

**EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP: PEDAGOGY
AND SCHOOL PRACTICES IN MALAWIAN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS**

Doctor of Philosophy (Social Studies Education) Thesis

By

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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

To my late parents, Patrick and Suzanna Namphande, for their perseverance and commitment to the course of my education and that of my brothers and sisters; and to the memory of my sister, Doreen, and my brothers, Philip and Patrick (Jnr).

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis reports of a study on education for democratic citizenship in a cultural setting characterised by vertical relations between children and adults, and also an educational context where secondary schools belong to a hierarchy of categories with distinct differences in status, resources, and student abilities. Following the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in Malawi in 1993, the country introduced citizenship education in secondary schools through social studies to teach skills and values that would enable students participate actively as citizens of a democracy. Using the multiple case study approach, three schools belonging to different categories namely national, district, and community day secondary schools, were studied to establish whether classroom practices in social studies lessons and school practices are developing future citizens for democracy in Malawi after 15 years of education for democratic citizenship. The study collected data through lesson observations, observation of school practices, interviews, focus group discussions, and review of documents. School practices were compared to explore if the secondary education system, with its known hierarchical categorisation of schools, is developing similar citizens for one democratic country. Using the theory of *critical pedagogy*, the study found major variations in classroom and school practices. School type and school organisation influenced classroom practices in that these factors facilitated or hindered efforts for acquisition of participatory skills and dispositions. While all schools provided spaces for students to participate in school decisions and lead democratic lives, the participation was found to be problematic because it was mediated through various mechanisms specific to each school. The study found that

the school is a site fraught with contradictions. In particular, education for democratic citizenship brought to the forefront various kinds of tension between the orthodox practices of social reproduction and democratic demands of social reconstruction. Further tension was manifested in a contest between students' claims to their rights and maintenance of school discipline. The study argues that existing variations in schools result in students learning remarkably different lessons and getting socialised to distinct citizenship roles. Consequently, each school appears to be developing its own kind of citizen. The study raises questions about the rhetoric of education for democracy and citizen equality in Malawi when the country's future citizens are socialised into a culture of segregation through an education system that privileges students in national secondary schools while marginalising their counterparts in community day secondary schools.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
DEC	Distance Education Centre
GPF	General Purpose Fund
JCE	Junior Certificate of Education
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MCDE	Malawi College of Distance Education
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
MYP	Malawi Young Pioneers
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education
PTA	Parents- Teachers Association
TEC	Technical Education College
TRF	Textbook Revolving Fund
TTC	Teacher Training College
UUREC	University of Ulster Research and Ethics Committee

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Chapter overview

Democracy has been gaining ground as a system of governance across the world (Davies, 1999). A shift towards democracy has been witnessed in politics, economics, and education; and the 1990s witnessed the highest growth in formal democratic states from 25% in 1973 to 68% in 1992 (Davies, 1999). This was largely due to the collapse of communism, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the fall of military and civilian dictatorships in South East Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa (Harber & Trafford, 1999; Heater, 1999). Following this global democratisation, there was a concern to not only “create democratic political institutions at the level of the state but also to use education to develop a more participant and democratic citizenry” (Harber & Trafford, 1999, p. 47). As Hinchey (2010, p. 25-6) argues “no democracy can continue to survive without the strong support of a citizenry invested in its survival”. In Malawi, democracy was reintroduced in 1993, after 73 years as a British protectorate and 25 years of one-party autocratic rule (Chiponda, 2007). In line with Hinchey’s (2010) argument, Malawi introduced social studies in the secondary school curriculum in 1998 “to provide students with skills which [would] enable them to actively participate as citizens of a democracy” (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. v). This study, therefore, explored the role of three Malawian public secondary schools, belonging to contrasting socio-economic categories, in developing democratic citizenship skills and dispositions in learners after over 15 years of education for

democratic citizenship. In line with the citizenship principle of equality, the study further explored if schools belonging to different categories were developing a similar kind of citizen for one democratic Malawi.

In this chapter I present my professional career and motivation for undertaking this study; and the context of the study, starting with the framework for the Malawi curriculum and problematizing the centralisation of key educational processes. In examining the framework, I discuss the values of education, national goals of education and the role played by standardised national examinations in education in Malawi. Under secondary education, which is the focus of the present study, I discuss how the country's political history influenced the segregation of schools into three categories which might have implications for education for democratic citizenship. In relation to Malawi's political history, I further discuss citizenship education initiatives that prevailed in secondary schools before the advent of multiparty democracy. Thereafter, I present aims of the study and research questions. Finally, I present the organisation of the thesis.

My professional career and motivation for the study

As I undertook this study, I brought with me my experience in the field of education which without doubt had a bearing upon this research. I have been involved, in the field of education, in various roles since I graduated from the University of Malawi in 1995. I have worked as a secondary school geography teacher, Senior Education Methods Advisor, and Principal Education Methods Advisor responsible for social studies and humanities. I am currently involved in teacher education particularly as a Lecturer in Curriculum and Teaching Studies at Chancellor College of the University of Malawi. My areas of interest are social studies education and geography education.

This experience has brought me into constant contact with schools, student teachers and with the national curriculum and its implementation within Malawi. This experience motivated me to undertake a study on the role of the school system in developing active citizens for Malawi's newly introduced democracy.

1.1 Background to the study

Social studies is a relatively new subject in the Malawi secondary school curriculum. As stated earlier, it was introduced only in 1998, following the country's change from one-party dictatorship to multiparty democracy. In line with this transformation, Malawi adopted a constitution that contains a bill of rights and other provisions, which in turn, necessitated the intensification of civic education in the country. The education system responded by introducing social studies as a subject in primary and secondary schools to teach values and practices of democratic citizenship. This reform, however, cannot be taken for granted. For education institutions to develop democratic citizens, it is not sufficient that schools teach about the values of democracy; they must also exemplify democracy and its values. In other words, schools and classrooms should themselves practice democracy (DeCesare, 2014; Galston, 2004; Glaeser, Ponzetto & Shliefer, 2007; Heater, 2004; Parry, 2003). The challenge is, however, that Africa's history offers little precedence for citizens to learn democracy in their national institutions such as schools (Chonzi, 2007). This is due to the history of dictatorships and the traditional roles of elders who are considered as fountains of wisdom that must be obeyed unconditionally (Tabulawa, 2013). An additional challenge is that social studies was introduced in a system whereby secondary schools are arranged in a hierarchy according to categories. This works against the citizenship and democratic principle of equality. Considering that a school is a micro society within the larger society, it was necessary to carry out a

study that could establish whether pedagogy and school practices are, in reality, providing and nurturing democratic experiences to students in Malawi. To understand the context in which the school system has been challenged to teach democratic citizenship, a framework of the Malawi school curriculum and a background of forms of civic education that existed before multiparty democracy was introduced in the country are presented below.

1.1.1 A framework for the Malawi curriculum

This framework outlines the values and national goals of education, the categories of skills to be acquired by students, and the levels of education provision. It elaborates secondary education further by providing core subject combinations. The role of national examinations and their effects on school culture is also explained. The framework, furthermore, explains the position of social studies in the secondary school curriculum.

Values and goals of education in Malawi

Modern curriculum design is a particularly challenging task not least because societies are confronted by a lot of issues which need to be addressed by the curriculum; even more challenging in a Malawi emerging from dictatorship. McKernan (2008) describes designing a curriculum as an artistic venture, a political event and a value- driven exercise. This explains why it is apparent that some curricula may combine several models in order to come up with an ideal curriculum that will attempt to respond to complex social realities. To highlight this challenge, Brunner (1982) observes that construction of curricula precedes a world of changing social, cultural and political conditions and that goals of education and aspirations of students keep changing too. It is, therefore, necessary for a curriculum to balance

uniformity with variety to account for cultural, social and political diversity. Malawi is not spared from this dilemma.

Values of education in Malawi can be classified into personal development and national development. National curriculum documents envision that education is a catalyst for both individual and national development (Ministry of Education, 1998). It is argued that education is meant to equip individuals with skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable them play their role effectively to promote and sustain socio-economic development of the nation. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) acknowledges that education is a key for attaining prosperity. Education is “a catalyst for socio-economic development, industrial growth and an instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and the voiceless” (Government of Malawi, 2005, p. 42). The Government of Malawi contends that the curriculum is developed after a careful understanding of the aspirations of the individual and the nation, and these are translated into aims and objectives. From the objectives, content is identified followed by learning experiences that facilitate the learning process (Ministry of Education, 1998). It can, however, be argued that for a country with a population of over 13 million people (Government of Malawi, 2008) and with wide cultural, political, and social differences, it is a challenge to develop a common national curriculum that balances the needs of individuals and the nation.

National education goals in Malawi are presented in seven main categories of skills which cut across the three levels of education from primary, secondary to tertiary. This approach maintains continuity and progression as one advances from one level to another. The categories of skills are: citizenship skills, ethical and socio-cultural skills, economic development and environmental management skills, occupational

and entrepreneurship skills, practical skills, creative and resourcefulness skills, and scientific and technological development skills (Ministry of Education, 1998). At primary level there is a prescribed list of subjects that all schools offer. In contrast, at secondary level, there is a list of eight core subjects that are mandatory to all schools namely: agriculture, biology, chemistry, English, geography, history, mathematics, and physics. The expectation is that students who effectively study the core subjects will acquire basic and essential learning skills (Skilbeck, 1982) and, therefore, attain the seven categories of skills outlined in the national goals of education. There are several elective subjects, including social studies that schools offer depending on availability of resources. That social studies is an elective subject immediately puts into question the commitment of government to achieving education for democratic citizenship.

Formal education in Malawi

The Malawian formal education system, excluding pre-primary schools, follows an 8-4-4 structure: that is 8 years of primary, 4 years of secondary and up to 4 years of tertiary education. Primary education has three phases: infant phase (primary 1 and 2), junior phase (primary 3 and 4), and senior phase (primary 5 to 8). The official age range for primary schooling is 6 to 13 years (Government of Malawi, 2011). At the end of the primary cycle, pupils sit for a national standardised examination - the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE). Due to limited access of secondary school places, the PSLCE determines pupils' graduation into secondary school (Government of Malawi, 2011). Since the introduction of multiparty democracy, primary education has officially been free but not compulsory. In practice, however, parents and communities contribute income and labour towards school infrastructure (Rose, 2003).

Secondary school education follows a four-year structure consisting of two levels, junior secondary and senior secondary. Both levels run for two years. Standardised national examinations are used to determine eligibility for students' entry into the next level. Before it's phasing out as a cost-cutting measure, successful completion of junior secondary was marked by receipt of the Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) and successful completion of senior secondary leads to the award of the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). The official secondary school age range is 14 to 17 years. Of interest to this study is the fact that secondary school students are expected to graduate when they are about to reach the legal voting age of 18 years. Grades obtained at MSCE determine eligibility for entry into tertiary education (Government of Malawi, 2011).

Tertiary education is offered at different levels. These include Universities, Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) and Technical Education Colleges (TECs). University level education is structured to last for four years; TECs take three years while TTCs take two years.

The Malawi Government, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), is responsible for public primary, secondary and primary teacher education in TTCs. Secondary school teachers are trained in public and private universities. The Ministry of Trade and Vocational training is responsible for all TECs. It should be noted that government also encourages private provision of education. Education in private institutions usually cost more than that of public institutions and there is a wide variation in the quality of provision (Rose, 2005; Zeitlyn, Lewin, Chimombo & Meke, 2015). National curricula for primary, secondary and primary teacher education are centrally developed by the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), an agency of MoEST. Considering that the curriculum is prescribed to schools, there is

limited teacher and school involvement in its development. Although there is consultation and inclusion of teachers in syllabus development panels, the majority of schools and teachers are likely to feel side-lined especially in the light of the large number of schools and teachers in the country. It can, therefore, be presumed that the limited involvement of teachers in curriculum development may have negative effects on teacher motivation and commitment to implementation of curriculum innovations. Bearing in mind that the present study has secondary schools as its primary focus, secondary education is discussed first before tackling social studies and citizenship education. Before that, however, the place of standardised national examinations in formal education in Malawi is briefly discussed.

Standardised national examinations

The Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) is an arm of MoEST responsible for summative assessment and certification. It develops and administers all public examinations, covering primary, secondary, primary teacher education, and technical education. High-stakes standardised national examinations play a pivotal role in education (Ydesen, 2014). In Malawi, access and continuity from one level of education to another is determined by how well a learner performs in national examinations. Furthermore, the public judges the credibility of schools depending on the outcome of national examinations. For example, at primary education level, a primary school is judged as good if it sends many pupils to secondary schools. This situation, therefore, creates competition among schools and among pupils due to limited access to secondary education. Table 1 highlights the problem of access to secondary schools by comparing the number of pupils in primary 8 with those in secondary form 1 in the year 2014/ 2015.

Table 1: Pupil enrolment in primary 8 and secondary form 1 in 2014/2015

Level of education	Pupil enrolment
Primary (Standard 8)	260,901
Secondary (Form 1)	95,000

Source: Government of Malawi, 2015

Similarly at secondary school level, national examinations play a major role in school life. Students' performance at MSCE determines their advancement to tertiary education institutions. More discussion on secondary education, which is the focus of this study, follows in section 1.1.2 below.

1.1.2 Secondary school education

The aim of secondary education reflects the broader aims of national education. In addition, secondary education is aimed at enabling the child to develop into an adult with a sound mind and body, because the student is in transition from childhood to adulthood, (Ministry of Education, 1998). The secondary education goals are consistent with the national goals of education and are classified into the seven categories of skills with a further elaboration of student behaviours under each category. To achieve these goals/ aims, a subject-based approach is followed through which students experience *basic and essential learning* (Skilbeck, 1982). MoEST provides guidelines for core subjects that all schools should offer and the number of periods (usually of 40 minute duration) per week allocated to each subject. Most students study up to 8 subjects at senior secondary level, but require passes in at least 6 subjects, including English, to attain MSCE. In spite of having a core curriculum for all secondary schools in the country, it has been argued that students' essential learning and experiences vary due to differences in facilities available in schools of different categories (MacJessie- Mbewe & Kholowa, 2010).

Categories of public secondary schools

Public secondary schools are categorised into three which the present study finds noteworthy because their development was influenced by the political history of Malawi, and that they form a hierarchy with national secondary schools at the top, district secondary schools at the intermediate level, and community day secondary schools (CDSS) at the bottom. Before these categories are explained, it is also worth noting that the British protectorate government in Malawi (then Nyasaland) neglected the task of providing education to natives, leaving it to Christian missionaries (Banda, 1982; Lamba, 2010). However, in practice, the missionaries, focussed on primary education whose main aim was to enable the natives attain basic literacy skills, for reading the bible. Consequently, the development of secondary education suffered tremendously as testified by the fact that Malawi's first secondary school, which was built in Blantyre, was opened only in 1941 (Lamba, 2010). From this year onward a few other secondary schools were opened mostly by missionaries, with government influence limited to development of educational policy and the provision of grants-in-aid. By the time of independence in 1964, only 4 secondary schools were government-owned while the rest were grant-aided and run by missionaries. Overall, the schools were not only few but they also had a national catchment area, hence the label national secondary school which is the concern of the section that immediately follows.

National secondary schools

As noted, national schools were opened in the colonial era. Their aim was to train a selection of the natives for higher education to prepare them for leadership positions in the private and public sectors (Lamba, 2010). National schools, therefore, are elite

schools with the following attributes: they are few; they offer boarding facilities which are necessary in order to serve a countrywide catchment area; their facilities are far better than those of schools in the other two categories; they get the first tier of students following performance at PSLCE; and, in turn, they produce most of the students selected to public universities. They are, in academic terms, the best public schools in the country, with most of them being grant-aided. Thus, a typical national secondary school has strict discipline regimes and is relatively well resourced with facilities such as laboratories for basic science subjects, functioning libraries, and computer rooms. Having the best facilities and best students, however, creates high expectations from the public especially regarding performance in national examinations. Most national schools register almost 90% pass rate at MSCE. They, however, have limited interaction with local communities because the students do not come from the concerned communities. They are the most diverse in terms of students' ethnic backgrounds which reflect their national catchment area.

District secondary schools

District schools were opened by the one-party government after Malawi attained political independence from Great Britain in 1964. During the fight for independence, the Malawi Congress Party, which later formed the government pledged to build at least a secondary school in each district once independence was attained (Lamba, 2010). Thus, when the present study was being conducted, all the 28 districts, except 2 that had just been declared as districts recently, had at least one secondary school. The aim of the district schools was to provide middle level manpower to fill posts that were vacated by the colonial masters (Lamba, 2010; Mafela & Mgadla, 2000). Therefore, the schools are allocated the second tier of students following performance at PSLCE. Most district schools offer boarding facilities because they also have a

wide catchment area, albeit a much smaller one than of their national counterparts. District schools are wholly owned by government and they receive monthly financial subventions from the national treasury. Generally, they are moderately resourced with laboratories for basic science subjects, and a library and most of them have a less strict discipline regime than that of national schools. They send a much lower number of students to public universities than their national counterparts do. The public's expectation of district schools is that the majority of students enrolled in them should attain MSCE. Because of the nature of their catchment areas, many district secondary schools tend to have a homogeneous ethnic composition. Generally, they have limited interaction with surrounding communities.

Community day secondary schools (CDSSs)

It is worth mentioning that prior to the advent of multiparty democracy, national and district schools were the only type of public secondary schools available in Malawi. Pupils who did not get selected to public secondary schools and could alternatively not afford to enrol with private schools, used to enrol with Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE), another arm of MoEST. The MCDE issued study materials through the post and offered tutorials to students in Distance Education Centres (DEC) located in many areas across the country. When multiparty democracy was introduced, the new government took two populist steps regarding education. It introduced free primary education, and converted all DECs to CDSSs. The aim of the latter was to increase access to secondary education by accommodating a large number of pupils coming out of primary school at that time. Another aim was to create a unified system of secondary education (Kadzamira & Ross, 2001). However, the CDSSs were not correspondingly supported with relevant facilities. The CDSSs are not supported with any government funding hence they operate from a position of

minimal resources relying on the meagre school fees collected from students. The schools get the third tier of students depending on PSLCE performance. Compared to the other categories, CDSSs register the lowest MSCE pass rates, and their students are rarely selected into public universities. As suggested by their name, they are found in most communities hence the absence of boarding facilities in them. CDSSs have the lowest status among the categories of secondary schools. Mostly, they lack laboratories although they offer some science subjects, and some do not have a library. Many have limited furniture and, as a result, some of their students sit on hard and dirty floors. Most of the resources that are used for running the schools are provided by parents through labour and financial contributions. CDSSs are locally found, serve local communities, and have substantial interaction with community members, hence cultural influences maybe more noticeable in them than in national and district schools.

It has to be observed that although the national and district schools have remarkable differences in their attributes, they are collectively known as *conventional secondary schools* because they were purposively constructed and resourced to serve as secondary schools (de Hoop, 2011). This term distinguishes them from CDSSs which were converted from DECAs and developed through community initiatives. MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010) argue and show evidence that secondary education in Malawi reproduces social inequality in that children of the poor and those of the elite are educated in CDSSs and in conventional secondary schools respectively.

The categories outlined above result in different expectations from the public which may, in turn, influence practices and roles played by students in the different schools. With such an uneven educational landscape, it makes education for democratic

citizenship problematic. Teaching citizenship in schools arranged in a hierarchy inevitably departs from the original meaning of a 'citizen' which signified equality among people of a political community (Heater, 1999). It should further be noted that MoEST centrally employs and deploys teachers to schools of all the three categories. The tuition fees which are collected from students in schools across all categories and remitted to central government might be used for teachers' payment among other purposes since the fees go into a pool/ common fund at the national treasury. The majority of teachers have either a diploma or a first degree. The national schools are, nevertheless, able to attract very good teachers because they have better working environments and better facilities such as staff houses. By contrast, many teachers shun CDSSs due to their remoteness and harsh working conditions (MacJessie-Mbewe & Kholowa, 2010). As a result, some CDSSs have teachers who possess only an MSCE and a primary school teaching certificate. In spite of the differences in physical facilities, teacher qualifications, and learner abilities and experiences, among the school categories, all schools have the responsibility to develop participatory citizens for a democratic Malawi through social studies and other school practices, which is a significant observation to the present study. Thus, next, citizenship education initiatives that took place before the advent of multiparty democracy and which were forerunners to social studies in the secondary school curriculum are discussed.

1.1.3 Citizenship education initiatives before multiparty democracy

Politically, Malawi has gone through three recorded periods, each with its own form of citizenship education. These are the colonial era, the one party dictatorship era, and the current multiparty democracy. As mentioned in section 1.1.2 above, in the colonial era, i.e., from 1891 to 1964, education was provided by Christian

missionaries with limited government control, and evangelization had prime importance over other rationales (Banda, 1982; Lamba, 2010). There was not much focus on citizenship education. As Heater (2004, p. 126) argues, colonialism was a conviction of superiority and a policy of paternalism, and not a belief in citizenship as equal participation in civic enterprise. The education provided could be similar to the one obtaining in the colonial power's home state. There were youth organisations which were formed in some secondary schools to offer education for character development (Lamba, 2010). Besides character development, youth movements such as Boy Scouts, Boys' Brigade, and Girl Guides were also used for political aims to instil loyalty to the colonial government and the British monarchy and as "an effective mechanism of thought control among Africans" (Lamba, 2010 p. 250). However, the youth movements did not have a lasting impact because they appeared foreign and were "viewed with disfavor by African nationalists" (Lamba, 2010 p. 247). Not surprisingly, after independence, they were replaced by the government organised Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) which operated on similar lines as the scout movements, but pledged their loyalty to the new native government and its leadership.

After independence in 1964, there was a brief period of multiparty democracy up to 1966 when it was abandoned and Malawi became a one party state until 1993. With respect to citizenship education, focus was on ensuring that citizens remained loyal to the government of the day and to the country's president. In this circumstance, therefore, citizenship education was meant to sustain an autocratic political culture. The MYP became the programme for citizenship education in secondary schools. In its early days, the MYP as an organisation used to train primary school graduates, who did not make it to secondary school, on artisan skills. These graduates were trained in carpentry, modern agricultural practices and bricklaying and were expected

to spearhead development in rural areas. To facilitate this initiative, several training bases (centres) were opened where youths would attend residential training. However, the MYP also had a political agenda. Trainees were taught loyalty to the party and the president and were given extra responsibility to be the ‘eyes and ears’ of the party, and keep a watch against any elements of ‘subversion’.

With time, some secondary school graduates who had primary school teaching certificates were also trained and deployed to all conventional secondary schools throughout the country to teach MYP as a subject. Although MYP had space on the timetable, it had no syllabus and it was not examinable during national examinations. It focused on educating students on the importance of upholding the national values of unity, loyalty, obedience and discipline (Divala & Enslin, 2008). Officially known as Malawi’s ‘four-corner stones’, these were the pillars upon which the single party and the government were founded. MYP can, therefore, best be described as a programme rather than a subject. The MYP also taught the history of the president who had a status of a cult hero; respect for national symbols; and the value of physical fitness (Kasambara, 1998). Kasambara (1998, p. 238) observes that “[MYP] lessons were physically orientated ... and the limited political education they incorporated was confined to the glorification of Dr. Banda’s statesmanship”. More sinisterly, the MYP teacher also served as a spy for the party within the school. As Englund (2006) affirms, the MYP brought a culture of fear, silence, and coerced unity and discipline among people both in schools and in communities. In addition, a week was reserved every year for coerced community action/ civic action whereby all teaching would come to a standstill to give way to ‘Youth Week’ activities. This community action involved learners both in primary and secondary schools. Members of the community were coerced to join in to provide mentorship and other forms of assistance. Activities

included constructing teachers' houses, bus shelters, bridges, guardian shelters in hospitals and road maintenance works. This kind of participation was both coercive and extractive. Contrary to the requirements of effective civic action projects where students should be involved in the planning and implementation stages (Banks, 1973), the community projects during the 'youth week' were chosen by the MYP teacher. The lack of choice and deliberation among students on the community projects, therefore, meant that students' only benefit was the acquisition of practical skills as opposed to gaining a sense of civic efficacy.

With the advent of multiparty politics in 1993, the MYP was disbanded and hence removed from schools. This, however, did not nullify the necessity to teach Malawian youths the values of living in a politically diverse and democratic environment. As Schwartz, quoted in Hinde (2008 p. 76) recommends, "the only way to keep a democracy from slipping into corruption, tyranny and degeneration [is] the careful education of all its participants". It is against this background that, social studies was introduced in the secondary school curriculum in 1998, and with its need to use participatory teaching strategies.

Social studies

Central to this study is the introduction of social studies in secondary schools. Lambert (2004) poses some pertinent questions regarding timetabled subjects and their role in the curriculum. He asks why a subject should be taught, why it should deserve space on the timetable, and whether it should be offered because it is simply there. In the case of a curriculum that is centrally developed with minimum participation from teachers, and handed down to schools to implement, it can be claimed that some schools may offer a subject 'just because it is there' on the

prescribed list. The same questions may be posed regarding social studies, which was introduced in secondary schools in 1998, and was offered alongside other traditional (social studies) subjects such as history, geography, and religious and moral education.

There has been a lot of debate on what social studies is or what the social studies are. The National Council for Social Studies (n.d.) defines social studies as the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Similarly, Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) define social studies as the integration of experience and knowledge concerning human relations for the purpose of citizenship education. Some educators focus on a discipline- based approach in which the social studies are seen as a combination of various disciplines each keeping its own integrity and identity (Banks, 1973). Others consider social studies as an integration of content drawn from the various disciplines. Proponents of the integrated approach argue that social studies should focus on issues rather than disciplines whose boundaries may be arbitrary (Banks, 1973). For purposes of citizenship education, this study advocates for the integrated approach where the focus on contemporary issues. There are, nevertheless, points of agreement regarding sources of content although the teaching approaches differ. Most scholars agree that content for social studies is drawn from disciplines such as geography, history, religious education, sociology, anthropology, law and political science. Another point of agreement is that educators justify the subject on the basis of citizenship education (Banks, 1973; Hinde, 2008; Ross, 2004; Tibbitts, 2005). Ross (2004, p. 249), for example, explains that “there is widespread agreement that the appropriate aim of social studies is ‘citizenship education,’ or the preparation of young people so that they possess the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation in society”.

