the study topic. Documents reviewed included mainly published scholarly articles on community participation, development theories, Disaster Risk Management, as well as project documents for Disaster Risk Management Interventions.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Social science research mainly involves investigation of complex cultural, legal, economic and political phenomena that in one way or the other involve people whose moral integrity is supposed to be protected (Madushani, 2016). Ethical consideration is therefore one of the critical issues in this research. Ethics defined here as what is or is not legitimate to do or what “moral” research procedure involves. (Cromer & Newman, 2012).

The study adhered to standard social research ethics in a quest to manage possible ethical issues, concerns, dilemmas, that might arise as a result of this study. There are different These included principles of confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, voluntary participation and privacy. These are considered key ethical considerations in Social science research by Fouka and Mantzorou (2011).

To manage possible ethical dilemmas the following steps were taken. Participation in the study was on voluntary basis. Participants were assured of confidentiality of their responses through anonymity of their ideas in the final write up. This applied to both individual participants, key informants, participants of focus group discussions as well as organizations whose projects were examined in the study sites. Consent form was administered prior to interviews (see attached appendix 2).

Whilst specifying nature of the DRR interventions and their corresponding locations, organizations whose works have been referred in the study have equally been anonymized by giving them a unique label to avoid direct attribution of the study findings to identified organizations in view of the sensitivity of study findings. Anonymity labels include faith-based organization X, or Y; local organization X, as well as humanitarian organization X. Key informants are identified by their location in case of community informants or position in case of informants from organizations or government departments.

3.8 Data analysis

The study had two levels of data analysis. This included analysis of primary and secondary data. Interpretation of study findings was informed by these two distinct analytical aspects.

3.8.1 Primary data analysis

The study relied heavily on thematic data analysis technique. This mainly involved identification of themes, coding them and attaching them with relevant narratives. It was these generated themes which informed major study findings. The study firstly transcribed the collected data. A code book based on the deductive themes generated from the literature review and other recurrent was developed. The transcripts were loaded into Atlas.ti 7, a software for qualitative data analysis. The researcher using the software rearranged the transcripts for easy analysis using axial coding into a good format for easy analysis. Notes were made and emerging findings were captured. Which focusing on assigning code labels for themes in readiness for thematic analysis which mainly involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study recurrent themes as major findings in the study.

3.8.2 Secondary data analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze secondary data collected. As noted by Creswell (2009) this consists of analyzing the contents of documentary materials such as books, magazines, newspapers and the contents of all other verbal materials which can be either spoken or printed. Project documents for different studied institutions, journal articles and books were analyzed to generate relevant data for the study.

3.9 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has discussed methodology employed in this study to examine the research problem, locating bottlenecks of local participation in community-based disaster risk management interventions within a political economy perspective. This is a unique study as limited studies have been done to understand disaster risk management and local participation from a political economy point of view. The study demonstrates the centrality of political economy factors in shaping local participation in disaster risk management sector as well as participatory development in general. The chapter has principally unveiled and examined tools, approaches used in collecting and analyzed data within the purposively used qualitative research design. Through data sources triangulation the study demonstrates the robustness of the study findings to justify their validity and reliability for possible generalization.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a presentation and analysis of research findings per each specific objective of the study. Prior to discussing the findings, the chapter provides a brief overview of the case study areas, and disaster risk reduction interventions referred in the study as case studies. The findings are analyzed within the rational choice theory perspective. A political economy conceptual framework has been employed to situate the study within the political economy perspective. Key concepts such as interests, institutions, power, and historical legacies provides the political economy face in the discussion.

4.2 Case Study Area

The study was conducted in Chikwawa District in three purposively sampled areas of TA Maseya, Makhuwira and Kasisi. Chikwawa district was purposively sampled due to its experiences in floods and disaster related problems often brought about by the flooding of Shire river which passes through the district. The district has an overall population of 564,684 with 97% of this being rural dwellers (NSO, 2018). The district often experiences two major disasters, floods and drought due to rainfall variability which ranges from a minimum of about 170 mm to a maximum of about 967.6 mm per annum. (Mwale et al. 2015). Flooding mainly tends to be caused by the bursting of the Shire River which is fed by Ruo River. Shire River itself also feeds into other rivers such as Maperera, Mpwadzi, Nkhathe, Livunzu, Mkombedzi, among others (Nillson et al., 2010). Severe flooding occurred in 1956, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2012, and 2015 (Mijoni, & Izadkhan, 2009). According to Malawi hazard and vulnerability atlas (2015) the district is ranked amongst the top three districts requiring attention in floods and disaster management interventions.

4.3 Actors and Disaster Risk Reduction interventions in Chikwawa district

Chikwawa district has over 40 Non-Governmental Organizations complementing government efforts in the provision of health services, water and sanitation services, agricultural services, education services, justice and human rights, civic education and good governance, relief services and environmental protection (Chikwawa district SEP, 2019)

Out of the 40, only 13 NGOs are very active in the provision of disaster risk reduction services. These are Malawi (EAM), Goal Malawi, CADECCOM, Christian Aid, World Food Programme (WFP), World Vision Malawi, WHH, CARD, Islamic Relief Services, Red Cross. DRR services provided include capacity building trainings in DRR, support towards irrigation farming, land conservation, early warning systems, disaster preparedness, relief distributions, economic empowerment interventions, as well as reconstruction initiatives amongst others. The number of NGOs in the DRR sector inflates whenever a disaster occurs as organizations come to provide relief items to affected families. (Chikwawa District SEP, 2015).

Management of actors is done by the Chikwawa district council through the office of the Assistant Disaster Risk Management Officer. Collaboration of actors is often done through the district civil protection committee, a grouping of all actors implementing disaster risk reduction activities in the district and relevant sectors of the council such as health, police, agriculture among others. At local level, there are Area Civil Protection Committees (ACPC's) and Village Civil Protection Committees (VCPC's) responsible for coordination of DRR activities at traditional authority and group village head levels respectively. However, in most cases, these structures are vibrant in areas with active disaster risk reduction interventions. (KII-Chikwawa district council official)

4.4 Case studies

The table below provides case studies, disaster risk reduction interventions referred in the study from different study sites in Chikwawa district. Due to the nature of the research and in line with ethical considerations, the study has anonymized identities of organizations or institutions who implemented the referred interventions. Each organization has been given a unique anonymity identifier which will be referred in the study. Out of interest in the study is simply an examination on how local people participated in such interventions including limitations to participation in line with study objectives.

Table 2: Case studies referred in the study

DRR INTERVENTION	LOCATION	IMPLEMENTER IDENTIFIER
Mwanza River-bank conservation	TA Maseya	Local faith-based organization X
M'bande Small scale irrigation scheme	GVH M'bande, TA Maseya	Local faith-based organization Y
Shire river-bank conservation project	GVH Mwalija, TA Kasisi	Local organization X
Construction of houses for affected households (DRR reconstruction)	TA Kasisi	International humanitarian organization X
Dike construction	TA Makhuwira	Local faith-based organization Y

4.4.1 Brief description of case studies

4.4.1.1 Mwanza river-bank conservation initiative-TA Maseya

Local people in the area of group village head M'bande in TA Maseya have for a long time been affected by floods due to overflowing of Mwanza river which passes along the area. In 2015 a faith based local organization X embarked on a 5 years food security project which had components of disaster risk management in it. At M'bande village the organization supported local people in river-bank conservation initiative where local people were mobilized to manage tree nurseries and plant trees along the Mwanza river-bank to conserve its catchment in a quest to reduce the impact of any potential floods.

4.4.1.2 M'bande small scale irrigation scheme-TA Maseya

A local faith-based organization Y supported local people in the area of group village head M'bande in the area of TA Maseya with a small-scale irrigation scheme to help the community address food insecurity. A 20 hectares Solar Powered irrigation scheme in the areas of Group Village Headman M'bande covers 12 villages.

4.4.1.3 Shire river-bank conservation project-TA Kasisi

A local organization X operating in Chikwawa district has been supporting local people in TA Kasisi with different disaster risk reduction interventions. In 2015 with support from an international organization from Zimbabwe the organization supported the area with a solar powered irrigation scheme to enable households curb food insecurity brought about by periodical floods as the area lies along Shire riverbanks. On the other hand, the organization mobilized local people in the area to embark on Shire river conservation intervention by among other things establishing nurseries and planting the tree along the riverbanks.

4.4.1.4 Houses reconstruction for flood affected households-TA Kasisi

An international humanitarian organization X has been operating in Malawi for over 40 years supporting different communities especially in times of crisis. Responding to 2015 floods which affected 12,755 households in the district and 640 households in TA Kasisi¹, the organization embarked on a project to support some of the affected households with reconstruction of houses. Targeted households who had relocated to an upland area were mainly supported with iron sheets, and bags of cement.

4.4.1.5 Dike construction -TA Makhuwira

A local faith-based organization Y supported local people in the area of TA Makhuwira with construction of a small dike. The dike was constructed to curb flooding in the area specifically during heavy downpour which makes bursting of Mkhathe river, affecting households, livestock's and other socio-economic activities in the area.

¹ 2019 DoDMA Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report (GOM-DODMA)

4.5 Examining nature of local participation in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) initiatives

Local participation in development is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, due to its differential forms. Studies on nature of local participation in development in general has been done, but a few are there specifically on examining how local people participate in different disaster risk management interventions, their underlying drivers and, forms of participation and its bottlenecks.

This study therefore sought to examine the nature of local participation in community-based disaster risk reduction initiatives to clearly situate how participation is configured in disaster risk reduction interventions. This was done in line with the underlying argument within the disaster risk management literature that presupposes that community participation is a challenge in DRR interventions in most developing countries as evidenced by studies done by Maskrey (2011), Mijoni and Izadkhah (2009), Shaw (2006), Wisner et al. (2004), in Asia, and some African counties including Malawi. The study therefore sought to understand how local people participate in different disaster risk reduction interventions by mainly reflecting on their role at different stages of the interventions such as design of the intervention, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the intervention.

