

**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND DEMOCRACY
CONSOLIDATION IN MALAWI**

MASTER OF ARTS (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS

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**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
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DECLARATION

I declare that this work has never been accepted in substance for any degree of it is being concurrently submitted in candidature for any other than Master of Arts degree in Political Science at the University of Malawi - Chancellor College.

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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

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DEDICATION

To the Almighty Universe

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ABSTRACT

The reintroduction of multiparty politics in Malawi in 1993 saw the emergence of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Besides helping in the introduction of democracy, the other subsequent role of CSOs has been democracy consolidation. This study therefore makes a contribution towards this discourse. Its main focus is on the role of CSOs in democracy consolidation in the democratic Malawi. First, the study seeks to find out the state of democracy consolidation in Malawi. From this, the study looks at the relationship among CSOs and government, among others, as these play a crucial role in consolidation. Deducing from the findings, the study has found out that democracy consolidation is taking place in Malawi even though consolidation is yet to be achieved. Second, the study also assessed the relationship between CSOs and government of which it was concluded that there is largely lack of trust between the two. This connects to the third aspect of the study which is the challenges CSOs in Malawi are facing towards democracy consolidation. Notably, it has been a challenge to contain the understanding of democracy consolidation. Even in the context of Malawi, there is a complex and complicated relationship in the role of CSOs in democracy consolidation especially when government is involved. But overall, amidst challenges being experienced by CSOs towards democracy consolidation in Malawi, it is evident that some of their actions have been towards consolidation although Malawi's democracy is far from consolidating.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFORD	:	Alliance for Democracy
CCAP	:	Church of Central African Presbyterian
CCJP	:	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CHANCO	:	Chancellor College
CHRR	:	Center for Human Rights and Rehabilitation
CONGOMA	:	Council for Non-Governmental Organizations
CSOs	:	Civil society Organizations
DPP	:	Democratic Progressive Party
MCP	:	Malawi Congress Party
MZUNI	:	Mzuzu University
NAC	:	Nyasaland African Congress
NGOs	:	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRC	:	National Referendum Commission
PAC	:	Public Affairs Committee
PCD	:	Presidential Commission on Dialogue
PP	:	People's Party
UDF	:	United Democratic Front
UNILIA	:	University of Livingstonia
UNIMA	:	University of Malawi
UTM	:	United Transformation Movement
YAS	:	Youth and Society

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This study is about the Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) role towards the consolidation of democracy in Malawi. The existence of CSOs, defined as various interest groups such as human rights organizations, co-operatives, trade unions and the church through which individuals collectively carry out social enterprises (Okuku, 2002), is arguably one of the fundamental precepts to democracy consolidation. Since democracy essentially connotes a form of government in which the people rule (Patel, 2007). This ideally means that the power and the authority is in the people, who often organize themselves in civil groupings in order to influence government processes. In addition, a primary criterion for democracy is equitable and open competition for votes between political parties without government harassment or restriction of opposition groups (Huntington, 1991)

In general, democracy is seen as a way of government firmly rooted in the belief that people in any society should be free to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems (Makinda, 1996). But the practicality of democracy comes when democratization has taken place. This is among other things when there is an end of the one-party political system, the emergence of political competition and the holding of free and universal multi-party elections (Chabal, 1998). In Malawi, this took place in the years 1993 and 1994. More to that, democratization requires the creation of institutional structures to promote, sustain and consolidate it or ward off the dangers

of reversal (Williams, 2003). But democracy consolidation is when democratic institutions and practices become ingrained in the political culture. However it has been noted that the main constraint the African democratization project is facing is the failure of the emerging democracies, like Malawi, to successfully consolidate (Scholz, 2008).

1.2 Contextual Background

On May 17, 1995 the Malawi National Assembly adopted a new democratic constitution (Mutharika, 1996) replacing the Republican Constitution of 1966 which had been amended in 1993 in order to allow for the re-introduction of a multiparty democracy. The new constitution followed the provisional constitution which came into force on May 18, 1994 (Wanda, 1996) which gave way to the second multiparty democratic elections on May 20, 1994. The history behind this election conveniently dates back to 1944 (McCracken, 1998) with the establishment of the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) by James Frederick Sangala, a Blantyre-educated government clerk. The party later came to be known as the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). Under Dr. Kamuzu Banda, MCP went into negotiations for independence with the British colonial government. This led to general elections on April 15, 1961. MCP won with a landslide victory and the party gained an important representation in the Executive Council (Parliament). Malawi was thus granted an internal self-government in February 1963 before becoming fully independent on July 6, 1964, and a Republic in 1966 (Patel and Svasand, 2013). But in an event known as the *Cabinet Crisis*, six months after getting the independence, a policy conflict between Dr. Kamuzu Banda and his first cabinet ministers, Malawi became undemocratic. The MCP government outlawed other political parties and all the ministers who opposed

Dr. Kamuzu Banda during the *crisis* were fired and replaced by loyalists (Young, 1994). Under the political slogan ‘one rule, one party, one system, no opposition’ (Power, 1998), it introduced punitive laws that resulted into a thirty year total disappearance of inside political opposition and serious human rights abuses Malawians had to endure (Mitchel, 2002). Dr. Kamuzu Banda closed the 1964 colonial inherited political opening through a combination of bribery, intimidation, election malpractices and suffocation of the civil society (Inhovbere, 1997).

But a combination of both external and internal factors led to radical political changes in the politics and governance of Malawi in the early 1990s. Externally, the end of the Cold War in 1989 made the West to start being embarrassed by its ally for serious human rights abuses. This resulted, for example, in November 1991, the European community to set strict political and human rights conditions for aid recipients like Malawi. As if that was not enough, in 1993, donors froze 74 million United States dollars in aid to Malawi and refused any economic assistance until human rights were respected and a political liberalization agenda was announced (Inhonvbere, 1997). Malawi, being an aid dependent nation, Dr. Kamuzu Banda’s regime was economically isolated. Internally, on March 8, 1992, the Catholic Church in Malawi released a pastoral letter titled *Living Our Faith*. It directly raised the political consciousness of Malawians by denouncing corruption, indiscipline, repression and human rights abuses in the country (Inhonvbere, 1997). The letter is said to be an immediate result of the 1991 conference by the Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central Africa at St. Peter’s Major Seminary in Zomba. At this conference Rt. Rev. Dr. P.A Kalilombe called on the Pastors “to have an adequate understanding of the political situation of our nation today.” The reason for

this was “to find an appropriate political system which guarantees freedom, dignity, participation, and responsibility” (Newell, 1995, p.22).

This was the beginning of the calls from the general public for a responsive government. It resulted into demonstrations across the nation, challenging the supposed invisibility of Dr. Kamuzu Banda and his regime. For a time there was both political and social instability. This forced Dr. Kamuzu Banda, seven months after the release of the letter, to concede to the calls for multiparty democracy from the civil society. He announced a referendum on the future of the one party system, to be run by the National Referendum Commission (NRC). He also set up a Presidential Commission on Dialogue (PCD) to act like a transitional government. In addition, he created the Public Affairs Committee (PAC). It comprised of religious organizations (Inhovbere, 1997) like the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), the Episcopal Conference (Catholic), the Anglican Church, the Christian Council of Churches in Malawi (Protestants) and the Muslim Association, two leading political opposition *pressure groups*, the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD), the Law Society of Malawi and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Brown, 2004). The MCP wanted an early referendum date. It first suggested December 1992. But with insistence from PAC and the opposition the date was later changed to March 1993 before finally settling for June 14, 1993. In the elections, people chose multiparty democracy. The result paved the way for multiparty general elections in May 1994. They were won by the United Democratic Front (UDF) under Dr. Bakili Muluzi with a 47 percent of the vote (Donge, 1995). During this time the role of CSOs like PAC cannot be overemphasized. It channeled all the pro-democracy energies into one direction by speaking for the churches and the

public (Lwanda, 1993). Its first action was the letter it wrote on August 8, 1992 asking for a meeting with the PCD.

After achieving multiparty democracy in 1993 / 1994, through the 1995 Constitution passed by Parliament, the CSOs were given the political mandate for them to perform their roles (Patel and Svasand, 2013). They were thus recognized by the government as another existing entity within the boundaries of the State and the government machinery. However, before the ascendancy of the democratic government, the CSOs main aim, as a group, was to see to the end of the Dr. Kamuzu Banda era and usher in a democratic government, of which they achieved. But soon after that the interests of the CSOs were cast wide as they now existed to address the effects of the democracy. There was a need for human rights, an accountable government, gender equality, a satisfactory social delivery and the general improvement of people's lives. This now became the new role of the CSOs; to make sure that the new system is ideally working for the people. In other words, democracy had to be consolidated.

In reflection, there have been occasional frustrations on the side of CSOs in their efforts to consolidate democracy in Malawi by strengthening the laws and the institutions. An example is during the 2009 – 2012 period, during the brief second term presidency of Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika, there was a sour relationship between government and the CSOs. The President called CSOs in Malawi puppets of the international donor community as well as agents of the opposition political parties (Patel and Svasand, 2013). Again, during the second term presidency of Dr. Bakili Muluzi, the CSOs too faced the same hostile relationship with government. This was because they provided a resisting movement during the futile Third term / Open term

bills in 2002 through 2003. There were running street battles between CSOs and government security forces, exposing the extreme extent government had gone to disturb CSOs' freedom to advocate for democracy consolidation. However, this does not claim CSOs to have an ideal moral leadership on democratic values. It is generally noted that CSOs themselves are lacking in some aspects. They, for example, usually play a reacting than a pro-active role. For example, they too lack the democratic tendencies they demand from government; their agenda is influenced by their international donors; and some even end up being part of government after a time.

1.3 State of Democracy Consolidation in Africa

Malawi is not different from the rest of Africa as far as democracy consolidation is concerned. It is one of the several countries that adopted democracy after the end of the Cold War. In most parts of Africa, democracy is not more than two decades, with a few countries yet to experience it. Africa is in general looking for the ways of understanding and living democracy (Chabal, 1998), and there are a number of challenges being faced. For a democracy to consolidate, it must first satisfy certain conditions, among others: Popular legitimization, diffusion of democratic values, neutralization of anti-system actors, elimination of authoritarian enclaves, party building, stabilization of electoral rules, alleviation of poverty and economic stabilization (Nwanegbo and Alumona, 2011). But democracy in Africa, for example, is unstable and this is mainly because of absence and weakness of institutions (Ojaborotu, 2009) which, among others, is a result of poverty (Mattes, Bratton and Davids, 2003). With poverty widespread across the continent, this paints a gloomy picture of the African democracy consolidation project. But according to Oguine (2006), for democracy to consolidate in Africa, it needs to concentrate on: conducting

credible elections, improving the conditions of government, revamping public institutions, improving security and counteracting citizens' apathy and disinterest towards constitutional democracy. And in addition,

Consolidating democracy in Africa requires reciprocal commitments from both the leaders and the citizens to change their attitudes toward constitutional democracy. Leaders must commit to operate an open, transparent and accountable government that respects the rule of law. Citizens, on their part, must supplant the current culture that engenders apathy and disinterest in the democratic process. (Oguine, 2006, p. 11).