In the Malawi secondary school curriculum, the integrated approach and subject-discipline approach exist side by side. Social studies as an integrated subject is offered alongside geography, history, and religious and moral education. It can, therefore, be argued that the main focus of social studies is to teach the values, skills and dispositions of citizenship. Actually, the subject rationale for social studies asserts particularly that “Social studies as citizen education, seeks to provide students with the skills, which will enable them to actively participate as citizens of a democracy” (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. v). In addition, the social studies syllabus has specific objectives some of which specify that students should: demonstrate a spirit of patriotism; acquire decision making skills necessary for participation in civic affairs; and demonstrate respect for the rule of law (Ministry of Education, 1998).

To meet these objectives, subject matter is organised through twelve themes through which understanding and skills are developed. The syllabus follows the *expanding environments* approach (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000) in which twelve themes make up the subject content from forms 1 to 4, with an increase in depth and levels of abstraction as one moves up the levels. This ensures progression and continuity. Participatory and interactive strategies are suggested and some of them include discussion, debate, role play, field visits, group research, case studies, demonstrations, textbook research, and use of songs and jingles (Ministry of Education, 1998; Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). Of added interest to this study is the suggestion for Civic Action Projects. For instance, under the topic of citizen participation, the syllabus suggests “initiating a project to demonstrate civic responsibility” (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 5). Examples provided include building bus shelters, clearing paths and constructing bridges. As can be noted, these activities are not dissimilar to the pioneering programmes by the MYP under the one party autocratic rule. Throughout the syllabus, suggestions for

teaching and learning resources include students' experiences, case studies, newspapers, and community resources such as resource persons and field visits (see Appendix 11) (Ministry of Education, 1998; Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). It can, therefore, be deduced from the syllabus that the subject promotes authentic learning to bring about students' experiences. The suggested activities and resources are in line with the observations of Davies (2012) who affirms that objectives of citizenship education can be met if teachers employ critical, interactive and collaborative pedagogical strategies that provide students with opportunities to gain useful experiences, skills and attitudes necessary in their immediate life and out-of-school life. Similarly, other researchers suggest activities that schools should undertake to give students experiences of democratic living. These activities include the use of experiential learning (Parry, 2003), participatory approaches (Carr & Hartnett, 1996), and promoting a culture of argument as opposed to a culture of answers (Lambert, 2004). White (2004) cites the effects of whole school processes in developing dispositions in students. Such processes include establishing and supporting interactive teaching and learning styles, collective decision making and modeling the school as a democratic place.

From the syllabus observations above, it is arguable that social studies in the Malawi curriculum takes a *social reconstructionist* approach (Skilbeck, 1984). Social constructionism emphasises knowledge for social transformation as opposed to knowledge for its own sake (Lawton, 1989). It is, however, worth noting that in spite of changes in the curriculum, standardised national examinations still exert a lot of influence on schools and students. Social studies was, therefore, introduced as an examinable subject to compel schools to offer it. It should, nevertheless, be considered that introducing a new subject does not necessarily mean that students will

acquire the necessary experiences, skills and values. The pedagogical and school practices are all vital in ensuring that students develop a culture of active and democratic citizenship. The practices and experiences that students go through in schools may determine if they are getting *Education FOR citizenship* as opposed to *Education ABOUT citizenship* (Kerr, 1999).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Malawi's democracy can be described as young, and hence the need to safeguard it in a variety of ways. While education is one route to such an end, schools in Malawi have traditionally been authoritarian institutions with classrooms as authoritarian spaces characterised by limited student voice in the running of affairs. This scenario reflects the concept of good school discipline. Furthermore, from a Malawian traditional perspective, children are rarely consulted in decision making processes. Most decisions are made by adults who are considered as fountains of wisdom (Chonzi, 2007), an arrangement that gives adults, including teachers, a privileged position within the school. The arrangement is also reminiscent of the political climate of the colonial era and one party autocratic regime which called for unconditional citizen obedience to those in authority. In addition, there exists pressure of public expectation from outside, within and among schools themselves to maintain standards of performance in national examinations.

With the advent of democracy and, consequently, social studies as citizenship education, schools and teachers have an extra responsibility to educate the child to uphold the values of democratic citizenship and political pluralism, which requires the school to become a site where democracy is practiced. However, a key challenge is that this responsibility was imposed on the schools as a top-down government

directive through a prescriptive, centralised national curriculum. Practically, it poses a challenge to the authority that schools and teachers have traditionally enjoyed. Another challenge is that education for democratic citizenship was introduced in an educational landscape in which schools are segregated into categories and receive unequal treatment from government. This challenges the principle of citizenship as equality. Several studies have been carried out on Malawi's approach to education for democratic citizenship (Divala, 2007; Divala & Enslin, 2008; Hals & Lindebæk, 2010; Mhango, 2004; 2008; Mwala, 2012; Ngalande, 2010; Wyse, 2008). However, no study has comprehensively explored the public secondary education system as a site where students practice democratic citizenship skills. In addition, considering the citizen and democratic principle of equality, no study has ever examined the hierarchical nature of secondary education in Malawi to explore if schools segregated into categories are developing one kind of a citizen for a democratic Malawi.

It was, therefore, essential to carry out a study to explore how schools have responded to the responsibility of developing active democratic citizens in spite of the historical and contextual challenges that they face and also to explore whether schools belonging to distinct categories are socializing students to similar citizenship roles for one democratic country.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to establish whether pedagogy and school practices promote the development of active citizens for a democratic Malawi using three secondary schools belonging to distinct categories as case studies. The study further explored if schools belonging to three distinct categories are socializing students to similar citizenship roles for one democratic country. For purposes of the present study,

pedagogy refers to the interactions between teachers, students, the learning environment, and learning tasks (Murphy, 1996). Specifically, the study set out to answer the following research questions:

1. What views do school managers, social studies teachers and students have regarding social studies?
2. What pedagogical practices take place in social studies classrooms to prepare students for democratic citizenship roles?
3. What factors influence the pedagogical practices in social studies classrooms?
4. What opportunities are available for students to practice democratic living in schools?
5. What challenges do schools encounter in providing education for democratic citizenship?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Since social studies was introduced in secondary schools in Malawi in 1998 no comprehensive study has been carried out to explore if the school is a site where democracy is practiced and if classroom practices have been aligned to the aims of democratic citizenship. This study, therefore, contributes to knowledge by filling this gap. In addition, the study will aid our understanding of changes in classroom and school practices occurring in countries that have embraced democratic forms of governance in the 1990s. This will facilitate international comparisons in citizenship education practices between Malawi and other democratic countries. Lessons learned in these comparisons will provide insight to teacher education.

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

This section outlines the organization of the thesis.

Chapter One: This chapter provides the background and context of the study. It presents a framework for education in Malawi focusing on national goals of education, the structure of education, and how secondary education has been influenced by Malawi's political history. The chapter also presents the statement of the problem, aims of the study and its significance.

Chapter Two: This chapter follows the evolution of the concept *citizenship* and discuss its two main traditions. It further discusses the link between citizenship and democracy and the type of education that is deemed appropriate for democracy to flourish. Furthermore, it teases out the relationship between citizenship and human rights and the contested question of citizen responsibilities. The chapter finally presents the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpin the study.

Chapter Three: This chapter reviews relevant literature using the 'inverted pyramid' approach. In this approach, the review starts with studies done in 'Western' and 'Eastern' countries before narrowing down to Africa and finally Malawi.

Chapter Four: This chapter presents the design of the study and its justification. It discusses the strategies of inquiry and data collection methods used. It further presents how data was processed, analysed and presented in the report. Afterwards, it presents ethical procedures that were followed and measures that were taken to ensure that the study remained trustworthy.

Chapter Five: This chapter, alongside chapters six and seven, presents findings of the study. The chapter first describes the three case study schools and their distinct characteristics as a way of comparing and contrasting the schools. This is followed by

presentation and discussion of views of teachers and students regarding social studies in the schools.

Chapter Six: The chapter presents findings and discussion on pedagogy in the case study schools and afterwards presents factors that influence the classroom practices. Each finding and discussion is followed by a cross-case discussion in which comparisons between schools are drawn and recourse is made to relevant literature.

Chapter Seven: This is an extensive chapter that presents findings on outside class practices. The chapter first presents a framework for student participation against which practices in schools are analysed. Afterwards, the chapter discusses challenges that the schools face in education for democratic citizenship.

Chapter Eight: This chapter ties up the findings from the three previous chapters in a general discussion of findings and link the study to the underpinning theoretical framework. It also presents lessons that have been learned with respect to the research concerns.

Chapter Nine: This concluding chapter presents the main argument of the study; the thesis, and the conclusions that have been drawn from it. It also presents the implications of the study which can translate into action, policy interventions or further research. It furthermore, presents a statement of the originality of the study as a contribution to knowledge.

1.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has set out the context within which citizenship education takes place in secondary schools. The chapter has provided a framework for education in Malawi problematizing the centralisation of key processes such as policy making, curriculum

development, and standardised national assessment. Furthermore, it has discussed the political history of the country and how this has affected the current provision of secondary education. This background provides an exciting landscape to explore school dynamics and how these affect pedagogy and school practices as schools develop active citizens for a democratic society. Added to this context is the understanding of how citizenship principles should shape the education of citizens for democracy. The next chapter focuses on the historical evolution of the concept citizenship and how education for citizenship has been influenced by the way citizenship has been conceptualised in different polities.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALISATION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

2.0 Chapter overview

Citizenship is a concept whose meaning has been changing over time. Although it sounds like a straight forward concept, its meaning is still contested. This chapter outlines the evolution of the concept, and briefly discusses the two main citizenship traditions, namely civic republican and liberal traditions. It further discusses the connection between democracy and citizenship, and the kind of education that is seen as appropriate for democracy to flourish. A further discussion positions Malawi within the two traditions of citizenship and draws out implications for education. The chapter finally presents the study's conceptual framework, discusses critical pedagogy as the underpinning theory, and links critical pedagogy, citizenship education and democracy. The authoritative work of Derek Heater was the departure point for tracking the evolution of the concept citizenship in the chapter. Heater follows the evolving nature of citizenship and identifies the main features of much of the debates about citizenship education in a historical context (Davies, 2012).

2.1 Citizenship: Origins and development

A number of writers acknowledge that citizenship is a contested concept (Heater, 1999; Hunt, 2011; Johnson, n.d.; Kerr, 2000; Turner, 1990). It can mean a status, or an activity, and it can mean different activities depending on the discourse of a particular time and space (Preece & Mosweunyane, 2006). It is also increasingly being linked to issues of identity (Heater, 1999; 2001; 2002; Kartal, 2002; Smith,

2002). Turner (1990), states that the concept is dynamic and its meaning continues to evolve while Cogan and Derricott (2000) argue that citizenship is a continuing process of debate and is often a subject of political disagreement and dispute. Since the concept, as contested as it is, relates to people, i.e., as a status, an identity, or an activity, it is important to look first at the question ‘who is a citizen?’ (Heater, 1999). The term ‘citizen’ was first adopted by French revolutionaries to pronounce the symbolic reality of equality (Heater, 1999; 2004). In classical times, the title citizen was a coveted one. It was a privilege to be prized and a possession of a wealthy elite. For example, it was conferred on property owners in Greece and men of valour in Rome. Later, the title was extended to include all men, to the dislike of the earlier citizens who had earned it. In ancient Greece, the constitution required citizens to repeat the words of Aristotle on “citizen being all who share in the civic life of ruling and being ruled in turn” (Heater, 1999, p. 83). In other words, it was a system in which citizens were equal as peers. Likewise, in the North Atlantic area the assertion of civic equality was derived from the ethical principle that all people are created, and remain morally equal. If individuals are by nature equal, any political system that enshrines inequality is essentially unjust. Hence, the principle of equality powered revolutionary activities in America and France which brought about a shift in authority from aristocrats and monarchs to popular will. Citizenship was the basis for challenging hierarchical systems which were built on top-down coercive exercise of power (Heater, 1999; 2004).

Currently, international law gives countries the freedom to decide who is a citizen (Heater, 1999). Correspondingly, legal definitions conflate citizenship with political nations. A major boost for the synthesis of citizenship and nationality was the collapse of monarchical and imperial regimes in the twentieth century. In Africa, for example,

the independence revolution and changes from imperial government to popular sovereignty brought enhanced feelings of freedom, allegiance, and cohesion (Heater, 1999; 2001; 2002; Johnson, n.d.).

Right from the classical era there have been distinguishing factors between Greek citizenship and Roman citizenship (Heater, 2004). Heater (2004, p. 2) writes that “the essence of Greek citizenship was participation; the essence of Roman citizenship was ownership of legal rights”. Even within ancient Greece, there were differences between city states which resulted in variations in civic education from one state to another with respect to aims, conduct, and choice of approach (Heater, 2004). For instance, there were differences in approach between Athens and Sparta with the former opting for unstructured education through visits to courts and assemblies while the latter opted for a structured approach through the military (Heater, 2004). The variations in the concept ‘citizenship’ results in differences in responsibilities and actions that citizens are expected to perform in their polity. Depending on expected actions of citizens, citizenship can be categorised into two main traditions namely *civic republican* and *liberal* traditions (Davies, 2012; Heater, 1999; Kartal, 2002). These categorisations are, however, very broad and general and are used just to aid one’s understanding of the complexity of the concept.

2.1.1 The Civic Republican tradition

The basic elements of the civic republican tradition can be understood from the meaning of the concepts *republic* and *civic*. A republic is a constitutional system with some form of sharing out of power to prevent concentrated, arbitrary and autocratic government. The concept civic stands for the involvement of the citizenry in public affairs to the mutual benefit of the individual and the community (Heater, 1999; 2004). In the civic republican tradition, the citizen, educated in the spirit of virtue,

must take positive interest in public affairs and above all, refrain from according priority to a private life of wealth, luxury, and ease over commitment to the general public good (Heater, 1999, p. 64; Honohan, 2001). The civic republican tradition understands freedom as a political achievement, not a natural possession of individuals (Honohan, 2001). Hence, in a republic, direct involvement of citizens is essential. If citizens are unwilling to fight for the republic, it will be overwhelmed by its enemies; and if citizens are unwilling to contribute to the civil affairs of the republic, it will collapse into corruption and dissension, ultimately into an authoritarian, even tyrannical form of state (Heater, 1999). Without the independence of the mind, manipulation or corruption will destroy the very essence of citizenship. This, therefore, calls for a type of education for the upbringing of citizens.

Ancient Greece and Rome were the forerunners of the civic republican citizenship. Aristotle's image of a citizen and a citizenship state was a small and homogeneous state where everyone had to play a role. In his image, the population should be small enough for the citizens to know each other; the citizens should go through the exchange process of ruling and being ruled; and the citizen should be actively involved in public life (Heater, 1999; Honohan, 2001; Kartal, 2002). However, questions have been asked on the applicability of the ideas of republican citizenship to large, multicultural and commercial worlds (Turner, 1990). Honohan (2001) contends that the applicability of the ancient concept of civic republicanism in a contemporary, heterogeneous society is idealistic. As a reaction, James Harrington suggested a 'mixed government' where self- government would rest on the rule of law, balanced institutions, and a considerable level of popular participation (Honohan, 2001, p. 12). He suggested a procedure of representation because the citizens of large cities and states were too many to be assembled as one body for decision making. Such a

procedure would balance between a popular representative assembly to decide and a senate to deliberate. His ideas were later expanded by James Madison who suggested a two- way approach, made up of constitutional provisions and civic-spirited participation. He suggested separation of powers between federal and state governments, between a president and the courts, and between a Senate and a House of Representatives. He distinguished this form of republican government based on representation from a pure democracy where all people govern themselves. In Madison's view, the republican government would take care of the challenges posed by an ignorant and biased majority (Honohan, 2001). This observation highlights the importance of education for citizenship.

Civic republicans believe in the intrinsic value of participation because it gives people a sense of efficacy (Sandel, 1996). To enhance participation, they promote deliberative democracy and open up spaces for grassroots deliberation (Heater, 1999; Kartal, 2002). Deliberation encourages reflection as citizens present their views, listen to the views of others and in the process, people adjust their views (Parry, 2002). This is considered a better way of developing policies that impact on people than soliciting an aggregation of people's views. Schools and civil society provide formal avenues for civic participation (Edwards, 2009; Heater, 1999).

2.1.2 The Liberal tradition

The liberal citizenship tradition developed from the civic republican tradition (Heater, 1999; Honohan, 2001). Its origin can be traced back to the 17th century when John Locke, the British political theorist, developed a theory that every individual should have the free and equal right to preserve his life, liberty and estate (Heater, 1999, p. 5). Locke defined freedom as a natural property of individuals, and the purpose of

government was to protect the rights and interests of individuals, rather than promoting the common good. It was argued that rights were God given; therefore, people have rights by virtue of being human. To protect these rights, individuals had to give up their rights to self-government. In this case, freedom does not require self-rule, but rather limiting the role of the government (Carr & Hartnett, 1996; Honohan, 2001, p. 13). Because the state was given the duty to ensure that rights of individuals were respected, there was, consequently, a shift from having rights by virtue of being an individual to having rights by virtue of being a citizen. However, it was acknowledged that for the individual rights to flourish there should be recognition of the rights of others. As a result, liberal citizenship calls for toleration, empathy, and moderation. A type of mass education was, therefore, required to develop these skills in citizens and to enable people to resolve their differences by reasoned persuasion.

Liberal citizenship separates public and private lives although some have argued that this separation promotes egoism. The duty of the state was to protect the citizen in the pursuit of his private undertakings which included the pursuit of money, accrual of wealth and pursuit of happiness (Carr & Hartnett, 1996). The citizen's only responsibility was to pay tax as a return for the duty that the government was performing. Only if the government over-stepped its mandate and began impinging on the rights of the citizens, can the citizens have a right to come out of their private comfort and rebel against it (Heater, 1999).

The shift from vertical relations, such as feudalism, to liberal citizenship was to a great extent influenced by capitalism (Heater, 1999). For capitalism to flourish, freedom was necessary to promote individual initiatives, movement to a free market economy, and open access to markets. However, capitalism itself posed a threat to

citizenship because, instead of an egalitarian society based on equality, differences emerged among the citizens in their economic power (Heater, 1999; Kartal, 2002). The state had to intervene to protect the citizens from monopoly and profit maximization by the capitalists through taxation of higher incomes and inherited property. The money raised was used to provide education for the masses (Heater, 1999).

As stated earlier, the liberal tradition and the civic republican tradition are not mutually exclusive. There is some common ground such as the belief in the freedom of the individual and protection of individual rights. Furthermore, there is also concern in both traditions for the rights of others through empathy and toleration, deliberation and reasoned persuasion. It is arguable that both traditions have a lot of merit in upholding the rights and freedoms of individuals. Thus, for some states in Africa, including Malawi where there have been high cases of corruption and abuse of human rights, both traditions have a lot of relevance for the sustenance of individual rights and freedoms. It is not enough to limit the role of government; citizens should also participate in cohesive communities to look out for any elements of authoritarianism from state functionaries. This challenges educational institutions to develop critical citizens who are willing to tread new paths (Veugeliers, 2007).

As observed earlier, the origins of citizenship have been closely linked with revolutions. The principle of citizenship as equality meant that citizenship could not work in a state or society where there were structural power differences (Heater, 1999; 2002). The ensuing systems favoured popular rule and the protection of citizens from arbitrary powers of rulers. Democracy was seen as a system of government that would provide these protective conditions. Section 2.2 below discusses the concept of

democracy and how it applies in civic republican and liberal citizenship traditions, and the type of education that obtains in each tradition.

2.2 Democracy, Citizenship and Education

The concept ‘Democracy’ is derived from two words *demo* meaning people, and *cratos* meaning rule. It means rule by the people (Carr & Hartnett, 1996). It is a system that was available in ancient Greece and Rome where citizens were directly involved in debates, and had direct or at least indirect influence in making laws and decisions (Parry, 2003). It should, however, be borne in mind that democracy has not been an all-inclusive concept. It depends on how the concept citizenship has been defined and who is a citizen in a particular polity. For example, the history of citizenship and democracy has seen slaves, women and ethnic minorities being excluded from participation. As noted earlier in section 2.1, differences between ancient states and modern states have brought challenges to citizen participation and, consequently, to democracy (Honohan, 2001; Kartal, 2002). As a result, two concepts of democracy have emerged: democracy as a form of popular power, and democracy as a representative system of decision making (Carr & Hartnett, 1996). These two are represented by the constructs *classical* democracy and *contemporary* democracy respectively (Carr & Hartnett, 1996). A discussion about classical democracy has been made earlier under origins of citizenship in section 2.1. In this section, attention will, therefore, turn to contemporary democracy.

It is acknowledged that democratic citizenship is a role that has to be learned. Its duties, rights, attitudes and skills have to be acquired through the process of education (Heater, 2002). Relatedly, Glaeser, et al. (2007) perceive a positive correlation between schooling and support for democracy and participation. They explain that

there is a lot of activism in schools in support of particular principles and systems. While acknowledging that not all activism has been in support for democracy they, nevertheless, insist that democracy has been better placed to survive as a system of government because it has a wider base owing to popular support. Other systems such as aristocracy and autocracy did not survive because they had narrow bases. As such, people are more likely to participate in support of democracy (Glaeser, et al., 2007). Their participation will depend on the model of democracy existing in their polity. Coultrap (1999) describes a model of democracy as a particular institutionalisation of the democratic method, one that outlines its general structure in a given instance.

He explains that:

Composed of various mechanisms designed to direct influence from society to government, a democratic model either describes or prescribes the institutional requirements for achieving an effective transformation of societal preferences into governmental decisions. At the same time, it describes or prescribes the structure of popular participation given conflicting social interests, and the structure of elite competition, given conflicting policy options (Coultrap, 1999, p. 108).

This discussion focuses on democratic models that apply to citizenship within the civic republican and liberal traditions. This will be consistent with the discussion on citizenship in section 2.2 above. The discussion, therefore, centres on *deliberative democracy* and *liberal democracy* respectively. In addition, considering the differences in how polities have defined citizenship, it follows that programmes and styles of civic education will vary contextually. A discussion of the two models of democracy will, therefore, be linked to the type of education that is applicable to each

model. The focus is on education for democratic citizenship as a way of inducting (future) citizens to the culture of citizenship for democracy.

2.2.1 Deliberative democracy

This is a form of democracy in which the people are sovereign, government power is limited, and citizens choose representatives who are, in turn, responsible to them. Deliberative democracy is to a great extent similar to the type of government that was practiced in ancient Greece. In its present state, it involves the creation of a republic (Banks, 2002). Deliberative democracy focuses on the communicative process of opinion and perspectives/ position formation that precede voting. Ryfe (2005) claims that deliberation supplements representative democracy, while Chambers (2003) refers to deliberative democracy as an expression of representative democracy. In deliberative democracy, officials routinely solicit public comments, have public hearings, and issue public reports on their activities. It gives people a hand in decision making following the principle that decisions ought to be influenced by the people that will be affected by them (Ryfe, 2005). Furthermore, deliberation is encouraged because it was feared that popular rule would create a “tyranny of the majority” and oppress minority groups (Banks, 2002, p. 17). Hence, besides representation in a national assembly, there are various fora for grassroots civic participation such as associations, trade unions, charitable organisations, churches, advocacy groups, and other civil society organisations (Ryfe, 2005). In addition, deliberative democracy considers participation as an end in itself (Kartal, 2002; Ryfe, 2005; Sandel, 1996). Deliberation and reflection produces more sophisticated, tolerant and participative citizens which are all essential in a multicultural society. Ryfe (2005, p. 52) explains that “individuals confronted by a greater diversity of ideas, either in the context of their own social network or in face- to- face discussions with strangers, tend to be

open- minded, to learn from others, and to engage in a deeper consideration of issues.” As such, deliberative democracy is seen as a better way of dealing with pluralism than do aggregative forms of democracy (Chambers, 2003).

It should, however, be pointed out that there are no straight forward outcomes from deliberations. Organising the process can also present some challenges. Ryfe (2005) acknowledges challenges related to the selection of people for participation in deliberations. He claims that those who are likely to participate already possess the civic skills for public participation. To resolve this challenge requires an education that will prepare citizens for the kind of life society expects them to lead. Ryfe describes education as a form of apprenticeship in which individuals learn to deliberate by doing it in concert with others more skilled in the activity. Similarly, Carr and Hartnett (1996) explain that in a society that values participation, education will have to socialise the individual into a culture of democratic participation and decision making. The curriculum will have to develop the critical faculties in individuals to evaluate the existing social norms. Pedagogically, there will be emphasis on the participatory approaches to teaching/ learning as opposed to the instructional approaches. Educational policy will be arrived at through a deliberative process. It can, therefore, be conclusively argued that deliberative democracy advances participatory and experiential education in which students will learn by doing.