4.5.1 Community participation at project design stage

Participation at project design is believed to be one of the cornerstones for successful development interventions. This is the stage where decisions on how a particular intervention will be made is done (Wasilwa, 2015). Examining the different DRR interventions the study found that local people had limited role and little influence in planning, deciding and controlling what to be implemented in their community.

FGD by Makhuwira area civil protection committee members indicated that:

We have been having projects in this area, but often we are on the receiving end of already planned interventions. Normally, these organizations before embarking on a project they are supposed to engage us, members of the ACPC because we are the ones who understand this area and its problems but that is not the case....so we simply receive these projects because they often came with officials from the district council and we don't want to be seen as people who are blocking development in this area (FGD TA Makhuwira).

Similar sentiments were found in TA Maseya where a local faith-based organization Z brought and implemented a prepackaged project which was not in line with local priorities. A focus group discussion targeting VCPC members in the area reported that

...when officials from a local faith-based organization X came, they met us and asked us about key disaster related issues. We were requested to come up with a proposal for two key issue to be addressed. Since we had our community contingency plan in place which was participatory developed, we referred to it and requested them to support households on economic strengthening initiatives such as rolling out village saving and loans initiatives or help us rehabilitate the small-scale irrigation scheme, we had to boost food security in this community. After passage of time, we were told that they will support us with catchment conservation for Mwanza river. They requested us to come up with nurseries and share with us how the whole intervention will roll out. Everybody was puzzled, but we accepted it anyway.

Similar imposition of initiatives was identified in Kasisi where a local organization X implemented imposed a riverbank conservation initiative in the area. In some scenario's some external development agents engage the local people, but often with pre-conceived ideas. When results of their engagement are contrary to their expectation, the outsider's aspirations often prevail. A key informant from a local faith based organization X who were implementing DRR interventions in TA Maseya cited how their pre-packaged project priorities clashed with local aspirations. He argued.

'Our primary guide for interventions in different communities was based on our project document, despite involving the locals through Participatory Vulnerability Assessment's, the project had its own priorities. There were situations where local aspirations did not match with our project scope. For instance in TA Kasisi, we planned to have river bank conservation along Mwanza river, but people in the area cited the issue of economic strengthening through VSL, in such scenarios we had no option but to convince the locals on the need for river bank project unlike VSL things, at the back of our mind knowing that the former was a key priority in line with donor requirements USAID (KII-local faith based organization X Official)'.

Contrary to the projects impositions the study found out that in some scenarios external agents' aspirations can ably meet local aspirations. The dike construction project in TA Makhuwira is a typical example. The study found that, Local faith-based organization Y had a through discussion with the VCPC, and jointly settled for the project which was in line with the area's contingency plan. However, this is an isolated case in most case studies examined.

On who should be involved in the intervention as beneficiaries, study found that identification is often done by the outsiders and simply communicated to the locals through chiefs. For instance, a tree planting exercise starting from the nursery which had cash incentives, identification of the participants was done by the local faith-based organization X, with 60% composition of women and 40% men. According to Key informant from the organization, the aggregate was in line with their objective number 2 which was targeting women especially lactating mothers. The different scenarios provided in the study reveals several critical issues worthy reflecting as far as nature of local participation in project design is concerned. Overall, the findings expose limited community participation, little control and voice of the locals in deciding their development path manifested in different facets. Reflecting on Pretty's (1996) ladder of citizen participation, it is evident and clear that the planning stage of different DRR initiatives is highly characterized by passive form of participation, which Mikelsen (2004) also calls cosmetic form of participation. This is where local people are told what has been decided to happen by external professionals, in this case project initiators, the NGO's.

On the other hand, there is a clear manifestation on participation by consultation where people participate by being consulted, answer questions, and the external agents define problems on their behalf. These forms of participation employed by NGO's is not new as far as development projects involving locals are concerned. As noted by Ahmed (2011), most development agencies do not value local insights on development, they always show that they know every aspect of current local situations. Kishindo (2003) characterizes NGO's approach towards needs assessment as a 'dictation of needs', a situation where the NGO's dictate problems and simply rubber stamp them to the communities.

Cosmetic form of participation characterized by consultation to local people evidenced in the study is not a new phenomenon in many development projects (Pretty, 1996). Often as rational agents, who are driven by the quest to maximize their self-interest as postulated by Ogu (2013), NGO's have a dilemma on how to balance local participation which largely entails empowerment of local people to have a voice and control over development, against their underlying quest to control the development processes. As noted by Moyo (2012) in Zimbabwe who argued that, the dilemma of many development agencies is that that both need and fear local participation. They need people participation, but they also fear that wider involvement can likely to slow down development and their targets. As noted by Ahmed (2011), the ultimate aim of NGO's when limiting participation is to control development. In this case, it is not surprising to note cosmetic form of participation during the project design stage as this form of participation is meant to satisfy their self-interest, the interest of controlling development. Overall, as Mohan (2000) local participation in many developing countries is a mere rhetoric as many intended participants are left out in the process.

4.5.2 Community participation at project implementation stage

Immediately after project design stage, the study sought to examine how local people participate in implementation of different disaster risk reduction interventions. This was done to understand their role during interventions implementation, how they control these interventions by deciding implementation modalities. Overall, the study found that, a proliferation of two forms of participation. Functional participation, and participation for material incentives. Pretty (1996) defines functional participation as a form of participation where external development agents create a space for participation as a means to achieve project goals but retains control of the decisions and entire development processes. Here, people participate by forming groups to meet pre-determined project objectives and are simply co-opted to serve external goals.

This form of participation is evident in most DRR interventions examined. In TA Maseya, and Kasisi where land conservation and riverbank conservation interventions were examined, several external agents facilitated establishment of three nurseries in the course of project implementation. Once interventions were completed such nurseries are deserted.

From the rational choice perspective, one can easily deduce that, functional participation was employed to serve the interest of both the external agents as well as local people. The former co-opting local people to participate through nurseries is a quest to maximize their interest of achieving their project goals. In this case participation is used as a tool for an end. On the other hand, the locals allowing themselves to participate because of perceived benefits to be accrued from such interventions.

On the other hand, the study found the primary of participation for material incentives. Generally, this is when local people participate due to perceived material or non-material incentives accrued from their involvement. Local people for instance may provide labor, in return for food, or any other material or non-material incentives. Several case studies examined reveal these two forms of participation which generally do not provide a true meaning of participation as power and control of development still rest in the hands of the external agents. Key informant senior government official from directorate of agriculture and natural resources for Chikwawa district council, lamented the issue incentives as one of the problems affecting sustainability of most of DRR interventions in the district.

He argued,

In most cases participation of local people in most DRR interventions is derived from the incentives given to them. Allowances for trainings, food rations, and sometimes cash are key drivers for this (KII-Chikwawa district council)

The study found that during project implementation stage, there are different types of incentives which external development agents provide to local people to induce their participation in different initiatives. These are cash, material and non-material incentives. For instance, the study identified agricultural seeds and other inputs provided to small scale irrigation farmers is a major driver for most farmers to partake into irrigation farming activities. This is evident in participation assessment of smallholder farmers in M'bande irrigation schemes. At this irrigation scheme, project implementers provided the farmers with starter pack farm inputs which included maize, and vegetable seeds. Immediately after completion of the scheme for instance, number of farmers drastically dropped.

For instance, number of farmers dropped from 120 to 81, and about 5 hectares of land was found idle during the time of the study. When asked on the idleness of the land, a key informant a farmer at the irrigation scheme stated pointed out the influence of incentives in driving the interest of the farmers at the scheme. He stated that:

When the scheme was constructed, the NGO responsible provided seeds of different types to farmers but this support stopped when the project was completed. This has made a number of farmers to stop doing their work here as they heavily relied on those inputs. (Key informant-farmers at M'bande irrigation scheme, TA Maseya)

The sentiments above showcase how disastrous induced participation can be during project implementation stage. According to Pretty rungs of citizen participation (1994) participation for material incentives, not a true meaning of participation. Despite being not an ideal form of participation, both the external development actors, NGO's and the local people seem to be benefiting from this form of participation. By deviating from the ideal form of participation, NGO's are believed to advance incentives as a ploy to make their interventions appear more participatory and bottom up, yet at the same time controlling the interventions implementation to be in line with their time frame, and project efficiency factors. On the other hand, local people are eager to participate because for the perceived incentives. All these actors being rational agents are driven by their self-interests.

Results in the discussion of research findings for nature of local participation in disaster risk management interventions provides a clear picture on how local participation in a challenge in most DRR interventions at local level. The results present participation for material incentives and functional participation as key forms of participation in design and implementation of different DRR interventions. According to Pretty (1996) typologies of participation, these forms of participation do not provide a true meaning of participation since true participation entails empowerment and self-mobilization for local people to decide and control development.

As noted by Burns et al. (2001) community participation is more than consultations, rather it concerns the engagement of individuals and communities in decisions and implementation of the decisions of the things that affect them. The study findings

showcase how a donor through NGO's quest to control development has shaped the nature of local participation in DRR interventions. Functional participation and participation for material incentives are not ideal forms of participation. Despite the widely held theory that approaches taken by NGO's are participatory ones (Vivian & Maseko, 1994), the study results are a sharp contrast to this widely held theory.

The results show that NGO's who finance most of the interventions have deliberately squeezed the space of participation for either project efficiency or some other self-interested reasons. The ideal form participation which is believed to be self-mobilization which lead to empowerment is often ignored. Bearing in mind implications of the provided limited space on local people willingness to participate in different interventions, most organizations have commodified participation, they are buying participation through provision of incentives. The study therefore shows that, local participation remains a challenge in DRR not because they don't totally participate in such interventions, but rather the way they participate leaves a lot to be desired.

Functional participation, and participation for material incentives as provided in this study does not provide a true meaning of participation as control still rests in the hands of the external agents, who in a way are exercising top down development.