A cursory survey reveals that, in a disproportionate number of African countries, the democratic process is in tatters, disfigured and lobotomized by the imposture of political elites (Rotberg, 2000). Ojaborotu ((2009) further adds that democracy in most African countries, including Malawi, is unstable due to weak institutions. With leaders implicated, as not committed to the rules of democracy, and citizens not interested in the democratic processes, the question can be whether democracy in Africa will ever “relax”, as felicitously formulated by Giuseppe Di Palma (Schedler, 2001) despite its wide support across the continent in 34 countries across Africa between 2016/2018 as shown in the figure below. According to Afrobarometer (2019) with Malawi's support for democracy at 62 percent as seen in the figure below.

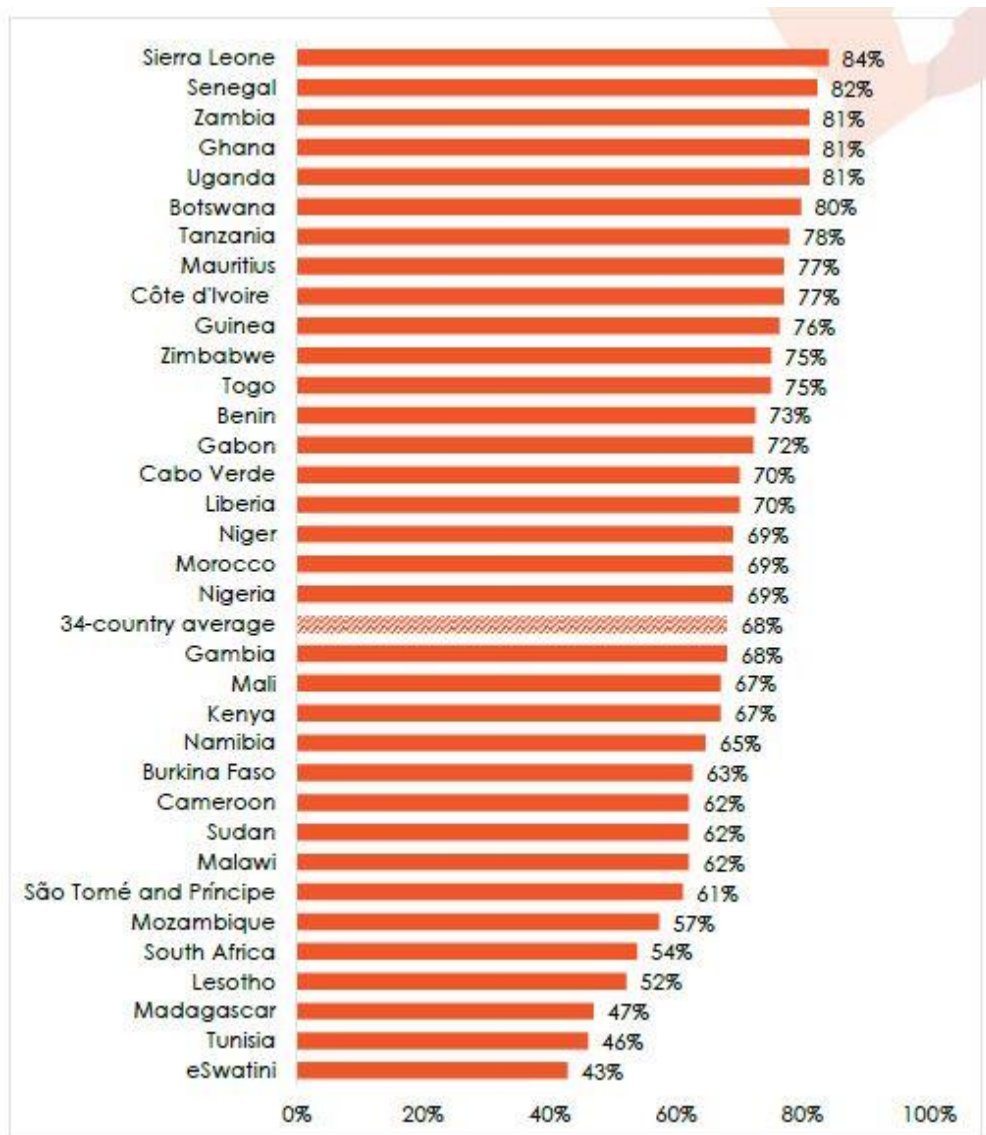


Figure 1: Support for Democracy in 34 African Countries

Source: Afrobarometer, (2019)

The coming of democracy to Africa made it possible for the generation of CSOs in countries across the continent. The relationship between them and their governments vary from country to country. But in general, democracy requires external vigilance of the citizens since the process goes beyond periodic elections. In addition, genuine democracy is watered with the sweat and the blood of the citizens who engage in pitched struggles with the state official over democratic reforms (Obina, 2012). For a

democracy to be vibrant and thrive, citizens must actively participate in every democratic process. But as observed above, in most countries in Africa, the citizens are withdrawn as far as participation is concerned because of factors like poverty. Even though this is the case, civil society is accepted by scholars of democratization as an essential component of democratic consolidation (Arbritton and Bureekul, 2002). But consolidating democracy in Africa, even by the CSOs, seems tough, audacious and challenging. As the experience in Malawi tells, the civil society has been active in making sure that democratic rules are followed to the letter. But they too have been facing several challenges like political opposition from the elites and organization as a group. How has this affected their role as democratic consolidators?

1.4 Problem Statement of the Study

This study aims at finding out if a strong civil society helps in democracy consolidation. It assumes that activities by the government can be checked by a strong civil society. CSOs in Malawi have been around since the coming of multiparty democracy in 1993. They were an important part in the transition from one party system to the multiparty system. After that, they have made their presence felt in several ways by establishing themselves in various acts in society in areas like gender, governance and human rights. Initially, the focus of CSOs was on the democratically held elections. But later on the role also included consolidation of democracy (Patel and Svasand, 2013).

Despite their wide representation in political and social discourse in Malawi, their role has sometimes been under question and scrutiny. There has been serious questioning of their autonomy as they are often seen as agents of their donor community. Their

agenda is looked upon as a rubber stamp of the West, which is often active in funding for their activities. Such suspicion has led to, among others, as stated above, facing opposition from the government. Again, the CSOs look at the government as a hindering block to their activities of democracy consolidation, among others (James and Malunga, 2006). The establishment of the NGO Act in 2001 and Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi (CONGOMA) in 1991, the regulating body for all NGOs / CSOs in Malawi, was coldly received. It was looked upon as government's way of controlling them. In other words, there is suspicion between government and NGOs / CSOs.

However, literature on democracy consolidation in Malawi has managed to identify challenges that democracy consolidation in Malawi is facing and the realization that emerging democracies like Malawi are failing to consolidate (Scholz, 2008). Again, James and Malunga (2006) focused on the organizational challenges facing the CSOs. Donge (1995) wrote on the then young Malawi democracy. He mainly dwelt on how the country was searching for the rules of democracy. Tusalem (2007) only explored the negative and positive roles of the CSOs in third- and fourth-wave democracies; and Brown (2004) reassessed Malawi's transition to democracy in 1994. He found out that, among others, the CSOs have played good democratic roles. For example they successfully fought against President Bakili Muluzi in 2002 / 2003 when he wanted to change the constitution to accommodate him a third / open term.

After multiparty elections in 1994, Malawi has been gradually transforming from a closed society to a more open and democratic society. Furthermore, this has resulted into creating more space for CSOs to become more involved in national concern

discussions. There has been an increase in numbers of individual CSOs, coalitions and networks (James and Malunga, 2006) that advocate on specific issues, including democracy consolidation. According to Meinhardt and Patel (2003), democracy consolidation in Malawi started in May 1994 after the multiparty elections, and still underway as of present. Even though the number of CSOs and their activities in Malawi keep on increasing, it does not guarantee democracy consolidation in itself. Proliferation of CSOs cannot in itself guarantee good governance and democratic consolidation (Igbokwe-Ibeto, Ewuim, Anazondo and Osawe, 2014). Despite an increased voice and impact from their side on matters of democracy, CSOs are still facing opposition from the people as well as the government by among others being seen as puppets of the Western government (Patel and Svasand, 2013). Contrary to the general perception that they speak for the voiceless and the marginalized, CSO's have to an extent lost their position and authority as the voice of the people. In other words, they are not being trusted by the people. Despite a wide look on the subject of CSOs and democracy consolidation in Malawi, the various studies did not appreciate how democracy consolidation in Malawi is being affected by the negative perception people have towards the CSOs. Therefore, against this background, this study therefore aims at exploring the assumption that a strong civil society aids in democracy consolidation.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study examined role of the CSOs in the consolidation of democracy in Malawi. In order to address this main objective it will have the following specific objectives:

1. To find out the state of democracy consolidation in Malawi

2. To assess the relationship between CSOs and government in democracy consolidation
3. To establish challenges CSOs in Malawi are facing towards consolidating democracy.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study was insignificant in several ways. First, being an academic exercise, it will contribute to the general knowledge on the relationship between democracy consolidation and CSOs. There has been several scholarly works under democracy in Malawi, covering various sides of the relationship. This study seeks to make a specific addition to the existing knowledge as highlighted throughout.

Lastly, taking into consideration the debate on the relevance of the CSOs, this study will try to be an answer to be debate. The study will examine the role of the CSOs in democracy consolidation. The hypothesis is that they are important in democracy consolidation. But how effective are they? With the study providing an answer to the question it will establish the necessity of the CSOs in a democracy, despite their other weaknesses.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the theoretical framework of the study and various intellectual definitions and conceptions of political space, democracy and consolidation. It will also appreciate, through literature use, the role of organizations in the consolidation of democracy. Lastly, it will look at the challenges of democracy consolidation, specifically in Malawi.

2.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study used the liberal theory of democracy in CSOs and democracy consolidation in Malawi. The liberal theory of democracy is common among capitalist countries like the United States of America and Britain. The theory has also manifested itself in other developing countries like Malawi, especially after the end of the Cold War. Some main proponents of this theory are John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith and Baron De Montesquieu. Essentially, the theory accepts capitalism; competitive party system as opposed to one party system; rule of law; pressure groups; separation of powers and checks and balances; emphasis on civil liberties or individual rights such as freedom of speech, assembly, press and religion; free, fair and periodic elections based on universal franchise; and abhorrence of revolutionary approach to change of government (Mohammed, 2013; Kwasau, 2013). In other words, liberal theory of democracy;

Designs a political system which encourages individual participation and enhances moral development of the citizens. It grants all adult citizens the right to vote and be voted for regardless of race, gender or property ownership.” (Adeosun, 2014, p.7)

There are three known strands to the liberal theory of democracy. These are: Classical liberal theory, elitist liberal theory and pluralist theory of democracy. To begin with, classical liberal theory is known from the writings of John Locke, John Stuart Mill and refined by modern philosophers like John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin and Brian Barry (Azam, 2014). Mainly, classical liberal theory is known for its key concepts which include liberty, equality, toleration and neutrality. Galston (1998) called the practice of these as liberal virtues and they enhance confidence among the individuals from majority or minority ethnic or religious groups. This is in regards to their rights and access to opportunity to public resources. Even though the theory is credited for its ability to uphold diversity there are four main challenges that goes with it. First, it ignores group identities and only focuses on the individual. Second, its concept of toleration does not encourage an appreciation of cultural differences. Third, its ideal of equal citizenship undermines the ability of groups to determine themselves and to preserve what they value. Last, liberal neutrality is an illusion as there is no such a thing as a neutral individual, group or state (Azam, 2014). Its focus on the individual and not on the group makes it not compatible with the existence of CSOs and their involvement in democracy. As much as CSOs are groupings that are made by individuals who are given the right to organize themselves, but the theory not allowing groups to determine themselves directly undermines CSOs.