2.2.2 Liberal democracy

Liberal democracy combines two seemingly incompatible concepts, namely liberalism, which focuses on individual liberty, and democracy, which focuses on popular rule. Carr and Hartnett (1996) explain that liberal democracy had to depart from the original form of democracy as practiced in Greek city states because of the former's focus on individual liberties. In liberal societies, popular democracy was feared because it was considered as 'mob rule' which would infringe on individuals' rights to enjoy their own freedom by claiming to enact the 'will of the people'. For democracy to be accepted, it had to be stripped off those features which potentially threatened individual liberty and, in turn, be constructed to protect the individual from those in power. Thus, as MacPherson, in Carr and Hartnett, (1996, p. 46) observe, "...by the time the liberal state was democratised, the old idea of democracy had been liberalised". To ensure that there are no restrictions for individuals in their pursuit of happiness, it was necessary to put mechanisms to limit the powers of the state. Representative democracy was, therefore, devised as a means of practicing democracy with checks against potential abuse. In this case, the duty of the people was to vote for their representatives once in a while. Afterwards, citizens should enjoy their affluence. To ensure that the representatives are accountable to the people that elect them, it was deemed necessary that education should enlighten the individuals in making informed decisions (Smith, 2002).

Liberal democracy values freedom, individual rights, tolerance, critical and rational thinking, and decision making. As a result, education in a liberal democracy aims at expanding the faculties of the individual to make independent decisions and have the capabilities to lead a private life that they see fit (Carr & Hartnett, 1996). Carr and Hartnett argue that due to liberal democracy's association with the market economy,

most of the demands of the school will be on preparing citizens for their future roles in the economy as workers, producers and consumers. Hence, there will be a two-tier system of education: one offering a minority group an education appropriate for future political leadership; another preparing the mass of ordinary individuals for their primary social roles as consumers, workers and producers in the modern market economy. Curriculum content will be a body of knowledge and skills which has value for the market economy. Pedagogical relationships will be authoritarian and competition will be encouraged. Schools organisation will not be democratic and decision making will predominantly be made by the head teacher who is also appointed on the basis of competition (Carr & Hartnett, 1996, p. 44- 45). Parallels can be drawn between education for liberal democracy and education in Malawi with regard to assigning positions on the basis on competition, selection of students into schools of distinct categories on the basis of competition, hierarchical relations between teachers and students in schools, and top-down policy initiatives. This setup could be construed to be preparing students for a competitive market economy as opposed to active democratic citizenship.

It should, however, be restated that in terms of education, the scenarios presented between liberal and deliberative democracies are extreme ends of a continuum. As is the case with Malawi, most systems will in practice fall in between. Even in Western countries that have practised liberal democracy for a long time, there is a move towards participatory approaches in education. A wide range of countries have citizenship education which focuses on participation as part of school culture to cultivate citizens who are action-orientated (Kerr, 2012; Veugelers, 2007; Wales & Clarke, 2005). Whatever political approach to citizenship is taken, for democracy to be vibrant the people should engage (Davies, 2012). It should, however, be

acknowledged that only education that engages students critically and reflectively will develop fully competent democratic citizens. A common denominator in the two modes of democracy discussed above is the availability of mechanisms to ensure respect for individual rights. The area of human rights has been problematic with respect to how they can be operationalised in educational institutions and nation states. Section 2.2.3 below discusses the link between citizenship and human rights and their implications for education.

2.2.3 Citizenship and human rights

The history of citizenship has been associated with struggles for equality and freedom. As a result, the principles of equality and freedom underpin citizenship in whatever form it takes. As earlier noted in section 2.2, the civic republican and liberal traditions have mechanisms to check against arbitrary use of power by the state to safeguard individual rights and freedoms. It was asserted that human rights are natural and are not derived from the state. People have rights by virtue of being human (Kiwani, 2012). Where these rights were violated, the state had the responsibility of ensuring redress. The state was, therefore, given the responsibility to ensure that the rights of individuals were respected. This caused a shift from having rights by virtue of being human to having rights by virtue of being a citizen (Heater, 1999). Hung (2012, p. 38), however, argues that having rights by virtue of being a citizen may “enhance indifference and exclusion of people who are taken as unqualified citizens.” The violation of human rights suffered by European Jews during the holocaust shows the shortfalls of deriving human rights from the nation state. Following the genocide and human misery suffered by millions of displaced people during the Second World War, efforts were made to institute human rights outside the authority of sovereign states (Turner, 2011). This led to the “rise of human rights in the post-World War II”

(Kiwan, 2012, p. 1). The passing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 reflects an understanding of what it means to be human- a universal moral experience (Kiwan, 2012). Although human rights morally focus on universal values, there is tension between the universal and the nation state since individuals reside within the jurisdiction of nation states. For operational reasons, human rights are still located within the responsibilities of the nation state. Kiwan (2012) asserts that although human rights are supposed to operate above politics, they are in practice operationalised in the context of the interests, negotiation and compromises of the state. This may bring back the question of citizenship rights and issues of discrimination. Others have tried to overcome this challenge by widening the boundary of citizenship by particularly, locating it within a global context (Hung, 2012). Global citizenship, cosmopolitan citizenship and supranational citizenship are seen as answers to the provision of human rights outside the confines of the nation state. The advantage of this arrangement is that human rights observation can be monitored by the international community at any location and efforts made to ensure that there are consequences and redress for any violations. However, Hung (2012) questions the capacity of the global village in reaching everyone without discrimination. He cites the United Nations (UN) as the biggest international organisation in the world but that it does not include all nations. The lack of recognition of Taiwan as a UN member, for example, is one case in contention (Hung, 2012).

The contestation between citizenship and human rights has implications for education. Most programmes for human rights education occur within the realm of citizenship education (Hung, 2012). For instance, ‘human rights’ appears as a theme of study within the social studies syllabus in the Malawi secondary school curriculum

(Ministry of Education, 1998). Where human rights education is offered within citizenship education, it may lose its universal appeal because, as Kiwan (2012) observes, it will be mirrored through the interests and compromises of the nation state. Alternatively, where the school is taken as a site where citizenship is practiced, it will be expected that human rights will apply in the school environment (McCowan, 2012). Put more simply, the school will be a rights respecting environment hence students will be socialised into a culture of human rights and social justice.

The evolving nature of citizenship often leads to variations in expectations and policy initiatives of citizens and policy makers of different polities. As a result, various practices are undertaken by different educational systems and schools to develop their desired 'good citizen'. Various models and frameworks have been developed which can be used to analyse commitments and practices of different educational systems and schools in education for democratic citizenship. Section 2.3 below discusses the framework for citizenship education that is used for analysis of practices in schools in this study.

2.3 Conceptual Framework for Education for Democratic Citizenship

Citizenship, as noted in section 2.1, is a concept characterised by ambiguity. McLaughlin (1992) posits that ambiguities in defining citizenship bring out tension when it comes to education for citizenship. These tensions manifest at various points. For example, the demands to educate for citizenship in a plural and diverse society call for respect for diversity and cohesion concurrently. To resolve such ambiguities, McLaughlin (1992) maps them up along a continuum in terms of *minimal* and *maximal* interpretations of citizenship. The differences between the minimal and maximal interpretations can be expressed in simplistic terms as contrasts namely

form-substance; private-public; passive-active; and closed-open. These interpretations represent differing political beliefs illustrated by four main features of citizenship, namely identity, virtue, political involvement and participation, and social prerequisites (McLaughlin, 1992). Kerr (1999) adds further characteristics to the *minimal – maximal* approach as seen in Figure 1 below.

Minimal		Maximal
Thin	-----	Thick
Exclusive	-----	Inclusive
Elitist	-----	Activist
Civics Education	-----	Citizenship Education
Formal	-----	Participative
Content- led	-----	Process-led
Knowledge- based	-----	Values- based
Didactic transmission	-----	Interactive Interpretation
Easier to achieve and measure in practice	-----	More difficult to achieve and measure in practice

Figure 1: Citizenship education continuum

(Source: Kerr, 1999)

Using the *minimal- maximal* model, Kerr (1999) further categorises curricula along a continuum between *values-specific* and *values-neutral/ values-free*. While all these approaches have advantages depending on their context, *values-explicit* approaches have been criticised for their associated dangers of bias and indoctrination of students. Similarly, *values-neutral* approaches have been attacked for their failure to help students deal adequately with real-life and controversial issues (Kerr, 1999). Notwithstanding the fears for indoctrination, it can be argued that specifying basic

values in the curricula ensures that students do not develop a relativist approach to values in general.

2.3.1 Analytical Framework

Following McLaughlin's *minimal-maximal* interpretations of citizenship, Kerr developed a model which conceptualises citizenship education into three strands: Education ABOUT citizenship; Education THROUGH citizenship; and Education FOR citizenship. Education ABOUT citizenship leans more towards the *minimal* citizenship interpretations while Education FOR citizenship leans towards the *maximal* ones. This is the model that is used as an analytical framework for this study. This section, therefore, discusses the model and justifies its use in the study.

Education ABOUT citizenship focuses on providing students with sufficient knowledge and understanding of national history and the structures and processes of government and political life (Kerr, 1999). Similarly, McLaughlin (1992) argues that for educational purposes, *minimal* interpretations prioritise the provision of information relating to legal, constitutional background to the citizenship status, and to the machinery and process of government; and the development of virtues of local and immediate focus such as voluntary activity and basic social morality. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that Education ABOUT citizenship programmes end up developing *personally responsible* citizens, which Veugelers (2007) calls *adaptive* citizens. Veugelers (2007) argues that *adaptive* citizens are favoured in education because they have adaptive abilities which do not cause any tension with school rules. On the other hand, McLaughlin (1992) views this approach to education as inadequate because it offers an unreflective socialization of students to the status quo. Along the same vein, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that while personal responsibility is

good for community living, it is not good enough for upholding democracy because it does not challenge social injustice.

Education THROUGH citizenship involves students learning by doing through active, participative experiences in the schools, local community and beyond (Kerr, 1999). This is experiential learning and it reinforces the knowledge component (Sigauke, 2011). Education THROUGH citizenship programmes may end up developing *participatory* citizens who try to solve social problems and improve society by actively participating in communities and taking leadership positions within established structures (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Because the focus of Education THROUGH citizenship is on participation to solve problems, root causes of social problems may be ignored (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Education FOR citizenship encompasses the above two strands and involves equipping students with a set of tools i.e., knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes, and values and dispositions, which enable them to participate actively and responsibly in the roles and responsibilities they encounter in their adult lives. This strand links citizenship education with the whole education experience of students (Kerr, 1999). Relatedly, McLaughlin (1992) argues that *maximal* approaches require considerable understanding of democratic principles, values and procedures on the part of the citizen, together with the dispositions and capacities required for participation in a democratic society. Participation should stem from a concern to ameliorate the social disadvantages that may inhibit the students from developing into citizens in a significant sense (McLaughlin, 1992). Such programmes are likely to develop *justice-oriented* citizens who seek to solve problems and improve society by debating and questioning established systems and structures that reproduce patterns of

injustice over time (Westheimer & Kahne, 2005). Westheimer and Kahne (2005) argue that upholding democracy requires *justice-oriented* citizens who can question the status quo and take action to bring about social justice. Education systems which develop justice oriented citizens are, therefore, better placed to sustain democracy. Similarly, Veugelers (2007) propounds the view that to sustain democracy, schools should develop *critical democratic* citizens who have the courage and creativity to tread new paths, and to question all knowledge. It should, however, be appreciated that Education FOR citizenship can pose major challenges to schools as the schools will, in practice, find the political nature of a *justice- oriented* programme problematic.

The choice of this framework is based on its compatibility with the design of this study. As will be noted in chapter 4, the study collected data from a number of sources using various techniques. Through these techniques, the study was able to explore whether schools are offering Education ABOUT citizenship; Education THROUGH citizenship; or Education FOR citizenship. Furthermore, the model enabled the study to pay attention to student participation in class and school affairs, and to discuss whether student participation in schools was substantive and inclusive; or formal and exclusive; and whether it was elitist or activist. The present study subscribes to the views of Veugelers (2007) that democracy is not a fixed state; it must be won repeatedly and must be maintained. However, to maintain democracy, students should be socialised into a culture of democratic citizenship through an effective education system. Hinchey, (2010, p. 25-26) states that, “no democracy can continue to exist without the strong support of a citizenry invested in its survival”. It can, therefore, be argued that for democracy to flourish, schools should offer Education FOR citizenship which is a *maximal* interpretation of citizenship education

(Kerr, 1999; McLaughlin, 1992). This approach is suggested because it is likely to develop *justice- oriented* citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). In addition, critical thinking and reflection should always be part of the educational process to ensure that students maintain their own identities and to avoid ‘groupthink’ which can result in dehumanising and irrational actions (Johnson & Morris, 2010). In this study, a comparative approach was taken in analysing the citizenship practices among three case study schools. Efforts that schools make and constraints that they face in interpreting the curriculum in *maximal* terms and developing *justice- oriented* citizens are discussed. A distinction is made on whether the facilitating or constraining factors are school-based or structural, which originates from society or the education system itself.

The analytical framework used for this study locates decisions concerning citizenship education at the level of the institution/ school. Its limitation is that it does not consider broader and system level influences. This study is alerted by the observations of Davies (1999) that democracy can be well articulated in policy documents while in practice no substantive initiatives may be taken to support democratisation of schools. In societies where democratisation took place as a result of pressure from outside, it may take time for systems to embrace democracy. Therefore, it was the interest to this study to explore whether schools have embraced democracy and whether students are given space for participation in school affairs, after 15 years of education for democratic citizenship at secondary school level in Malawi. The study also acknowledges that schools and pedagogical processes do not exist in a sociological vacuum (Gervedink Nijhuis, Pieters & Voogt, 2013; Kerr, 1999; Tabulawa, 1997; 2013). Rather schools are influenced by the broader socio-cultural environment. As such, pedagogical processes cannot be understood when “dislocated from their

broader social context” (Tabulawa, 1997, p. 92). To ensure that attention is paid to the broader picture, and that differences between school level factors and structural/system-level factors are taken into account, critical pedagogy was used as the theory through which interpretations of the study were viewed. Critical pedagogy, furthermore, enabled the study to focus on the promotion of critical thinking, social justice, and student agency.

2.3.2 Critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is an approach to education/ teaching that was inspired by critical theory. It was developed by the Brazilian educational philosopher, Paulo Freire. Focusing on his work with peasants, he recognised the relationship between education, politics, domination, and liberation. He noted that the underclass, the oppressed, and the less privileged have not received the benefits of education, and that they should not expect it to come as a gift from the dominant class. Instead, they should educate themselves, developing a *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Freire, 1970a).

The choice of critical pedagogy for this study is based on my strong view that for democracy to survive, it requires a critical citizenry, and that for citizens to become critical in an informed manner, they should be socialised by the school to think critically and politically. Giroux (n.d.) argues that the way we educate our children points to the future that we aspire for. Furthermore, such a future should deepen the children’s understanding of freedom and social justice. On the other hand, it is recognised that the school can also play a contradictory role by socialising students/citizens to conform to undesirable existing beliefs and practices. Carr and Plum (2015) describe the school as a social site for maintenance of domination, not by force, but through consensual social practices, social norms, and social structures. It

has to be reiterated that citizenship symbolises the principle of equality (Heater, 1999) and that democracy allows people's freedoms to flourish. As such citizens should play an active role in state affairs and be on the lookout for any signs of domination which can bring about unequal relations and threaten their freedom.

Any society making decisions about citizenship education is making a political decision (Giroux, 1980). Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that decisions concerning the kind of citizenship education in any society are not made in a vacuum. They are political and ideological based on the concept of the 'good citizen' that is envisaged. For democracy to survive, schools should, therefore, develop citizens who can uphold freedom and ensure that equality is promoted and maintained. As such, schools should raise the critical consciousness of learners so that they can recognise challenges and make efforts to address their root causes. Raising critical consciousness, however, requires schools to go beyond critical thinking. Johnson and Morris (2010) distinguish critical thinking from critical pedagogy by stating that critical thinking teaches how to think critically while critical pedagogy teaches how to think politically. Critical pedagogy emphasizes the decolonisation of the mind through critical consciousness which Freire calls *consciountization* (Freire, 1970b). *Consciountization* requires developing the critical faculties of the people from *intransitive consciousness*, through *semi- intransitive consciousness* to *critical consciousness*. Freire (1970b) argues that human beings have the ability to contribute towards improving their own well-being in the world in which they live alongside other humans. In other words, humans must reflect and act upon their world. He, however, argues that there are a lot of *limit situations* that people take for granted (Monchinski, 2008). These make people reify the state of affairs and think there is nothing they can do to change them. This is fatalistic thinking, which he describes as

intransitive consciousness. *Intransitive consciousness* lacks structural perception and is not able to objectify the conditions of its existence. Instead, it attributes phenomena outside of objective reality to a supernatural cause or to an inherent weakness in the self. For example, if people are getting a poor education, they may attribute it to the will of God or blame themselves for not being smart. This is a consciousness of inaction that rejects human agency (Monchinski, 2008). The *semi-intransitive consciousness* is a consciousness that is aware of domination and recognises some external forces behind the domination. Without action that seeks to change objective structures of dehumanisation, *semi-intransitive consciousness* can be a frustrating position to be in; for example, being at a very bad school and knowing that you are receiving a markedly bad education compared to others. This kind of consciousness can be cynical but not critical. It views causality as a static fact, not realising that the cause of something today may not be its cause tomorrow. Because causality is considered static, action to transform reality is usually futile. Monchinski (2008, p. 138) describes this kind of consciousness as “one-dimensional thinking that leads to acting on an isolated problem, ignoring root causes and long-term solutions”. On the other hand, *critical consciousness* makes people aware of structural inequalities that condition their lives. It is through *critical consciousness* that students can achieve *conscientization* (Monchinski, 2008). *Critical consciousness* refuses fatalism and the finality of dominating structures, recognising that these structures were *made* hence can be *remade*. It represents the fruition of human agency. The individual, however, knows that her/his actions alone cannot reconstitute reality. She/he recognises that her/his actions must be in accord with those of others. *Critical consciousness* can be raised through education based on dialogue and *problem-posing* (Freire, 1970a).

Bruenig (2005) argues that dominant views are pervasive in education through the purpose and structure of schools, the curriculum and teaching methodology. With regard to teaching methods, Freire (1970a) refers to the use of traditional teaching methods as the *banking model* of education where the student functions as an open repository to whatever knowledge the teacher chooses to deposit. This method supports the dominant educational ideology that silences and marginalises students' voice and experience. The belief is that the main purpose of schools is to transmit the knowledge necessary for people to enter the workforce and that good teaching involves the transmission of that knowledge through the most socially efficient means. The relationship between a teacher and a student is top- down. The teacher is seen as all-knowing while the student is seen as ignorant (Monchinski, 2008). Banking education is linked with a positivist view of education that subscribes to the belief that "knowledge is out there, knowable, immutable, and independent of the knower" (Monchinski, 2008, p. 122). The knowledge manifests itself in curriculum, textbooks and other canons and is non-contestable. This approach is seen as oppressive as it creates citizens who conform to dominant ideologies (Bruenig, 2005; Freire, 1970a). It is a dehumanising pedagogy that domesticates students instead of empowering them. The lecture method is closely linked with the concept of *banking education*. Critical pedagogy, on the other hand, advances the use of *problem-posing education*. *Problem-posing education* changes classroom relations making both the teacher and students subjects who collaborate in the process of schooling (Bruenig, 2005; Freire, 1970a). It allows students to develop the power to perceive critically. It encourages critical learning, and aids learners to know what holds them back and imagine a social order which supports their humanity (Monchinski, 2008). The role of the teacher is to problematize situations; to present to students situations they are

familiar with but in a manner that gets them thinking about those situations in new ways. Learning is grounded in the experiences of the learners and that teachers act as facilitators (Monchinski, 2008). Critical pedagogy identifies with a constructivist view of knowledge that human beings construct knowledge from their experiences and is closely associated with collaborative and interactive teaching methods such as inquiry and group methods.

In this study, critical pedagogy provided the lens through which pedagogy in social studies classrooms and school practices were interpreted. In other words, the theory was utilised as an interpretive lens and not for emancipatory purposes. Particularly, it was used to interpret whether actions taken by teachers and schools were able to raise students' critical faculties or if they were only effective in socializing them to maintain the status quo. The study explored whether teaching strategies promoted *banking education* or *problem-posing education*. *Banking education* is associated with schools and systems that have *minimal* interpretations of education which may develop *personally responsible* and *adaptive* citizens (McLaughlin, 1992; Veugeliers, 2007; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). On the other hand, *problem- posing education* is associated with schools and systems that have *maximal* interpretations of education and develop *justice- oriented* citizens who aim at social transformation (McLaughlin, 1992; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Critical pedagogy further assisted in locating the influencing factors for existing citizenship education practices either within the school system, or in the wider educational or social context. This study takes the position that critical pedagogy should direct school actions and practices in Malawi if the country's democracy is to be sustained. Due to high cases of political corruption, and rent-seeking in some developing countries such as Malawi, it is important that the citizenry should be critical. My strong view is that critical pedagogy should always inform

practices in schools and socialise students to a culture of reflective critical and political thinking. It should, however, be acknowledged that critical pedagogy may create tension in schools in functionalist educational systems. For example, the place of standardised national examinations in the school system; the school culture and wider cultural contexts may be too conservative and authoritarian to accommodate critical pedagogy. The existence of such tensions should, nevertheless, be considered as challenges encountered towards the goal of education for democratic citizenship.

2.4 Chapter summary

The discussion in the present chapter has traced the evolution of citizenship from classical to contemporary times. The relationship between citizenship and democracy has been discussed in the context of the civic republican and liberal traditions. Furthermore, the chapter has discussed the challenges to contemporary citizenship and the role of education in maintaining democratic citizenship. The chapter has further discussed the relationship between human rights and citizenship and the challenges faced in making human rights operational in schools and nation states. The study acknowledges that decisions about citizenship are both ideological and political. As a result, a conceptual framework for the study which makes politics apparent in school practices has been presented. Therefore, this chapter argues that because the concept 'citizenship' is multi-layered and evolving it poses a challenge to newly democratised countries such as Malawi which look up to advanced western democracies for models. Such challenges can further be manifested in the area of education where school systems are called upon to develop citizens for a democratic society in cultural settings which value the views of adults more than children. Chapter 3 reviews literature on education for democratic citizenship from various countries which are at different stages in the democratisation process.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

3.0 Chapter overview

The evolving and multi-layered nature of citizenship results in variations in the role of citizenship education. The narrow and exclusive focus on the nation state and the need to promote loyalty, a common identity, inculcate patriotism has been challenged by multiculturalism, supranational forms of citizenship, and efforts to promote a form of citizenship based on common values such as human rights and tolerance (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Existing literature shows various reasons why different societies offer citizenship education depending on their history, context and experiences. In some societies, especially Western democracies, citizenship education is offered to counter a perceived democratic deficit among young people who appear apathetic and disengaged (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998; Vegeulers, 2007). In countries that have just emerged from autocratic rule, citizenship education is offered to consolidate multiparty democracy (Johnson & Morris, 2010; Sigauke, 2012). In contrast, in countries that are emerging from conflict, citizenship education is offered as a unifying factor in divided societies (McCully, 2006; Nasser, 2014; Reilly & Niens, 2014; Smith, 2003). A number of studies have been carried out in different societies regarding the role of education in citizenship and democracy. Using the ‘inverted pyramid’ approach (Boyde, n.d.), this chapter reviews literature on studies carried out in western democratic countries which can be regarded as forerunners of democratic citizenship; and eastern countries which have embraced democracy in

recent years. The chapter further reviews literature on studies carried out in Africa before turning to those about Malawi.

3.1 Citizenship education in Western democracies

The present section discusses studies that have been carried out in Western democracies. Western democracies, which cover countries in North America, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, have a long history of democracy hence are considered models by newly established democracies such as Malawi. Firstly, the section discusses an international comparative study whose scope spanned across three continents.

At international level, a comparative citizenship study of 16 countries ranging from North America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia, to Australia and New Zealand showed wide and remarkable variations in the approach to citizenship education (Kerr, 1999). This comprehensive study focussed on citizenship education aims, organisation, structure, teaching and learning approaches, teacher education and teacher specialisation, assessment arrangements, and textbooks and other resources. The study noted that aims, approaches and organisation of citizenship education vary from one country to another. The study found that, due to differences in value systems, some societies had explicit aims which gave teachers and students a better direction while others were values-neutral and as such presented teachers with challenges in interpretation. Values-explicit countries, however, risked indoctrination and most often had a *minimal* approach to citizenship. A *maximal* approach was more related to a values-neutral curriculum. The exclusion of Africa and South America could, however, be considered a shortfall of the study. Nonetheless, from the outcomes of the study, lessons can be learned that there are no standard approaches to citizenship education. Every society develops its own approach depending on its

history and culture (Kerr, 1999). Notably, the study cautions against wholesale importation of successful practices across different contexts. Instead, practices should be adapted to the historical and cultural context of the receiving country. Furthermore, the study notes that regardless of the stage of democratic advancement of a country, whether well-established democracies or newly democratised countries, democracy is still evolving and advancing. This poses further challenges to education for democratic citizenship, especially for countries that have recently adopted democratic forms of governance such as Malawi.

Western democracies such as England, USA, Canada, and Australia have had a renewed impetus for citizenship education due to observed apathy among young people and concomitant democratic deficit. Focus has mostly been on developing active citizenship dispositions among young people (Peterson & Knowles, 2009). Hughes, Print and Sears (2010) indicate that youth disengagement from political and civic life is in part a result of high rhetoric about citizenship by Western governments, which has not been matched with required support in practice. To counter this effect, national governments have stepped up their support for citizenship education. One area of support has been through increased funding. To explore if this increase in funding is bearing fruit, Hughes et al. (2010) carried out a comparative study involving Australia, Canada, England, and USA. The study reviewed research literature on citizenship education, and consulted policy and curriculum documents to assess and compare initiatives among the four countries. Although all these countries are advanced democracies, the study found different outcomes in terms of disjuncture between policy rhetoric and practice in seven key elements. The most important key element was funding made available for research, pre-service and in-service teacher education, and production of materials. Other key elements were the amount of debate

in initial stages of citizenship education programme development and involvement of stakeholders; appropriate training of curriculum implementers; clear goals to drive the process; accessible materials to assist in implementation; curriculum resources for schools to form a solid foundation for the programme; an implementation and monitoring strategy; and research and policy development commitments (Hughes et al., 2010). England emerged as the best example in the seven key elements, while Canada fared badly.