4.6 Examining how Institutions 'rules of the game' shape Local Participation in Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Initiatives

This section demonstrates how institutions also referred to as 'rules of the game' (North, 1990) shape local participation in Community Based Disaster Risk Management interventions in Chikwawa District. Institutions influence development outcomes as they shape behavior of actors through the incentives they generate (Rhodrik et al. 2004). As incentive system, they define the means by which interests are translated into outcomes (North, 2005). Further to that, they provide context in which actors interact. On the other hand, Thelen (2004) notes that actor's behavior is not always subjected to institutions as they are active and creative, such that at times actors challenge, or evade them. Institutions, formal and informal are resources of power which actors draw to advance their interests. In this section I demonstrate how institutions provide context for actors to shape participation of local people in community based disaster risk management interventions

4.6.1 Formal institutions driving local participation in Disaster Risk Management

The study found out that configuration of local participation in disaster risk management through community based disaster risk management interventions is shaped by both formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions as noted by Helmke and Helmke and Levitsky (2004) entailed formalized, and codified laws and policies.

In terms of formal institutions, The Malawi government, is a signatory of various international protocols on management of disaster. The major instruments include the Hyogo framework of Action, and its predecessor Sendai Framework of Action, which calls for member's countries to ensure that disaster management is community based as one of its priority pillars. The country signed these documents to be seen to be in line with global trends on disaster management.

At country level management of disasters is guided by the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Act (1994) which set out institutional framework headed by Department of Disaster Risk Management Affairs (DODMA) to guide management of disasters with key focus on community based management of disasters through decentralized civil protection committees at Traditional Authority and Group Village Head level as spaces for community based implementation and coordination of various forms of disasters.

In 2015, the Malawi government also enacted the National Disaster Risk Management policy to guide overall implementation of disaster programs, but it also recognizes the role of local people as active participants in various disaster risk management programs at local level. However, the study found that formulation and adoption of these institutions have been donor driven as alluded by one of the key informants in the study from DODMA who stated that;

'Almost all formal institutions guiding DRR are responsive to particular disasters and their adoption are largely driven by donors, or government quest to align themselves to global disaster risk management evolution trends. The National DRM Policy for Malawi (2015) were largely supported by UNDP and other development partners. Equally, until now we are still using the outdated Disaster Relief and Preparedness Act (1994), government is yet to pass the National Disaster Risk Management Bill which was already tabled in parliament.' (KII, DoDMA, 2019)

Donor driven reforms through formal institutions have proven not to work in many developing countries due to various political economy dynamics as noted by Chasukwa (2018). This is largely due to the underlying role of informal institutions such as clientelism, clan politics and corruption and patronage which are key. These informalities are utilized to advance vested interests of the bureaucrats.

For instance, in Malawi, elements of *Big Bwana syndrome* as noted by Booth et al (2006), and a state formation of subjection to strong orders emanating from historical legacies originating from the colonial, passing through one party dispensation to the present democratic era still defines the state and citizenry relationship. Thus, room for meaningful participation cannot be meaningfully created, as the goal of participation is citizen control which contrasts with the prevalent state formation.

4.6.2 Decentralized structures as tools for local participation in DRR interventions: The role of local civil protection committees

Local civil protection committees are created as a policy and legislation requirement to spur local participation in disaster risk management at community level. Despite a proliferation of these structures across all the areas in Chikwawa district, operating at traditional level and group village head level, the study found that functionality of these structures is subject to support from NGO's implementing DRR related activities in their areas. In areas without NGO's, the situation is so disastrous as most of these committees are non-functional. In areas where they are active NGOs utilize them as facilitators of their activities.

In some cases, implementing organizations completely ignore the established civil protection committees and create their own structures which in some cases has resulted in conflicts between these structures. A FGD at TA Kasisi, when asked about local involvement in the small-scale irrigation project, articulated how the local people including the VCPC was ignored throughout the process, and instead international organization Y created a parallel structure to manage their intervention.

He said:

'What happened was that, we just saw the chief calling for a meeting that this organization would like to come up with this project. They came with some few government extension workers from the Boma, and the community received the project. They brought their own contractor, and everything was done by themselves until handover, no VCPC member was involved in anyway.' (VCPC FGD, TA Kasisi).

The aversion of these officially created spaces for local participation and creation of new structures is deliberate and demonstrates how not only how weak formal institutions are in governing local participation in disaster risk management, but largely how actors capitalize on this weakness, maneuver to advance their interests. As pointed out by, Thelen (2004) actors are creative and not bound to prevalent institutions to shape their behavior. Through the new structures it was found that, the committees were not inclusive as selective members are involved.

A key informant from Makhuwira area indicated that;

'In an ideal situation management of disaster related interventions is supposed to be done by the VCPC but you see, international humanitarian organization X has their own committee, purely detached from the VCPC. Only the learned are members of that committee.' (KII-TA Makhuwira)

The weakness of local level civil protection committees as a space for local participation is as a result of lack of political will to meaningfully decentralize the disaster risk management sector in Malawi by among other things providing adequate resources to district councils to meaningfully strengthen these structures. A key informant from Chikwawa district council indicated that until 2019/2020 budget, the council never received funds for disaster related activities.

This situation put the disaster related activities including revamping of civil protection committees amongst others and training them to understand their roles and responsibilities problematic. As noted by Chiweza (1998), the state is reluctant to fully devolve its functions due to vested political interest. Concurring with Chiweza (1998), Reich (1995) argues that for reform to succeed, policy makers who are mostly

politicians weigh the costs and benefits of that reform on their political survival or political interest.

In the case of local participation in DRR, policy makers deliberately disempower the CPCs so that local people should continue to rely on the state when disasters occur, and this assistance is a carrot which politicians use to generating political mileage. Understanding local participation as a reform challenge, Tambulasi (2010) and Andrews et al (2013) notes that reforms are mere ‘signals’ as they are simply created, but never implemented simply to suit the interests of donor agencies who drive them in my developing countries.

Governments pretend to reform by changing what ‘policies’ or organizations ‘look like’ rather than what they actually ‘do’. Thus, government prioritizes ‘form’ over ‘function’ in order to satisfy donors and maintain aid flows. Ndengwa (2002) when examining decentralization argues that, the state deliberately cripples top down development evident in decentralization reforms for fear of losing power. This has translated to what Tambulasi (2010) calls “Policy paralysis”, the inability of organization for whatever reason to take action or implement procedures. This phenomenon is evident in many developing countries where decentralization has been adopted but has failed to achieve its participation outcome.

4.6.3 Local participation and institutional change in Disaster Risk Management

The study found that limited local participation in disaster risk management interventions especially those driven by Non-Governmental organizations as the case in most communities will be as a result of politics of institutional change. For a long time, interventions in disaster sector has been associated with humanitarian response, viewing people affected by disaster as passive recipients of aid and very vulnerable (Maskerey, 2004). However, the paradigm shifts to participatory and community based programming presents a change in the entire institutional arrangement in management of disaster as a development concern. Chinsinga (2008) notes that promoting and facilitating institutional change is not an easy task as the process is deeply imbued a political process involving winners and losers. Thus, this sector specific institutional change, the bottom up and community based approach to disaster risk management is

not a 'neutral' institution, it presents what Schattschneider's (1960) in Chinsinga (2008) terms the '*mobilization of bias*'.

That the institution will advantage some and disadvantage others. Thus, to understand why local participation a challenge is it is important to examine this political struggle and understand the winners and losers and their accompanying actions to maximize their interests.

The study found that various actors involved in the sector including, donors, the state, NGOs and local people who are key players in DRM sector have vested interests, and the paradigm shift has differential effects to them, some winners and other losers. To begin with the basic ideal understanding local participation in Disaster Risk management entails a situation where local people take an active role in identification of their disaster management needs, implement the interventions, and takes control of the whole program with just support from outsiders. The role of the outsiders, like NGOs is there to empower the people, that local people should have power' to dictate their development. If this is to happen who will win and who losses? Thus, change is highly political and highly contested by diverse interests and with different degrees of power, influence and authority (Leftwich & Hogg, 2007).

While through formal institutions local participation looks to be good for all actors in the DRM sector but more primarily the targeted local people, the shift is deliberately crippled by the government and NGOs due to their vested interests of controlling development using visible and hidden form of power, as the change largely disadvantages them unlike the local people. The state for instance benefits more from the top down approaches unlike bottom up approaches due to its incentives associated with clientelistic and patronage citizen-bureaucrat's relationship with is a key feature of state-citizen relationship in Malawi. According to Booth et al (2006) this originates from the historical legacies of Malawi's state formation.

To cripple advancement of bottom-up DRM the state exercises informal or non-decision-making power. Non-decision-making power entails the practice of limiting the scope of actual decision making to safe issues by manipulating political institutions and procedures (Baratz, 1963). As a way of crippling the paradigm shift in DRM to be bottom up, exercise of non-decision making power is evidenced through among other

things reluctance to pass the tabled Disaster Risk Management Bill, delays in the passing of Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015) which remained in draft form for a long time before its passing due to donor pressures immediately after the 2015 deadly floods, as well as through the limited support provided to DODMA to implement community based DRR interventions let alone strengthening decentralized disaster risk management systems as evidenced through weak Civil Protection Committees who are formally created structures to spur and deepen local participation in disaster risk management in Malawi.

Thus, despite having CPCs in place as formal institutions, these structures are '*mere signals*' of the much touted participatory and community-based management of disaster. On the other hand, Mphande (2018) notes that NGOs despite seen as champions of participatory development than the state equally play a double standards game, as they themselves deliberately cripple local participation both as a process and an outcome due to the perceived disadvantages with this change. NGOs are seen to be using invisible or internalized power to cripple formal institutions in a quest to advance their self-interest. As noted by Pettit (2013) using this form of power, the domination of the powerful, in this case NGOs is seen prevailing even without the knowledge of the less powerful, in this case the local people and the state.