On the other hand, pluralist theory of democracy is characterized by lines of separation, distribution and participation where political power, institutional structure, ways of government and exercises of public authority are concerned. By definition, political pluralism is a belief in or a commitment to diversity or multiplicity (Arif, 2014). In other words, this means that people are free to form and belong to different political parties or groups, including CSOs, who are free to compete for political power at all levels. Furthermore, people are free to form pressure groups to express their opinion on different aspects of politics and governance (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2011). The theory has two main strengths, which are: First, it clearly addresses and acknowledges the reality of diversity between different groups in the political context. This assures the mushrooming of different associations and organizations with an assurance of government protection and political space. Second, the theory encourages small groups to develop their tactics and strategies by maintaining their interests (Arif, 2014). This, according to Self (1985) and Miller (1983), prevents a tyranny of sovereignty owing to the check and balance system. However, the theory also faces criticism. First, it ignores the reality that there are groups which are dominant over others. According to Ellis (1980), the dominant groups can influence the smaller groups, and even government as well when it tries to play the referee. This, effectively, dilutes the pluralist ideal. Second, the theory is difficult to implement as far as dispersing of political power is concerned. There is no guarantee of coordination and this may lead to inefficiency and ineffectiveness (Self, 1985). Despite its challenges, its ability to identify political actions which stress the dynamics of interest groups for the ideal political system in democratic countries puts it at a more realistic position than classical liberal theory which undermines self-determination of groups.

Last, According to William (1994), the elite theory of democracy is a theory which seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in the contemporary society. It states that a small minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and political elite holds power which is independent of democratic elections process in agreement with Schumpeter (1942) who says democracy is a competition among elites for the allegiance of the people. However, there is no clear relation between the theory and what is termed as 'democratic elitism'. The role of elites within democratic governments presents democratic theorists with one of their thorniest problems (Samal, 2012). This assumes that society has always been and will always be controlled by a small group called the elite which is in line with Yamakoski and Dubrow (2008) definition of them as actors controlling resources, occupying key positions and related through power networks. However, its salient feature of only the few controlling resources and key positions is not in line with individuals organizing themselves into groups as CSOs. The theory therefore gives no rooms for CSOs to operate as it only allows the citizen only a passive role as an object of political activity (Walker, 1966).

Classical liberalism is defined by its tenets of liberty, equality, tolerance and neutrality which are in line with the practice of democracy in general. Even so, it faces criticism of assuming neutrality which has been described as illusionary. But its fundamentals which includes liberty, equality and tolerance are congruent with pluralist theory of democracy which is committed to diversity and allows for people's participation in political processes both as individuals and groups as alluded to by Diamonds (1994). Unlike the elitist theory of democracy, the two allows people to take an active role in politics with classical theory of democracy's major weakness

being that this is limited to an individuals. But for CSOs to exist, they need individuals who can organize themselves into groups and actively take part in the political processes. It is with this reason that this study used the pluralist theory of democracy to establish its assumption that a vibrant civil society is important in democracy consolidation. In line with this, this study therefore sought the extent of political participation CSOs in Malawi have. Furthermore, the study looked at CSOs as political actors that result from political diversity and multiplicity whose participation is vital towards helping in democracy consolidation despite operating amidst various challenges. Importantly, the theory is relevant in the Malawian context because it results into a systemic structure which enables the functionality of an effective and efficient democratic political system. To this extent, the utility of this theory in the Malawian context is that it forms a basis for analyzing the associations formed which essentially, according to this study's hypothesis, aims at consolidating democracy. Another important point to note in the contextualization of this point is that civil society acts 'beyond' the state. In essence, civil society encourages individual participation which eventually ends up into associations. Some of the associations have evidently been key to democratization in Malawi, and relevantly, pursue activities that are aimed at democracy consolidation.

This chapter, therefore provided an introduction to the whole thesis by among others, looking at contextual background of the research problems, state of democracy consolidation in Africa, objectives of the study, statement of the study problem, its significance and theoretical framework. There is a clear understanding that CSOs played an important part in democratization in Malawi during the early 1990s. But moving on from there, just like it is in most African countries, the state of democracy

consolidation is in limbo in Malawi. However, it requires an in depth understanding of CSOs role in democracy consolidation with the study assuming that CSOs have an important role. The next chapter is on literature review. It will look at the debate surrounding CSOs, democracy and also consolidation.

2.3 Conceptualization of Civil Society

There have been various concepts and theories on civil society. But the general perception is that for the activities of the Civil society to take place there is a need for a strong liberal State that provides political space for the liberty of speech, association and assembly. Resulting from this, the standard theoretical sense and understanding of the civil society is a collection of associations (Vinod, 2006). This agrees with Khilani and Kaviraj (2002), who advanced that the Civil society expresses the political desire for greater ‘civility’ in social relations and it tries to recover the power of the society which, by time, is subdued by the power of the state. In perspective, the community is capable of organizing itself independently of the specific direction of the state power (Chandhoke, 1995).

Ever since the presence of society or government, the civil society has always been there in one way or the other. And its definition, importance and significance has been theorized and practiced differently throughout the ages. Vinod (2006) identifies these theories of the civil society from different theorists, from the ancient Greece to the Enlightenment era. In ancient Greece, he says, the ‘civil’ part of the society meant the basic requirements of citizenship. It took a liberal view where every citizen was supposed to have knowledge, discourse and take part in the participation of the political processes. This is in agreement with one of the Greek philosophers Aristotle

who said life takes place at multiple and pluralist associational levels, of which the citizen has to belong to. Therefore, in the Greek world, it was a democratic obligation to be an active part of the civil society (Vinod, 2006). Different from the Greeks, the Romans had the Republican view of the civil society and how the citizens related to the state. The State, in the Roman view, was thought to be behind everything. Power started and ended with/in the State. Power, therefore, started from the top and diffused to the bottom. This meant that in the Roman conception, the civil society was non-existent as it had no partake in the exercise of power.

The fall of the Roman Empire gave way to the rise of the Christian tradition which for years dominated both the political and social discourse. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274), one of the early Church fathers, understood the society to require a moral God-given-base. This resulted in the religious concept of the civil society based on God, making it an exclusionary, hierarchical and fixed since only the Christians / believers were the only ones part of it, by its definition. But it was during the 16th century that the discovery of individual rights as distinct from group rights largely emerged from the Protestant reformation which swept across Europe. Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679), the English philosopher and political theorist, in his *Leviathan* book (1651), did not consider the civil society as the natural part of the society but an artificial creation of the State. In other words, he looked at the state of the State as the determinant whether the civil society exists or not. This is in agreement with Okuku (2002) who says the rise of the civil society is due to the weakness of the state and it is attempt by the people to compliment the State. Thus, the people are forced to organize themselves outside the weak State. But clearly for Hobbes, there cannot be the civil society without the state.

John Locke (1632 - 1704), the English philosopher who founded the school of empiricism, writing in 1689, deviated from Hobbes' view by looking at the civil society as a result of itself, as also observed by Chodorov (1959, p. 35) that "society is a growth, with roots imbedded in its own components units." He characterized it as being voluntary, individualistic, participatory and democratic in nature. For him, civil society is an association of free and equal human beings. This therefore assures stability in the society of the society at large since it is made of a rational association. He looked upon the State as a coercive power, capable of disturbing the society. Thus he made it a last necessary resort when he compared its importance with that of the civil society.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778), the French political theorist and philosopher, conceived the civil society as an artificial realm and a complete human creation. Unlike Locke, who sees it as a source of stability, Rousseau looked at the Civil society as a source of insatiability, inequality and a destruction of freedom because of the 'relationships' and the 'arrangements' it turn to represent. In addition, he said members of the society have a stake in each other, what de Tocqueville called the 'common good'. Otherwise, the civil society will be dissolved (Bellah, 2002). He looked at the civil society as more powerful than the State hence he dissolved the state within it.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 – 1831), the German idealist philosopher, in *Philosophy of Right*, 1821, looks at the civil society as a 'Sphere of ethical life'. This agrees with Alexis de Tocqueville (1805 – 1859) view of the civil society, as an 'associative sphere outside the state.' In addition, like Locke, they all looked at free

human beings organizing themselves into associations beyond the state. But going further in the discourse, they deviate. For Hegel, civil society, exists within the contract of the society, and not formed by it. For Tocqueville, civil society is formed to fill the void left by the Aristocrats. They all look at the civil society as existing within the contract of the society, bound by legal order or set of shared rules (Diamond, 1999). Tocqueville further elaborates that the civil society is a counterpart of a stable and a vital democracy, and not an alternative to it. Both it and the aristocracy fill in voids of the same super structure (de Tocqueville, 1835).

Karl Marx (1818 – 1883), the German political philosopher and revolutionary, in one of his works, *Das Kapital*, looks at the civil society as an independent realm of the state. Like Locke, he conceives it as a force within itself (Cox, 1999). More to that, he thoughts of it as an association aimed at protecting the private property and the existing market relations, and that its autonomy is found in the political economy of the society. This agrees with Rousseau who said civil society represents ‘relationships’ and ‘arrangements’. Marx explicitly calls these the Capitalists. Because of that, he therefore concluded of it as harboring egoistic interests, therefore, not representing the whole society, but a part of it; the bourgeoisie.

Lastly, Antonio Gramsci (1891 – 1937), the Italian Communist Party leader and Marxist political theorist in *Prison Notebooks*, 1929 – 35, in Cox (1999) deviated from his mentor, Marx. He detached the civil society from the economy and allocated it to the State. He said civil society is the prime mover as it has an autonomy than the state. In addition, he looks at the civil society as “Both shaper and shaped, an agent of stabilization and reproduction, and a potential agent of transformation” (Cox, 1999,

p.17). The State, therefore, is only the ground of the existing social order and from where a new one can be found. He related the two as being members of a 'superstructure' like Tocqueville's conception, and that each of them is a structure within it. Harris-White (2005) further adds that Gramsci primarily looked at the civil society in the political, culture, and ideological hegemony of a small group of people, and a ground on which an emancipatory counter hegemony could be constructed (Cox, 1999), in part agreeing with Marx.