The study sheds light on the commitment of different states towards education for citizenship. However, it should be noted that government commitment may not always translate into improved outcomes in citizenship education for young people. There may be differences between governments' policy intentions on the one hand and the actions of implementers on the other. For example, the commitment of the government in England towards education for citizenship has been widely acknowledged (Heater, 2001; Hughes et al., 2010; Menter & Walker, 2000). This commitment culminated into the publication of a report by the Advisory Group on Citizenship, commonly known as the Crick report (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998). The report contained recommendations which challenged schools to depart from their traditional practices regarding teaching methods, school ethos, and community relations. A successful programme of citizenship education would, therefore, rely on the commitment of teachers, school managers, and community members.

As preparation for citizenship education, the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) in England funded a small number of places in universities for Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in citizenship (Jerome, 2006). At Anglia Ruskin University, the citizenship project required student teachers to undertake an assessed project in their

final placement (Jerome, 2006). Their assignment particularly required them to write about the place of active citizenship as an entitlement to students in their placement schools. This was part of their reflective school experience. The results showed some positive outcomes such as learners' increased motivation due to active strategies; and collaboration between student teachers and colleagues. The study found that small group activities were more effective than whole school activities. In terms of whole school approaches, student teachers noted limitations in terms of resources, shortage of time, and curriculum status. In some cases schools were too cautious to introduce innovations although the curriculum called for them. Furthermore, some school managers lacked enthusiasm and commitment towards citizenship. Similarly, some teachers showed lack of commitment to citizenship by their unwillingness to give students responsibilities and roles to play independently. This lack of trust was also noted in some school managers. Jerome (2006, p. 325) quotes one school principal as saying "we don't want the lunatics running the asylum" to questions on why the school was not giving pupils space to make decisions and run affairs.

This study shows a mismatch between government commitment on one hand, and implementation at school level on the other. Brown (2000) expresses pessimism on the role of the school in citizenship provision in England. He explains that with increased centralisation of power on the head teacher and a reduction in power on Local Education Authority (LEA), it is unlikely that schools will move towards a *maximal* approach to citizenship without a change in their organisational structure. With a lot of weight placed on the shoulders of head teachers to improve academic results in league tables, and more conventional subjects, particularly the core curriculum, he questions whether the expected benefits of citizenship will outweigh the threats posed by these changes. It can be argued that unless school managers and

teachers are won over and accept the role of citizenship in schools, they will act as gatekeepers who will provide a *minimal* approach to citizenship as a response to official pressure. Furthermore, Brown (2000) highlights the importance of taking the context into account when implementing new programmes.

Some scholars have argued that the increased interest by governments in the citizenship agenda should be treated with caution (Kennely & Llewellyn, 2011; Marinetto, 2003). Quoting T.H. Marshall, Turner (1990) indicates that citizenship has evolved historically through a generation of rights that citizens are entitled to from legal rights, to political rights, and social rights. These rights were seen as entitlements of citizens to be provided by the state. Other scholars, however, view the recent shift in government towards active engagement as benefitting government itself. Active engagement is seen as desirable because it allows communities to mobilise and engage in self-help activities and hence reduce the burden on government (Marinetto, 2003). Others still, argue that this interest is a social engineering attempt to cultivate compliant citizens (Kennely & Llewellyn, 2011).

Noticing this increase in interest by the government, Kennely and Llewellyn (2011) carried out a study in the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario in Canada. Using critical discourse analysis, they studied key words in curriculum documents such as *active citizenship*, *responsible citizen* and *ethical citizen*, and their accorded meanings. First, Kennely and Llewellyn (2011) explain that although the responsibility for curriculum development in Canada rests with provinces, federal government has some control over curriculum decisions, especially citizenship education. This is manifested by how similar curriculum documents are across the three provinces. The study looked at what is active citizenship as presented in the curriculum documents; what constitutes a good citizen; and what actions an active

citizen should be involved in. It further looked at how the definitions/ categorisations used in the curriculum documents might be seen to include and exclude other sections of society. Their interpretations were made through the lenses of cultural theory as expounded by Michael Foucault.

Cultural theory posits that the institution of modern schooling acts in part as an apparatus of governance by the state, conveying the most acceptable forms of behaviour (Kennely & Llewellyn, 2011). The study found that the official categorisation of active citizenship, which includes actions like voting in elections, and membership to a political party, promotes an approach to citizenship that is characteristic of middle class people, marginalising other forms of traditional citizenship associated with working class people. Furthermore, it marginalises other kinds of citizenship in which the youth are actively involved in such as online activity and activism, as opposed to voting in booths and voluntarism. Analysis of *active citizenship* showed that it is associated with responsibility, duty and ethics. It is argued that all these are more of neoliberal concepts and are meant to bring out compliance, not activism. Activism is considered as inappropriate participation in civic dissent (Kennely & Llewellyn, 2011). It is argued that the idea of informed and active citizenship is in line with the liberal concept of rights-based citizenship which privileges individual development over collective benefits (Kennely & Llewellyn, 2011). Similarly, the pairing of action with responsibility affirms passive messages about citizenship- drawing attention to the individual and not to the state. This shifts the burden from the nation to the individual, in line with liberal conceptions of democracy.

The observations made from this analysis shed light on the political nature of citizenship education programmes promoted in some Western democracies. It can be argued that the focus on action through voluntarism can end up developing *personally responsible* citizens who may not be effective in sustaining democracy. Westheimer (2010) claims that voluntarism and kindness are good character traits, but they can be used to avoid thinking about politics. Similarly, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that democracy requires civic engagement. They cite non-violent actions of civil disobedience in the American race struggle as being highly effective.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) carried out studies on American democracy using mixed methods approach. They interviewed and observed participants, and analysed pre-survey and post-survey data and concluded that programmes aimed at developing citizenship skills can end up developing skills that vary depending on their design. Some may end up developing students who are personally responsible, others develop students who can actively participate in their communities, and yet others further develop students who critically analyse social issues from economic, political and social points of view i.e., students who look at the bigger picture and see the political in the personal (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). They assert that politics is involved in educating for democracy. It is not enough for schools to develop values for democratic citizenship, the question should be: what values are schools developing for democratic citizenship?

A related study was carried out in The Netherlands by Veugelers (2007). Veugelers sought the views of students, teachers and parents regarding the aims of citizenship education. He categorised their aims into three, namely adapting and discipline; social awareness; and autonomy and critical thinking. On the basis of these categories, he

conceptualised three types of citizenship; individualistic, adaptive, and critical-democratic. Each of these types of citizenship calls for different practices in schools and learners. The adaptive approach focuses on imparting values and control of norms. The individualistic approach emphasises choice and one's own responsibility while the critical-democratic approach advocates cooperative learning, action research, and reflection. Veugelers (2007) advances the view that education should intrinsically be seen as political, and should educate citizens to be intelligent and active participants in society.

The evolving nature of citizenship and its different conceptualisations can create challenges for teachers. Where teachers hold different conceptualisations it provides a fertile departure point for variations in practice even within the same education system. A teacher's conceptualisation of citizenship may have an influence on the type of learning that takes place in the classroom. The issue here may not necessarily be what the teacher was taught about citizenship during training, but rather about their personal understanding of the concept. A teacher can speak about the aims of a subject that they learned in university, but when it comes to action, they may act differently. Patterson, Doppen, and Misco (2012) carried out a study in the USA to find out conceptualisations of *citizenship* by pre-service and practicing teachers. Using the mixed methods approach, previous survey data was used as entry point to find respondents and contact them for further interviews. Westheimer and Kahne's categorisation of citizenship orientations, namely personally responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented were used as a framework for analysis. The researchers compared the earlier research categorisations with the ones they substantiated on the follow up interviews. The outcome showed some differences between what the teachers' earlier responses were and what they indicated later. In

some cases, teachers' earlier definitions of a good citizen did not match with their responses of what roles a good citizen should play and the degree to which such goals were met in their classrooms. A comparison of the two studies led to teachers shifting from one category to another. The outcomes indicate that *prima facie* responses can be misleading (Patterson, et al., 2012). Beliefs and actions are not always congruent. It can also be further concluded that teachers' beliefs keep changing with experience and time.

Besides knowledge and skills, practices of teachers in class and the school are a result of many other factors. Issues such as teacher beliefs, socio-cultural environment and power relations can have a big influence on education for democratic citizenship. Thornberg (2010) carried out a study in Sweden to investigate how learning in democratic participation is constituted by the social interaction and conversation patterns in school democratic meetings. He describes the aims of Swedish public schooling after World War II as preparing young people to be committed, competent and active citizens in a democracy and "vaccinating" them against totalitarian movements by the practice of democratic education and pupil participation. Thornberg, (2010, p. 924) asserts that "democracy is best learned by practicing it in the school". This was an ethnographic study of the formal and informal values of education in everyday school life. Data was collected by direct observation of phenomena (meetings in session), observation of everyday school life, and interviews. The key findings were that there was asymmetrical distribution of power and loss of negotiation power by pupils which was a result of the Initiation- Response-Evaluation (IRE) exchanges during meetings. The IRE is a set up where teachers initiate a discussion and pupils have to put up a hand to respond followed by the teacher evaluating their responses. This shows power imbalance between the two

parties. Teachers show authority by prompting, nominating pupils to respond and assessing their responses. This teacher control and IRE exchange framework counteracts deliberative democracy and communication (Thornberg, 2010). Thornberg (2010) suggests a discursive shift from traditional pupil control discourse to deliberative democratic discourse. Such a shift will value the contributions of pupils and empower them.

An analysis of the literature from Western democracies shows that citizenship education is driven by ideologies and political philosophies followed by a country where the education takes place. It can be argued that the liberal and civic republican traditions have differently influenced the way citizenship programmes are offered in different countries. The departure points for the citizenship education agenda may be similar but there are some subtle differences. For example, countries following the liberal tradition associate youth disengagement with apathy, ignorance, and cynicism about public life. Consequently, the solution to the problems which citizenship is expected to address include educating young people to think critically and weigh evidence before making decisions, and radically developing in them the competencies of community involvement and public service. This explains the approaches to citizenship which involve voluntarism and other forms of charity. On the other hand, countries following a civic republican tradition view youth disengagement in terms of lack of interest in community affairs and political life. Education for citizenship is then charged with the responsibility to develop the skills of critical thinking, deliberation, and reflection. This is reflected in approaches which call for some kind of political action among youths to develop civic efficacy.

Osler (2011) states that citizenship education has been seen as a binary between national citizenship, which aims at nation building, and global citizenship which aims

at building global solidarity. She contends that cosmopolitanism requires a critical kind of patriotism and acceptance of different identities as humans identify with other humans wherever they may be. This statement, it can be argued, holds true even in respect of national citizenship due to the multiple identities within modern nation states. The contested nature of national citizenship is more apparent in divided societies emerging out of conflict (Smith, 2003; Reilly & Niens, 2014).

Writing about Northern Ireland, Smith (2003) states that the concept of citizenship as identity would be divisive and can promote conflict (with some people identifying with British, others Irish, while others with Northern Irish identities). Therefore, Smith (2003) contends that the concept of citizenship based on human rights and responsibilities, as opposed to national identity, offers the potential to transcend nationalism. It also provides a basis for challenging sectarianism and for strengthening a democratic culture, since human rights abstract away some differences such as ethnic identity. The challenge for education, however, is to introduce an inquiry-based curriculum in a system where there has been *transmissional* and subject-discipline based curriculum. This would bring further challenges related to teacher competences and assessment (Smith, 2003). Furthermore, inquiry-based education may have limitations in teaching controversial issues in emotionally charged environments if learners do not come to terms with their feelings of anger, fear, and bitterness emanating from experiences of conflict (McCully, 2006).

Furthermore, the teaching of controversial issues in divided societies poses a challenge to teachers due to the sensitivity of issues, fear of indoctrination, and fear of loss of class control (Akar, 2012; McCully, 2006; Smith, 2003).

This review so far has shown cross-country variations at both policy and practice levels. In some cases, there are intra-education system differences. This is a manifestation of the shifting nature of democracy and citizenship, which testifies to the fact that the concepts citizenship and democracy represent *work in progress*. From the studies, it has been shown that even in advanced countries, which are well resourced, the provision of resources for training of teachers, and development of materials, among others, may not translate into effective citizenship education. A number of factors come into play when it comes to implementation of programmes. Some of the factors include the roles and responsibilities of head teachers, the socio-cultural environment and power relations between teachers and pupils.

Section 3.2 below reviews literature from countries in the Eastern bloc which are not only more values-explicit than Western countries but they also embraced democracy relatively recently.

3.2 Citizenship education in Eastern countries

Eastern countries embraced democracy relatively recently following the collapse of Communism and other totalitarian regimes in the 1990s. These include most countries in Eastern Europe, Middle East, Asia, South America, and the Far East. The countries can, therefore, be rightly termed young democracies. A number of Eastern countries have also experienced conflict in the run up to the democratisation process, or after democratisation as different nations within the states aimed for self-determination. Therefore, citizenship education in these countries serves a number of ends (Davies, 2010; Nasser, Abu- Nimer & Mahmoud, 2014). Practically, Eastern countries look to the West as models of democracy due to the influence of Western governments and Western institutions such as the World Bank and NGOs in their democratisation

processes. In spite of the West serving as models, Kerr (2012) warns against *educational borrowing*, a term referring to countries of other regions directly copying policies or practices from western countries into their own contexts. Taking into account cultural differences, democracy and citizenship should, therefore, be manifested differently in various regions and countries.

A study undertaken by Mathews, Spearman, and Megan Che (2013) on democratic education shows contradictions of democracy as perceived in countries from various regions of the world. In the study, teachers of other cultures (mostly Eastern countries) were immersed in the American culture for five months to experience a different kind of life. This was also meant to allow American educators to listen to and hear the views of others on how they perceive democratic education. The international teachers came from Philippines, Indonesia, Lebanon, Brazil, India, and Ghana. They enrolled with American universities and had internships in American classrooms. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, reports before and after the trip to USA, self-reflection journals, and workshop reports. The study observed that interpretations of participants were made through gendered, nationalistic, cultural, and age-oriented lenses. This resulted in differences in interpretation of results by teachers from different educational systems.

The most striking observations had to do with values. International teachers found their American counterparts to be more liberal, allowing students more freedom than would be the case in their home countries. Some teachers were alarmed to see students using iPads while a class was in session, and all the teacher could do was ask the students to turn them off, when their expected action was that teachers would confiscate the iPads. Some compared the 'dictatorship' in their home classrooms with

the freedom students enjoyed in American classrooms, while others were surprised at the lack of emphasis on values such as loyalty and honesty in the American curriculum. These observations show that education in other cultures is more values-explicit than in western culture. An interesting observation in terms of global citizenship education was that while the USA promotes intercultural education, their students and teachers had very little global awareness (Mathews, et al., 2013). They had a narrow and Western-centric view of the world. For example, some students had stereotypical views of India as being responsible for recession because Indians took away jobs from Americans (Mathews, et al., 2013). This observation is similar to the one made by Osler (2011) in her study in England on teachers' and students' views about European citizenship. Osler noted that most students lacked awareness of other people and other cultures which resulted in *Euroscepticism*. Social deprivation was cited as the main reason for the lack of acceptance of 'other' cultures as they were seen to be taking away jobs from the local population. This observation underlines the need for global citizenship education in all education systems to challenge students' prejudices.

For Eastern countries that have just embraced democracy, a shift to political pluralism is manifested by an emphasis on nation building. For countries in Eastern Europe, the democratisation process has been accelerated by outside pressure to meet standards for joining the European Union. Lanahan and Phillips (2014) carried out a comparative study of the knowledge and beliefs regarding democracy and education for democracy of pre-service teachers in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) and USA. The countries have hugely different contexts, with USA being an established democracy but with a perceived diminishing role for formal citizenship education due to the high stakes placed on standards and assessment. In contrast, BiH is an emerging

democracy in a post-conflict era seeking to use citizenship education to unite a divided society and build a cohesive democratic community (Lanahan & Phillips, 2014).

The qualitative study used case study methodology to find out the beliefs and understandings of pre- service elementary teachers in the two countries. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with five teachers from each case study country. On the one hand, the findings showed that the BiH students took democracy passionately and seriously, and thought of it as a unifying factor. Applying for EU membership was an added motive for democratisation in BiH. On the other hand, USA students perceived democracy as a government function, and not a responsibility stemming from citizens. Regarding teaching and content knowledge, USA participants focused on neutrality and impartiality with respect to how content was presented, while BiH participants opted for explicit content which focused on teaching values such as tolerance and human rights. The two settings show a marked difference in their approach to democratic education with the USA taking a *maximal* approach and BiH taking a *minimal* approach (Kerr, 1999; McLaughlin, 1992). It can, however, be argued that participants from BiH were able to identify the benefits of democracy having fresh memories of the contrasting system of communism. An added factor for adopting a values- explicit stand could be the need for education to promote the values of unity in diversity in a society which is recovering from the effects of civil war caused by ethnic divisions (Davies, 2010; Nasser et al., 2014).

Stating the aims of a subject does not always translate into effective achievement of objectives. The standing of a subject in a system also plays a role in its implementation. In Lebanon, education is used to bring social cohesion and

democracy in a country with a lot of diversity in a post- conflict era (Akar, 2012). Akar (2012) carried out a study to explore civics teachers' conceptions of citizenship and their reflections on classroom teaching. The study, which targeted private secondary school teachers and used semi- structured interviews to collect data, found that most teachers had minimalist and nationalist views of citizenship education. Most of them indicated using interactive pedagogies to facilitate discussions as opposed to transmission of information and that the availability of textbooks facilitated their work. However, some negative observations were also made. For example, it was noted that civics was not taken seriously in schools as it had the least assigned time on the timetable, and its weighting in national examinations was very little. The limitation in time, coupled with the lack of teacher specialisation in citizenship education, meant that there were no student activities beyond classroom lessons. This puts into question the attainment of the required dispositions by students as well as the teachers' assertions of using interactive methods. It can be argued that the study could have yielded better insights if the interviews were validated by classroom observations. Furthermore, private schools may have a profit motive which may influence their citizenship education programmes by teaching for examinations. Notwithstanding the profit motive, however, it is significant to note that private schools may be better placed to implement effective citizenship programmes if they have the autonomy to determine and finance their own programmes.

A study carried out at a private primary school in Turkey, for example, showed that students were able to develop citizenship competencies such as active citizenship perceptions, social accountability, inter-cultural awareness, awareness of democracy and human rights, thinking and research skills, and interaction and intrapersonal skills (Filiz Keser, Akar & Yildirim, 2011). The programme was set up as a result of a

change from communism to democracy and the push to join the European Union. With most schools infusing citizenship in already existing subjects in the curriculum and focussing on a thin approach to citizenship, the case study school opted to emphasise on extra- curricular activities to build active citizenship values and competencies in pupils. The school made a deliberate shift from teaching citizenship which focusses on individual skills and individual knowledge, to learning citizenship and democracy through extra-curricular activities such as student clubs, field trips, and projects. It should, however, be noted that the case study school was located at a university campus and worked in collaboration with the university in research and innovations. It was, therefore, an affluent and privileged school which was different from most Turkish schools. This implies that the research may have limited applicability due to its affluent setting. Nevertheless, it shows that positive outcomes can be obtained if sufficient attention is given to outside class activities.

As noted earlier, decisions about citizenship education are based on ideology and are, therefore, political (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Although citizenship is based on the principle of equality, citizenship education can at times be used to maintain structures of domination and control. Writing about the introduction of citizenship education in Singapore, Sim (2011) assesses how authorities have used education to silence dissent and ensure that only official versions of information filter to students. For example, citizens are discouraged from any action that will promote disunity by developing unity through fear and coercion. This is a thin and descending approach to citizenship that infringes on the rights and freedom of citizens.

A similar approach to civic and citizenship education is noted in Israel where civic education outside the school and citizenship education within the formal school

curriculum teach nationalist ideologies that exclude other Israeli citizens of Palestinian descent (Lemish, 2003).

Inequality can manifest itself in various forms and has an influence on acquisition of citizenship dispositions in students. A study by Otsu (2001) in Japan shows that while schools have explicit values for citizenship education, their implementation is affected by the wider value system and the attitudes of teachers. Japan adopted democracy after World War II and its curriculum encourages the use of student activities for citizenship dispositions. Although various activities are conducted, there is more emphasis on the traditional implicit values such as hard work, caring for others, and acting with decency (Otsu, 2001). Although schools provide spaces for student voice and democratic decision making through student councils, the views of students are rarely respected and teachers make all decisions that count. The tension between traditional values and values promoted by citizenship in the curriculum provides an interesting space for contestation. Developing democratic citizens requires treating children/ students with respect and valuing their opinions.

Experiences of totalitarian regimes leading to World War II, the collapse of communism and the desire to join the European Union have provided the motivation for democratisation and policy support for education for democratic citizenship in some Eastern countries. Research, however, shows that even where there is support for citizenship education at policy level, there are challenges in practice (Brown, 2000; Hunt, 2011; Jerome, 2006; Peterson & Knowles, 2009; Thornberg, 2010).

For Eastern countries which are more values-explicit in their presentation of aims and content for citizenship there is tension between democratic values and cultural values. Citizenship education is, therefore, used to transmit acceptable cultural values. This

thin approach to citizenship education has the advantage of providing a better direction to student actions. However, it limits students' freedom and does not provide them with space for decision making and substantive involvement in school governance. Effective citizenship education requires a paradigm shift from traditional teaching and school management practices to democratic governance.

Section 3.3 that follows reviews literature on education for democratic citizenship from Africa where communal lifestyles are valued more than individual rights, and are complemented by a high prevalence of patriarchal values. With its history of colonialism and the swift nature of the democratisation process, Africa offers unique experiences on education for democratic citizenship.

3.3 Citizenship education in Africa

Democracy, and hence education for democratic citizenship, are relatively recent phenomena in Africa. With the exception of a few countries such as Botswana, democratisation in sub-Saharan Africa occurred as a result of victory of democracy over communism in the 1990s (Abdi, Ellis & Shizha, 2005; Harber, 2002; Szeftel, 1998). Englund (2004) claims that the anti-colonial movements in Africa in the early and mid-twentieth century, were more about self-determination than citizenship. This is the reason why decolonised and newly independent countries were swiftly replaced by civilian dictatorships. Africa, therefore, offers unique lessons in terms of democracy and education for democratic citizenship due to tensions such as the top-down nature of the democratisation process; limited economic development; high rates of illiteracy; and political corruption. This section discusses the democratisation process in sub-Saharan Africa, the role played by external agencies in the process, and the relationship between the economy, democracy and education. Furthermore, it

reviews empirical studies on citizenship education conducted in Africa. It should, however, be acknowledged that there is limited published work on education for democratic citizenship in African countries. A key contributing factor could be inadequate research funding across most of the continent. The only exception is South Africa, which is relatively economically advanced, and therefore, has more published work on citizenship education. Furthermore, with its history of struggle against apartheid, South Africa's democratisation process is different from the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. The present study, therefore, contributes towards reducing this literature gap.

The context in which democracy was introduced in Africa is highly debateable and has serious implications on how citizenship education is conducted on the continent. Some writers argue that democracy came as a top-down imposition on African states as a condition for accessing aid, following the fall of communism (Abdi et al., 2005; Harber, 2002; Szeftel, 1998). For example, Harber (2002) argues that authoritarian states stood in the way of economic growth and development in Africa and this necessitated the imposition of democracy on them. He links authoritarianism to poverty through corruption, lack of climate for investment, increased military spending, censorship and lack of discussion, and lack of innovation (Harber, 2002). It was believed that if the authoritarian state was the problem, it could be fixed by a change of system of governance. This is the reason why, after the fall of communism, African states had to shift swiftly to democratic governance as a condition for receipt of aid. Furthermore, democracy was accompanied by reforms and structural adjustment programmes such as market liberalisation, privatisation of state property, and reduced government spending on social services such as education and health

(Abdi et al., 2005; Szefter, 1998). A contradictory school of thought, however, challenges this explanation.

While agreeing with Harber on the link between authoritarianism and corruption Szefter (1998) argues that the fact that even advanced western states such as Italy, the Vatican, Britain and USA have been associated with corruption demands a better explanation regarding the imposition of democracy in Africa. Thus, Szefter (1998, p. 223) argues that “those looting the African state can only envy the size of the ‘pot’ available to those in other countries”. As far as he is concerned, the problem with Africa is that corruption seems acceptable; there is a culture of political corruption (Szefter, 1998). Regardless of the existence of this debate, however, one may argue that the swift nature of the transition did not give people enough time to prepare for their citizenship roles in a democracy (Abdi et al., 2005; Harber, 2002; Szefter, 1998). Citing the case of Zambia, Abdi et al. (2005) advance the view that multiparty democracy was hastily instituted and the opposition was inexperienced. Along the same vein, Harber (2002) observes that democratic citizenship is a new role for most people in Africa, hence the need for them to learn democratic values with time. This gives African schools and education systems a big role in fostering knowledge, skills, and values necessary to promote and protect a democratic political culture (Harber, 2002).

The Western-imposed structural adjustment programmes which reduced government spending in education, ironically, weakened the capacity of education, not only for social development, but also in developing a critical mass of people that would be needed in the democratic transition period and after to demand full democratic rights (Abdi et al., 2005). Thus, it can be argued that with externally imposed democratic

governance, the commitment of African governments towards education for effective democratic citizenship should be put to scrutiny. Worse still, in spite of the reduction in funding for social services, the newly elected governments in most African countries took populist actions such as the abolition of fees in primary schools. For example, Malawi's first multiparty democracy government introduced free primary education which suddenly increased primary enrolment by 51% (Evans & Rose, 2007).