NGOs in this case are seen to secure compliance to domination over the less powerful through the power the shaping of a general belief that local people are poor, ignorant and vulnerable, thus limiting their levels of participation especially in identification of issues to be addressed as disaster concerns. Thus, it not surprising to see, NGOs coming up with pre-packaged programmes as the case with most interventions. NGOs plying their trade in disaster prone areas have for a long time capitalized on 'narratives of humanitarian'.

This includes defining people affected by disaster with terminologies such as of helplessness, victims, and vulnerable. These terminologies ideally entail an aspect of helplessness and powerless. This created a dual helpless and helper relationship in which the helpless often have no say in whatever the helper decides. This has resulted to what Heinhson (2004) calls '*blind loyalty*'. This relationship was created deliberately

by NGOs to maximize their interests of generating resources from the donor community.

The donor community just as their counterparts, NGOs are also to blame for lack of meaningful participation in the DRR sector. The study found that, if local participation materializes, donors stand to lose out due to benefits associated with top down approaches. Critics of foreign aid note that aid has failed to develop developing countries and its continued provision is a mere indirect attempt to neo-colonization. If local people are empowered and disaster management works chances are high that donor aid might not be necessary, therefore, to maintain this dependency syndrome, donors deliberately ignore participatory development concerns.

Furthermore, even if people participate, their participation is limited to make sure that the dependence syndrome continues. For donors to maintain their relevance, poverty must exist. This is simply as issue of global politics.

Local people on the other hand are real beneficiaries of community-based disaster risk management. However, due to their position in the disaster management chain, they do not have power to turn the tables around. Consequently, their level of influence in participatory disaster risk management is limited. The discussion concedes that, local participation in disaster risk management can be problematic due to bottlenecks of institutions change politics. The more powerful will strive to maintain the status quo for their own benefits.

4.6.4 Institutional bricolage and local participation in Disaster Risk Reduction interventions

The study found a manifestation of institutional bricolage as one of the key features of local participation in disaster risk reduction interventions. According to Cleaver (2012), institutional bricolage is a generally a process through which people reshape institutional arrangement disregarding of their original purpose, and the new re-invented institutions perform new functions. In a quest to negotiate and regain their control in development processes, local people were identified to have substituted formal institutions with informal rules in some instances. A FGD result in TA Kasisi lamented that despite the organization coordinating the identification of beneficiaries in a Shire River bank conservation intervention by local organization X the final list of beneficiaries was doctored by the chiefs.

He said,

‘Most of the beneficiaries were in a way or the other related to the chief, and in some instances the chief solicited bribes from some people in the village to be included on the beneficiary list.’ (FGD-TA Kasisi).

At Mwalija village, a similar incident took place where chiefs bloated the number of local organization X funded ‘tree planting exercise’ from the initial agreed 50 to almost double.

‘Initially the job was to be done by 50 people in three months as requested by local organization X, but in essence it was done by 102 people. When resources for 50 people came which included 20 kg of pigeon peas, and 10 liters of cooking oil per registered person per month the chief ordered the recipients to put together the items and redistributed to all participants equally. This when arrangement was happening without knowledge of the organization’s officials.’ (KII, Mwalija village, TA Kasisi, Chikwawa)

These institutional bricolage instances simply showcase how fragile institutions are, as they are prone to change at any point in time. Local people here using their own hidden form of power are have negotiate their participation space in development interventions space by substituting the formal rules brough by the NGO’s and formed their own informal rules to achieve the same purpose. Thus, if a rational actor feels not benefiting more or not well compensated in a relationship he or she surely pulls out of the relationship. In this case the locals have not completed pulled out, but rather found an alternative to achieve the same purpose. In Ethiopia Guta et al. (2014) found institutional bricolage as helpful in dealing with collective action challenges in communal irrigation.

Institutional bricolage is also evident in creation of new spaces for participation by NGO’s in different DRR interventions. The current disaster risk management policy for Malawi 2015 provides for participation of local people in disaster risk management through decentralization mechanisms. At district, and local level civil protection committees are established to provide a space for local participation as far as DRR

governance is concerned. Ideally these structures are supposed to be utilized by actors implementing DRR interventions.

However, the situation is different in many areas. The study found so many parallel structures established by various NGOs to serve their differential interest. International humanitarian organization X implement their programs through their ‘Community Based Volunteers’ which operate and execute almost all activities expected to be done by civil protection committees. Another international organization operating in the area has been using what they refer to as ‘Project Coordinating Committee’ (PCC) in their DRR interventions at community level. Civil protection committees are believed to be weak and at times are deliberately meant to be weak by both the government and NGOs to sustain the dependency syndrome.

The situation is not different in other African countries such as Uganda and Mali where lack of effective and consistent devolution of power to formal institutions at lower levels of governance have negatively affected the functioning of formal institutions in their ability to govern common pool resources in a sustainable manner (Bazaara, 2003; Backer, 2001).

4.7 Examining how actor’s interests shape local participation in Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Initiatives

This section presents and examines how interests of various stakeholders for community-based disaster risk management shape and inform local participation in these interventions. Using various case studies, I argue that, the configuration of limited local participation in DRR interventions is well understood by examining the interest of key actors in DRM interventions. The key question is, why is local control and empowerment in DRR interventions failing to materialize?

An assessment of interests of key actors namely the NGO’s, government and the local people, and how they intersect brings out critical insights on the same. Basically, the study found that key players in DRR such as the NGO’s, government, donors, and the local people themselves have and advance different interests as far as approaching local participation in DRR interventions is concerned.

4.7.1 Local participation in Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives: Actors interests mapping

Although the concept of local participation is ambiguous (Dulani, 2003; Upholf, 1980), the ultimate aim or goal of local participation in general as well as in disaster risk management is precisely to ensure that local people are taking a leading role, control at planning, implementing, and evaluating, DRR interventions as well as ensuring that these interventions reflect their interests at local level being first respondents of disaster. This is what White (1996) entails transformative participation, where the role of the external agents is largely to deal with institutions and structures that perpetuate exclusion and marginalization.

Conceptualizing participation in this perspective there is need to understand what different actors do to achieve this goal. However, it is noted through DRR studies as cited by Coatze and Nieckerk, (2012) and Parsons, et al. (2016). That participation is problematic as they continue to be top down. It is therefore imperative to understand the interests of different actors as a major contributor of this failed errand. These interests are either visible or invisible. The visible interest are actions which different actors clearly do to support or block local participation. The invisible interests are the indirect and often hidden agendas that are not documented but are more beneficial to the individual actor if pursued.

In this section, I demonstrate how these interests emerge, are manifested and how they shape configuration of local participation through assessment of who participates in various interventions, how they participate and the incentives for local participation in DRR interventions. The table below, provides a matrix identifying major DRR actors, their roles and interests to expose how differential these interests are.

Table 3: Actors Mapping in CBDRR: Roles and Interest

LEVEL	ROLES	INTERESTS IN LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN CBDRM	
		Visible interests	Invisible interests
Donors, funding agencies • DfID • USAID • European Union (EU)	• Providing technical and financial support for various disaster risk reduction interventions at various levels in the country through direct and indirect support.	• A quest to help Malawi government goal of development by addressing DRR concerns and making sure development is bottom up.	• Maintaining bilateral and multilateral relations • Neocolonialism • Advancement of foreign policy interests.
Implementing Partners-Local and international NGOs	• Providing technical and financial support in various community based DRR interventions • Providing direct implementation support of various DRR interventions	• Ensuring that DRM is community based and that local people participate in addressing their disaster risk related problems. • Empowering local people to manage disasters.	• Responding to donor interests on various conditions set in projects • Timely completion of project activities • A quest to generate more funds for further DRR initiatives. • Incorporating local people for project efficiency goals

Malawi government Department of Disaster Risk Management Affairs (DODMA)	Providing enabling environment through formulation of policies, legislations, and Standard Operating Procedures that governs or guides overall disaster risk management sector in the country.	- Providing policy guidance to ensure effective coordination of DRM sector - Providing financial resources for DRM interventions.	Political interests through Clientelism
District Councils	- Providing oversight role on implementation of various DRR interventions in the district - Providing technical support to partners implementing various DRR interventions	- Ensuring good coordination of actors - A quest to make development (disaster related interventions) bottom up, in line with decentralization policy (1998) and Local government Act, (1998)	Generation of more resources which are often abused by council officials
Local Community - Chiefs - Area and Village Civil Protection Committees - Local people, Intervention beneficiaries	- Coordinating implementation of various DRR interventions in communities - Participating in implementation of various DRR interventions - Governing DRR interventions at local community level	- Providing support in overall implementation of DRR interventions. - Supporting communities to manage disasters on their own - A quest to make communities and households capable of managing disaster risks	Financial and material Incentives accrued through involvement in various DRR interventions

The table above provides that despite having a common understanding of the need for local participation in DRR interventions, various actors have vested and hidden interests which have shaped local participation dynamics. Data presented on the table is drawn analysis of different data materials utilized in the study such as government documents, donor reports and primary data sources such as interviews and focus group discussions made.

4.7.2 Local participation in DRM: donors and vested interests

Through the table the study found that visibly different actors seem to have common interest on local participation in disaster risk reduction intervention, the need to enhance bottom up participatory development. However, the study largely recognizes the differential interests among these actors which is affecting the nature, extent and form of local participation in these interventions. The shrinking space accorded to local people through consultation, participation for material incentives and functional participation is a clear manifestation of the fact that although local participation seem to be desired and pursued, but actors seem to run away from true actualization of participatory development due to perceived costs attached to it.

From the findings I argue that the continued funding of DRR interventions without addressing the perceived challenges locking top down and bottom up approaches employed by most of these organizations is a clear manifestation of the donor's reluctance and little investment towards transformative development which is brought about if and only if local people are empowered to take a leading role and control development through meaningful and ideal participatory processes.