2.4 Conceptualization of Democracy

Democracy implies a form of governance in which 'the people rule' (Patel, 2007). It therefore means that a political system is democratic to the extent it facilitates the self-rule of the citizens, how it permits the broad deliberation in determining public policy, and how it constitutionally guarantees all the freedoms that are necessary for open political competition (Joseph, 1997). The above discourses can be summarized in the President Abraham Lincoln's famous aphorism: Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people (Williams, 2003); the scope within which the civil society exists, operates and finds its legitimacy.

One of the prominent debates on democracy, before examining its consolidation, is its conduciveness. Democracy, in reality, is a fragile species throughout Africa (Bratton and Mattes, 2001), Malawi inclusive. North (1990, p. 3) also notes;

... Let it be noted that democracy is not inborn. It is something, which has to be developed and nurtured. As such the state has to create conducive environment for that to happen. It is through the nation's constitution and ordinary laws the same may materialize... having a constitution but without creating a corresponding culture

of constitutionalism is democratically unfriendly. In other words, constitution without constitutionalism is in fact a threat to democracy which modern state vow to fight against.

Chabal (1998) adds that inherently democracy is a fragile political system because its consensus depends on the economic base. In a broad context, if a democracy is not producing good policies in the areas of education, health, transportation, some safety net for its citizens hurt by major market swings, and some alleviation of gross inequality, it will not be sustainable (Linz and Stephan, 1996). This remains the challenge since for democracy to thrive there is a need for a good capitalist economy, high literacy rates and a vibrant civic culture. As in the case of Malawi, the country is consistently ranked as one of the poorest in the world, the literacy rates are low and it has no vibrant civic culture. These pose a serious challenge to the success of democracy in Malawi.

It is of no wonder that democracy in most African countries has failed to advance. In most parts of Africa democracy has failed to live up to its expectations. Autocracy is still alive and kicking in Africa. It is more cunning than ever, having a conscious-image and a sophisticated ability to manipulate the language of democracy, human rights and social justice (Ihonvbere, 1996). There are little or no difference in the living conditions in spite of numerous promises from what (Ihonvbere, 1996) calls 'Emergency democrats'. Malawi too has not been a different case to the large part of Africa. Between 1994 and 2004, during the presidency of Dr. Bakili Muluzi, democratic governance visibly deteriorated. The presidency remained overly powerful and insufficiently unaccountable (Brown, 2004). Perhaps this was because Malawi

was not a case of ‘democratization from below’, with the NGOs having a narrow urban base (Brown, 2004).

Despite the challenges being faced by most, democracy still has advantages over other systems. First, it allows the poor masses to penalize the government that allow, for example, allow famines to occur. Second, through the freedom of press, democracies are good at transmitting information from the poor remote areas to the central government. This prompts the governments to act. Last, democracies help the poor by producing more public goods and more income redistribution. This is because they have a wide range of people to appease (Ross, 2006). This perhaps could be the reason why prospects of democracy in Malawi seem to exist through the following 2008 Afrobarometer survey statistics: 74 percent prefers democracy to any other form of government. 68 percent prefers plurality of political parties. 78 percent prefer elections as the best form of electing leaders. And 68 percent indicated to have the confidence in democracy as a system which can best deal with the challenges facing the country (Patel and Svasand, 2013).

2.5 Conceptualization of Democracy Consolidation

A democracy is best said to be consolidated when it is capable of withstanding pressures or shocks without abandoning the electoral process or the political freedoms on which it depends. This includes those of dissent and opposition, and it requires a depth of institutionalism reaching beyond the electoral process itself (Beethan, 1994). But the challenge has been measuring when it is consolidated or when it is not. However, Power and Powers (1988) examined the different approaches to democracy

consolidation advanced by various scholars. This further exposes the above stated challenge of measuring democracy consolidation.

First, David Collier understood democracy consolidation to be in three categories: *Actor-centered*, which focuses on the willingness of significant actors to work in democratic rules; *event-centered*, which looks at elections and constitutional ratification as markers of consolidation; and *internal/external institutional*, which focuses on the degree of institutionalization and the duration of new political institutions and the extent on meaning challenges there in, respectively. On the other hand, Karl doubts Collier insinuation that elections can be used to understand democracy consolidation. He argues that some elections do not function as ‘founding elections’ and do not further consolidate. Further (Plasca, 2012) also observes that elections are not reliable since *first*, they also happen under dictatorships; *second*, electoral democracies stop at voting and are not interested in for example, level of liberty; *last*, any electoral process has major imperfections, like some vote because of trying to be dutiful citizens and not be democratic actors per se. this effectively defeats elections as a means of measuring democracy consolidation. Third, Linz and Stephan (1996), however, does not differentiate transition from autocracy to democracy and democracy consolidation itself. He considers democracy consolidation to be the completion of procedural democratization. From this point the constitution produces a sovereign elected government and no actor holds veto power over the system, effectively counter-arguing Collier’s actor-centered approach. Fourth, O’Donnell (1996) advances that we avoid the term ‘consolidation’ altogether and concentrate on the types of democracy. For him, democracy consolidation does not exist, only the types of democracy. Lastly, Philippe Schmitter opposed the

‘essentialist’ definitions, suggesting that institutions and procedures are necessary and sufficient for democracy consolidation. Rather, conceived consolidation as a condition in which the elite actors have reliable expectations and politics, such that the parties and rules of the political game are known and can be anticipated. This agreed with Valenzuela at the same conference who stated that “Democratic consolidation takes place in a political and historical context which shapes the institutions, actors, and politics of the new regime” in terms of “...economic and human rights of authoritarian regime, the circumstances surrounding the transition, and the strategies of significant actors in the post-transition struggle for influence” (p.12).

Still not able to give an objective measure of democratic consolidation, Linz and Stephan (1996) says democracy consolidation can be observed in three ways: *Behaviorally*, when democracy becomes the only game in town with no significant political opposition seriously attempting to overthrow the democratic regime. *Attitudinally*, when in the face of several political and economic crisis, people believe that any further political change must emerge from within the parameters of democratic procedures. *Constitutionally*, when all the factors in the polity become habituated to the fact that political conflicts are settled according to established rules. However, it is a challenge to subject behavior, attitude and the constitution to an objective measure in regard to democracy consolidation. This too is apparent with the exploration of conditions for democracy consolidation. These are: Effectiveness of government on economic delivery (Bratton and Mattes, 2001); the character of the previous regime and the mode of transition (Beetham, 2004); the market economy, suggesting a close relationship between capitalism and democracy (Beetham, 2004);

support for democracy from the political culture, popular beliefs, attitudes and expectations of people (Almond and Verba, 1963); political institutions (Beetham, 2004); and the process of democratization (Inhovbere, 2006).

Perhaps Diamond (1996, p. 12) was right when he defined democracy consolidation as “The *process* of achieving broad and *deep* legitimization...” This agrees with Diamond (1996, p. 64) who defined democracy consolidation as “The *deepening* of democracy so as to be made more authentic so that political institutions of democracy must become more coherent, capable and autonomous so that all major political players are willing to commit to and are bound by their rules and norms.” With the apparent failure to reach to single objective measure of democracy consolidation, these two definitions can be said to be best representing democracy consolidation, in countries like Malawi. Democracies are not supposed to be fully consolidated... ever (Schmitter and Schneider, 1997). However, they should be looked as a *process* towards the *deepening*. The vivid challenge it therefore to reach to a point where they can be looked upon as consolidated. The openness inside the process and the deepening still does not address the challenge of understanding consolidation. It further complicates it, hence O'Donnell's (1996) assertion that ‘consolidation’ must altogether be avoided and concentrate on types of democracy.

2.6 Civil Society and Democracy Consolidation

Although defined as “The realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting, that is autonomous from the state and bound by a legal order or a set of shared rules” (Diamond, 1994, p.5), says the civil society is not independent of the state. In general, “Civil society is looked upon as a pre-condition for the vibrancy of democracy and its effective role as a means to overcome the ills of

democratic government, especially for developing societies and to achieve economic development” (Dash, 2001, p.6). CSOs act in a pluralist associational level, as conceived by Aristotle. Summing it up, Weigle and Butterfield (2002), say the modern civil society is comprised of two elements: First, a legal framework which permits voluntary organization and this defines the relationship of such groups to the State. Second, principles that defines the characters of civil society, meaning the direct social actors and the goals towards which the activities are directed. It varies from society to society depending on the values that influence the public domain.

The varying in the values of social domains and public influences make the role of democracy consolidation by the CSOs. In other words, there is no single path for all the CSOs in various countries to follow in the process of democracy consolidation. But in general the CSOs create the basis for common welfare out of the pursuit of particular societal interests, sustain and promote the development (Chandhoke, 1995). Civil society has some crucial roles in a democracy: First, it is relied upon by people for responsive and democratic governance, while still functioning within the State and retaining a certain degree of autonomy. Second, it is looked upon as a pre-condition for the vibrancy of democracy and it carries an effective role of complementing the ills of a democratic government to achieve economic development, especially in the developing societies. Third, it is a crucial provider of government legitimacy and this directly affects its stability. Fourth, it carries the voice of the common people by eliciting participation and has the social capital to pressure the State (Dash, 2001). In addition, CSO in a democracy, first, they encourage political participation from the citizenry by acting as conduits between them and the Government. Second, they participate in Government’s policy formulation. Third, the CSOs help in

institutionalizing democratic norms and practices. These include openness, tolerance and accommodation of opposing views. Fourth, they facilitate the development of political parties. Fifth, CSOs monitor the existing democratic institutions so as to sustain them. Last, the CSOs disseminate information to the masses on policies and other important issues affecting them (Patel and Svasand, 2013). Even more, in relations to democracy consolidation, (Zaidise, 2004) notes that civil society may actively and purposely seek to consolidate democracy. These organizations have been noted to be ‘pro-democratic’ civil society by Pedahzur (2002). A good example is Botswana, Africa’s oldest continuous democracy, whose success story is now being tampered by, among others, weak civil society (Lekalake, 2016). However, several writers have accepted that CSOs and democracy do go together. For example, Yishai (2002, p.215) states that “a vibrant civil society has been perceived as pivotal to democracy” as “it contributes to government’s legitimacy and its efficiency.” In addition, Cheeseman (2015, pp.68-75) also notes that the vibrancy of “associational life” helps in checking the “worst excesses” of authoritarian rule. This was key to the generation of the momentum for democratization in most African countries during the early 1990s.

It is apparent that CSOs in Africa do face challenges in their democratic-oriented activities. This mushrooms from the difference in concept on CSOs and democracy. Some scholars and commentators have argued that CSOs exist to pursue their own parochial interests, in a way, challenging their CSOs legitimacy amidst a long range relationship between them and democratization. Even more, it is believed that CSOs cannot pursue consistently and persistently certain course of action either because of lack of ideological and programmatic bases or their leadership are more concerned

with their personal gains (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al, 2014). This has therefore transformed into challenges CSOs are coming across in, specifically, democracy consolidation. Some of them are:

The first challenge is that there is a question of CSOs democratic credentials and their ability to mid-wife and deepen democracy in Africa. There is doubt on CSOs ably put democracy in Africa beyond reversal (Gyimah-Baadi, 1996) or the 'only game in town' which is a visible step towards consolidation. According to Ekeh (1991), this is the situation because civil society in Africa show interest in matters in which the state shows little interest. This is probably to maintain their autonomy and keep themselves from being contaminated by the ills of the public realm. This puts them at the risk of not being relevant to common people since in many countries, the state sees itself, if not exclusively, responsible for national development (Hyden, Court and Mease, 2003). Malawi has had this experience as well with CSOs advancing agendas like Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) rights at the expense of priority development areas which are of much concern to people. In a place like Malawi, efforts towards democracy consolidation suffer the same fate. In general, for democracy to flourish it needs a literate populace which is able to understand how the system works and how it has to work for them. But this is not the case with Malawi where people do not inherently understand democracy and even its consolidation. This makes democracy consolidation ends up into an effort in isolation.