Parallels can be drawn between the above analysis and citizenship education in post-colonial Kenya. Through analysis of documents and critical moments in Kenya's history Wainaina, Arnot, and Chege (2011) explored the shift in citizenship conceptions in Kenya following independence, democratisation, and economic liberalisation. The outcome of the study revealed shifts in conceptions of citizenship and duties of citizens in the critical periods throughout the history of the country. Similarly, it noted a shift in tensions between traditional communal values and democratic values. For example, girls' assertiveness was in contrast to the expectation that girls be submissive in a mainly patriarchal society. Although the study focussed mainly on policy documents and literature, it sheds light on the tensions existing on an African landscape between communal values and liberal democratic values. It should, however, be noted that some African leaders have at times resisted the promotion of liberal democratic values using the communal values argument as a way of holding on to power and avoiding the scrutiny which comes with citizen empowerment.

As noted earlier, the introduction of democracy resulted in reduction in the role of the state. In education, there was a shift towards decentralisation and increased

community participation in school governance. It is asserted that decentralisation and devolution of authority increases accountability and participation which translates into higher quality of education and increased learner outcomes (Bartnett, 2013). The introduction of democracy and *Education For All* (EFA) goals led to an increase in primary enrolment and emphasis on community participation in school management. However, as Yamada (2014) argues, decentralisation in an environment of high adult illiteracy may result in re-centralisation of power on the head teacher and teachers. As Yamada's study had shown, this is due to the power imbalance between teachers who are considered as fountains of knowledge and community members who are perceived as ignorant. This environment provides a fertile ground for authoritarian practices in schools. These power imbalances may also manifest themselves in classrooms.

Tabulawa (1997) argues that African traditional culture perceives children as a deficit system. Children are considered ignorant while adults are fountains of wisdom which must be transferred to the child in the process of growing up. It can be argued that the cultural role of the teacher as an adult considered alongside his/ her position in society as a fountain of knowledge may legitimise authoritarian practices in schools.

Tabulawa (1997) studied a school in Botswana with the aim of establishing the nature of teaching and learning patterns in a geography classroom, and determining how teachers and students made sense of the observed patterns. This was an ethnographic study and data was collected through interviews with teachers, students, and parents; observation of geography classes; and a rating scale. It was anticipated that the outcome could pave a way for more innovative practices depending on the understanding of the relations and interactions in class.

The main finding was that there was limited interaction among students. Teacher-centred pedagogy dominated classroom practices, and it was enhanced by the actions of both teachers and students. Tabulawa (1997) cites examples such as mass teaching, and cases where students were reluctant to participate in lesson activities. Interviews showed that all participants valued the utilitarian view of education which was the driving force behind the classroom interactions. Teachers, students and parents shared the view that the school should transmit knowledge for students' understanding so that they pass examinations and be awarded certificates to enable them get jobs later in life.

Tabulawa (1997) argues that without an understanding of the historical and socio-cultural environment, technical innovations are bound to fail. He attributes the failure of innovations in learner-centred pedagogy in Botswana, in spite of all effort expended, to the imported bureaucratic-authoritarian educational model of the nineteenth century Britain; the missionaries/ colonialists' belief in the supremacy of western civilisation; the authoritarianism inherent in the traditional culture; and the human resource development policy aimed at meeting the needs of an industrialising post-independent country. This complex interaction of factors connived to impede innovations in pedagogy (Tabulawa, 1997). This interpretation agrees with the views of Giroux and Penna (1979) who argue that educational reform cannot be successful if it is approached in a technical, ahistorical, and reductionist way since curriculum developers and educators fail to perceive the connection between school and the larger society in which schools exist.

As noted earlier, decisions made by policy makers and educators for the education of citizens are not arbitrary. They follow a political ideology and have political consequences (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Similarly, Sigauke (2012) argues that the

nature of citizenship education a country adopts is greatly influenced by the political context and ideology of the state. Sometimes citizenship education can be used to inculcate responsibility and respect for those in power and to encourage a sense of uncritical patriotism (Sigauke, 2012).

Sigauke (2012) explored the introduction of citizenship education in Zimbabwe by paying attention to the political context. He observed that citizenship education was introduced at a time when the government was introducing more autocratic laws and closing democratic spaces against students and civil society through legislation. Noting that no major reforms had taken place in education since independence in 1980, a presidential commission was set up in 1998 to investigate the need for fundamental changes in the curriculum at all levels (Sigauke, 2011). The aim was to make education a major tool for character and citizenship formation (Sigauke, 2012). During debates, the commission noted that young people were blamed for anti-social behaviour and lacking good citizenship values towards property. To address the problem, it was recommended that citizenship become part of the curriculum and be statutory (Sigauke, 2011; 2012).

The study, however, noted that young people themselves were not consulted. Furthermore, there was no research to form the basis for the judgment about young people, apart from the debates. Sigauke (2012) asserts that under the Zimbabwean context, citizenship education could be used as a tool to silence young people. He, therefore, carried out a study to hear from young people themselves on their constructions of citizenship from their everyday experiences (Sigauke, 2012). Targeting 160 public and private secondary school students from both rural and urban schools, the study's findings were contradictory to the report of the presidential commission. The study found that young people were knowledgeable about

citizenship issues but were hesitant to be involved in political affairs due to the prevailing political climate which was characterized by tension. Sigauke (2012) maintains that genuine political participation is a result of appropriate civic education and skills which are important in filtering, unmasking, and “identifying facts from non-facts, biased from non-biased information, rhetoric and manipulative information and exposing hidden intentions in political discourses” (p. 215).

From the findings of Sigauke’s (2012) research it can be argued that it is essential for citizenship education to go beyond critical thinking. Instead, it should focus on critical pedagogy which teaches students to think politically and analyse issues from a political standpoint (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Critical pedagogy allows students to critically analyse who personally stands to benefit from an educational programme or any discourse purportedly intended to benefit a nation. However, in an authoritarian state, this is easier said than done. Where cases of political violence are common, people prefer silence to engaging in democratic discourse.

A related study on democracy and teacher education in The Gambia also had similar findings (Schweisfurth, 2002). The study noted that there was a tendency to identify democracy with state politics. With increased cases of political violence during election times, teachers chose not to bring up issues of democracy for fear of giving students a license to engage in violent behaviour.

While most countries in Africa have experienced democracy from above (Tuner, 1990) through external imposition, South Africa achieved democracy from below (Tuner, 1990) through the struggle of its citizenry against the apartheid regime. To bridge the racial divide and allow human life to flourish in spite of racial differences, legislation and several policy initiatives were taken (Enslin, 2003; Harber & Mncube,

2012; Hunt, 2011; Hunt, 2014; Karlsson, 2002). One such policy and legislation was democratisation of education (Karlsson, 2002). Under this policy, measures for reform were set up which included ensuring that equality was promoted in all schools regardless of race, class, and socio-economic background. To facilitate school democratisation, an act of parliament was passed where all schools were expected to have School Governing Councils (SGC) to oversee the process. However, studies show a major disjuncture between the ambitions of policy and practices in schools (Hammett & Staeheli, 2011; Hunt, 2011; Hunt, 2014; Karlsson, 2002).

Karlsson (2002) carried out a longitudinal study to find out the effectiveness of school governing councils (SGCs). She reported that SGCs were made up of all stakeholders including learners, and had the additional mandate to mobilise funds to supplement government shortfall (Karlsson, 2002). The study compared data for the years 1997 and 2001 on the effectiveness of SGCs. The finding was that participation in meetings was dominated by school principals and teachers. This was due to their positions of power in areas of education, access to information from government, and being executors of decisions. Participation of learners was limited to learner discipline, sports and fund-raising activities. This scenario was more common in poor schools. The study, nevertheless, noted a general improvement in participation over time. With time, learners were more active and less intimidated by adult members of councils, and other members were also more confident and more active in their participation.

A similar study of SGCs by Hunt (2014) found that participation was fraught with power imbalances between teachers and students in which student voice was stifled. Furthermore in a related study, Karlsson (2002) found out that different SGCs had

different capacities to mobilise funds for schools to carry out necessary maintenance of facilities. It was noted that rich schools, other than poor schools, were able to raise more funds and make better provisions for students thereby reinforcing inequalities that existed during the apartheid era.

Similarly, Hunt (2011) carried out a study in which she compared the citizenship practices of South African schools which were categorised differently in the apartheid era. The schools were previously separate black, coloured, Indian, and white only schools. Using a collective case study approach, the study compared the four case study schools in their apartheid context and post-apartheid constructions of citizenship. The findings showed that the identities that students and schools had in the post-apartheid era reflected their apartheid regime identities. For example, formally black schools practiced civic republicanism to stop teachers from administering corporal punishment. This was similar to practices in black only schools during apartheid where schools were centres of protest. Likewise, formally white schools practiced liberal citizenship which was the case in the apartheid era (Hunt, 2011).

A further finding was that, though not explicit, mixed schools registered subtle discrimination against students of the minority race. It was further noted that at policy level students had rights, but the context of the schools prevented them from having substantive rights. This was mostly common in previously coloured and Indian schools, while in previously white schools, students had opportunities to influence decisions through existing students' councils (Hunt, 2011). The outcome of the South African studies shows that policy change and curriculum implementation is clouded with tensions due to long established and entrenched practices.

The present section has discussed the context in which citizenship education is practiced in Africa. With examples from several countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, it has shown that the top-down imposition of democracy left countries unprepared for democratic citizenship responsibilities. Democracy came along with the promise of social rights in the form of universal primary education. With reduction in government finances due to conditions imposed by structural adjustment programmes, it has been a challenge to sustain universal primary education. This has resulted in extractive and manipulative community participation in education. Participation has been extractive due to the power relations between teachers and parents/ communities which are skewed in favour of teachers. The power relations have also been manifested in areas such as classroom practices and curriculum development. The context of Malawi is not dissimilar to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. With democracy imposed from above, and no time made available for citizens to learn the values of democratic citizenship, citizenship education became imperative. Section 3.4 below reviews studies done in Malawi on education for democratic citizenship and related areas.

3.4 Citizenship education in Malawi

The 1990s witnessed significant changes in the political history of Malawi. As noted in section 3.3, the democratisation process in Malawi, like other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, occurred at a period of economic down-turn due to unfolding world events (Abdi et al., 2005; Szeftel, 1998). Englund (2004) asserts that the end of the cold war ruined the strategic significance of Africa and exposed its autocratic regimes. As a result, Malawi and other African countries experienced a second liberation (Englund, 2006) due to the fall of autocratic rulers and the ushering in of democracy. Furthermore, as noted earlier, democratic rule was introduced in the

context of limited government funding, limited state control over the economy, and efforts to limit the role of the state in the interest of the private sector. Effects of these changes were noted in many areas including education. This section reviews literature on education for democratic citizenship in Malawi. It discusses studies carried out in education with respect to democracy and human rights, social studies, decentralisation and community participation. It should, however, be pointed out that due to donor interest in basic education and limited funding for secondary education, most published studies in Malawi focus on primary education. There is limited published work on secondary education although, ironically, as far as citizenship education is concerned, this level is crucial because it focuses on students who will be enfranchised soon after completing secondary school.

As noted earlier, democratisation and the reduced role of the state resulted in an increase in the role of other stakeholders at lower levels of governance such as regional, district and local levels (Rose, 2005). Multiparty democracy was, consequently, followed by privatisation and decentralisation. It was argued that privatisation would improve efficiency since a client- centred approach to education would increase people's choices (Porter, 2014). Similarly, decentralisation would lead to improved qualitative outcomes (Bartnett, 2013) since communities would be involved in decision making on issues of school governance. It is argued that participation has an intrinsic value in that it enhances the democratic attributes of the participants (Rose, 2003; Sen, 1999). Rose (2003) examines the contradiction that exists in community participation in democratic Malawi. She observes that the reduction in government funding brought in cost sharing measures in education. This was in contrast to the communities' understanding of free primary education (FPE) in which they expected government to provide everything (Rose, 2003).

A number of studies have examined the role of communities in school governance in primary schools in Malawi (Bartnett, 2014; Porter, 2014; Rose, 2003). The outcomes of these studies show that community participation has been problematic. Community participation had been noted to be extractive and manipulative (Rose, 2003), and was fraught with power imbalance in favour of adults against children (Porter, 2014). Porter (2014) argues that communities have limited powers to influence decisions because they are ‘invited’ into the decision making arena as opposed to claiming their own spaces. Relatedly, Evans and Rose (2007) found a positive link between education and support for democracy. Important for the present study, Evans and Rose (2007) found that the more people get educated, the better they understand democracy. Evans and Rose (2007, p. 916) highlight that, “the educated have a firmer grasp on meaning. Not only do they support democracy, but they also have a better understanding of why they are supporting it.” This outcome, therefore, supports education as a worthwhile investment for the promotion of a democratic culture. It should, however, be understood that support for democracy alone is not sufficient for upholding democracy. Only forms of education that are designed to foster democratic values and skills can have a lasting effect on democratisation (Harber, 2002). This is the reason why despite provision of general education, the government of Malawi introduced social studies to teach the values and skills of active citizenship for democracy.

A number of studies have been carried out on Malawi’s approach to education for democratic citizenship (Divala, 2007; Divala & Enslin, 2008; Hals & Lindebæk, 2010; Mhango, 2004; 2008; Mwala, 2012; Ngalande, 2010; Wyse, 2008). Most of these studies have, however, focussed on primary education; some have focused on teachers’ perceptions of democracy and social studies; and others have focused on

civic education and curriculum materials; while a few others have focused on teaching methods only. Furthermore, other studies have only paid attention to the compatibility of school discipline and democracy.

Divala (2007) made a critique of citizenship education offered in Malawi after it became a democratic country. He reviewed documents used in education for democratic citizenship in formal education and in communities. Most documents reviewed were developed for voter education in the run up to multiparty democracy. Divala (2007) observed that the documents made a strong case for representative democracy while down playing the role of citizen participation. He, therefore, proposed deliberative and participatory citizenship as better options for democratic citizenship. Divala's (2007) critique, however, has some noteworthy weaknesses. For example, it focuses on documents used for general civic education at the expense of documents for formal citizenship education in schools. Furthermore, it conflates documents for civic education with documents for formal education. It has to be acknowledged that in Malawi, as in most countries, there are specific materials developed for the school curriculum whose approaches are different from public education materials.

In a related study, Divala and Enslin (2008) carried out a critical document analysis to analyse citizenship education in Malawi from the colonial era, through the one party era to multiparty democracy era and their implications for global citizenship. The study noted that prospects for global citizenship were hampered by limited spaces for political participation throughout the history of the country. Even in multiparty democracy, spaces for citizen participation were shrinking due to political influences (Divala & Enslin, 2008). It was further noted that documents, which included approved textbooks for schools, promoted a minimal approach to citizenship. Since

the study focused on commercially produced and approved textbooks for formal education, any shortfalls noted may be interpreted as shortfalls of the curriculum. The actual syllabus suggests methods and practices for students to gain relevant experiences. Thus, empirical studies can provide more insight and evidence of classroom practices and school ethos which influence citizenship dispositions of students.

Mhango (2004; 2008); Ngalande (2010); and Mwala (2012) carried out qualitative studies in schools to explore the implementation of the social studies curriculum. Ngalande (2010) and Mhango (2004) undertook their studies in primary schools. Ngalande's study set out to explore teaching methods used in class against those suggested in the syllabus; teachers and learners understanding of the subject; learners understanding of learner-centred methods; support provided to teachers in implementing learner-centred methods; and challenges that were faced in schools (Ngalande, 2010). Data was collected from multiple sources using various methods to aid triangulation. The study found that teachers had a good understanding of the way social studies should be taught. However, most of them were unable to translate this understanding into practice due to a number of factors. It was, for example, noted that teachers had problems with content knowledge due to limited time accorded to the subject during orientations. The cascade model of orientation, favoured by the government, put teachers at the bottom rung of training. As a result, only 3 hours was available for training in social studies for both content and methodology. Besides problems with content knowledge, the study noted that both teachers and pupils had problems with English language which affected their comprehension skills.

A similar study by Mhango (2008) found that in spite of the curriculum having appropriate content and pedagogical approaches for the preparation of active participatory citizens, there was a disjuncture between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum. This was due to teachers' limited understanding of the concept participatory learning, which in turn, influenced their classroom practices. Furthermore, the use of English language as a medium of instruction, and standardised national examinations negatively contributed to the decisions teachers made in the organisation of classroom practices.

Likewise, a case study by Mhango (2004) set out to examine how a social studies teacher applied the teaching methods learned at teacher training college (TTC) in a real life situation. Studying a single teacher as a case, Mhango found a discrepancy between what the teacher learned at college and what was applied in class. The difference was attributed to limited practice at college resulting in high knowledge and low skills; large class size of up to 116 pupils; high teaching load; and influence of public examinations. Also, the use of English language limited the participation of pupils in class activities.

A related study was carried out by Wyse (2008) to find out the constructions of Malawian national identity by social studies teachers in 3 primary schools in Malawi. The study noted tension between democratic practices and Malawian traditional practices. Teachers lamented the incursion of Western influences on traditional Malawian culture. For example, the study cites respect for elders as a Malawian cultural practice in contrast to the practice of ladies wearing trousers as Western and non- Malawian. This finding, therefore, shows that the process of educational change is fraught with tensions which have to be carefully navigated if curriculum aims are to

be met. Unlike the above-cited studies which were carried out in primary schools, Mwala (2012), and Hals and Lindebæk (2010) undertook theirs' in secondary schools.

Mwala's study took place, particularly, in 4 CDSSs. The aim was to explore how teachers in CDSS involved their students in participatory learning, the recommended strategy for social studies. Mwala's choice of CDSS was based on the challenges that are faced by them such as large class sizes resulting in high teacher: student ratios; inadequately trained teachers; and limited teaching and learning materials. The findings of Mwala's (2012) study show that teachers had a positive perception of learner-centred approaches. However, there was limited involvement of students in lessons. The learning environment was the main factor hindering use of participatory approaches. For example, one form 1 class had 72 students, all sitting on the floor, which made it difficult for students to learn and participate effectively. Furthermore, teaching and learning resources were limited to very few copies of social studies textbooks causing learners to rely on the teacher as their main source of information (Mwala, 2012). Insights generated by Mwala's study inform the present study especially on the context of CDSSs and the challenges that they face. This is the case because a CDSS is one of the case studies in the present study.

Another study in secondary schools was undertaken by Hals and Lindebæk (2010). The study was meant to assess "what understanding ...teachers and students have of democracy and of students' opportunities for democratic participation in a selection of Malawian secondary schools" (Hals & Lindebæk, 2010, p. 4). Three government secondary schools took part in the study. These were a district secondary school, and two national secondary schools. Data was collected through interviews with teachers and group interviews with students. The study found that both students and teachers

had a good understanding of democracy. Interview responses indicated that there was active participation by students in class, although boys were more active than girls. There were also extra-curricular activities which allowed students to be active in democratic education (Hals & Lindebæk, 2010). The study, however, relied on one method of data collection. Utilising interviews as the only data collection method is problematic considering that *prima facie* responses of research participants can be misleading (Patterson, et al., 2010). Observations and review of official records could serve to validate or establish actual practice.

The advent of democracy in Malawi brought tension in schools between traditional practices and the demands of a democratic system. Tension was manifested mainly in the clash between upholding human rights and maintaining school discipline (Luhanga, 2010; Sakala, 2009). A study by Kuthemba- Mwale, Hauya and Tizifa (1996) reported that there had been an increase in cases of indiscipline in schools since the introduction of multiparty democracy. Furthermore, some of these cases were handled without due regard to the rights of accused students which resulted in judicial reviews in courts of law, at the Malawi Human Rights Commission, and The Office of the Ombudsman where decisions made by schools were reversed (Kuthemba- Mwale et al., 1996). As a reaction, MoEST issued policy guidelines on how discipline cases should be handled in line with the human rights approach (Ministry of Education, 2000b). In addition, MoEST trained secondary school head teachers on human rights, good governance, and conflict resolution to provide them with systematic knowledge of the content and legal basis of values and principles of liberal democracy so that they can effectively manage their institutions. In spite of the guidelines and the training, cases of judicial review continued. Thus, Sakala

(2009) and Luhanga (2010) carried out studies to find out if the human rights approach was compatible with school discipline.

Sakala (2009) carried out his study in 5 conventional secondary schools. The aim was to explore students' and teachers' knowledge of the discipline policy; how the policy was communicated to students; and what procedures were followed in handling discipline cases. The findings showed that both students and teachers were aware of the policy. There were, however, differences between schools in the way the policy was communicated to students. For example, in one school, a copy of the policy guidelines was made available for students to sign in the presence of their parents (Sakala, 2009). However, the study noted that the language used in the policy was too technical for students and there was no effort to explain the contents. The students signed because it was a condition for them to get to class and not because they understood. The study further noted that there was resistance on the part of school authorities and teachers in handling discipline cases following laid down procedures. The policy guidelines suggest resolution of discipline cases following a hierarchy. Minor cases were to be handled by the school, major cases were to be referred to the divisional education office, and serious cases were to be handled by MoEST headquarters. Remedies such as counseling and guidance, warning, and rustication were available to the schools. Suspension and expulsion were to be recommended to divisional offices and MoEST headquarters for major and serious cases respectively (Ministry of Education, 2000b). Yet schools opted to use higher level remedies for minor offences. There was a feeling amongst teachers and school heads that democracy and human rights were undermining school discipline. As a result, some schools showed resistance by following procedures selectively. In addition, the study noted that accused students were called to appear before discipline committees as a

matter of procedure, not essentially to be given a fair hearing. Committee members prejudged students as being in the wrong and as being dishonest (Sakala, 2009).

A similar study in 5 conventional secondary schools was conducted by Luhanga (2010). It examined teachers' and students' understanding of principles of human rights and whether the principles were compatible with enforcement of school discipline (Luhanga, 2010). In the findings, most teachers reported that human rights and school discipline were compatible as long as teachers respect the rights of students. Some teachers, however, thought that human rights and school discipline could not go together. They lamented the misunderstanding of human rights by students which, in their view made it difficult to maintain school discipline. On their part, students felt that human rights were compatible with school discipline provided teachers treated them with respect. In the view of students, indiscipline could ensue if teachers were not respecting the rights of students. If teachers used abusive language, harassed, and embarrassed students, the students would react because they were not being treated with dignity. More important to this study, students were also of the view that school discipline would be enhanced if they were involved in decision making. For example, they expressed their suspicion that some school rules and regulations were meant to infringe on their rights, such as the prohibition of girls from wearing trousers during weekends. In turn, they argued that if they were involved in making school rules, they would reject some of the rules, which in their view should not apply in a democratic era (Luhanga, 2010). While teachers in all schools claimed that recommended procedures for handling discipline cases were followed, students complained that suspected offenders were suspended without being given an opportunity to be heard. Students protested that teachers did not want to waste time

with ‘lawbreakers’. The study revealed that grant-aided (national) secondary schools flouted discipline procedures more than government (district) secondary schools.

The studies by Sakala (2009) and Luhanga (2010) have shown tension between democracy and human rights on the one hand and traditional school practices on the other. The area of school discipline is the most apparent space where this tension has been manifested. The responses of schools to procedures for handling discipline have been varied. The two studies show evidence of resistance, on the part of school authorities, to following procedures that are consistent with democracy. It has to be reiterated that these procedures were imposed on schools by MoEST as a policy directive. The studies have also shown that students are aware of their rights as young citizens and are willing to claim these rights where they have been violated.

As revealed by the discussion in this section, a number of studies have been carried out in Malawi on topics related to education for democratic citizenship. However, no study has ever been undertaken to explore the whole school as a site where democratic citizenship is practiced. Furthermore, no study has compared schools in the three categories to examine if they are developing similar skills for democratic citizenship among students.

3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has reviewed studies on education for democratic citizenship that were carried out in different parts of the world. Starting with Western democracies, and then moving on to Eastern countries, the chapter completed the review with studies carried out in Africa and Malawi. The review has shown that citizenship education practices differ from one context to another and that there have been varying reasons and motivations for its introduction. In spite of motivational differences, practices fall

short of the rhetoric contained in policy documents and curriculum aims. The review has also shown that the study fills an important gap because in Malawi, no study had been undertaken to look at the place of the school as a terrain where citizenship is practiced and where students develop citizenship understanding, skills and dispositions. Having highlighted all these issues in the present chapter, chapter 4 concerns itself with the design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.0 Chapter overview

There is plurality of research literature regarding frameworks that guide design decisions by researchers (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Terms and concepts such as paradigms and philosophical worldviews are variously used which can result in confusion in making design decisions. A general framework can, however, be discerned and be used to guide research designs. This chapter presents the design of the study. It discusses the current paradigms followed in social science research and the one chosen for this study together with strategies of inquiry and data collection methods. The chapter further discusses ethical procedures that were put in place to protect research participants and measures followed to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

4.1 Research design

Creswell (2008, p. 5) refers to research design as a “plan or proposal to conduct research which involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods”. He describes three types of designs namely: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. He adds that the qualitative and quantitative designs should not be viewed as opposites, but as ends of a continuum since research tends to be more qualitative than quantitative or vice versa. The mixed methods design falls in the middle of the continuum. Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011)

emphasise the place of qualitative and quantitative approaches in educational research and how these two have been combined in mixed methods research.

The present study followed a qualitative research design. This design allowed the researcher to focus on classroom and school practices while paying attention to the context in which these practices take place. Qualitative studies take place in natural settings and the researcher pays attention to the context of the study area (Ary et al., 2010). The perceptions of the research participants are important and give meaning to qualitative studies (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). The researcher is the tool for data collection and small samples are studied. The aim is to examine phenomena as it is in rich detail (Ary et al., 2010). The qualitative research design is flexible and can evolve in the course of the study. It views phenomena holistically considering that complex phenomena cannot be reduced to a few factors (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). It operates on the assumption that reality is socially constructed by individuals. As a result, human interpretations are important in explaining causal relationships among social phenomena (Gall et al., 2007).