As Haddock (1999) poverty is functional for international development has to continue. Through this study it was noted that most organizations spend rarely work with civil protection committees in the villages. These committees are a dully recognized space for local participation in managing disasters according to the current Malawi Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015) A key informant in TA Maseya stated that:

Despite having our village civil protection committees in this area, most NGO's work independently, and at times create their committees, which makes our structures less relevant (local key informant, TA Maseya)

The current practice reflected in continued funding can be seen as a quest to sustain poverty and development control of their former colonies. As noted by Rwandan President Paul Kagame in Moyo (2010) donor interest is one of the stumbling blocks affecting attainment of development outcomes in African countries. He argues:

‘...the reason why Africa remains in the condition of underdevelopment despite large amounts of aid since 1970’s is because, much of the aid is being spent on creating and sustaining client regimes of one type or another, with minimal regard to development outcomes.’ (Moyo, 2010)

These donors use development funding to advance their foreign policy goals, with control of their former colonies through maintaining clientistic regimes among others being one of the vehicles. To advance agenda donors with common interests are seen to be creating coalitions in funding different projects. DfID for instance, a development arm of Britain, a former colonial master for Malawi has been pumping in resources supporting organizations whose origins are traced from Britain or British empire. NGOs such as Concern Worldwide, Concern Universal now United Purpose, Goal Malawi, Action Aid, Christian Aid, and Self-Help Africa are strategic beneficiaries of DfID grants in various programs including Disaster Risk Management. These have often implemented interventions as solo organizations or as consortiums.

Equally, USAID, an international development arm of the United States government mostly provides funds to organizations with US origins. For instance, Save the Children, Project Concern International (PCI), CARE Malawi and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) which have US roots have benefited in a number of 5 year projects with interest in addressing disaster risk problems such as; I-life, WALA, UBALE, Njira, and Titukulane which have been funded by USAID. Interestingly, DfID rarely fund organizations from US roots, equally USAID rarely funds organization from British roots. These arrangements clearly demonstrate how foreign policy goals drive the behavior of major donors

4.7.3 Malawi government interests in local participation in Disaster Risk Reduction Intervention

The study found that Malawi government, the central government recognizes the centrality of local participation not only in disaster risk reduction interventions but also in the entire development processes. Creation and implementation of the 1998

decentralization policy, local government act and Disaster Risk Management policy (2015) with their corresponding decentralized structures such as ADC's as well as Civil protection committees in particular are a clear testament for on government interest to ensure full participation of local people in development through different decentralized spaces. The local structures are in place in almost each and every community, however, a question still remains why is local participation still problematic these structures?

The study found that, functionality of these structures as tools for local participation in disaster risk management remains a rhetoric in most communities as most of them are almost dead or not adequately trained on their roles and responsibilities. In line with decentralization policy (1998) revamping of these structures is primarily the responsibility of district councils. The study further found that, financing to councils on disaster related activities directly from the central government remains a challenge. According to key informant interview with a senior member from Chikwawa district council, the central government seem to be reluctant to provide adequate resources towards disaster risk management at district level to strengthen functionality local structures such as Village and Area Civil protection Committees respectively among others.

The informant stated:

Until 2019-2020 budget, the central government never allocated funds for Activity Based Disaster activities at district councils minus funds provided for Other Recurrent Transactions (ORT) which is basically meant for office operations costs. This affected disaster risk management activities especially those to do with revamping civil protection committees in our communities even monitoring how our partners are engaging the local community with various interventions. At the end of the day. (KII-Chikwawa district council)

Similar sentiments were expressed by a senior officer from DODMA who lamented lack of seriousness on the part of the central government as far as financing DoDMA activities is concerned.

‘We have been operating without a clear budget vote in the national budget, and mostly we simply rely much on our partners who fund most of our programs including community based initiatives. Partners such as UNDP for instance have been instrumental in supporting us with funds to implement small grants projects with communities, even the development of the country’s disaster sector governing tools such as National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015), and National Resilience Strategy (2016), and the yet approved Disaster Management Bill which is meant to replace the outdated Disaster Preparedness Act, 1994 has been heavily financed by our partners.’ (KII-DoDMA)

The above stated finding showcases that, although in principle government seem to be interested with community participation in DRR primarily through the stated decentralized structure, in practice, the same government is blocking the process. This demonstrates indirect vested interests which the government is harboring against making local participation in DRM a success. Therefore, it is imperative to understand these vested interests.

Although the study, didn’t probe more to identify these vested interests, however, other similar studies on political economy of DRR financing across the globe exposes government financing challenges largely due to perceived incentives. Studies by William’s (2011), and Wisner (2011) on political economy of Disaster Risk Management in Columbia, India, South Africa, Indonesia, Mozambique, and Bangladesh found out the centrality of political incentives as a key political will driver for government financing.

In Bangladesh for instance which enjoys good disaster financing, Wisner (2011) stated that, this is as a result of the political related incentive for the politicians as disaster finance influences voter behavior. This contrasts with South Africa and Mozambique where financing of disaster interventions by government has no political costs. In Malawi as reflected on this study, financing appears to have no impactful costs. Just like some developing poor countries, massive investment or financing of disaster comes from the non-state actors, and politicians really don’t prioritize meaningfully financing of DRR as it seems to have limited political costs due to the availability of resources channeled from different development partners.

Thus, as rational agents the central government led by politicians are visibly promoting local participation in DRR through provision of policies and guidelines, but indirectly blocking the process through limited financing, resources seem to be channeled towards sectors with good political incentives, a guarantee for their power consolidation, sectors such as health, education, agriculture, and water development which are considered key in Malawi.

4.7.4 NGOs interests in local participation in Disaster Risk

Reduction Interventions

Disaster Risk Management financing in many developing countries is highly donor driven. Malawi, just like other disaster-prone countries has different local and international NGO's implementing different Disaster Risk Reduction interventions. In this section I present findings on the interests of these NGO's in line with responding to the question why local participation is a problem in DRM interventions. To respond to this question through NGO interests I mainly examine broader incentives for local participation in DRR interventions.

Ultimately, Cleaver (1999) argues that, local participation in many development interventions has efficiency and empowerment incentives. On efficiency, participation is seen as a tool for achieving project outcomes. On the other hand, Oakley et al. (1991) provides that equity and empowerment arguments hinges on participation as a process and outcome which enhances the capacity of individuals to improve their own lives and facilitates social change to the advantage of the disadvantaged and marginalized people

In line with these paradigms, the study found that, NGOs utilize these two paradigms to define how local participation should be configured but largely utilize the same to advance their interest. Broadly as pointed out in objective number one on the nature of local participation, where it was found out that participation for material incentives and functional participation in DRR interventions, it is therefore a case that NGO's utilize participation mostly for efficiency reasons. The study found little consideration and investments in addressing empowerment bottlenecks which are structurally rooted as noted by Luttrell et al. (2009).

The study also found that, NGOs advocate for local participation simply to be in terms with donor requirements and win their proposals for funding. Community participation as a tool for empowerment narrative is available in almost all project documents reviewed for CBDRM, but the actual empowerment process is a mere rhetoric. Thus, even though during project implementation communities may participate in one way or the other, their contributions will be limited and minimal (Moyo, 2012).

In all the case studies presented in the discussion, community engagement is minimal in almost all aspects. Pretty (1996) notes that, this is the case in many NGO driven interventions because, NGOs often want full control of projects for their own interests. Thus, despite embracing participatory development, NGOs are caught up in a dilemma that they both need community participation but they also fear it as they look at it as a rigorous process which can at times affect timelines of their projects (Pretty, 1996).

4.7.5 Actors interests and commodification of local participation in DRM: The role of incentives

Driving participation for project efficiency reasons as the case with most DRR interventions has led to ‘commodification’ of participation. This is a situation where players implementing DRR interventions provide different incentives to trigger participation of local people in pre-developed interventions. Community members interviewed in the study stated the desire to reduce the impact of disasters through various preparation mechanisms as the underlying motivation and interest for their participation in disaster risk reduction initiatives. This constitutes their visible interest as far as participation is concerned. On the flip side, when asked why they participate in DRR programs, most respondents did not directly indicate the issue of incentives as the underlying driver. This also makes it hard to clearly measure this issue. However, a clear analysis of different interventions the study ably exposed this.

Ostrom et al. (2002) defines incentives as rewards and benefits that accrue from pursuing certain areas of action. These can be remunerative (i.e. material reward) coercive (i.e. enforcement of rules), or moral (i.e. social norms of behavior) (Farraz & Finan, 2011). They positively affect an individual’s attitude and behavior which in turn motivate their active participation in collective arrangements. Despite incentives driving positive influence on individual attitudes, incentives also fail.

According to Mishra et al (2014), notes that, incentives matter in real world but how people respond depends as much upon how they are designed in the context in which they are used, thus institutions, history, geography and culture matter a great deal in determining whether a particular incentive will work or fail. Examining various DRR interventions reveals the significance of incentives in shaping commitment to participate in various DRR interventions. An illustration of the impact of incentives can be found in the manner in which people participated in various DRR interventions before, during and after DRR intervention by two local faith based organizations X and Y operating in TA Maseya. The study found that, participation was solicited largely through cash and non-cash incentives.

According to one key informant, DRR field officer, he states that “in most areas where incentives were provided, DRR interventions were successful, unlike where they were not provided.” For instance, at TA Maseya, the local faith based organization X provided tree seedlings, shovels, hoes, wheel barrow soya beans, and cooking oil to local participants who took part in raising and planting over 500 trees along Mwanza River as part of river bank conservation initiative around the area of GVH M’bande.

The study found that despite heavy investment in DRR interventions, most communities in Chikwawa, little is there to show as part of community sustained activities once donors phase out their programs. This is revealed in the numerous non-functional irrigation schemes, and non-attended tree nurseries. This demonstrates that incentive driven DRR implementation informs most programs not only in Chikwawa but most parts of the Lower Shire districts. NGOs are known to use this approach because their programs are often short term and based on strict timelines. It is therefore not surprising to notice the usage of incentives to trigger participation which often pays dividends to them

The study also found that in almost all the small scale solar powered irrigation schemes constructed by NGOs and handed over to the community, the number of farmers engaged in farming practices reduced immediately after project handover. This has also been attributed to the issue of incentives.