Second, CSOs in Africa in general have failed to innovate its mode of operation by evolving and contextualizing itself into the new political and economic culture in Africa. According to Gyimah-Baadi (1996), CSOs copy from the western democracy, and in a way, forcing its norms and ways in Africa. It is apparent that the African

democracy story is very different from the Western one, and so is its consolidation. With an understanding that the result of this very different history cannot be the same, while still adhering to the tenets of democracy, CSOs ought to give life to democracy and its consolidation in an Africa way. Democracy consolidation must transform into a way of life for all citizens in, specifically, Malawi. But with CSOs tendency of copying and pasting the Western experience of democracy into Africa, there is a practical risk of their efforts being ignored by the masses who are primarily supposed to be part of the consolidation.

Third, CSOs are mostly based in the urban areas. This is where their make-shift offices are located with handpicked staff that does not have the skill and experience to run the organization (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al, 2014). Most of people in Africa, including Malawi, are located in the rural areas. These are people that need to understand democracy, but with the CSOs concentrating themselves in the urban areas it means they lose the setting where their efforts will be able to make much difference. It also makes it difficult for CSOs to be incorporated into the grassroots political movements which are vital in democracy consolidation. Thus, just like it was with democratization, which originated from the urban areas, democracy and its consolidation therefore remains a system for the elite. This guarantees lack of sustainability for efforts that aims to consolidate democracy.

Fourth, the fact that CSOs get their funding from external or Western donors, makes it easy for them to compromise their agenda. As much as it is not wrong to be financed by Western donors, but if not properly checked this ends up putting the autonomy of CSOs into disrepute as they operate subject to those who operationalize them

(Igbokwe-Ibeto et al, 2014). This is one of the most notable challenges since it dictates the content of what CSOs carry and this imprints their legacy and image on the people they work with. In Malawi, for example, this is the reason CSOs brought into debate issues of LGBTI at a time when the country has other developmental priorities. LGBTI is primarily a Western debate, but it has found its way into Malawi for the reason that the CSOs bringing it into limelight are funded for that. In the end, CSOs are seen as not representing the needs of people which compromises their authority.

Last, CSOs in Africa, including Malawi, have proved not to be persistent enough amidst state intimidation. Democracy is never won on a platter of gold (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al, 2014). It has to be fought for and this requires a lengthy battle for democratic values amidst state opposition. In Malawian example, this happens due to divide-and-rule tactics by the state which ends up one group of the CSOs curved in and eventually dilutes the whole motive. Of recent, CSOs in Malawi have been known to be organizing demonstrations on various issues. Observably, it has ended up with the demonstrations being a one-off attempt towards an issue. There is little or no follow up onwards and this questions their capability to sustain an issue. Democracy consolidation cannot therefore be achieved with this approach. The process has to be consistent and goal oriented. More important, there has to be no divisions among CSOs which is not possible.

But what does the future hold? Clearly, the existence is not the end in itself and does not in any way mean that there have not been gains towards democracy consolidation by CSOs. The role of CSOs towards democracy consolidation is under question just

as it is with them as agents of democracy in general. Therefore the challenges represents what has to be done by CSOs towards democracy consolidation. Notably, leadership is key to meeting most of the challenges. It is clear that civil society needs leadership which is visionary and is able to harness the country and unleash it into formational development through linking of ideas and practice (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al, 2014). There are few leaders among CSOs who can ably understand the changing times and adopt a course of action which takes into account great number of interests in the perspective of a longer period of time (Magstadt, 2006).

Funding for CSOs is also another crucial element that needs to be taken into account on the way forward. As already noted, there is no problem in itself with CSOs being funded by international agencies. But in the long run, this does compromise the quality the agenda of the organizations which sometimes ends up not to be relevant with the areas these CSOs are operating in (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al, 2014). In reality, it is nearly impossible for CSOs to operate using on local funding and even their own generated funds. Hence, if not properly checked, the future of CSOs as far as their agenda is concerned will still be dictated by these agencies. Therefore, amidst this reality, there is a desperate need for a civil society leadership which is able to balance between being funded by international agencies and being relevant to the people they claim to be serving.

Last, CSOs needs to build a robust and functional bureaucracy with a well skilled and experienced personnel. In developing countries, including Malawi, to get and retain such skilled and experienced staff. It requires a steady flow of funds which is not guaranteed as well. But when such workers are recruited, there is need for efforts to

have them capacitated into conforming to best global practice of their work, in this case, democracy consolidation (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al, 2014). CSOs in this regard should therefore rise above ethno-linguistics and religious affiliations while at the same time domesticating the core values of their work. This will ensure a civil society which is able both local and international stakeholders in their different capacities towards democracy consolidation.

The above chapter, in reviewing literature around the study has dwelt on the concept of civil society, democracy and democracy consolidation. It also looked at the relationship between CSOs and democracy consolidation. In a nutshell, civil society is in essence the society in itself. But aside that, democracy entails involvement of people in the governance processes. It has also been noted that there is an ending debate on democracy consolidation. Its application is relative and will be fully explored in Chapter four in the discussion of findings. The next chapter explains the design of the study and also the methodology used.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the design and the methodology of the study. It will explain how the sampling of the data collection and its analysis before concluding with the study challenges. Details of this chapter are therefore explained below.

3.2 Study Approach

The study used the qualitative approach since it focused on data which could not be adequately expressed numerically (Neuman, 2003). By definition qualitative research approach is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning ascribed to a social [or political] problems (Crotty, 1998). This approach was able to address the three objectives of this study through an explanatory analysis of CSOs and democracy consolidation in Malawi since 1994 when Malawi became a multiparty democracy. Again, the choice of the qualitative approach was informed by the need to explore the perspectives, thoughts and perceptions of the relevant stakeholders (Yin, 1984), in this case, CSOs and academicians.

Furthermore, the explanatory approach of this study was to deal with complex issues. It was aimed at moving beyond ‘just getting facts’ in order to make sense of the myriad other elements involved such as political and contextual (Walliman, 2011). There were two advantages of qualitative methods to exploratory research. These

include: First, it allows the use of open-ended questions which were helpful in probing the participants and gave them the opportunity to respond to their own words. Second, the method allows for the researcher to be flexible to probe initial responses. In other words, the opportunity to ask on why and how (Pope and Mays, 2000). This was important knowing that democracy consolidation is a historically complex issue in the Malawian context which needs flexibility and open-ended responses. In addition, in order to understand it, there was a need to go beyond analyzing what happened, but exploring the context in relation to the past, present and future trends of the issue.

3.3 Sampling of the Study

The study used purposive sampling, specifically, homogenous sampling, which is a deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. Among others, this method, first, identifies and selects individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest. Second, the importance, willingness and availability to participate and communicate on the experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive and reflective manner. In consideration of how challenging it was for the researcher to interview all the targeted individuals and groups, some participants were purposively sampled for the interviews and the data was useful enough in drawing conclusions about the whole (Weiss, 2005) Sampling was done in order to save time, money and effort (Rees, 1995). The respondents were purposively sampled because they have access to the relevant information and to make the data more representative. The selected CSOs are registered and most of them have been working in Malawi for over a decade. In addition, over the years, these CSOs have been involved in democracy and governance projects in Malawi. In other words, they

have firsthand experience working for democracy in Malawi and can therefore provide credible information regarding the study. The study therefore targeted six CSOs across Malawi and one respondent was chosen from each of the organization. They included: Center for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR), Public Affairs Committee (PAC), Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), Youth and Society (YAS), Norwegian Church Aid and United Nations Women. The sampling objective was to achieve a diversity of area of action. It covered areas of governance, gender, youth and human rights. These organizations were purposively selected as they have a history in the chosen four areas of action. Besides that, they have a national wide presence and since the research could not cover every organization, their national presence gave an important representation.

The study also involved expert analysis and contribution from three academicians on the topic under study. These provided deductive knowledge on the relationship among the CSOs, the government and democracy consolidation. These were purposively selected depending on their area of expertise and academic contribution to the topic. Each was from the University of Malawi (UNIMA) - Chancellor College (CHANCO), Mzuzu University (MZUNI) and the University of Livingstonia (UNILIA)

To get the side of government on the existing relationships on democracy consolidation, the study also engaged Presidential Advisor on NGOs. Government's side was crucial in the sense that, as seen below, there has not been a warm relationship between it and CSOs in the democratic Malawi. It will provide perception and attitudes regarding the work of CSOs and how best it thinks they can work to compliment government's efforts.

Eleven respondents were engaged in the study. These were in-depth interviews through a questionnaire that was administered. These included representatives from the following organizations: CHRR, Norwegian Church Aid, PAC, CCJP, United Nations Women, YAS, Academicians were drawn from the following institutions; the UNIMA – CHANCO, MZUNI and UNILIA. The study also engaged a political analyst and a Presidential Advisor on CSOs and NGOs.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection means wide range of methods such as intensive interviews, sample surveys, history recorded from secondary sources and content analyses (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994). The researcher used two sources of collecting the qualitative data; primary and secondary. These two were used because they provided an array of interpretive techniques which describe, decode, translate, and finally, draw meanings out of data rather than numerical frequencies, (Neuman, 2003) as further elaborated below.

3.4.1 Primary data sources

This was collected using key informant interviews with the different groups of informants. These are interviews involving a selected group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on particular subject (Kumar, 1987). These were appropriate for the study since they are able to source specific and descriptive information about an issue. In turn, this information can be used for decision making. As it was the case with this study, the key informants provided specific and descriptive information on CSOs and democracy consolidation in Malawi, and from that information, the study was able to make a conclusion from.

The first group of key informant interviews was comprised of various CSOs leaders across Malawi from the categories of religious associations, human rights and democracy promotion associations and organizing and mobilizing interests for women and youth. This is because they are the three types of organizations that seem to have a particular relevant empirical focus in the Malawian context (Svasand and Tostensen, 2009). The second group was comprised of political analyst. These were those in neither CSOs nor academics. But throughout democracy in Malawi, they have engaged with the topic in various ways, for example, writing and consultancy. These provided an independent assessment of democracy consolidation in Malawi, including its challenges. The third group was comprised of various academicians from UNIMA, and MZUNI. These provided the scholarly analysis of the topic under study. The last group comprised of government which was represented by its Presidential Advisor on CSOs and NGOs.