Before embarking on a research project, researchers need to think about the philosophical worldview that they bring into the study. Defined as basic sets of beliefs that guide action, philosophical assumptions influence research practice (Creswell, 2008). Other writers refer to philosophical worldviews as *paradigms* (Cohen et al., 2011; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Guba and Lincoln (1998) argue that paradigms are not based on evidence but rather on beliefs hence there is no correct paradigm. Four main paradigms can be identified namely positivist; constructivist; transformative; and pragmatic paradigms (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Their developments

followed a historical approach due to dissatisfaction with the earlier/ reigning paradigms.

Within a research design a researcher also chooses the *strategies of inquiry* to follow when conducting a study (Creswell, 2008). Strategies of inquiry provide specific direction for procedures in the research design (Creswell, 2008). Strategies of inquiry within the qualitative design include ethnography, grounded theory, narrative research, phenomenological research, and case study research (Creswell, 2013). The present study followed the case study as a strategy of inquiry. This strategy was chosen because the study explored the school as a place where citizenship is practiced and the factors that influence the practices. As a result, attention was paid to classroom and school practices, and the influencing factors which make the context within which citizenship practices take place.

4.1.1 Case Study research

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context may not be clearly evident (Yin, 2014, p. 16). The phenomenon or the “case” can be programmes, curricula, roles, events, communities, decisions, or organizational change (Gall et al., 2007; Yin, 2014). As a research design, the case study is a rigorous process using a unique way of collecting and analysing empirical evidence (Yin, 2014). Researchers using the case study strategy recognise that there are many variables operating on a single case and to catch the implications of the entire variables requires more than one tool for data collection and many sources of evidence (Cohen et al., 2011). Flyvbjerg (2011, p. 301) explains that a case study is determined by the demarcation of the phenomenon’s

boundaries or the ‘casing’. Research questions help to set boundaries of the “case” from the factors external to the case, the context (Yin, 2014). Setting boundaries also includes specifying the estimated time for the beginning and ending of the case (Yin, 2014). The case should be a real life social phenomenon that has some concrete manifestation. It is, however, acknowledged that the boundaries between the case and the context are very faint since qualitative case studies operate from a good understanding of the context and its role in the inquiry. In line with qualitative study designs, case study research requires the researcher to maintain an adaptive posture and be flexible to take into account new situations encountered as the study progresses (Yin, 2014).

Case study research can be designed for a number of purposes. As a result, several types of case studies can be identified ranging from intrinsic, to instrumental, evaluative, explanatory, and exploratory (Creswell, 2013; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2014). The present study is an exploratory case study which was aimed at exploring democratic citizenship practices in schools.

Thomas (2011, p. 104) explains that:

An exploratory case study will be done where you are faced with a problem or an issue that perplexes you. You need to know more: what is happening and why? You may have little preliminary knowledge of the issue- or at least little rounded knowledge of it. You may have some familiarity with it, but what you know is one- dimensional...

The present study followed a multiple case study approach. In a multiple case study, groups of individual case studies are undertaken simultaneously to gain a fuller picture of a phenomenon (Stake, 1995). A multiple case study is more robust than a

single case study because it allows comparisons to be made between the cases. This results in more compelling evidence (Yin, 2014).

The cases in this study were three public secondary schools belonging to three distinct categories namely a national secondary school, a district secondary school, and a CDSS. The selection of cases was based on *maximum variation* (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Maximum variation cases are used to obtain information about the significance of various circumstances for case process and outcome. For example, three cases that are very different on at least one dimension such as size, form of organisation, location, or budget (Flyvbjerg, 2011). The cases, in this study, were studied holistically on implementation of the social studies curriculum as citizenship education. A general description of the categories of secondary schools in Malawi was provided in section 1.1.2. A description of each case study school is made in the next chapter, to allow the reader to understand the context of the study.

Purposive and convenience sampling (Ary et al., 2010; Silverman, 2010) were utilised to identify case study schools. Three public secondary schools belonging to different categories were sampled. The schools had the characteristics that the study was looking for hence they provided maximum information (Silverman, 2010). They were all co-education and they offered social studies. Purposive or criterion-based sampling is employed in case studies because it serves the real purpose of the researcher of gaining insight and understanding into the chosen phenomena (Burns, 2000). The schools allowed the study to generate a deeper understanding of the practices that promote the development of active citizenship dispositions in students. For the district school and the CDSS, schools in the southern region of Malawi were targeted on proximity grounds, which made a lot of economic sense to the research budget.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

As previously noted, the present study was carried out at three case study schools. At each school, the Form 3 social studies class was chosen as the main focus for pedagogy hence classroom observations, teacher interviews, and focus group discussions were limited to the Form 3 class. This class was chosen because the students had studied social studies for more than two years. This was long enough to provide adequate information for the study. Students in Forms 1 and 2 had studied social studies for less than two years hence were excluded from the study sample. The Form 4 class was excluded because it is an examination class. Schools are usually reluctant to involve this class in activities that may minimize their focus on examination preparation. For the out of class activities, attention was paid to whole school processes instead of binding them to a specific class because “real-world affairs do not readily fall into clear-cut categories” (Yin, 2014, p. 214). Yin (2014), nevertheless, advises that it is important to define the boundaries of a case study in order to determine its scope and make the study manageable. ‘Bounding’ a study involves specifying the persons taking part, specifying the objectives, and estimating its beginning and ending. Data for the present study was collected in the first term of the 2014/ 2015 academic year which ran from 08th September to 12th December, 2014. Subsequent follow ups were made to fill in missing data in the second term specifically from 05th January to 27th February, 2015.

Private secondary schools were also excluded from the study because, although they enroll about 20% of secondary school students (Zeitlyn et al., 2015), they do not fall into any distinguishable categories, and this posed operational challenges in choosing an applicable and representative case. Private schools in Malawi mushroomed without

proper planning and without government direction. Shortfalls in government provision of education resulted in private individuals and organisations taking advantage of the unmet demand to open up schools (Rose, 2005). Up to now, there is limited government control and regulation. Although efforts were made in the recent past to close down substandard schools, this move has not been sustained and schools have continued to operate without government regulation.

Similarly, the study did not involve 'Open secondary schools' which operate at the end of the normal school day in most schools. Open secondary schools have no age limit for students. As a result, they mostly have students who are very advanced in age. This study was interested in students of the official secondary school age (14 to 17 years) because its focus was on formation of citizenship dispositions to a group that had not been enfranchised. The voting age in Malawi is from 18 years which is the age at which most students complete secondary education.

4.1.2 Data collection

Case study evidence is obtained from multiple sources of information using various tools (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). Correspondingly, data for this study was collected using various methods and from various sources. For each case study school, more than one unit of analysis was incorporated into the design. In this regard, the following methods were utilised: interviews; focus- group discussions; review of documents; and direct observation of practices. Study participants included an official from MoEST and another from MIE as key informants. From the schools, the head teacher or deputy head, social studies teacher, and form 3 students took part in the study. Wiersma and Jurs (2009) assert that qualitative research design is flexible and can evolve in the course of the study. Similarly, in the course of data collection, the

study incorporated unstructured interviews with selected prefects at each school to validate claims made by other research participants. Three weeks was spent at each school for data collection using the methods discussed below.

Interviews

Several interviews were held with various participants to obtain data from different perspectives. Kvale (1996, p. 14) describes an interview as “literally an *inter view*, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest”. In all interviews, an interview guide was used which outlined issues and topics for discussion in advance. The interview guides were pilot tested at a local school and were, afterwards, fine-tuned to close any anticipated gaps. An interview guide provides a framework for the main body of the interview and is based on key questions that the study addresses (Arksey & Knight, 1999). The outline of issues increases data comprehensiveness and makes data collection systematic (Cohen et al., 2011). Interviews also remain conversational and situational. A limitation with regard to interviews is that interviewees may at times be unwilling or uncomfortable to share what the interviewer hopes to explore. The researcher, therefore, has the responsibility to set a good rapport with respondents to ensure that they feel free to express themselves. This study required the researcher to get personally in touch with research participants to understand their experiences. Negotiating entry into the research context was, therefore, of paramount importance. In the study, interviews were held with various participants as explained in the following sections. All interviews and focus group discussions were recorded verbatim using a voice recorder. This allowed the discussions to flow freely without the interruption of note-taking.

Semi- structured, in- depth interviews: The semi-structured interview is considered a good compromise between the structured interview with its predetermined responses and the unstructured interview which flows without any fixed manner and direction (Thomas, 2011). The semi-structured interview gives the interviewer freedom and flexibility to tackle issues and follow them up with the interviewee. The use of prompts and probes allows the researcher to seek for clarifications and more explanations from interviewees (Thomas, 2011). Arkey and Knight (1999), however, caution that interviewers need to be very good at listening and that the act of probing should not turn the interview into an interrogation. In this study, semi- structured, in-depth interviews were held with several participants.

Firstly, the interviews were conducted with two key informants from MoEST and MIE. Arksey and Knight (1999) refer to key informants as elites, experts or leaders who exercise power and influence while Mikkelsen (1995, p. 104) calls them “outsiders with inside knowledge” who can answer questions about other people’s knowledge, attitudes and practices besides their own. MoEST is the central office that is responsible for development of educational policy and monitors both policy implementation and curriculum implementation while MIE is responsible for national curriculum development for primary and secondary schools, and teacher education. MIE also orients teachers and carries out research on curriculum implementation. The interviews with the key informants were aimed at exploring policy decisions and guidelines behind the introduction of social studies in the curriculum and preparations made in schools and among teachers in readiness for the implementation of the subject. Strengths and challenges noted in the implementation of the planned curriculum were also discussed. An interview guide was used (see Appendix 7A). The challenge with interviewing key informants is that they have little time to spare, and

may at times be protected by lower level personnel (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Anticipating such challenges can assist in avoiding frustrations. It is, therefore, advisable for the researcher to start from the top and move down the hierarchy by seeking permission from the highest office which may help to obtain the assistance of other senior staff. Furthermore, it may prove helpful for the researcher, to draw on pre-existing personal contacts among the elites in question (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Recognising this challenge, the present study sought the key informants through formal written invitations (see Appendix 3A) and made follow ups by phone. Having worked with MoEST before, I was also able to use a network of contacts to gain the access of key informants for the interviews.

Secondly, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with school heads. The interviews were aimed at exploring whether students are given space in school governance and participate in decision making on matters that affect them. In this case, effort was made to find out how democratic the schools are in terms of decision making and listening to student voice. The head teachers were formally invited to the study and all information pertaining to the request was provided (see Appendix 3B). Head teachers are the overall managers of schools and are mostly aware of activities that take place in schools whether in class or outside class. They are, therefore, instrumental in the process of school democratisation and creating spaces for student voice. Consequently, they were instrumental in this study as they provided information about activities that promote democracy within schools and classrooms. Any challenges that schools encounter in meeting the objectives of citizenship education were discussed. An interview guide was utilised (see Appendix 7B).

Thirdly, interviews were held with form 3 social studies teachers. One teacher was interviewed at each of the schools. These interviews focused on classroom practices among other issues. Attention was paid on pedagogical practices in social studies classes and the reasons for such practices. As noted earlier, the social studies syllabus advocates the use of participatory teaching and learning approaches. Discussions with teachers were centred on their experiences in the use of participatory strategies and the factors that influence classroom practices. Furthermore, discussions focused on whether students are given opportunities outside classrooms to put into practice what they learn in class, and also whether they have opportunities to lead democratic lives. Any challenges encountered were discussed with the aim of locating whether the sources of such challenges were school based or context based. An interview guide was similarly used (see Appendix 7C).

Unstructured interviews: Unstructured interviews are defined as interviews in which neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1990). McLeod (2014) calls them informal interviews or guided conversation. They are mostly used to complement studies based primarily on other methods. Minichiello et al. (1990) explain that in an unstructured interview, the interviewer follows the interviewee's narration and generates questions spontaneously based on his/ her reflections on that narration. They are open-ended, conversational, and nonintrusive. Although no interview guide is used, the structure of the interview can be loosely guided by a list of questions called an *aide memoire* (Minichiello et al., 1990). In the present study, unstructured interviews were held with some prefects in all schools. These were not originally planned but were incorporated into the study to validate claims made by other research participants. Yin (2014) argues that case study research requires the researcher to maintain an adaptive posture and be flexible to take

into account new situations encountered in the course of the study. The unstructured interviews were, therefore, spontaneous and complementary to other methods. In the present study, the interviews were conversational and did not have a common *aide memoire* for all schools because issues discussed varied from one school to another depending on the data that emerged from other sources.

Focus group discussions

A focus group is described as an informal discussion among selected individuals about specific topics relevant to the situation at hand (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinugub, 1996, p. 4). Morgan (1998, p. 1) describes focus groups as group interviews. Vaughn et al. (1996) suggest that a focus group should be small, with between 6 to 12 members, and should be relatively homogeneous, while Barbour (2007) argues that a focus group made up of between 4 to 8 members is easier to moderate and manage. Krueger and Casey (2009) advise that when conducting focus group interviewing with young people the age range should be kept within two years, and the moderator should make an effort to put them in a conversational mode before moving on to questions that guide the study. This can be done by investing some minutes at the beginning to talk about topics of interest to youths such as music, football, and favorite celebrities. Group interviews have advantages over individual interviews because individuals in the group can cross-check, support, complement, and influence each other (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Cohen et al., 2011). The dynamics of the group becomes an essential part of the data and the data collection. The group interview is socially oriented as participants are studied in an atmosphere more natural than artificial experimental circumstances and more relaxed than a one-to-one interview (Flick, 2011). The researcher, nevertheless, has to be aware of the salient power

dynamics in the group and be on the lookout for people who can dominate discussions.

Cohen et al. (2011, p. 433) advise that “it is important to understand the world of children through their own eyes rather than the lenses of adults.” The present study considers children as active agents in their own learning and agrees with Arksey and Knight (1999) who advocate for the active involvement of children in issues that affect them. It was, therefore, in recognition of the fact that students have a story to tell that this study held discussions with them on the practices that take place during social studies lessons, and opportunities they have to practice democracy within schools. The discussions also focused on arrangements that schools make to hear students voice and how the schools respond to issues raised by students. Power and status are heavily implicated in interviewing children (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 433). Although secondary school students in Malawi can be referred to as older children, effort was, nevertheless, made to help them develop trust and confidence in the researcher, and contribute their views effectively.

At each school, a focus group discussion was conducted with form 3 students. The numbers of participants ranged from 8 to 11. Arksey and Knight, (1999) argue that data sources can be triangulated at different levels of analysis from the aggregate (at the level of the individual), to the interactive (at the level of interacting individuals in a group). Vaughn et al. (1996) argue that a focus group should have a moderator with prepared questions and probes. The probes set the stage and induce participants’ responses. In the present study, a moderator’s guide provided an outline that was followed for the smooth running of the focus group discussion (see Appendix 7D).

The participants for the focus groups were selected randomly by picking the every other fifth student from a class list in which names were arranged alphabetically.

Direct observation

The study also involved direct observation of phenomena. Creswell (2013, p. 166) defines observation as the act of noting a phenomenon in the field setting through the five senses of the observer, often with an instrument, and recording it for scientific purposes. Observations are more than just looking in that they are based on research purposes and questions (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013). Thomas (2011) distinguishes between structured observation and unstructured observation. The former is where the researcher systematically looks for particular kinds of behaviour while the latter is where the researcher watches informally (but methodically) in and among the participants, recording important facets of what is happening (Thomas, 2011, p. 165). In the present study, both structured and unstructured observations were made. Structured observations were made during social studies lessons to observe classroom practices. Focus was on teaching strategies, classroom interactions, engagement of students, promotion of critical thinking skills, utilisation of authentic experiences, and classroom atmosphere. A lesson observation schedule was used to record the occurrence and extent of the stated attributes (see Appendix 6). In the study design, not less than six social studies lesson observations were planned for each class at a school. There were, however, variations in the number of lessons observed ranging from 3 to 5 double lessons. Reasons for these variations are explained in chapter 5. Classroom observations were conducted in lessons that were delivered by teachers who had also taken part in the interviews. Information about the teachers' roles in the study was presented in writing in advance of the study to ensure that they

were informed of all the processes (see Appendix 3C). The lesson observation schedule was piloted at a local school and refined to ensure that it was effective in collecting the required data.

Unstructured observations were utilised for outside class activities. Observations were made for the availability of extra- curricular activities, and other activities that promote cooperation among students. Further observations were made on the interaction between teachers and students to see if there were respectful relations between them. Lambert (2004) explains that the teacher directly translates the aims of education into reality through curriculum implementation in the classroom and outside classroom experiences. Whole school processes can, therefore, enable students to develop skills and dispositions for the kind of citizen the schools want to develop. Monchinski (2008) notes that teachers, by virtue of their position and training have a responsibility to make sure that a climate exists in the school where pedagogy should take place. However, teachers must walk carefully along the thin line between authority and authoritarianism. Authority is considered as an invention of freedom that makes pedagogy possible while authoritarianism denies students freedom (Monchinski, 2008). Observation of school processes provided complimentary data to interviews and focus group discussions (Flick, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). An observational protocol was kept to record unstructured observations (see Appendix 9) (Creswell, 2013).

It should be stated that observation has challenges related to subjectivity, intrusion, and researcher expertise (Adler & Adler, 1998; Murray, 1985). It is argued that without member checking, observers rely on their perceptions which can result in biased interpretations. Adler and Adler (1998) explain that researcher subjectivity can

be overcome by using multiple observers to cross check on each other's interpretations. Availability of multiple observers in a research setting may, however, bring challenges of intrusion and observer effects. Writing about observations in education, Murray (1985) points out that it is not possible for the observer to be 'a fly on the wall' and allow observation to take place without intrusion. He, therefore, advises researchers to spend considerable time in the research environment to win the trust and acceptance of research participants. Furthermore, he cautions expert researchers against introducing theoretical interpretations, which are not based on observed behaviour to rationalise observations. Overcoming these challenges require rigour on the part of the researcher (Adler & Adler, 1998). In this study, the researcher spent three weeks at each case study school, staying in the staffroom amongst teachers. This had the advantage of the two parties becoming familiar with each other and hence limiting intrusion effects. Although direct observation may be marred by researcher bias, it enhances research credibility and validity when combined with other data collection methods. Direct observation, therefore, enhances triangulation and cross-checking with data collected through other means (Adler & Adler, 1998).

Review of documents

Flick (2011, p. 124) describes documents as standardised artifacts that occur in particular formats such as notes, case reports, drafts and diaries. The review of documents is an unobtrusive method which portrays the values and beliefs of the participants in a setting. Documents serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly (Stake, 1995). Actually, they may represent data which is thoughtful in that participants have given attention to compiling them, and

can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher. The weakness with documents is that they may be incomplete and may not be authentic (Creswell, 2003). Documentary evidence has also been criticised for emphasising on facts and acts and for failing to engage with the classroom, the learning context, and the interface between teachers and students (Cohen et al., 2011).

In the present study, documents were used to complement data gathered through interviews and focus groups (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The following documents were reviewed at each school. Firstly, a *calendar of school events* which is an outline of weekly activities that students are engaged in during the school term. The aim was to check the extra-curricular activities that students were engaged in. Secondly, *schemes and records of work* for Form 3 social studies were studied to check the planned work and the records of classroom processes. Focus was on the proposed teaching and learning methods planned for the academic school term as indicated in the schemes of work; and classroom processes as recorded on the records of work. Thirdly, the study planned to review *lesson plans*, to check the methods of teaching that teachers would employ during lessons and lesson evaluations to check the outcomes of lessons. However, teachers in all schools did not keep lesson plans. The study noted that it was not mandatory for teachers to write lesson plans. Finally, the study accessed other records from school noticeboards. These records included a list of responsibilities, and membership of various committees in the schools.

Besides the records indicated above, the study also reviewed other relevant documents. Government recommended *social studies textbooks* were studied to find out their approach to the subject. Focus was on whether the textbooks contained activities which promoted interaction and critical thinking among students. When a

curriculum has been reviewed in Malawi, publishers are tasked to develop student textbooks. MoEST and MIE carry out an evaluation of all submitted textbooks and approve those seen as most appropriate and relevant. Those textbooks are then recommended to all schools as part of the study materials. Being a resource constrained environment, the recommended textbooks play a major role in curriculum implementation, and may be the only sources of information for some students.

The study also reviewed past *national examination papers* for social studies at senior level (MSCE), particularly those for 3 years prior to the study. As discussed in chapter one, social studies in Malawi is an examinable subject. The review of past examination papers focused on the types of questions that were asked. Specifically, attention was on whether questions focused on knowledge or skills such as inquiry, critical thinking, and decision making. A specification grid was used to analyse selected questions and check them against levels of Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain (see Appendix 8). With an open mind, the researcher also looked for any reports and information that was available in schools regarding activities such as field trips, educational visits, and community engagements, considered of interest to the study. A reflective diary was kept where practices and reflections were recorded.

4.1.3 Data analysis and interpretation

The process of qualitative data analysis involves making sense of data, be it visual, written or audio. Actually, it is an ongoing process that involves continued reflection, asking analytical questions, and writing notes throughout the study (Creswell, 2003). As opposed to quantitative data analysis, little guidance has been given on qualitative data analysis. For example, on thematic data analysis, most writers focus only on

coding which is the first stage in the process (see Bryman, 2008; Cohen, et al., 2011; Gall, et al., 2007; Wiersma & Jars, 2005). Similarly, Yin (2014) observes that analysing case study evidence is especially difficult because the techniques used in it are yet to be well defined. Likewise, Lichtman (2013) points out that with the exception of grounded theory, the analysis of qualitative data is the most complex part of a research project and has received the least discussion in literature. This is due to the vastness and richness of qualitative data which comes in different forms making it difficult to develop a standard strategy for analysis. Most writers, nevertheless, agree that it is an iterative process with no boundary between data collection and data analysis (Bryman, 2008; Cohen, et al., 2011; Gall, et al., 2007; Lichtman, 2013; Stake, 2005; Wiersma & Jars, 2005). Qualitative data analysis, therefore, calls for creativity and discipline. Creswell (2013, p. 182) observes that qualitative researchers often 'learn by doing' data analysis. Lichtman (2013) describes a way of analysing qualitative data by developing themes. This is done through coding, sifting, sorting, and identifying themes. In the present study data was managed and analysed through a number of iterative processes as indicated in the sections that follow. Although the processes are presented as linear, in practice they are iterative and circular.

Transcription of data

Thomas (2011) describes transcription as a process in which the researcher makes an electronic copy of all the raw data. In the present study, transcription involved listening to recorded interview and focus group discussion data and typing it up verbatim. The data was transcribed verbatim to avoid potential bias which could come about during summarising or interpreting (Ary et al., 2010). The process occurred simultaneously with the data collection processes. The transcribed data was saved in

MS Word format in appropriate folders with relevant titles (Lichtman, 2013; Thomas, 2011). This made the data more organised and, hence, easy to retrieve (Ary et al., 2010). Data for each case study school was kept separately and was kept in various locations to prevent data loss. In a similar way, data from other sources such as lesson observations, reflective journals, documents, and field notes was stored in separate folders and labelled appropriately. The initial set of transcripts were read and re-read in order to get immersed in the data contained in them, and some short notes were taken in the process (Creswell, 2013). These were short phrases or key ideas that occurred in the process of reading. They became handy in organising ideas emerging from the data.

Coding the data

Coding is a process through which the numerous data collected were organised into elementary categories. It involved putting similar data under umbrella terms (Lichtman, 2013). This process emerged out of the constant reading of transcripts. Creswell (2013) describes this activity as ‘winnowing’ the data because not all the collected data can be used; actually, some may be discarded. However, as Thomas (2011) advises, the data that did not fit perfectly into categories was reserved as it formed important counter-examples for the main codes.

Categorising the data

Categorising involved grouping the coded data into major topics. This necessitated combining the initial categories. The form that the categories took depended on judgment following the way the data presented itself (Lichtman, 2013). Constant reading of the coded data and initial categories resulted in noted redundancies, similarities and identification of critical elements. The categories were labeled with

names that best described the information they contained and the research concerns (Creswell, 2013).

Identifying themes

This is the final process of analysis and involved identifying themes from the categories (Ary et al., 2010; Lichtman, 2013). Reading and re-reading of the data and categories revealed some concepts that appeared richer and more powerful than others. The themes, therefore, combined several categories and reflected the meaning that was attached to the collected data. Reference to the raw data was constantly made in search of unique experiences, conflicting ideas, richness of details, and metaphors. These have been included in the report to make it richer and meaningful. Furthermore, quotations, narratives and examples were drawn from the actual data to support and illustrate the themes identified (Lichtman, 2013; Thomas, 2011).

Data from classroom practices was recorded on lesson observation schedules which had checklists and rating scales with descriptors. This data is presented in chapter six as scores using graphs/ charts and tables.

Interpreting and representing data

Once data has been analysed and themes developed, the next step is interpretation (Ary et al., 2010). Interpretation involves going beyond the descriptive data to extract meaning and insights. It is a process of bringing out the meaning, telling the story, and developing plausible explanations. There are no rigid rules to follow in interpretation; it all depends on the theory used as well as the researcher's knowledge, background, perspective and intellectual skills. Despite the lack of procedure, all interpretations must come from the research and should be supported by the data (Ary et al., 2010).

In the present study the interpretations were linked to the theoretical constructs of critical pedagogy, it being the theory that anchored the study (Denzin, 1998).