For instance, at a 4 hectares M'bande irrigation scheme constructed by local faith-based organization Y, only 1.5 hectares is currently being used. When asked why this is the case, a key informant at the scheme who happens to be the scheme chairperson, revealed that, the number of farmers has been reduced largely due to lack of seeds and other farm inputs. He reported that:

Most farmers were motivated and supported the idea of having a scheme because they were promised to be provided with seedlings. At first when these were provided life was okay, but immediately when they stopped, most farmers also abandoned their plots, that's why you can see a lot of abandoned plots in the scheme. (KII-TA Maseya)

His sentiments were echoed by another key informant an official from a local NGO in the district who stated that

"Generally speaking without incentives it becomes hard to make people participate in most of these interventions, people especially in the Lower Shire region are used to receiving handouts because of floods, that's why when an organization came for DRR related issues, all what they think is to be provided with some relief items", (KII's-NGO Officials).

These sentiments correlate to study findings made by Ntata (1997) on 'Relief issues in the Lower Shire valley' where he blamed the handout culture by most organizations in disaster management as one of the challenges rocking the DRR sector in Malawi.

Another key informant government official laments the issue of handouts as one of the key challenges which is equally affecting government departments engagements with the local people on self-help development initiatives, as well as on sustaining the programs initiated by NGOs. He argued:

'As government we also work with the same farmers on various programs but they don't get paid, we just support them with extension services, but they do everything on their own, with this handout culture we are beginning to find it hard to mobilize these communities on various self-help initiatives, even sustaining the NGOs initiated programs is becoming a very big problem.' (KII-Chikwawa District Council, District Agriculture Office)

The issue of NGOs programs and participation of local people was also touched in a study by Mphande (2018) who found that NGOs do not provide a space for meaningful participation in their projects. In view of the rational choice theory propositions, I argue that, deliberate efforts to induce participation through incentives is a mere ploy by the NGOs to satisfy their vested interest, to make local people less empowered and consequently generate opportunities for further projects through identified problems.

Furthermore, incentives make NGOs to complete their tasks on time, since it acts as a carrot for the recipient to be available no matter the circumstances. From the discussion presented, it is evident that different actors' interests have shaped local participation dynamics in DRR interventions. From this discussion, NGOs, the central government, donors and local people are all rational actors pursuing their self-interests directly or indirectly.

However, some scholars such as Amartya Sen (1977), Stern (1995), and Wade (1987) argue that not all the time are actors driven to maximize their self-interests. Sen (1977) in his work *'Rational fools'*, a critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory, traced through the works of Francis Edgeworth (1845-1926) and Adam Smith (1723-1790), specifically argues that:

“The assumption that people are exclusively driven by maximizing their own gain is a silly one”. He claims, ‘rather than constantly and accurately trying to maximize only the benefits from all available courses of action, people or groups they represent are equally motivated by alternative logics of behavior such as moral lessons of justice and fairness, empathy and valuing collective action, more than individual utility maximization.’ (Sen, 1977)

Through this proposition, the study found that there are some scenarios where participation is driven by other factors more than self-interests as reflected in the Mwalija Village case study where chiefs requested all community members, even those not registered, to benefit from food for work tree planting exercise to participate with the plan of sharing the proceed equally. On one hand, by creating a space for the non-registered to participate in the community work, the chief might be viewed as driven by principles of fairness and sympathy. On the other hand, the chief might be driven by selfish interests of trying to cement his relationship with his subjects.

This section has demonstrated how interests of various identified players in Community Based Disaster Risk Management have shaped local participation dynamics in DRR interventions. The section has showcased that various actors enter the DRR area with visible and invisible interest which guide their engagement with other stakeholders. Overall, invisible interests pursued by all actors in a quest to maximize their utility as rational actors has consequently shaped manner of local participation in various disaster risk reduction interventions. Thus, understanding actors visible and invisible interests is important in assessing why local participation is problematic in DRR interventions apart from taking other factors into consideration.

4.8 Examining how structural factors contributes to limited local participation in Community Based Disaster Risk reduction initiatives

This section presents a discussion on how structural factors shape the behavior of different political actors to bring about limited participation of local people in Community Based Disaster Risk Management initiatives. Hay (2002) define structures as the setting, or context in which social, political, and economic events occur and acquire meaning. According to Thelen and Steinmo (1992), structures are created by agents or political actors. As actor's creation, structures can be maintained or disrupted (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006).

Examining structures is important in this study because it is one of the critique areas of the rational choice theory. According to Thelen and Steinmo (1992) structural factors consideration is one of the critical areas of actors' pursuits of their self-interest. In essence, minus the cost benefit analysis which each individual actor makes, as purported by rational choice theorists Green (2010), Shapiro (2006), several contextual factors are also are considered by actors when executing their actions. It is these structures which shapes meaning of different actions. Understanding failure of ideal local participation in disaster risk reduction intervention therefore along structural factors entails examining assessing how different contextual drivers model the behavior of different actors. Despite the numerous contextual factors, this study will strictly focus on political, economic, and social structure, as they are key in political economy analysis.

4.8.1 How political structures shape local participation in Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Initiatives

Different political structures shape development path of many developing countries. In Malawi for instance, Chinsinga (2008) identify clientelism, political patronage, vested interests, and rent seeking as key political structures that have shaped Malawi's political landscape. Booth et al., (2006) points at patterns of 'big man syndrome', divergence of formal and informal rules, power distance and subordination among key features.

The study found that the continuous top down approaches in disaster risk management interventions are shaped by power distance and subordination political features which Booth et al. (2006) singled out. This has resulted into acceptance of blind subordination of the local people to NGOs and the state. Such that, local people have for a long time believed that it is the state or other external actors who can change their welfare and not themselves. This also has culminated into a false consciousness on their voicelessness which can be traced back from the one-party Dr. Banda era, where government through the state machinery thwarted dissenting views which resulting into passive citizenship.

In most DRR interventions, local people looked up from their supporting NGOs to decide on their behalf. For instance, at Mwalija Irrigation scheme in TA Kasisi where despite undergoing a technical training on maintenance of the scheme, local people abandoned the scheme awaiting basic maintenances to be done by the initial funder who constructed it. This demonstrates a laissez faire altitude brough about by politically created subordination structure. This structure was created and is sustained by politicians to achieve their self-interests of easily controlling their subjects. However, the implication of this structure is the laissez faire altitude on self-held initiatives as demonstrated in this community. Therefore, as noted by Gilboa (2012) political structure here is being utilized as a key resource to the political elites to maximize their interests.

At national level, the study found that, evolution of DRM from top down towards embracing bottom up approaches is affected by path dependent political structure.

The issue of path dependence simply entails that dependence entails that decisions made are modelled by what was done in the past, history repeating itself in decision making processes (Sydow et al., 2012).

The stated evolution being facilitated by numerous reforms including adoption of Disaster Preparedness and Relief Act (1991), the National DRM Policy (2015), Hyogo Framework of Action at global level among others to spur local participation in disaster risk management is failing to materialize and achieve these goals partially due to path dependency dynamics. This is evident through weak or inadequate support towards effective implementation of these guiding documents as lively documents as a catalyst for local participation in different disaster risk reduction interventions.

The study for instance found that NGO's who are key players in the DRR sector are failing to utilize the already existent spaces of decentralized DRM structures at local level such as Village and Area civil protection committees and in turn resort to creating their own parallel structures as a way of pursuing their self-interests. In TA Kasisi for instance it was found that despite the presence of civil protection committees in the area, an international disaster response humanitarian organization X have their own structure, a group of volunteers who coordinate their DRR interventions. This has created conflicts amongst these two competing groups in the community. The government created structure however seem powerless due to limitations of voice and resources unlike their counterparts who are ably resourced to carry their activities. Even when the VCPC's are meant to work hand in hand with the other structures their relationship hasn't been cordial. A key informant VCPC member from TA Kasisi stated:

As a committee we face a lot of challenges, often we get sidelined when other big organizations chose to work with their own created structures yet we were told by the district council officials that anything to do with disasters falls under our mandate. It is hard to compete with others, yet this a mere voluntary task. (KII-TA Kasisi)

Thus, the actions of some organizations by creating parallel structures largely aimed at serving their interests, makes recognized governance structures to pull out their involvement in such endeavors as they feel powerless. This resonates well with Gilboa (2012) who argued that when the value of reward diminishes below the value of the costs incurred, the person will end the action or the relationship. In this case, the new structures created are advantageous to the implementing NGO's as they have absolute control over them.

On the other hand, the same action, makes other stakeholders, the VCPC's to pull out of the relationship. Thus, participation in this case is heavily controlled by the partner who decides the role of these volunteers in their interventions. The prevalent discussed anomalies where actors can choose to ignore prevalent created local participation structures reflect a critical point of development failure due to failure of reforms. Thus, despite the enabling environment through various reforms in DRM, local participation remains a problem. As noted by Tambulasi (2009), reforms fail in many developing countries because they are mere signals. The failure of decentralization reform in DRM to create a space for meaningful local participation and weak support towards their corresponding lower level structures in Malawi can also be understood in line with the wider failure of the general decentralization reform as largely driven by political interests.

Studies by Chiweza (1998) on review of decentralization in Malawi has judiciously highlighted how the central government seem reluctant to give out some of their powers to lower level structures due to vested political interests. Meaningful participation in DRR interventions which largely calls for empowerment of local people, sought within decentralization reforms appears to be costly to the bureaucrat whose political survival thread hinges on the '*big bwana syndrome*' and clientelism as noted by Booth et al., (2006). Thus, VCPC's and other decentralized structures weakness in DRM can be understood as derived from the general failure of the decentralization paradigm in Malawi. The wider local participation structures such as VCPC's or ACPC's in DRM just like their counterparts for wider local development planning, the ADC's and VDC's will remain reform signals but largely powerless if limited efforts are done to empower them as not only spaces for local participation but also key local actors in development.