Information was collected using open ended questions on a thematically arranged semi-structured interview guides by the researcher. These are best used when the researcher will not have more than one chance to interview a participant. They are often preceded by observation, informal and unstructured interviewing in order to allow the researcher to develop a keen understanding of the topic (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). Thus they were important in this study as they provided the informants with an opportunity to have a keen understanding of the topic and freely express their views. The targeted individual in each of the CSOs was those in the leadership role since they have a wide understanding of what their organization stands for as well as democracy, democracy consolidation and the role of CSOs. All the interviews were done once with each respondent between August – November 2017

with a few follow ups on information through physical meetings, phone call and Email responses from Blantyre to where the respondents were, in other words, Rumphi, Mzuzu, Zomba, Lilongwe and Blantyre. On average, each interview lasted for an hour. After the data was collected, especially from the phone calls, it was transcribed together with that collected through physical and Email interviews before it was arranged into categories and themes for analysis.

The CSOs were asked to relate their experiential view on democracy in Malawi. Further, the questionnaire enquired from them their efforts in consolidating democracy in Malawi, its necessity, their efforts and the challenges they are facing. On the other hand, the academicians were interviewed to get a scholarly opinion on how the CSOs can help in democracy consolidation. But since the study was qualitative, the questions on the questionnaire simply served as guides as the exact wording of the question depended on the background of the informant and the general direction of the conversation. This therefore means that the researcher first listened to the response and determined the next question using it. In total, this study had eleven respondents.

3.4.2 Secondary data sources

Secondary data in this study, obtained from public libraries, served the advantage of high face validity and a possibility to study phenomena that occurred in the past (Rubin and Babbie, 1997). Besides this, secondary data also aided this researcher to learn from existing knowledge and build on what other researchers have already done while examining a related study, as observed by Neuman (2003). The data used documents in the name of books, newspapers, journal articles, conference papers,

published statistics, government publications and the internet. The used documents were subjected to both external and internal criticism in order to effectively help this researcher in conceptualizing the given research question and relate it to the hypothesis of this study. The external criticism established the authenticity or genuineness of the sources. Among these are analyses on the issues to do with the outward characteristics of the documents. On the other hand, internal criticism evaluated the worthiness of the content. This included the author's competence, honesty and biasness.

3.5 Data Analysis

In this study, data was analyzed qualitatively. After the data collection, as recommended by King et al, (1994), it was summarized because communicating in summaries is often easier and more meaningful to a reader than using the original data. This therefore meant that the summaries focused on the outcomes that were wished to be described and explained (King et al, 1994). Data analyzed included both primary and secondary. For the former, the responses from the key informants were based on two variables, democracy consolidation and CSOs. It also included that from the government as government forms an important connection between the two variables. For latter, independent academic papers with a discussion on democracy consolidation and CSOs were used. There is no universal paper that constitute what democracy consolidation entails, and even the role of CSOs in it. As far as they are being regarded as independent, their independence depended on objective academic interpretation. Therefore, the study had two categories and domains; democracy consolidation and civil society. After collecting the data using the given tools, it was coded into a list of observable implications of a theory (King et al., 1994) inductive

content analysis was applied resulting into the formulation of the above categories and domains. Again, inductive content analysis in this case was vital since it searched for multiple interpretations by considering diverse voices, alternative perspectives, oppositional reading or varied uses of texts examined (Krippendorf, 1980). This process entails open coding, creating categories and abstraction, the latter being formulating a general description of the research topic through generating categories (Robson, 1993). This further means that notes and headings are written in the text while reading it. As many headings as necessary are written down to describe all aspects of the content for open coding. Then the list of categories are grouped to reduce the number of domains (Burnard, 1991) which were Democracy Consolidation, civil society Organizations, Governance institutions, Democratization and Government of Malawi. When using this method it meant that meaning, words, meanings, pictures, symbols and themes that were communicated (Mouton, 2005) were analyzed. The evidence from the interviews played the significant role in shaping the analysis as the initial questions. According to Harris-White (2005): Reading through the responses, there was tagging of key phrases and text segments that corresponded to those in the questions asked. There was also noting of other phrases that seemed important but were unexpected, similarities in expression of the same concept, and continues iteratively to compare the categories and constructs that emerge through this process. In the process, the method sought to look for diversity of ideas, alternative perspectives, oppositional writings, and / or different uses of the texts by the respondents. In total, the study analyzed questionnaires from eleven respondents.

This chapter tackled the study design and methodology. Among others, it also looked at the sampling method, data collection and data analysis. This was a qualitative study which provided a history and explanatory analysis. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources and then summarized for analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter details the objective(s) in line with data collected. As already stated above, the main objective of this study is to find the role of CSOs in democracy consolidation in Malawi. To fulfil this, this chapter therefore looks at the respondents' understanding of democracy consolidation, opinion on the state of democracy consolidation and challenges being faced by CSOs in democracy consolidation.

4.2 The State of Democracy Consolidation in Malawi

There have been interesting responses from the respondents regarding this. The differences have been seen from the understanding of democracy consolidation. The indicators for the responses were; free and fair elections, respect for human rights, strong democratic institutions and an accountable government. Of the eleven respondents, six felt that democracy in Malawi is *being* consolidated, three felt that democracy in Malawi is not consolidated, one felt both can be observed with one emphasizing the point that a democracy can never be consolidated. Although it can be closely related to those who think democracy in Malawi is *being* consolidated, there is a difference. The latter assumes that there will be a time when it will be consolidated with the former dismissing this as a *never*.

Unsurprisingly, most of the respondents who are based in the CSOs think that democracy in Malawi is *being* consolidated as noted by one: “On the state of democracy, we are on a progressive path. Notwithstanding some capacity deficits, our institutions are constantly challenged to do better.” (CSO leader, Mzuzu, October 10, 2017). The leader takes into consideration the milestone changes that have been achieved throughout the history of democracy since 1994. Given examples include: First, President Bakili Muluzi’s open term / third term bids in 2001 / 2001, respectively. CSOs like PAC played a vital role in making sure that the democratic constitution was not violated upon and democracy in Malawi stood still. Second, the recent passing of Access to Information Bill which was advocated for by Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) – Malawi, which is a professional body of journalists in Malawi. The Bill faced hesitation from the government but in the end it went past parliament. It is vital to democracy consolidation as information plays a huge role in how people respond to the actions of those in power and also influences democratic attitudes and perceptions. Last, PAC recently also advocated for Electoral Reforms. The governing DPP government felt that the proposed reforms needed time and not rushed through parliament. Facing this hesitation, the quasi-religious organization settled for nationwide peaceful march which was slated for December 13, 2017. These were aimed at forcing government to bring the debate on Electoral Reforms to parliament. Although it did not result in the way PAC wanted, the fact that there was an action done by the Executive arm of government suggests the role and influence of CSOs in democratic processes.

It is interesting to note that all the examples where CSOs interplayed government in what is deemed democracy consolidation were confrontational. This brings forth

another aspect of democracy in Malawi, more specifically, its consolidation. It is clear that there is lack of trust between government and CSOs in most of the latter's governance interventions as noted by Presidential Advisor on CSOs and NGOs: "CSOs are pro-opposition" (The Nation newspaper, November 7, 2015, page 15). As a background to this, a group of CSOs which was being led by Billy Mayaya, Gift Trapence and Timothy Mtambo gave President Mutharika a 30 day ultimatum to respond to some challenges the country was going through. In response, Presidential Advisor on CSOs and NGOs said:

These calls are totally unjustified and the basis is feeble. For [Timothy] Mtambo, [Billy] Mayaya and [Gift] Trapence to give us a 30-day ultimatum to solve all challenges facing this country is unrealistic. To say that the President should resign if he fails to solve all problems is out of this world and incomprehensible. Why can't they be part of the solution to the challenges? The President cannot individually solve the problems alone because most of these problems require collective responsibility and I must ask CSOs not to assume responsibilities of the opposition parties. Why are they not condemning the K300 million extravagance at Parliament? (Chavula, 2015, p. 13)

"There is lack of trust between government and CSOs if one looks at history" (CSO leader, Mzuzu, October 10, 2017). Although government's view on CSOs has been exposed above, furthermore, government looks at CSOs as extensions of Western states in Africa. This complicates the relationship even more. As a result, government's attitude and perception on CSOs is affected. "Since funding is the main driver and key determinant of content, and funding is mostly foreign-sourced, much of the CSO agenda is likewise non-locally driven. Majority of CSOs are therefore extensions of Western ideologies" (Presidential Advisor on CSOs and NGOs,

Lilongwe). This, as already noted, happens with CSOs who are into governance activities. It results into resistance by government and consequently slows down consolidation process minding the fact that strength of institutions relies on government's nod. On the other hand, it will be a challenge to disassociate local CSOs / NGOs with Western support in terms of funding. There is barely local support for CSOs / NGOs. This signifies that the existing attitude and perception of government for CSOs/NGOs will continue, consequently spelling doom for democracy consolidation in Malawi.

This definitely puts CSOs in an awkward position. If they have to be given space and platform by government they have to be deemed relevant to government. But on the other hand, "As CSOs, we are voices of the voiceless. Our aim is to see government delivering to the needs of people. We do not compromise with that" (CSO leader, Lilongwe, August 15, 2017). From the onset, it suggests CSOs are ready to take on the government where it is failing. It is not them per se, but the voiceless people they claim to represent. The relationship of the two largely gives a picture of the present state of democracy consolidation in Malawi. But it should also be known that democratic processes are irrespective of a particular government. Therefore, as much as this can easily be concluded in the sight of the present political players, democracy consolidation is more about that.

Lastly, CSOs have been accused of not practicing what they preach. As such, they put themselves at a vulnerable position and creates a loophole where government can answer back. This further complicates the relationship of the two. Even more damaging, it demeans the credibility of CSOs in the eyes of government rendering

government unreceptive of interventions on democracy consolidation. Even though that is the case, an overall assessment by a Zomba based academician is that CSOs have done well, but quickly points out that much can still be done. One of their main challenges is lacking what they expect from government. For example, they are critical of party leaders clinging to positions and singlehandedly making decisions while on their side there is widespread of *founder's syndrome*. In this, most CSOs have had same leaders (founders) for years to the extent that the organization's position, policy and activeness depends on the founder.

From the above it can be noted that CSOs in Malawi are versed in the discourse of democracy consolidation. They have a general understanding of what it is comprised of and have activities and attitudes that are aimed at achieving. But CSOs everywhere, including Malawi, operate within the context of politics which is the realm of power. As much as they understand their limits, government is usually wary of political infiltration on the part of CSOs. "Government expects CSOs to be a bridge between citizens and leadership," (Presidential Advisor on CSOs and NGOs, Lilongwe, November 2, 2017). According to government, this has not been the case with CSOs blaming government of controlling and interfering tendencies. This is what can be called the state of democracy consolidation in Malawi. Both actors may understand democracy consolidation but there is a clear difference in the question of how to consolidate.

4.3 Understanding of Democracy Consolidation

This was aimed at collecting and synergizing the understanding of democracy consolidation among the interviewees. The understanding was a result of a basic understanding of democracy consolidation. Minding the fact that this study has provided several definitions on democracy consolidation, the information from the interviewees will help a lot in relating these two. The comparison will help in understanding democracy consolidation in the context of Malawi as far as the role of CSOs in understood in this topic.