Representation involves the way the data is presented (Ary et al., 2010). In the present study, the data was presented by themes using thick description (Holliday, 2002). Holliday (2002) states that bounded settings provide an important means for thick description. Being a case study, the uniqueness of the cases was maintained by integrating the themes with connecting strategies (Maxwell, 2012). This means that the themes were linked to descriptions and explanations obtained from the various data sources to maintain the context of the study (Huberman & Miles, 1998). Direct quotes and narratives were used appropriately to provide examples. Interpretations for each case study school were made under themes and presented separately. Maxwell, (2012) argues that the case study has a unique strength because the categories and themes are developed within each case. This maintains the uniqueness of the context considering that the case study provides an account of a particular instance or setting. A cross-case synthesis allowed the researcher to draw cross-case conclusions which either showed similarities or contrasts between the cases (Yin, 2014). As stated earlier, data from classroom observations was presented using descriptions, scores/ charts and tables.

4.2 Trustworthiness of the study

Marshall and Rossman (2006) posit that all research must respond to canons of quality against which their trustworthiness can be evaluated. In qualitative research, issues of reliability, validity and self-reflection add to the soundness and credibility of findings. Reliability in the quantitative sense cannot be achieved because qualitative studies take place in natural settings and since reality is multilayered, interpretations

may differ from one researcher to another (Cohen et al., 2011). Creswell (2008) suggests several reliability procedures such as checking transcripts to make sure that they do not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription; and making sure that there is no drifting in the definition of codes.

In the present study, reliability was ensured by comparing data with codes constantly, and by going through the recorded data and the transcripts to iron out any mistakes. In addition, reliability was ensured through the creation of a case study database which contained all the raw data as evidence from which the interpretations were drawn (Yin, 2014). Since the conclusions of the study are ‘comingled’ with the researcher’s interpretations, critical readers can make recourse to the database to establish the basis of these interpretations (Yin, 2014, p. 123). The availability of the case study database was not, nonetheless, a substitute for evidence in the representation of the case study. Enough evidence has been presented in the reporting to ensure that the findings and interpretations are evidence-based. Although the findings of the study cannot be generalized, they may be applicable to settings similar to the case study schools. Gall et al. (2007) argue that using purposive sampling may increase the probability of applying case study findings to other cases representing the phenomenon being studied.

Qualitative validity is described as the means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings. Validity is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account (Creswell, 2008). In the present study, validity was ensured through several procedures. First, different data sources were triangulated to build a coherent justification for themes. The second procedure was member checking. This involved talking to some research participants about interpretations which had been made

regarding the data after generating themes to make sure that the interpretations reflect the participants' views. Third, there was peer debriefing to ensure that the interpretations resonate well with those of other readers. Peer debriefing was done through presentations made on two occasions at Chancellor College's Faculty of Education monthly research seminars. Besides peers, four supervisors from two universities who formed the supervisory team critiqued the work to ensure that the interpretations are accurate. Fourth, thick description was used to present the findings (Maxwell, 2012). Thick description shows different and complex parts of particular phenomena (Holliday, 2002). Fifth, discrepant information that run counter to the themes was also presented in the form of contrasts, comparisons, and extreme cases (Huberman & Miles, 1998). The discrepant information presented a more realistic account of the findings than presenting perspectives that only support the themes. Yin (2014) argues that because case study researchers have to understand the issue under study beforehand, this understanding may sway them towards supporting evidence and move away from contrary evidence. He, therefore, warns researchers against bias and, in turn, encourages the involvement of critical colleagues early enough in the process of data collection to ensure that the researcher is tolerant to contrary views. Researcher bias can, in addition, be minimised by self-reflection.

Self-reflection involves clarifying the bias that the researcher brings to a study (Creswell, 2008). Culture, gender, social status, class, education, values, language, political praxis are reflexive screens through which a researcher's interpretations can be viewed (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As noted in chapter one, I brought into this study my experiences as a previous secondary school teacher, senior inspector, and principal inspector of schools. Coupled with my current work as a teacher educator, my interpretations might have been influenced by these experiences. That

notwithstanding, I kept a reflective journal during the data collection process where I recorded my views and feelings about the research process. This made me aware of my feelings and ensured that they did not unduly bias the outcome of the study. Furthermore, talking about the data collection strategies constantly with colleagues, allowed me to shift my focus from lesson supervision to lesson observation. Lichtman (2013) argues that the researcher is critical in all forms of qualitative research. She acknowledges the researcher as a tool through which all meaning comes and that, in the process the researcher shapes the research and is also in turn shaped by it. Therefore, she further argues that, instead of seeing this as a limitation, self-reflection should be seen as an asset.

4.3 Ethical considerations

Ethics has been defined as “a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others”. It is asserted that “while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 84). Most case study research study human subjects in real-world contexts, hence the researcher has the responsibility to exercise special care and sensitivity (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) recommends that between the design of a case study and the collection of data, the researcher has to show how she/he plans to protect the human subjects in the study. Similarly, she/he has to ensure that formal approval is obtained for such a plan. Because this study involved students, who are considered as minors, it had to undergo a rigorous process of ethical review on research conduct and governance at the University of Ulster. First, the study proposal was peer reviewed by the School of Education Ethics Filter Committee (see Appendix 14A). Afterwards, it underwent another review process by the University of Ulster Research and Ethics Committee (UUREC) in which the researcher and main supervisor had to appear

before the University wide committee (UUREC) to clarify on issues (see Appendix 14B) before approval was eventually granted (see Appendix 14C).

In Malawi, several steps were taken to ensure that the rights of participants were respected. First, the study sought written permission from the Secretary for Education, Science and Technology to collect data in public secondary schools (see Appendix 1). It should be noted that in Malawi access into schools for research involving students is obtained from the Secretary for Education, Science and Technology. Besides seeking for permission in writing, the researcher also met a representative of the Secretary for Education in person to explain the purpose of the research. The meeting also helped to impress upon the official on the urgency and importance of sticking to the time schedule of the study. Written permission was eventually granted by the Secretary for Education (see Appendix 13). Secondly, the researcher sought informed consent from all research participants. Cohen et al.(2011, p. 79) define informed consent as the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions. Participants were also assured of privacy and confidentiality. They had the right to withdraw from the study without giving any reasons and there would be no consequences for withdrawing (see Appendix 4A).

The study involved students under the age of 18 who are considered as minors. Cohen et al. (2011) understand minors' informed consent as involving two stages. Firstly, the researcher consults and seeks permission from adults responsible for the minors, and secondly she/ he approaches the young people themselves. This process is important because children are considered as vulnerable participants due to unbalanced power relations (Lichtman, 2013). In the present study, the consent of the head teachers was

sought first before seeking the informed assent of the students themselves (see Appendix 4B). After the consent was given by the head teacher, individual students were consulted to make informed assent (see Appendix 5). In Malawi, schools have the consent of parents to make important decisions regarding the children/students in the course of the academic term. Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 90-91) rightly describe the scenario when they observe that “according to Malawian rules, once you have the permission from the Ministry of Education ..., it is enough to use schools for research”. An important explanation of this situation is that with the exception of CDSSs, most students stay in hostels in the schools for the whole academic term with no contact with parents. In addition, the majority of parents may not have access to a post office box through which letters may be sent to them. Secondly, with high levels of illiteracy people may not be fully informed of what they are signing. Marshall and Rossman (2006) add that people become suspicious of written forms of communication where they have to put their mark or signature because of the experiences of past repressive and corrupt political regimes. Thirdly, with a highly collectivist culture, trust and good faith are observed through one’s word rather than signature. In such cases asking someone to sign a form might be construed as a sign of disrespect.

Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw without giving a reason. Due to asymmetrical power relations between the researcher and students, a clause explaining the procedure for withdrawing from the study had been included in their information letter to make sure that they did not feel coerced to continue participation if they were no longer willing (see Appendix 3D). To ensure further protection of research participants, all information given for the research was kept private and confidential. Yin (2014) considers privacy and confidentiality as

covering the protection of participants in a research so that they will not be put in an unwittingly undesirable situation including being on a roster to be requested to take part in future studies conducted by the researcher herself/himself or other people. In this study, all information was kept anonymous. No names of individuals are mentioned in the report, and pseudonyms are used for the case study schools. Furthermore, only the researcher and the supervisors had access to the information. Audio interview recordings were transcribed and the original materials were kept safe at the University of Ulster where they will be destroyed only after 10 years as stipulated in the University's data handling policy.

4.4 Chapter summary

The present chapter has presented the methodology of the study, describing how data was generated, processed and interpreted. The study employed a qualitative paradigm and a multiple case study approach. Data was collected using various methods from three case study schools and key informants. The chapter has also discussed how the study ensured that it generated trustworthy findings. Finally, it has shown the types of ethical considerations that it made to ensure that research participants did not suffer from any harmful effects. The subsequent three chapters present the findings of the study and a discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOLS AND VIEWS OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS REGARDING SOCIAL STUDIES

5.0 Chapter overview

It is widely acknowledged by many writers that the aim of social studies is ‘citizenship education’ or the preparation of young people for active participation in society (Banks, 1973; Hinde, 2008; Rose, 2004; Tibbitts, 2005). There is, however, lack of agreement on what constitutes citizenship, and how its instruction should be approached (Rose, 2004). This may result in variations in approach even between schools that fall within the same education system. Therefore, an understanding of the aims of social studies by stakeholders in schools is essential because it may affect the approach that schools take to meet the stated aims of the subject. The present chapter presents the views held by head teachers, social studies teachers, and form 3 students regarding social studies. The findings are presented under general themes for each school and are followed by a discussion in which comparisons and contrasts are drawn across the cases. Firstly, the chapter describes the case study schools to facilitate a better understanding of the context and the interpretations.

5.1 Case study schools

This description follows a consecutive approach. In the approach, a complete description of a school is given before moving on to the next one to allow the reader to get a holistic picture of each school as a single entity. Afterwards, a cross-case comparison between schools is made to highlight key areas and enable understanding

of the context of the schools. The pattern of the descriptions and presentation of findings in this chapter and the subsequent chapters starts with Namikango national secondary school, followed by Nachiswe CDSS and finish with Chifule district secondary school. This order is needed to bring out clearly the sharp contrasts between the national secondary schools and CDSSs. District secondary schools stand midway between the two extremes. As discussed in section 4.3, pseudonyms are used for the case study schools.

5.1.1 Namikango national secondary school

Namikango national secondary school was established as a primary school in 1928 and was later upgraded to a secondary school in 1959. It receives grants-in-aid from central government. As a public secondary school that was opened by missionaries, Namikango national secondary school is called a grant-aided school. It is a triple stream secondary school (i.e. each form has three classes) and offers boarding facilities to all students enrolled at the school. At the time of data collection, it had an enrolment of 614 students (see table 6). Although boys and girls are selected to the school in equal numbers, table 2 shows more boys than girls. This could be a reflection of cultural factors which work in favour of the education of boys at the expense of girls. The table further shows a general increase in enrolment from form 1 to form 4. It was noted that besides selection based on PSLCE performance, MoEST keeps on admitting students into schools through written instructions. The criterion used for these admissions is, however, unknown.

The school had 29 teachers, of which 9 were female and 20 were male. Two of these teachers had Master's degrees; 19 had Bachelor's degrees; and 8 had diplomas. This means that all teachers were qualified to teach in secondary schools in various areas

of specialisation. The school offered up to 17 subjects which give students a wide range of choices. As earlier indicated in section 1.1.2, a student requires passes in 6 subjects including English to attain MSCE. The common practice in Malawi is for students to study up to 8 subjects at senior level. There were core and optional subjects on offer. The optional subjects were offered as *Sets*. With *Sets*, all students from the three classes of a particular form/year study the optional subjects at one time. Students, therefore, split into the various optional subjects depending on their choices, subject combinations, and availability of equipment for technical subjects. The class sizes for the optional subjects, therefore, vary with some having more students than others. For example, the form 3 social studies class enrolled 80 students while home economics and woodwork enrolled 9 students each. The form 3 social studies class was, therefore, one of the largest classes at the school.

Besides the ordinary classrooms and a school hall, the school has the following functional purpose built specialised rooms: 1 library, 2 science laboratories, 1 computer laboratory, and 1 technical workshop. There was a third science laboratory but it was closed and in need of repair. For the 3 years prior to the present study, the school's performance in MSCE had been improving (see Table 7) and the number of students selected to public universities was comparatively high.

There were several initiatives aimed at fostering students' academic achievement. For example, with funds raised through the *Parents- Teachers Association* (PTA), the school rewards teachers whose students pass very well in national examinations. For instance, in respect of the previous year's MSCE examinations, a teacher would receive MK1200-00¹ for an award of distinction per student. Thus, the larger the

¹1 US\$ was equivalent to MK450 on 14th September, 2013.

number of distinctions realised, the greater the amount of money a teacher would be rewarded. The money, therefore, acted as an incentive to teachers to ensure that their students perform well in national examinations. The school also has several awards for high achieving students whose aim is to encourage the students to perform well in their studies. For example, students who attain positions 1 to 3 in every class receive a reward through what the school termed *The Manken Awards*, named after a former Malawi Defence Forces General, an alumnus of the school. Furthermore, students who attain positions 1 to 5 in every class are rewarded with an educational visit to a place of academic interest every term. Last but not least, in order to promote a culture of English speaking among students, the school gives monthly prizes to students who are able to speak English without code switching to their vernacular. It is worth noting that English is the language of instruction in secondary schools and also the official language for government business in Malawi.

The school had several sources of income, with the main one being school fees that was being charged at MK50,000-00 per student per term (see Table 4), followed by grants-in-aid from government. The school also conducted some income generating projects and, occasionally, it received donations from well-wishers which supplemented its finances. For example, during the data collection exercise, a 2 room-classroom block was under construction with funding from some well-wishers. Similarly, a flush toilet was being constructed at one of the hostels with financial support from the school's alumni. Most of the revenue from school fees was used at the school, except for income from tuition fees, which is entirely remitted to central government. The school also provided bursaries to its most needy students.

Table 2: School fees- Namikango national

Term	Fees distribution (MK)					Total (MK)
	<i>Tuition</i>	² <i>PTA</i>	<i>TRF</i>	<i>GPF</i>	<i>Boarding</i>	
1	500-00	2000-00	250-00	500-00	46,750-00	50,000-00
2	500-00	2000-00		500-00	47,000-00	50,000-00
3	500-00	2000-00		500-00	47,000-00	50,000-00

As stated in section 1.1.2, conditions in national secondary schools are much better than those in CDSS. The contrast will be noticeable from the description of the next school in the following section.

5.1.2 Nachiswe CDSS

Nachiswe CDSS was established as a distance education centre (DEC) in 1975. In 1997, it was converted, alongside other DEC's, to a CDSS (see section 1.1.2). It is a government run school, owned by a church organisation. The school operated as a single stream intake although it was officially designated as a double stream. Classes currently in forms 3 and 4 were selected based on double stream, but had since reverted to single stream due to a shortage of teachers and classrooms. Being a community day school, Nachiswe has no boarding facilities and hence students either commute from home or seek private accommodation in nearby villages. Many students also commute long distances to school as revealed by a noted fleet of bicycles parked against classroom walls and under a big tree at the school. There were two groups of students using privately rented accommodation. The first group lodged in privately rented quarters in surrounding villages and cooked for themselves while

²PTA- Parents Teachers Association; TRF- Textbook Revolving Fund; GPF- General Purpose Fund

their counterparts rent rooms from the church organisation owning the school. For this group, payment covered the cost of a room and meals. In all cases, there was no teacher supervision in the lodging areas because as a day school, the responsibilities of teachers did not extend to students' lodging.

The school has 3 blocks of 2 classrooms each, making a total of 6 classrooms. However, at the time of this study, only 4 classrooms were in use. The reasons will be provided when the nature of the buildings at the school is considered. The school has 3 sets of buildings. The first is made up of the original structures of the school namely a two-classroom block, and an administration block made up of the head teacher's office and a staffroom. These were built by a foreign building contractor through a loan obtained by central government. The second set comprise of 2 blocks of two classrooms each, and a school hall. Two of these classrooms were improvised to become a science laboratory and a library. The buildings in this set were constructed with partial funding from the European Union (EU) and contributions from parents through sand and bricks. Although the standard of buildings is not as good as that of the first set, they are still well lit and well ventilated. The third set is a two-classroom block that was built wholly by the school using local contributions. Its iron sheets were recycled from an old school block that was built in 1975 and is no longer in use. Parents contributed the rest of the resources. However, this block was not in use because it was poorly lit and ventilated, and students and teachers found it to be too uncomfortable to be used as a classroom.

Other significant changes had also been made regarding use of space at the school in an effort to alleviate its infrastructural challenges. For example, the library was being used as a staffroom and vice-versa because the latter had proved too small to

accommodate all teachers. The current staffroom also used to serve as a computer laboratory when computers were functioning. At the time of data collection, the school had an enrolment of 366 students (see table 6). Boys and girls were selected to the school in equal numbers; therefore, the higher enrolment of boys could also be a reflection of cultural factors which might work against the retention of girls.

There were 15 teachers of which 12 were male and 3 were female. Of these teachers 5 had Bachelor's degrees; 9 had diplomas; and 1 had a primary school teaching certificate. Among the 9 diploma teachers, 6 were products of a special distance teacher education programme that was conducted to upgrade to diploma level primary school teachers who had been serving in CDSSs. A total of 10 subjects are offered. The school was not getting any funding from central government and the only source of revenue was school fees. The maximum amount of fees paid by a student per term was MK4250-00 (see Table 6). Here also, the tuition fees were remitted to central government.

Table 3: School fees- Nachiswe CDSS

Term	Fees distribution (MK)				Total (MK)
	<i>Tuition</i>	<i>PTA</i>	<i>TRF</i>	<i>GPF</i>	
1	500-00	3000-00	250-00	500-00	4250-00
2	500-00	3000-00		500-00	4000-00
3	500-00	3000-00		500-00	4000-00

The limited amount of revenue available to the school may, therefore, adversely affect teaching and learning, and other opportunities offered to students. Several bursaries were available for the neediest students who could not afford to pay the fees. For the

three years prior to the study, the performance of the school at MSCE had been varying (see table 7). One student was selected to a public university in the year prior to the study.

The school also used to reward teachers for the performance of students at MSCE. The amount was decided by the head teacher depending on availability of funds. For example, in 2013 a pass with distinction attracted a reward of MK300-00 per student. The students' level of English proficiency was low. Most of them had difficulties expressing themselves in English both orally and in writing. As a result, Chichewa, the national *lingua franca*, was often used during the focus group discussion to allow students to express themselves freely.

The school timetable had 9 periods of 40 minutes each as recommended by MoEST. There were two short breaks of 10 minutes and 20 minutes respectively after every 3 periods. The breaks were short because there was no provision for midday meals. The school day, therefore, ended at 14:20 hours to allow students time to go home for their meals. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the 9th period was used for extra-curricular activities.

5.1.3 Chifule district secondary school

Chifule district secondary school is a wholly government-owned secondary school established in 1990. It is a triple stream school and it had an enrolment of 518 students at the time of data collection (see table 6). The school offers boarding facilities to all enrolled students. There were 7 dormitories for boys and 3 for girls resulting in higher enrolment for boys than for girls. This could be a result of discriminatory policies that were followed at the time the school was opened, which may also be a reflection of the wider culture of that time.

There were 25 teachers of whom 17 were male and 8 were female. Two of the teachers had Master's degrees; 13 had Bachelor's degrees; and 10 had diplomas. All teachers were, therefore, qualified to teach in secondary school in various areas of specialisation. A total of 14 subjects were offered. Social studies was a popular optional subject with only very few students opting out. As regards infrastructure, besides the ordinary classrooms and the school hall, the school has the following specialised rooms: 1 library, 3 science laboratories, and 1 computer laboratory. One of the 3 science laboratories was converted into a digital satellite television (DStv) room. The school had a partnership with the digital satellite television provider, MultiChoice (Malawi) through which the company provided the school with free television subscription for all educational channels. These channels included the *National Geographic*, *History*, *BBC Knowledge*, *Discovery*, *Mind-set learn*, and *Natgeo Wild*. Students could, therefore, watch live television programmes or record them to be viewed later. There were variations in the school's performance at MSCE for the previous 3 years (see Table 7) and few students were selected to public universities.

There were two sources of income, namely school fees, and subvention from central government. The maximum amount of fees per term was MK24000-00 (see Table 10) of which tuition was also remitted to central government. The school had bursaries available for the neediest students who could not afford to pay the fees.

Table 4: School fees- Chifule district

Term	Fees distribution (MK)						Total (MK)
	<i>Tuition</i>	<i>PTA</i>	<i>TRF</i>	<i>GPF</i>	<i>Boarding</i>	<i>Computer fund</i>	
1	500-00	500-00	250-00	500-00	22000-00	250-00	24000-00
2	500-00	500-00		500-00	22000-00	250-00	23750-00
3	500-00	500-00		500-00	22000-00	250-00	23750-00

5.2 Discussion of the schools

From the descriptions above, it can be noted that there are some similarities and differences between the schools. This section makes comparisons between schools in selected areas to bring out the similarities and differences. Tables are used where appropriate for easy comparison.

Firstly, Tables 5 compares data for the schools in terms of school type, number of classes per form, subjects offered, fees paid by students, and sources of revenue while Table 6 compares the schools in terms of enrolment.

Table 5: Comparative statistics between schools

	Namikango national	Nachiswe CDSS	Chifule district
Type of school	National boarding	Community day	District boarding
Streams (Number of classes per form)	Triple	Single	Triple
No. of subjects offered	17	10	14
School fees per annum	MK150, 000-00	MK12, 250-00	MK71, 500-00
Sources of revenue	Grants-in-aid from government, school fees, well-wishers, projects	School fees	Monthly government subventions, school fees.

As noted from table 5, Namikango national secondary school collects the highest amount of fees, followed by Chifule district secondary school. Comparatively, the fees paid by students of Nachiswe CDSS are very low. Interestingly, Nachiswe CDSS does not get any funding from central government while the other two schools are supported by government financially. It should also be noted that out of the annual fees paid by each student, tuition fees amounting to MK1500-00 per annum from every student is remitted to central government. This leaves Nachiswe CDSS with very little revenue for its operations. It should, however, be noted that Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools offer boarding facilities hence a large share of their fees is used for student maintenance. It should, furthermore, be noted that teachers' salaries, in all schools, are paid by central government. Although Nachiswe CDSS does not get any revenue from government, it has the highest average number of students per class (see Table 6).

Table 6: Schools enrolment by class and sex

	Namikango national			Nachiswe CDSS			Chifule district		
Form	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	85	56	141	45	40	85	81	36	117
2	96	59	155	44	38	82	97	42	139
3	85	40	125	65	41	106	92	53	145
4	119	74	193	56	37	93	81	36	117
Totals	385	229	614	210	156	366	351	167	518

It is important to observe that student enrolment in schools is directed and coordinated centrally by MoEST. While the minimum enrolment for national and district schools is 40 students per class, that for CDSSs is 50. Nachiswe's financial position and enrolment is, therefore, likely to have an adverse effect on the availability of teaching and learning resources, and provision of learning experiences to students which may, in turn, have an effect on education for citizenship.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, Namikango national secondary school offers the highest number of subjects, giving students a wide choice. This is followed by Chifule district secondary school. As will be noted later, the availability of a wide choice of subjects may result in competition for space on the timetable and possibly limit options for students as several subjects are taught in parallel sessions. This should be understood in the light of the fact that to attain an MSCE a candidate requires a minimum of 6 subjects, and that most students study up to 8 subjects at senior secondary level.

Secondly, I compare the academic qualifications of teachers of the three schools (see Figure 2), the performance of schools in national examinations, focussing on MSCE results for the three years prior to the study (Table 7), and finally the rewards teachers get for outstanding students' performance in their respective subjects.

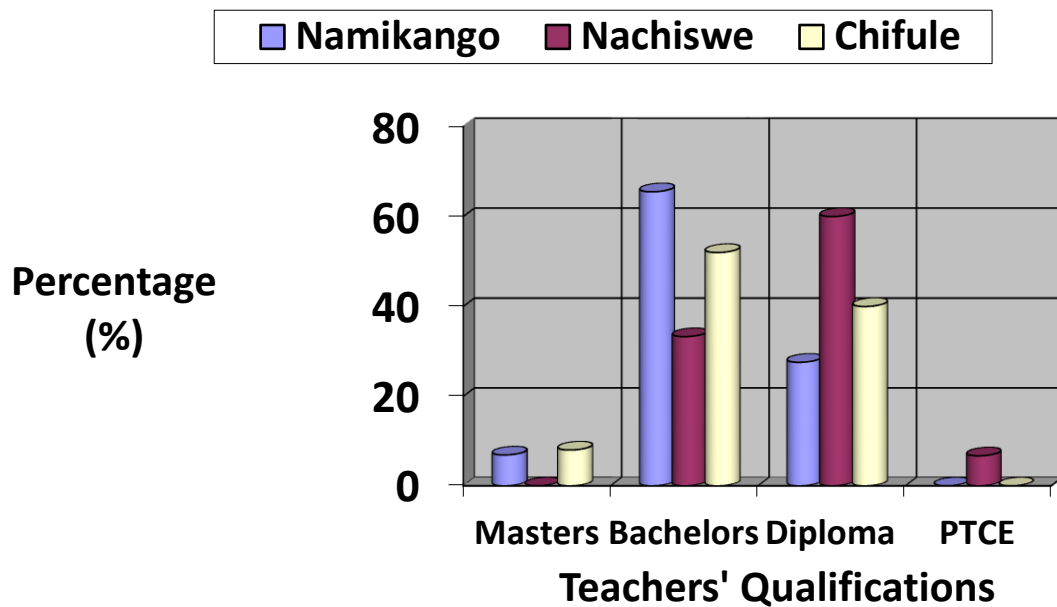


Figure 2: Teacher qualifications by percentage per school

Figure 2 show that Namikango national schools' graph is skewed towards the positive (majority of teachers have Bachelor's degrees with even some few having Masters degrees), while Nachiswe CDSS's graph is skewed towards the negative (majority of teachers have diplomas, some Bachelor's degrees, and a couple primary school teaching certificate- PTCE). For Chifule district it's graph has a normal distribution (many teachers have Bachelor's degrees and diplomas and few have Masters' degrees). MoEST posts graduate teachers to National and district secondary schools to meet their aspirations. Moreover, these schools have better teacher houses and teaching environments than CDSSs do. Furthermore, Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools offer some technical subjects which require specialist teachers who have to train up to Bachelor's degree level. This means that teachers with lower qualifications are left to face massive challenges in the CDSS. These differences in qualifications may result in differences in the calibre of teachers between these schools. These may further result in different expectations from society

with the effect of influencing students' school experiences. Not surprisingly, there are big differences in the pass rates for students of the three schools in national examinations.