4.8.2 How economic structures shape local participation in Community Based DRR Initiatives

For a long time, Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction interventions have been taking place in rural areas where the need is greatly felt due to poverty levels. In Chikwawa District, over 80% of people are poor rural dwellers living below the poverty line (NSO, 2008).

The study was sought to find out the influence of economic structures on local participation in development. The study found that nature and extent of participation is dictated by NGOs whose operations are aligned to neo-liberal school of thought which limits government interference in development affairs. A quest to address colonial inherited economic structures has created a room for emergence of NGOs with state limitation on the path. However, despite this state limitation, the role of NGOs in advancing participatory DRR has been questionable and not satisfactory as they implement activities ‘to the people, and not with them’ (Kishindo, 2003). This brings in an interesting debate on the role of the state in development as advanced by neo-liberalists with minimalist’s state on one hand and developmental state arguments on the other as advanced by Leftwich (2000) and others.

A comparative study on the role of the state in development done by Hwedi (2001) justifies why the state needs to be in control of development other than leaving it to other players. Botswana and Mauritius were singled out as typical examples of developmental states which have developed in contrast to Zambia, Angola and Malawi which are largely driven by the neo-liberal school of thought.

It is from this understanding where we can conclude to the fact that, the prevailing economic structure and the influence of neo-liberal approach has greatly affected nature and extent of local participation in DRR interventions as the sector has opened a room to be driven by the NGOs sector which as noted by Mukumbe (1996) has often been questioned on its quest for participatory development because they largely advance their self-interests and really creates a room for transformative or empowering driven local participation in their programs. As concluded by Haddock (1999), ‘poverty must remain’ for NGOs to survive. It is from this conceptualization of economic structure that one really appreciates the limited engagement of local people in most DRR interventions not only in Chikwawa District but also in other districts where NGOs are driving the DRR agenda.

4.8.3 How social structures shape local participation in Community Based Disaster Risk Management

Social structures in political economy encompasses so many things including norms, values as well as ideas. Ideas are central to political discourse, debates and contestation. Leftwich and Hudson (2007) note that, the concept of ‘ideas’ has often been neglected in many political economy studies despite acknowledgements that norms and values shape behavior of actors. He extends that, ‘there has been little discussion on types of ideas or how to study them. In this study, ideas are recognized to be part important contextual factors which shape the behavior of actors. Thus, ideas are important for actors as they need to interpret their context. It is an actors’ interpretation of his opportunities and barriers that matter (Melo et al., 2012). In this discussion I present and analyze how dominant ideas ‘ideologies’, have affected local participation in community-based disaster risk management interventions.

The study found that local participation in DRR interventions is affected by several ideologies which characterize disaster risk management sector. Some of the ideologies, norms and values include, neo-colonization, gender, and dependency syndrome, among others. The list is not exhaustive but for the sake of this study those are the key issues to be discussed. The study found that, socio cultural norms especially those associated with gender have had a great impact on the nature and extent in which local participation is configured in most DRR interventions. This was evidenced in participation of women in various DRR interventions. For instance, the study found limited participation of women in governance structures especially village civil protection committees. This was reflected through unbalanced gender representation in these structures. In TA Kasisi and TA Maseya for instance it was found that, eighty percent of VCPCs are dominated by men with over seventy percent representation in these structures. Women who are members of these structures are simply committee members, with no meaningful leadership position.

This situation is not new in Malawi as noted by Chiweza (2016) in his analysis of women representation in local governance where she argues that “women representation in local government does not guarantee that they will have any substantial influence over policy decisions, or that they will articulate women’s interests. It depends on the incentives facing them as representatives”.

Thus, women participation in DRR governance is a challenge despite gender balance calls through the enactment of the National Gender policy which calls for a sixty to forty representation of gender in committees. The unequal gender representation can be attributed to the socio-cultural values of the dominant patriarchal Sena culture prevalent in most parts of the Lower Shire valley districts, a cultural characterized by subjection of women to male authority. Therefore, even if women might want to actively participate in DRR interventions, their level of participation is constrained socially constructed gender norms prevalent in their respective communities. Thus, other than serving their self-interest, ensuring that women take an active role in development through meaningful participation, this drive by NGOs and the government is constructed by these socially prevalent structures.

The study also found that the dependency ideology as one of the key and central ideologies hampering meaningful local participation in DRR interventions. As noted by Campbell (2000) ideas are social constructs that shape the mentality on how actors understand and respond to things, the dependency ideology has for a long time characterized disaster management sector which for a long time has been associated with humanitarian response in times of a crisis. It is the dependency ideology which makes external actor's supporting DRR interventions build a belief that local people being dependent on external support cannot stand on their own and requires continuous support. One key informant acknowledges the importance of local participation in their interventions but was quick to challenge the altitude of local people on community based DRR interventions in the district. He was quick to say that;

'Most local people here are too dependent on these organizations, when an organization comes with a project all what they think is that the organization is there to give handouts. Even if you engage them on some works all what they expect is to get something at the end of the day forgetting that whatever we do is for their own benefits. People look for immediate benefits in most DRR interventions' (KII-NGO Official)

It is this dependency ideology amongst others which has constructed a mental wall to actors supporting local people not to value local participation in general let alone inject some efforts towards local empowerment for self-help DRR initiatives. Therefore, this dominant ideology in one way or the other drives the shrinking space for local people to have a voice or control in NGO initiated DRR interventions.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section provides conclusions and recommendations drawn from presentation and analysis of the study findings. The recommendations made are identified gaps which other scholars can pursue to advance this discussion on local participation in community-based disaster risk reduction interventions. The conclusions and recommendations made are presented per specific objective as outlined in the study.

5.2 Study Conclusion

The study was conducted to examine how various political economic factors such as institutions, interest and structures influence limited local participation in community-based disaster risk reduction initiatives. The study presented and concluded on a number of arguments emanating from the various findings. This section concludes the study as per discussions made per each specific objective.

The first objective '*exploring nature of local participation in disaster risk management interventions*', was sought to benchmark prevalent local engagement practices in disaster risk management interventions as a basis for subsequent discussion on how various political economy drivers have shaped this. Overall, the study established that the nature of local participation in different intervention is determined by organizations who finance most of the community-based interventions in developing countries. The study notes that, co-option and participation for material incentives have taken center stage in most DRR interventions. Thus, although there might be many organizations implementing different programs at local level, the situation is that the locals do not have a voice or control, they are simply co-opted in pre-determined interventions. This form of participation characterized by disempowerment has negative implications as far as ownership and sustainability of those interventions is concerned.

The second specific objective, *“examining actors’ interests on local participation in Community Based Disaster Risk Management initiatives”*, was sought to identify and examine how interests of key actors in disaster risk management shape local participation dynamics in community based disaster management interventions from the case study sites. The study found that different actors in disaster risk reduction management approach local participation in DRR with different interests. Despite local participation being desired, the study found that meaningful participation which is meant to lead to empowerment is often dreaded by key actors in the sector such as donors and NGO’s who mainly finance most of DRR interventions in Malawi. Thus, cosmetic participation, which is less empowering, characterized by co-option of local people in predetermined interventions is sought for a mere participation signal. The study established that, donors through NGO’s do not necessarily employ meaningful participatory approaches as they enjoy the status quo where local people are subjected to decisions from powerful development actors.

The study notes that a quest for local people to control DRR interventions by negotiating for a meaningful participation space has led to institutional bricolage. On the other hand, the study notes that despite having limited voice in interventions, local people are willing to be co-opted in various interventions which external players deem participation merely for incentives. From this discussion and context, it is imperative that local participation will remain a challenge until these interests are checked properly. Furthermore, since DRR financing is largely dependent on donors the government need to properly enforce participatory guidelines as guided in various DRM legislations. This can be achieved by proper regulation of the sector as well as providing adequate resources for district councils for monitoring and enforcement of standard operational procedures. However, this cannot be that easy considering the overreliance of the country on donors in almost all the key sectors as reflecting in the yearly national budgets.

The third specific objective, *“examining how institutional factors influence limited local participation in community-based disaster risk management”*, was sought to identify and examine how institutions also referred to as ‘rules of the game’ shape participation of local people in DRR interventions at community level. Focus was on identifying and examining how various institutions affect actor’s interaction in making disaster risk reduction interventions participatory.

Through a discussion in this section, the study found that local participation is largely influenced by informal institutions utilized by different actors to advance their interests. It was noted that due to weakness of formal institutions enforcement, actors substitute them with informal institutions. Due to this scenario, there has been cases of institutional bricolage when self-centered created institutions by different actors to advance their interest clash in one way or the other. The powerful actors win and their interest prevail. The powerful actors often NGO's who finance most of community based DRR interventions are the ones who define and control the participation space. However, the study notes that failure to follow the formal rules is imbued in path dependent governance apparatus of the DRM sector which have been donor dependent such that set rules are mere signals.

The final specific objective, *“examining structural factors affecting local participation in community based disaster risk management”*, just like its predecessor, examined how various structures affect local participation. The study identified, economic, social, and political structures as key structures which provide context for actors' interaction. However, focus was on political and economic structures considering that social structure was well covered in the second specific objective as part of 'informal institutions. The study found that nature of local participation is shaped by economic structures. One key economic feature of Malawi is 'reliance on donors' to finance most of development programs. This historical legacy has its accompanying effects as far as development programing is concerned as donors who finance these programs largely in form of aid attach conditions to their support. NGOs for instance are known for implementing short term programs and often due to time factor fail to address underlying causes of non-participation which are structural in nature as alluded by Mukumbe (1998).

Through the study, it was found that financing of most community based DRR interventions is driven by donors, no matter how the country can have systems and institutions 'rules of the game 'in place to regulate local participation, this can be a dream as the dictates of these programs, including the nature and extent of local participation largely respond to the interests of these financiers.