The general understanding of democracy consolidation among the respondents was putting in place and solidifying of democratic institutions. Even more than that, the institutions are thought and seen to be functioning accordingly. In this case, democracy consolidation is not actor oriented anymore. It assumes a shift from democratization which involves several actors. At this stage, democracy is seen to have moved a step forward and is defined by how strong or weak the institutions are. But as already observed by Ojajorotu (2009), democracy in most African countries, including Malawi, is unstable due to weak institutions. Therefore, although this has been the most preferred definition for democracy consolidation, it is not the case in practice for Malawi as institutions remain weak rendering Malawi's democracy unstable

However some of the respondents understand democracy consolidation as the possibility for citizens to change government through the ballot. In principle, democracy means that there are a lot of actors in the name of political parties. In comparison to the one party system, which Malawi experienced between 1964 and

1993, in a democracy, people have options for those who can assume power. In addition, accountability is important in a democracy. People are ideally at the center of the decisions. This means that even though there are individuals in power, they are accountable to the electorates. If they are not working to the satisfaction of the voters, it means they will be voted out for. “Voting a government out simply means people are aware of what a democracy has to do for them” (CSO leader, Lilongwe, October 17, 2017). The only challenge with this is that such an understanding suggests that people are rational enough to know what they deserve from their democratic government. They are well versed in the process and have a full knowledge of what type of leaders are needed. But in a country like Malawi where literacy levels are low (62.7 percent), it is a challenge for most people to understand the democratic process in general. Over 80 percent of the country’s population lives in rural areas where access to some vital information on democracy is a challenge. With most votes being casted by the rural population, it means most vote out of other reasons, accountability of leaders not being one of the dominant. Therefore, a government may change, but that does not follow that it happened out of masses’ knowledge of democracy, therefore, not constituting democracy consolidation, rendering this understanding inadequate and misleading. In 2014, President Joyce Banda of People’s Party (PP) was voted out of power in an election won by Peter Mutharika of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). As said above, this change of government does not assume democracy consolidation in Malawi. Further, elections in themselves do not conclude democracy consolidation. This solidifies an interesting take by one respondent who said that it is possible to mistake authoritarian consolidation with democracy consolidation if elections are used as a gauge.

One has to be careful when analyzing events to do with democracies because some ‘democratic practices’ may actually consolidate authoritarianism. For instance, having elections for the sake of elections or having elections because they are due as stipulated in the constitution. When elections do not offer meaningful competition and realistic chances of opposition grabbing power, then they are ‘mock’ elections with potential of consolidating authoritarianism. (Academician, Zomba, September 6, 2017)

As said by one respondent, “Democracy is a government of people. Representation is therefore another aspect of democracy consolidation” (CSO leader, Mzuzu, October 10, 2017). By this, the leader was arguing that a democracy becomes it, and even consolidates when it is seen to be representing what people expect of it. The leader was putting into emphasis the point made by Oguine (2006) that for democracy in Africa to consolidate it needs leaders who are committed to an open, transparent, accountable government and are also oriented to respecting the rule of law. Although this is to an extent related to accountability, this point emphasizes on the people in power. It looks at them as enablers of an accountable government. This will follow citizen’s satisfaction and will help in consolidating democracy in a way one respondents said: “A democracy is consolidated when people feel satisfied and turns it into their way of life.” (Academician, Rumphi, August 8, 2017).

As prescribed by some scholars, regular elections are one aspect of democracy consolidation. Malawi, since becoming a democracy in 1994, has had elections in every five years. The last election in 2014 was the fifth. At the moment, the country is looking forward to the sixth election on May 21, 2019 which will be closely contested by governing DPP under President Peter Mutharika, main opposition MCP under

Lazarus Chakwera and newly formed United Transformation Movement (UTM) party under Vice President Saulos Chilima. According to the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), DPP won the election with 38.57 percent, MCP came second with 35.41 percent while UTM trailed third with 20.24 percent of the vote. There has never been a question of whether an election in Malawi will be held or not. They have always been there. Although it puts the country's democracy on the path of democracy consolidation, the understanding that consolidation is more than the ballot faults the country's efforts as this does not conclude the whole story. There is therefore a need for depth of institutionalizing beyond the electoral process, in Malawi (Beetham, 1994). This point was also agreed to by one CSO leader (Lilongwe, August 15, 2017) who said: "To the naïve, Malawi can give an impression that we are on the course of democracy consolidation. We have elections every five years. But democracy is more than that. Can we say democracy has consolidated when our institutions continuously face political interference?"

Perhaps, it is not being fair comparing Malawi to the universal standards of democracy consolidation. Some of the respondents think democracy consolidation is confusing in developing countries like Malawi where there are other primary needs to be met. The country has been a democracy now for slightly over two decades. It is therefore unfair to start imposing standards of democracy on it by comparing it with countries that have been democracies for centuries. By this, the silent assumption was that democracy consolidation can be *situational* at times, subject to geography, history and time. It follows the wide understanding among scholars that the nature and application of democracy, among others, depends on factors like the history and political culture of the country. Malawi falls within as well. Coming from a one party

state for three decades, the country is still struggling to replace the repressive ways of the old political regime. This suggests that the country has a long way to go, invoking the understanding that, in principle, a democracy is not supposed to fully consolidate. It is a process which is open ended and responds to the present needs of the society. With the consolidation standards remaining constant throughout, it complicates the understanding. It is from this that scholars like O'Donnell's (1996) suggestion that consolidation must be avoided altogether makes sense. The focus must be on the types of democracy which ably responds to the existing openness including that of Malawi. Even so, in the Malawi situation, where institutions are fragile, unstable and weak, it is another challenge for its democracy to come out as a single type.

If ever Malawi can be said to have consolidated, then it is so as an electoral democracy. How can we talk of strong institutions, people demanding accountability and participating in the processes when they still lack basic needs like food and clothes? (CSO leader, Lilongwe, October 17, 2017)

This brings to the last major discourse in democracy consolidation in countries like Malawi: Such minimalist understanding of democracy deviates from its scholarly understanding. There is no question that for democracy as a whole to flourish it needs people's participation. Already Malawi is a case of failure to democratize from below. Its history in Malawi is much related to the urban population which was caught up in the winds of change that swept across Africa at the end of the Cold War symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. Much of the rural population was left out during the early stages. To this very day, they remain participants mostly as electorates. Already left out in the democratization process during the early 1990s, and the constant struggle to find means of survival, it means democracy is not the

primary concern of the rural masses. In other words, there cannot be democracy consolidation if the general population is not able to fend for itself. “Poverty levels are greatly affecting people’s participation in democracy. Literally, they are left out in the process” (Academician, Mzuzu, October 17, 2017). With clarity that for democracy consolidation to take place depends on the participation of the general population, Malawi has a long way to go. It first needs people to be lifted out of poverty. Malawi’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) averaged at 2.70 percent as of 2016. This minimal change means that it will take years for the country to achieve the developed country status and for the wealth the redistributed to the over 70 percent of the population.

4.4 Challenges facing CSOs in Malawi

4.4.1 Limited staff and technical capacity

Limited staff and technical capacity has been a major challenge facing CSOs in Malawi. The scope of work done by them requires enough work force bearing in mind that some aim at a national impact. It therefore means there will be limited work load and this greatly affects performance. The vigilance identity that CSOs have been known for requires them to deal with pressing issues almost at all times to make sure there is relevance in the cause. Further, this challenge influences the organizations’ reputation. “If there is no required technical staff, it means there will be limited delivery. Coming from organizations that are engaged in activities that aim at democracy consolidation, in a larger picture, this can also be seen as one challenge towards CSOs’ democracy consolidation in Malawi” (CSO leader, Lilongwe, October 17, 2017).

4.4.2 Lack of networking and trust among CSOs

There has been a steady growth of the number of CSOs in Malawi since 1994. As already noted, these are in different operational areas. Their role in complimenting government's efforts cannot be overemphasized enough. The growth in number has increased the possibility of work duplication. This means several CSOs working on a similar activity in the same area but in isolation. These have challenged results and impact of the project. It also ends up bringing confusion to the communities on the ground. "This emanates from the perceived competition for significance and funding. Activities on democracy consolidation are more to do with advocacy and working with concerned citizens in knowledge, information and skills sharing" (CSO leader, Mzuzu, October 17, 2017). For advocacy to achieve a huge impact, there is always a need for networking and numbers. But that has not been the case with CSOs working in some areas like governance and democracy consolidation. Most respondents were quick to rightly point out that democracy consolidation depends on several aspects. The understanding is that one can consolidate democracy by working with women while other can do the same working with district councils, for example. Looking at the differences in the people being targeted, it would therefore be a challenge to form a working network that will work towards democracy consolidation. The general assumption was that there is an understanding on what democracy consolidation is and despite working in isolation, all ends up in achieving the same. This may look like a challenge on paper, but according to CSOs, it is not. What is important for them is common understanding of objectives and not formation of networks per se.

4.4.3 Focus on short term than long term goals

CSOs have been accused of funding infidelity. They mostly go where there is funding, and in the long run, it compromises their long term vision and goal. Organizations are oriented towards sustaining themselves and end up going for short term activities which covers the given time for the constant change in both political and social terrain. As a way of making a project successful, community engagement is key. There is need for all the local and traditional structures to be involved so that community members feel ownership of the process as well as the results. But “the challenge has been organizations implementing projects that are short term leaving communities not fully aware of its necessity and also sustenance. Thus within a short period of time after phasing out the project, the state of things reverses to prior the project” (CSO leader, Lilongwe, August 15, 2017). Projects on democracy consolidation ought to be continuous regarding the nature of democracy consolidation itself. There will always be new challenges to be addressed with regards to democracy consolidation. The fact that democracy consolidation has been a topic in Malawi’s civil society movement since 1994, it risks getting overridden by new and ‘relevant’ problems. But this has not been the case, and it will not be the case minding the fact that democracy consolidation activities are done in wide approaches. In addition, the existence of CSOs in Malawi has been as a result of democracy. Even uplifting the economic status of women and the youth, for example, is an act for democracy consolidation. As already noted, it is a challenge for an individual who is living for survival to care about democratic processes.

4.4.4 Lack of strategy in working with government and donors

CSOs operate under the government of Malawi and most of their activities are funded by international donors. As such, there is a need for a proper strategy on the part of CSOs in how best to work with these stakeholders. This is regardless of the antagonistic relationship that sometimes exists between government and CSOs. But much of the blame has been rested on government. CSOs claim that there is heavy interference of the state in their activities. “There is a growing number of State Civil Society (SCS) – state bankrolled groups that are masquerading as civil society groups. “This has compromised our work and put democracy at stake as it continues to incarnate in various civilian forms” (CSO leader, Mzuzu, October 20, 2017). But CSOs have also taken the blame on the dwindling relationship they usually have with government with their seemingly ‘anti-government’ approach. It has resulted into loss of trust especially the existing “cosmetic governance structures as well as CSOs colluding with politicians by taking up positions in government” (CSOs leader, Lilongwe, October 15, 2017).

4.4.5 Being funded

Being a developing country, with Gross Domestic Product worth 5.4 billion US dollars as of 2016, with a world economic value of 0.01 percent, it means Malawi barely has enough resources to sustain its public service delivery. Therefore, it relies on aid from foreign government and grants from international lending institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB). This is also the same with CSOs. They too get their funding exclusively from foreign organizations and governments. The support these

two get reaches out not only to developmental activities but also on democracy and governance processes.

The main observed challenge with foreign aid is that it influences content of activities, positions and even behavior of CSOs as far as democracy consolidation is concerned as argued by Presidential Advisor on CSOs and NGOs (Lilongwe, November 2, 2017). “Since funding is the main driver and key determinant of content, and funding is mostly foreign-sourced, much of the CSO agenda is likewise non-locally driven. Majority of CSOs are therefore extensions of Western ideologies.” Thus the consolidation ends up to be a rubber stamp of the Western agents, in this view. It therefore compromises the quality and nature of democracy in the developing world, Malawi in particular. This also fuels the antagonistic relationship between CSOs and government as they become battleground for government and Western interests.

On the other hand, despite controversies surrounding foreign funding of CSOs, donor fatigue is also another challenge. If democracy consolidation relies on the donor’s gesture it turns out to be unsustainable. This entails that the aid tap will one day dry up and this will leave Malawi’s democracy consolidation project in limbo. “The institutions will no longer hold as, presently, instructions, directions and intentions of donors orient policies and activities of government and CSOs, respectively” (CSO leader, Lilongwe, October 15, 2017). A good example is in May 2002. IMF refused to release US\$47 million of the US\$55 million (the second instalment of a three-year poverty reduction and growth facility), due to concerns over transparency and good governance (EISA Research Report No. 1060). It is not an ideal situation for activities towards democracy consolidation to be controlled by outside funding. In a nutshell, as Malawi, we are not in control of what has to happen with our democracy.

This chapter discussed the study findings by looking at the concept of democracy held by the respondents, the state of democracy consolidation in Malawi and challenges facing CSOs in Malawi. It has widely been found out that for most of the respondents, democracy consolidation means the stability of democracy. By this it means democracy is widely regarded as the only viable system of government. It also appreciated CSOs important role in the emergence of democracy in Malawi. Therefore, their continual efforts for democracy and its consolidation is both historical and presently important. The role of CSOs in democracy consolidation has been seen to be vital. CSOs are one of the important agents of democracy consolidation in Malawi. But as noted, this is happening amidst several challenges being faced by CSOs and an antagonistic relationship between CSOs and government. However, they both agree that democracy consolidation is necessary and ideally they both work towards that goal.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to examine the CSOs in democracy consolidation in Malawi. This was looked upon bearing in mind several challenges CSOs in Malawi meet in terms of governance and democracy activism. To achieve the main objective, the study looked at the development of democracy in Malawi since its inception in 1994. Building from this, this chapter therefore aims at prescribing conclusions and recommendations on how best CSOs in Malawi can further help in consolidation of democracy in Malawi. In addition, it was also highlight how CSOs can effectively work with other stakeholders like government and donors in ironing out antagonism and mistrust that exists among them.

5.2 Conclusion

A thorough look at the discussion of findings in Chapter four has confirmed the hypothesis that CSOs have a role in the consolidation of democracy in Malawi. There is direct evidence linking activities and interventions by CSOs in Malawi with what is deemed as democracy consolidation. This has been witnessed through their funded activities which are aimed at working on governance with different stakeholders, including government and general public. They have engaged the latter in sharing information and knowledge on, inter alia, what democracy means to an individual citizen. At times when the tenets of democracy were threatened by activities of

government and its political leadership, CSOs have on several occasions intervened to make sure the status quo remains or gets improved. The study has therefore found out that a strong civil society provides a constant check on the quality supply of democracy, in the process, consolidating it.

The study has also unearthed some challenges CSOs in Malawi are going through in democracy consolidation in Malawi. It has been found out that there is an antagonistic relationship with government. Prominently, they are branded as ‘pro-opposition’ and lacking the same values they preach. This, therefore, stipulates the vanity that CSOs activities endure especially when government deems them ‘not developmental oriented’. This challenge is also connected to the supposed influence in content that Western donors have over the work of CSOs. Besides being thought of as agents of political opposition by government, they are also seen as agents of the Western priorities. This renders their efforts mountainous as they have to work amidst suspicion of their existence and work. More detrimentally, CSOs are facing challenges from within. Among others, lack of networking and competition for funding have resulted into their work defined in quantity and not quality. There are several activities aimed democracy consolidation in Malawi. But working in isolation has proved ineffective to the aim despite their claim that it does not.

The nature of democracy in several African countries, including Malawi, has vindicated the challenge CSOs are facing in democracy consolidation. Malawi has largely been classified as an electoral democracy. It has laws and institutions that purportedly respect the rights of an individual, provides checks and balances on governance and helps in preventing a reversal to autocratic rule through satisfying

people with delivery of democracy per demand. But as noted, its practice is far from what is on paper.

In a general overview, despite the enduring challenges, it is encouraging to note that there is evidence from this study indicating that CSOs in Malawi have had a great role in democratization, and presently, in democracy consolidation. This shows the importance of CSOs in a democracy, and more importantly, a strong civil society. It can therefore be safely concluded that CSOs in Malawi are important agents in the drive to consolidate democracy in Malawi.

5.3 Recommendations

From the above findings, the study therefore makes the following recommendations: First, this study has established that democracy in Malawi is facing challenges as far as consolidation is concerned. CSOs, therefore, have to do more in order for them to be trusted agents of democracy consolidation. It has been found out that there is a common perception of CSOs being influenced in content by donors and opposition. This has compromised the general perception to CSOs. There is, therefore, a need for CSOs to distance themselves from these by acting independent and staying relevant. Second, the function of democracy goes beyond governance and its consolidation. CSOs need to go down on the ground and meet the common challenges people face every day. Thus democracy's tenant of accountability, among others, is there to make government socially and economically accountable to its citizens. Therefore, making sure government provides social needs to people is one way of making sure democracy is consolidating.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Semi Structured Interview Guide for CSOS on Democracy Consolidation

My name is **Wonderful Mkhutche** and I am a second year Master of Arts Political Science student at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I am conducting a research study to examine the role of the civil society Organizations in democracy consolidation in Malawi. You have been selected as one of the people who can give me information on the subject in question. Please assist me to obtain information for the study by answering the following questions. Your responses will solely be used for research purpose.

Are you willing to be interviewed? YES / NO

Thank you for your time. For the purpose of this study I need to ask you some questions regarding the topic understudy.

Date	
Name of interviewee	
Organization	

Part A: Democracy Consolidation

1. Looking at the history of Malawi since 1994 when it became a democracy, how do you define democracy consolidation?
2. In your understanding of democracy consolidation, what are some of the necessary factors that make it possible?
3. Assessing from Malawi's twenty three years as a democracy, do you think it has consolidated?

4. We are now in 2017, what do you think are the challenges democracy consolidation in Malawi has had to deal with?
5. Democracy in Malawi also came with CSOs. Do you think they have been important agents of democracy consolidation?
6. From the question above, what few examples can you cite if CSOs have been important agents in democracy consolidation?
7. Some scholars say that CSOs have lost the trust of people as important agents in democracy consolidation, do you agree or not?
8. If you agree, what do you have been some of the contributing factors for the loss of trust?
9. What has been the impact of loss of trust on democracy consolidation since CSOs are regarded as important agents in democracy consolidation?
10. Lastly, what can CSOs do to regain this trust from the people they work with / for?

Part B: Activities being done by the CSOs for democracy consolidation

11. Since your inception as a CSO, have you been doing any activities that are geared towards democracy consolidation?
12. In your experience with democracy and activities, why do you think Malawi democracy has to be consolidated?
13. Some scholars argue that governments do not trust CSOs with their democracy consolidation activities. How has been your relationship with the government in this area?
14. What has been the approach in your activities; top-bottom or bottom-top?
15. Basing from your question above, why did you choose the approach?

16. What benefits has such an approach helped in your democracy consolidation drive?

Part C: Challenges CSOs in Malawi are facing

17. As a CSO working in Malawi, how have these following challenges affected your democracy consolidation drive?

- (a) Limited staff and technical capacity?
- (b) Lack of networking and trust among CSOs?
- (c) The urge to focus activities for short term goals than long term, as a means of surviving the environment?
- (d) Lack of established strategy in how to work with government and donors?
- (e) Being funded by international donors who are sometimes perceived as influencing content of your activities?

18. Do you think the existence of the challenges have in any way positively contributed to you being agents of democracy consolidation? If YES, how?

Thank you

Appendix II: Semi Structured Interview Guide for Academicians on Democracy Consolidation

My name is **Wonderful Mkhutche** and I am a second year Master of Arts Political Science student at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I am conducting a research study to examine the role of the civil society Organizations in democracy consolidation in Malawi. You have been selected as one of the people who can give me information on the subject in question. Please assist me to obtain information for the study by answering the following questions. Your responses will solely be used for research purpose.

Date	
Name of interviewee	
Place of work	

Part A: Democracy Consolidation

1. In your understanding of politics in Malawi, how do you define democracy consolidation
2. Why do you think Malawi has to consolidate its democracy?
3. What are some of the necessary factors that make democracy consolidation necessary?
4. From your assessment, do you think Malawi democracy has consolidated?
Please, explain your answer.
5. Acknowledging the existence of CSOs in a democratic Malawi, do you think they are playing a part in democracy consolidation?

Part B: Activities being done by the CSOs for democracy consolidation

6. Scholars argue that people have lost trust in CSOs activities geared towards democracy consolidation. How do you think this loss of trust affects democracy consolidation by the CSOs?
7. From above, what do you think is the people's perception in CSOs as agents of democracy consolidation?
8. Assessing from past and present results of their activities, where do you think CSOs have to act more for them to play an effective part in democracy consolidation?

Part C: Challenges CSOs in Malawi are facing

9. CSOs in Malawi are facing several challenges, as indicated below. What do you think are the solutions to them?
 - (a) Limited staff and technical capacity?
 - (b) Lack of networking and trust among CSOs?
 - (c) The urge to focus activities for short term goals than long term, as a means of surviving the environment?
 - (d) Lack of established strategy in how to work with government and donors?
 - (e) Being funded by international donors who are sometimes perceived as influencing content of your activities?
10. In general, how have the challenges above affected the work of CSOs as agents of democracy consolidation?

Thank you

Appendix III: List of Respondents

NAME	ORGANIZATION / INSTITUTION
Father Henry Saindi	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
Charles Kajoloweka	Youth and Society
Timothy Mtambo	Center for Human Rights and Rehabilitation
John Chawinga	Danish Church Aid
Robert Phiri	Public Affairs Committee
Habiba Osman	United Nations Women
Billy Mayaya	Civil Rights Activist
Mavuto Bamusi	Government of Malawi
Chifundo Kamba	University of Livingstonia
Judith Mwandumba	Mzuzu University
Michael Chasukwa	University of Malawi – Chancellor College