Overall, the study has demonstrated how various identified political economy factors such as institutions, actors' interests, power, structures and other political economy factors shape local participation dynamics in disaster risk management interventions. Using a Rational Choice Theory, the study has demonstrated how actors utilize these political economy factors to maximize their self-interests. Thus, through this study the prevalent top-down approaches and limited community participation in different community based disaster risk management interventions which are meant to be 'community based, community owned and driven' is largely affected by the quest of the various actors to maximize their self-interests.

5.3 Recommendations/Areas for Further Study

The paper has presented a discussion on how various political economy factors such as institutions, structures, and interests, affect local participation in Community Based Disaster Risk Management Interventions. The study has explored and concluded on several issues related to how political economy factors influence limited participation of local people in DRR interventions. Through the discussion, several gaps have been exposed which can be explored to deepen the discussion.

The study explored on participation of local people mainly in NGO funded DRR interventions, however, a further discussion can be explored to look into self-help DRR interventions which the study found it hard to identify in the area studied. A discussion on examining self-help DRR interventions can be important for comparison purposes specifically focusing on how incentives drive participation of local people in such interventions.

Another study can be conducted to understand deeply whether other factors than one's self interests have a bearing on one's participation in DRR initiatives. Critics of Rational Choice Theory on the self-interest premise such as Adam Smith suggests that certain actions are done not only to pursue one's selfish interests. It is therefore eminent to examine whether this premise holds in view of the prevalent study findings where self-interests have been revealed as one of the key drivers shaping local participation in both negative and positive ways.

Thirdly, the study recommends a study to explore on sustainability of different NGO driven DRR interventions. Massive investments have been there in DRR across the country as reflected in the numerous activities and projects funded by major donors in Malawi. It can be quite interesting to examine how these interventions continue when the donors phase out their support. This study has noted that participation is often induced by material incentives, the puzzle now is, how do local communities sustain these activities without those incentives? What modalities are there by the government to ensure that such initiatives benefit communities more after the initial support.

Finally, the paper recommends a comparative assessment of the interests of major donors such as USAID and DfiD in the Disaster Risk Reduction sector in the country in-order to understand how this affects their DRR programing. This will also inform an understanding of the participatory approaches they employ in these interventions. aspect.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Data Collection Tools

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD) GUIDE

Community participants

Hallo my name is Blessings Mbendera, a student of Master of Arts Degree in Development studies at University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I conducting an academic to understand local participation dynamics in Community based disaster risk management interventions. I am therefore requesting you if you can spare your time to discuss a number of things bordering on that issue. Your participation is purely on voluntary basis. Whatever I am going to generate from this discussion will be used solely for academic purposes.

1. General overview of Disaster Risk Management

- 1.1 What are the main natural disasters this community experiences?
- 1.2 How do this community manage prepare, respond and recover from these disaster occurrences?
- 1.3 What support or assistance do you get from other partners to manage disasters in this community
- 1.4 What interventions are implemented by these partners
- 1.5 How beneficial are these interventions in this community?

2. Community participation in Disaster Risk Management interventions

- 2.1 What do you understand by the issue of community participation?
- 2.2 Can you explain how local people participate?
- 2.3 Who participates in these interventions
- 2.4 Who identify the participants
- 2.5 What are the entry points or spaces for participation in various DRR interventions?
- 2.6 At what stage do local people participate in DRR interventions
- 2.7 What are the barriers of local participation in DRR interventions?

3. Institutions affecting local participation in CBDRM

- 3.1 What are the rules, instructions or policies within or outside this community that affect local participation?
- 3.2 What rules do you follow when selecting beneficiaries or participants of different programs
- 3.3 How do they affect participation of community members in various DRM interventions?
- 3.4 What do you suggest as possible ways to improve community participation based on the institutions?

4. Actors interests for local participation in CBDRM

- 4.1 Who are the key players in DRR interventions in this community?
- 4.2 Why should community members to participate in DRM interventions?
- 4.3 What motivate people to participate, what benefits do people get
- 4.4 What is given to the participants

5. Structures affecting local participation in CBDRM

- 5.1 What are the social norms that facilitate or limit participation of people in different initiatives in this community
- 5.2 How do these factors affect community participation in DRR interventions?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) GUIDE

Experts opinion: Government extension workers, government officers, NGOs Officials operating in Chikwawa

Hallo my name is Blessings Mbendera, a student of Master of Arts Degree in Development studies at University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I am conducting an academic to understand local participation dynamics in Community based disaster risk management interventions. I am therefore requesting you if you can spare your time to discuss a number of things bordering on that issue. Your participation is purely on voluntary basis. Whatever I am going to generate from this discussion will be used solely for academic purposes.

1.0 General overview of Disaster Risk Management

- 1.1 What are the main natural disasters experienced in this district?

- 1.2 How do local people manage these disasters on their own
- 1.3 How do government and other players come in to assist
- 1.4 What support or assistance is provided to prepare, respond and mitigate impact of disasters
- 1.5 How beneficial are these interventions to the community?

2.0 Community participation in Disaster Risk Management interventions

- 2.1 What do you understand by the issue of community participation?
- 2.2 Can you explain how local people participate in DRR interventions implemented by the NGOs.
- 2.3 Who participates in these interventions?
- 2.4 Who identify the participants?
- 2.5 What are the entry points or spaces for participation in various DRR interventions?
- 2.6 At what stage do local people participate in DRR interventions
- 2.7 What are the barriers of local participation in DRR interventions?

3.0 Institutions affecting local participation in CBDRM

- 3.1 How are participants in DRR interventions identified
- 3.2 What are the criteria followed to identify participants of various DRR initiatives
- 3.3 How do these rules affect local participation in various DRM interventions?
- 3.4 What do you suggest as possible ways to improve community participation based on the aforementioned rules?

4.0 Actors interests for local participation in CBDRM

- 4.1 Who are the key players in DRR interventions in this community?
- 4.2 From your perspective why should community members to participate in DRM interventions?
- 4.3 What motivate community members to participate, what benefits do people get
- 4.4 What motivates DRR players to ensure that interventions are participatory
- 4.5 What is your opinion on the manner in which community based interventions are carried out, especially on involvement of local people?

5.0 Structures affecting local participation in CBDRM

5.1 What are the structural factors that affect community participation in DRR interventions?

5.2 How do these factors affect community participation in DRR interventions?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) GUIDE

DRM Experts opinion: DODMA and others

Hallo my name is Blessings Mbendera, a student of Master of Arts Degree in Development studies at University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I am conducting an academic to understand local participation dynamics in Community based disaster risk management interventions. I am therefore requesting you if you can spare your time to discuss a number of things bordering on that issue. Your participation is purely on voluntary basis. Whatever I am going to generate from this discussion will be used solely for academic purposes.

1.0 General overview of Disaster Risk Management

1.1 What are the major natural disasters experienced in Malawi?

1.2 How do the country manage prepare, respond and recover from these disaster occurrences?

1.3 How has management of disaster followed this path

1.4 What support or assistance do you get partners and central government to manage disasters in this country

1.5 What interventions are implemented to manage disasters

2.0 Community participation in Disaster Risk Management interventions

2.1 Can you explain the issue of community participation in DRR interventions?

2.2 From your experience how has the country taken on board the issue of community participation in Disaster Risk Management sector

2.3 Why should local people participate in these interventions?

2.3 To what extent do community members participate in DRR interventions

2.4 How should community members participate in DRM interventions at community level

2.7 What are the bottlenecks of local participation in DRR interventions?

3.0 Institutions affecting local participation in CBDRM

3.1 What are the policies, strategies, and legislations governing DRM sector in Malawi?

3.2 How has the issue of community participation advocated in through these institutions

4.0 Actors interests for local participation in CBDRM

4.1 Who are the key players in DRM sector in Malawi?

4.2 What are the roles of these DRM actors in management of disaster risk

4.3 Who are the key actors in Community Based Disaster Risk Management interventions in Malawi?

4.4 What are the interests of these actors in Disaster Risk Management

4.5 From your experience how do these actors conceptualize the issue of local participation

5.0 Structures affecting local participation in CBDRM

5.1 What are the structural factors that affect community participation in DRR interventions?

5.2 How do these factors affect community participation in DRR interventions?

Appendix 2: Study participants consent form

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY BASED DISASTER RISK REDUCTION INITIATIVES IN CHIKWAWA DISTRICT, SOUTHERN MALAWI

My name is Blessings Mbendera, a student from Chancellor College. I am here to conduct a study on political economy on local participation in disaster risk management initiatives in Chikwawa district, in fulfilment of my Master's Degree in Development Studies. You have been purposively selected to participate in this study. Your participation is on voluntary basis and all information you will provide shall be treated with confidentiality and shall be used solely for my academic purposes. At any time, you can decline to answer any question you think are offending you. You can also choose to withdraw from the interview at any time. There are no risks that will happen you due to your participation in study as your name and any other information that can identify you will not be used during the presentation of study results. I will be grateful if you chose to participate. I therefore request for your consent to respond to the questions and any subsequent discussion emanating from this study.

Do you agree to participate in the study?

Yes

No

Name_____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Request for Permission

Chancellor College
P.O Box 280,
Zomba.
MA/DEV/ 01/12

Dear Sir/Madam,

REQUEST TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS FOR MY MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES THESIS

I am a student at Chancellor College pursuing Master of Arts in Development studies. I am currently collecting primary data for my thesis titled Political Economy of Local participation in disaster risk reduction initiatives in Chikwawa district. The study is aimed at examining how local people participate in different DRR interventions, establish bottlenecks of this participation within the context of political economy perspective. I would like to request an audience with officers in your institution, local participants of various DRR interventions you have been implementing in the district, or any other relevant stakeholder who can ably contribute to the discussion on the above stated subject matter. I am available to conduct the interview at your convenient time. Hope to hear from you soon, you can contact me through my email or mobile number. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

Regards,

Blessings Mbendera
blessings.mbendera@gmail.com
0888 768 333