Table 7 below shows the performance of the schools, against national averages, in MSCE for the 3 years prior to data collection. Although all schools have higher attainment compared to the national averages, Namikango national's performance has not only been consistently high but has also been improving while Nachiswe CDSS has the lowest rates in the group. Chifule district, though not consistent, also has very high pass rates.

Table 7: MSCE pass rates for three years

YEAR	MSCE pass rate (%)			
	Namikango national	Nachiswe CDSS	Chifule district	National average³
2014	96	61	92	55.71
2013	90	70.5	76.5	58.24
2012	85	58	88	51.95

Although teacher qualifications make a difference in a school's academic achievements, it should be noted that there were further efforts to motivate teachers in the sampled schools. Each school, however, determined its own reward depending on availability of financial resources. For example, teachers at Namikango national secondary school earned MK1200-00 for a pass with distinction while, in contrast, their counterparts at Nachiswe CDSS earned only MK300-00 for the same grade. This

³The national averages cover results from schools in the following categories: national secondary schools and district secondary schools (collectively known as conventional secondary schools); community day secondary schools; open secondary schools; and private secondary schools (Source: MANEB).

practice was, however, not in place at Chifule district secondary school. Apart from motivating teachers, Namikango national secondary school also rewarded students' academic achievements. For example, *The Manken Awards* and educational visits for high achieving students were meant to encourage students to aim high academically. Furthermore, there were monthly rewards to encourage students to speak English without code-switching with vernaculars. The other two schools did not have such initiatives.

From the foregoing discussion, it can be noted that the three schools have different departure points regarding revenue, teacher qualifications, and number of subjects offered among other factors. All these factors place Namikango national secondary school at an advantage over Nachiswe CDSS, while Chifule district secondary school lies in the middle. Ironically, in spite of these striking differences between them, each of the schools has the responsibility of developing citizens for a democratic Malawi. It would, therefore, be interesting to note the experiences and opportunities that students of each school have to practice democratic living. It would further be interesting to explore and compare the types of citizens that the practices in each school might likely develop.

The section and chapters that follow concern themselves with how the different factors noted above translate into school experiences that promote or hinder the development of skills and dispositions for democratic citizenship. The next section presents views of teachers and students about the aims of social studies and the types of citizen that the school is expected to develop. Direct quotes have been used in the findings to provide narratives and give participants a voice. A link is made between the findings and literature on critical pedagogy and citizenship education.

5.3 Views of teachers and students about social studies

As indicated in chapter 1, the Malawi Government introduced social studies as citizenship education in schools following the advent of multiparty democracy in 1993 (Chiponda, 2007; Ministry of Education, 1998). This point was elaborated by the official from MoEST, who was a key informant in the present study.

Focusing on the link between democracy and good governance, he said:

In 1994 (sic), there was the introduction of ... democratic dispensation through the multiparty government that came in place in Malawi. So it was felt that issues of good governance, democracy, human rights and social justice needed to be entrenched in the Malawi citizenry, and the best way was to introduce social studies at secondary school level as a carrier subject. (MoEST official)

Schou (2001) argues that the best way to teach democracy is by practising it. The present study was, therefore, undertaken to explore if secondary schools are places where citizenship and democracy are practiced. One way of understanding if the school is an arena for practising democratic citizenship was to explore the views of teachers, head teachers and students on their understanding of the aims of social studies.

Firstly, the study sought the views of officials from MIE and MoEST which represented the official positions of the curriculum development organisation and the Government of Malawi respectively. Both key informants spoke of education as aimed at developing *personally responsible* and *participatory* citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). The MoEST official presented the role of the education system as: “*to develop a citizen who respects the rule of law, who embraces the tenets of democracy, and who is a responsible citizen in all aspects of life.*” When probed to explain more

on the tenets of democracy he cited examples such as taking part in development, participation in elections, and accepting responsibilities at school level.

Similarly, in her response, the MIE official said that education should develop “*a citizen who is able to make informed decisions; who is ready to participate in activities within the community ...able to use the resources which are there in proper ways, and also ... is able to be patriotic to his or her country.*” It can, therefore, be argued that personal responsibility and participation represent the official positions of a kind of citizen that the education system should develop. As will be noted later, participation can be problematic since it can be used to bring out conformity and maintain the status quo on the one hand, or it can also be used to bring about transformation and social justice on the other. From the examples cited by the key informants, it can be argued that these views represent a passive form of citizenship (Turner, 1990). It would be interesting to note whether participants from schools share similar views or have different perceptions of citizenship.

As earlier stated, form 3 students and social studies teachers took part in the study. Head teachers at Nachiswe CDSS and Chifule district secondary school and the deputy head teacher at Namikango national secondary school also took part in the study. Their views about social studies are presented below, firstly according to schools, and followed by a cross-case discussion.

5.2.1 Namikango national secondary school

One question the study posed was to find out participants’ views on the aims of social studies, or why social studies was introduced in secondary schools. Responses were very similar to the aims of the subject as indicated in the syllabus. The deputy head, for example, specified that:

Actually, one reason is to equip students with citizenship, and social-cultural skills, and another point is for the students ... to be aware of the emerging issues in the society (Deputy Head- Namikango national)

Similarly, the social studies teacher indicated that the subject was meant to raise the awareness of students regarding issues affecting their lives. On their part, students viewed social studies as aimed at making students aware of democratic practices, and the roles they should play in society as citizens. Some of their views are captured below:

Social studies is taught in order to make people to realise the democratic practices of everyday life. (Student- Namikango national)

Social Studies is taught in order to prepare students for the responsibility that they had (sic) in the future in the country. (Student- Namikango national)

These views showed familiarity with the curriculum documents and may also reflect a clear understanding of the aims of the subject, starting from the level of school management, to the students. However, awareness-raising can be problematic since it is a pointer towards Education ABOUT citizenship (Kerr, 1999). How this understanding is translated into action and practices in classrooms and whole school processes is yet to be observed in chapters six and seven respectively.

When asked about what kind of a citizen the country wanted to develop through social studies and the school curricula, most responses showed that the school was meant to develop *personally responsible* and *participatory citizens* (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). For example, students' views were that the country would like to develop "*patriotic*" citizens; "*tolerant*" citizens; and "*good citizens who are self-reliant*". These views are not dissimilar to those held by the key informants. The social studies

teacher was more elaborate in his response, and like the key informants, focused on the participatory role of the citizen.

I think the country would like citizens who are responsible and citizens who are able to take part in development activities; citizens who are able to care for the resources that are in their midst; citizens who are able to know their rights and are able to respect the rights of others ...informed citizens; citizens who are able to follow what is happening in their country. (Social studies teacher- Namikango national)

Although the outcomes of a citizenship education programme may not be apparent during the period of learning, schools are expected to ascertain if programmes of learning are bearing fruit. As such, the study sought views from the school on the immediate benefits of studying social studies. Responses showed that the subject had some perceived impact in terms of awareness, knowledge acquisition and practice. For example, the deputy head teacher specified that students were aware of their rights and responsibilities. This awareness made the school to respect students' rights. In terms of practice, the social studies teacher mentioned that students were able to transfer concepts learned in class to outside class situations. He cited a case where students organised themselves and created a club to take care of health and sanitation issues at the school's dining hall after learning about civil society organisations. Students' responses in a focus group discussion touched on a wide variety of issues ranging from being more interactive, taking care of facilities at the school and in the community, to taking keen interest in government affairs.

One interesting response had to do with political literacy:

With social studies, we have gained some skills like we are able to know if the government is doing wrong things or right things. So we are able to criticise the government. (Student- Namikango national)

When the student was probed whether he had been able to criticise the government, he was quick to reply that: “*Aaaah, no! I am afraid of being killed.*” These responses show that the school held positive views about the social studies programme and its impact. They show that students were aware of their rights and were willing to claim them although, as indicated by one student’s response, they may not be willing to tread in new paths for fear of repercussions. Furthermore, the views of a critical citizen who should monitor the actions of people in authority, as expressed by some students could be at tension with the views of teachers and key informants. How this tension is played out on the school terrain shall be seen in the chapters that follow.

5.2.2 Nachiswe CDSS

The study similarly sought views of Nachiswe CDSS teachers and students about the teaching of social studies. These views also focused on their understanding of the aims of the subject, the type of citizen they expected the education system to develop, and the apparent outcomes of the social studies programme. There were several views on the aims of social studies, or why the subject was introduced. Firstly, the head teacher stated that the aims of the subject relate to the way students should lead their everyday lives while in school and after school. The head teacher, however, appeared to confuse social studies with life skills and at times conflated the two subjects. Social studies and life skills are relatively new subjects in the curriculum, and there are overlaps in some topics. Furthermore, the head teacher had negative views about social studies, claiming that it was responsible for the breakdown in morals and discipline at the school. He indicated that the introduction of social studies had resulted in students becoming unruly under the guise of expressing their freedom. Expressing his dissatisfaction, he suspiciously stated that:

...all these learners are pursuing social studies as a subject, but at the same time, when you look at their behaviour, it is always naughty. Is it because of what they are learning in class? (Head Teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

On his part, the social studies teacher, described social studies as a subject which prepares students for a better life. His remarks showed optimism for education for democratic citizenship saying that social studies offers a platform for students to learn about democracy.

...it prepares students for a better life out there because we have to live in a democratic society, so students have to learn the democratic principles, and I think social studies is the only subject that currently can offer students the platform where they can learn issues of democracy. (Social studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

Students, on their part, stated that the aims of social studies were for them to know about culture, development, and their rights.

When asked about the kind of citizen that the country would like to develop through social studies, the social studies teacher responded that:

I think the nation is looking at citizens that are democratically mature. Citizens that can make individual and well informed decisions wherever they are. If they are employed, they can work efficiently and make sure that they are not corrupt or they don't bring a bad tendency at the work places. Even if they are doing business, they can be people with integrity... and in terms of politics; they can be a new crop of politicians that the nation has been looking for, for a long time. (Social studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

His response shows that the programme should develop citizens with good character.

Similarly, the students' views were that the system was meant to develop *personally*

responsible and participatory citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) who would provide charity to the needy, and take part in village meetings and in development work. In their responses, they made statements such as: “*I want to be a citizen who participate[s] in all activities in my country*”, citing examples such as “*repairing broken bridges, constructing schools*”. Others considered becoming charitable citizens stating that: “*I [would] like to give... to other(s)... exercise books, school uniform, school fee*”. Likewise, responses from the head teacher indicated that the school should develop personally responsible citizens. Referring to social studies (and apparently life skills), he lamented that the subject was, in contrast, doing the opposite:

I think the subjects were supposed to tackle such things about their behaviour, their dressing, or how they should behave and how they should stay in society, although we are seeing something contrary. (Head Teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

When it came to the apparent outcomes of the social studies programme, there were varied responses. As noted earlier, the head teacher indicated that the outcome of social studies was negative and causing the school some discipline challenges. He further stated that there was a lot of focus on rights and freedoms by students and not responsibilities. Acknowledging first the importance of freedom in a democracy, he said:

...democracy is there, yes. But at school level, we have these new subjects that are influencing such [bad] behaviours: life skills and social studies. Because, you are giving them more freedom! They learn about their freedoms! So many freedoms! But to attach those freedoms with responsibility I think that's where the problem is. As a result, we are meeting lots of challenges in terms of behaviour of these students. (Head Teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

The social studies teacher on his part was unable to ascertain whether social studies was having any effect on students or not. He indicated that with only classroom teaching that was based on theory, it was difficult to note any immediate outcomes. In his view, only the future could tell if there had been an impact or not.

It's difficult to assess them because it's something that will happen out there, so whenever they are at school, we assess them academically, as of the practical aspect, I think it's hard to assess them (Social Studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

He added that in the future people might be able to say “... *that student was taking social studies while ... in secondary school ... and the character that he or she is showing must be a manifestation of the learning of social studies.*” This response could be a pointer towards Education ABOUT citizenship. Furthermore, the responses by the head teacher and the social studies teacher represent a source of tension by two key players within the school in terms of knowledge and attitudes towards social studies and democratic citizenship. With the balance of power in schools tilted in favour of school managers, it remains to be seen in the following chapters how this tension is played out when it comes to practices in classrooms and outside class. Furthermore, the responses by both the head teacher and the social studies teacher may imply lack of space by students on the school terrain to put into practice concepts that are learned in class. In contrast, students stated that they were benefitting from studying social studies by knowing other cultures, studying technology, knowing rules and regulations, and how they could develop their country. For example, one student answered that it was important to know rules and regulations “*because one cannot break the rules*”.

It can be noted that students and the social studies teacher had a good understanding of social studies which was not far from the aims as stated in the curriculum. Although the head teacher had some understanding of the subject, he had negative views of the subject, alongside life skills, viewing them as being responsible for students' misbehaviour. With such a view, it would be interesting to note if the school was making any effort to provide students with space to practice democracy. It would also be interesting to note the role the social studies teacher plays in the education for democratic citizenship since his views are in tension with those of the head teacher.

5.2.3 Chifule district secondary school

At Chifule district secondary school, the responses to the question of the aims of social studies, or why the subject was introduced, showed participant awareness of the aims of the subject.

The head teacher gave a historical perspective of the introduction of the subject and stating the outcome for offering it:

Social studies was introduced in secondary schools because of the changes that have taken place in Malawi from one party system of government to multiparty where people must learn and know their rights and responsibilities... and one way of transmitting this knowledge is through curriculum and to be specific through the teaching of social studies, so that in the end we may come up with good citizens of Malawi.
(Head Teacher- Chifule district)

As can be noted, the Head Teacher's response focused on knowledge transmission and not development of skills and dispositions. On his part, the social studies teacher indicated that the subject is about human life and touches on everything that takes

place in humans. The students gave varied responses which, nevertheless, showed an understanding of the aims of the subject. Most of their responses focused on the role of the subject in social change. Some talked of the subject helping in improving living standards, others talked of addressing bad cultural practices, while still others talked of promoting development through participation.

When asked about the kind of citizen the country wants to develop through the teaching of social studies, students talked of “*good citizens*” and “*patriotic citizens*” who participate in development activities; and citizens who pay taxes. Their views can be described as views of *personally responsible* and *participatory* citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). One student, however, had *maximal* or *justice-oriented* interpretation of a citizen (McLaughlin, 1992; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

In his view, a good citizen should demand transparency and hold leaders accountable:

A good citizen, if he or she sees that ... in government, they are hiding things there, they did not display it to the people who choose them, a good citizen [should] not fear to talk about what happens there. He or she is free to talk and to express his or her views freely, so that the government might change their behaviour, and that makes them to bring about change. (Student- Chifule district)

The social studies teacher had views of *personally-responsible* citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), stating that the country needs to develop “*honest and obedient*” citizens. Referring to massive corruption in government, known in the local media as *cashgate* he said:

Because the country needs people who are honest, I think you know what is happening right now. We are talking of ‘cashgate’ and some other malpractices in government. So I believe that if we intensify social studies training be it at primary school, secondary school, up to

college...I think we might have a lot of honest people. (Social studies teacher- Chifule district)

Although students and teachers talked of good citizens, their interpretations regarding responsibilities and duties of the citizen varied from those that are personally-responsible, participatory, and justice- oriented citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). It should be noted that the view of personally-responsible citizen came from the teacher and the head teacher, while that of justice-oriented citizen came from students. This tension provides a fertile ground for contestation of power on the school terrain between teachers on one hand and students on the other. On the apparent outcomes of the social studies programme, there was acknowledgement of a change in behaviour among students. The head teacher cited the reduction in acts of violence at the school and reduced cases of riots as examples of changes resulting from learning social studies. Even students explained that learning social studies has changed their attitudes towards the environment, school property, and other students. Some of their responses follow:

Just to mention but a few, I was one of the persons who used to segregate other types of sex like girls, [saying] that girls are not intelligent enough to be competing with boys. But I have learned that we have the same quantity of ... (silence as he looks for an appropriate word) ..., the same capacity of learning which is just equal [between] girls and boys. ... I have also learned that in our everyday lives, we make different mistakes and one of the mistakes is that we don't take care of our resources which are around us, and as a result, we don't see the problems but other people who are coming behind us are the ones who face the problems. So I have learned to take care of the resources which are around us and the ones that we use. (Student- Chifule district)

Some people they just say that they can do agriculture without being educated, thus why they are still using unimproved seeds. Because the one who has gone to school knows that also agriculture must be improved, the implements, crop varieties they might change, may be practising mixing cropping, yap! And I will change that attitude.
(Student-Chifule district)

The responses from students show that they are aware of the relevance of social studies to their lives and the lives of others. It should be acknowledged that there are differences between stated opinions and actions. However, although not sufficient, knowledge is necessary for people to change their behaviour.

As noted in this section, there was correlation among the participants in the school on their views about social studies, the type of citizen, and the apparent outcomes of social studies programme. In all cases, there was emphasis on personal responsibility, and participation in the community. Changes in behaviour and attitudes have been cited as the apparent outcomes of social studies. Chapters 6 and 7 will ascertain if schools translate this knowledge into actions in and outside class respectively. The following section discusses the findings across the three schools.

5.3 Discussion of findings

The study has noted that there are similarities in the views of most participants across the three schools on the teaching of social studies. Across the schools and across all participants, the aims of social studies were related to awareness of the role of students in their communities and in a democratic society. For example, the head teacher of Chifule district secondary school and social studies teacher at Nachiswe CDSS both talked about the role of the subject in transmitting knowledge about democratic citizenship. Similarly, the deputy head of Namikango national secondary school spoke about respecting human rights in a democratic era. All these aims are in

line with the aims of the subject as articulated in the syllabus document. The syllabus describes social studies as a subject which should instil in learners knowledge, skills, attitudes, and actions which are important for living in a community and society. It further places emphasis on social studies as citizenship education and the importance of participatory abilities of students (Ministry of Education, 1998). A further link can be made between the syllabus and the responses of participants in all schools where participation was also highlighted in the aims. These responses show that most participants had a good understanding of the official aims of social studies. This observation is similar to the findings of a study by Hals and Lindebæk (2010) conducted at two national secondary schools and one district secondary school in Malawi. The study found that teachers and students had very good understanding of democracy and the role of the citizen as a participant in a democratic state.

It is significant to note that the findings of the present study and those of Hals and Lindebæk's (2010) can be contrasted with those of a study conducted by Ngalande (2010) also in Malawi. Ngalande studied primary schools in two districts in Malawi and found that most teachers did not understand the rationale for social studies. This disparity may be attributed to the fact that, unlike their primary school counterparts who are trained to teach all subjects in the curriculum, secondary school teachers generate a comprehensive understanding of the aims of social studies because they specialise in it during their training. Furthermore, it is logical to expect a diploma and degree teacher to understand a subject better than would do a primary teacher with only an MSCE and a teaching certificate. This understanding provides a good departure point for understanding education for democratic citizenship in Malawi. It should, however, be anticipated that since participants view social studies as being aimed at awareness raising, this can also be an indicator of schools offering

Education ABOUT citizenship (Kerr, 1999) where the focus is on knowledge transmission. As Reilly and Niens (2014) argue, awareness raising is inadequate in developing (democratic) citizenship.

On the kind of citizens the school system aims to develop, there was emphasis on personal responsibility and the participatory abilities (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) of citizens in all three schools. It was interesting to note that the issue of justice-oriented citizens who would hold leaders accountable only turned up in students' focus group discussions at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools. This shows tension between the views of teachers and those of students regarding the type of citizen that schools should develop. While teachers and head teachers had thin interpretations, some students had thick interpretations (McLaughlin, 1992) of the type of citizen that social studies was expected to develop. This finding is in keeping with the findings of the study by Hals and Lindebæk (2010) in some secondary schools in Malawi which found that teachers had a republican view of a citizen which focused on participation, while students had a liberal view which concentrated on rights. Interestingly, the views expressed by teachers and head teachers are also similar to the ones expressed by the key informants to this study. It should be noted that although the concept of *patriotic citizen* is value laden and can represent any type of citizen who acts within the law, in Malawi's official discourse, the concept mainly represents personally responsible citizens and participatory citizens. Critical-democratic citizens (Veugelers, 2007), and justice-oriented citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) who fight for social justice and hold leaders accountable are usually labelled as unpatriotic even if they act within the law. In terms of upholding democracy, the thin interpretations (McLaughlin, 1992) and views held by the schools could be described as views of a passive citizen (Turner, 1990). It can, therefore, be

argued that the views held by teachers in all schools were views of a passive citizen who has to act in a responsible manner. Although there is focus on the participatory role of the citizen in all schools, the kind of participation is what Davies (2012) calls engagement without critical analysis.

Davies (2012) advances the view that although civic engagement is necessary for a vibrant democracy, some kinds of inaction such as boycotting a service also form expressions of citizenship. It should be noted that the students of Nachiswe CDSS also had views of personally responsible and participatory citizens. Unlike the other two schools, issues of social justice did not arise during focus group discussion at Nachiswe CDSS. This could be a reflection of the students' close interaction with the community and the influence of the local culture considering that this is a community day school. With cases of massive corruption in Malawi by government officials and politicians, the personally responsible citizen reflects the concerns and the desire of most people for the education system to develop honest citizens and citizens with integrity. Integrity and honesty came up strongly as examples of responsible citizens at Chifule district secondary school and Nachiswe CDSS where *cashgate* was cited as an evil that the education system should root out.

As argued by Westheimer and Kahne, (2004) although personal responsibility is good for community living, it is not sufficient for upholding democracy. Democracy requires citizens who are justice-oriented so that leaders can be held accountable for their actions. As noted earlier, the differing views held by teachers and school heads on one hand and students at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools on the other represent a source of tension within the schools. It is interesting to note, in the following chapters, how this tension is played out in the schools. Furthermore, the views of personally responsible and participatory citizens held by

schools could be pointers towards Education ABOUT citizenship and Education THROUGH citizenship (Kerr, 1999) practices respectively in the schools.

In terms of apparent outcomes from the social studies programme, there were similarities between Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools. Both schools expressed positive views about the apparent outcomes of social studies. Changes in behaviour were the main examples cited. The schools noted a positive influence of social studies on students' life outside the classroom. In contrast, the head teacher at Nachiswe CDSS viewed social studies with suspicion because it allegedly contributed to the rising cases of indiscipline. While the social studies teacher at Nachiswe CDSS was unsure of the outcome of the programme, the head teacher was straight forward in blaming social studies for the indiscipline at the school. This outcome relates to the findings of a study by Wyse (2008) in which primary school social studies teachers in Malawi located the problem of breakdown of discipline to democratisation. Wyse (2008) argues that democracy resulted in the incursion of western values on Malawian culture and led to dilution of local cultural values. It can, therefore, be posited that the school space is also a terrain where the tension between cultural values and democratic values is contested. With views from teachers and head teachers focusing on personal responsibility, and the principles of democratic education focusing on social justice, this represents another source of tension which is contested on the school terrain. Another source of tension maybe noted at Nachiswe CDSS where the head teacher laments about students' indiscipline due to social studies while the students themselves view the programme as useful because it has enabled them to understand and follow rules and regulations. The following chapters will show how these tensions are played out in class and outside class practices.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has explored the understanding of research participants in the case study schools about the aims, and outcomes of social studies teaching. Cases of tensions have been noted between students on the one hand, and key informants, teachers and head teachers on the other. When the teachers' passive views about social studies are considered against the critical views held by students, it sets the scene for contradictions and tensions in school practices and classroom practices. However, school practices are not only informed by people's understanding of the aims of a subject, but by power relations inherent in schools, and the context within which schools operate. This chapter has set out the differing contexts within which the case study schools operate. With schools having differences in terms of resources, teacher qualifications, as well as school cultures, it sets an interesting landscape for education for democratic citizenship. The chapter that follows, therefore, explores how the understanding of social studies and the tensions in each school are translated into action through pedagogical practices within the context of each school.

CHAPTER SIX

PEDAGOGY AND ITS INFLUENCING FACTORS

6.0 Chapter overview

It is argued that experience is important in forming habits and that schools play an essential role in this regard. Shyman (2011) contends that schools are not just arenas for intellectual exercise; but are viable communities through which democratic ideas and activity, critical awareness, and social duty are to be exercised. The present chapter presents findings on pedagogy in social studies classrooms and relate them to the development of democratic citizenship skills and dispositions. As indicated in section 1.3, pedagogy refers to the interactions between teachers, students, the learning environment, and learning tasks (Murphy, 1996). Pedagogical practices are presented for each case study school, and are followed by a cross-case discussion. Afterwards, the chapter presents factors that influence these classroom practices in each school before eventually discussing the findings for the three cases together. The discussions provide a link between the findings, the theoretical framework, and the context of the schools so that interpretations are properly grounded in the situations in which pedagogy takes place.

6.1 Pedagogy in social studies classrooms

It is argued that students who talk and think critically in class will also become critical citizens outside class (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). Similarly, Davies (2012) asserts that active learning on its own is not good for democracy unless it is accompanied by

critical analysis. In order to develop democratic citizens, teachers are, therefore, challenged to engage students intellectually and to provide them with opportunities to practice critical thinking and dialogue (Nourri & Sajjadi, 2014).

To explore classroom practices, form 3 social studies lessons were observed using a lesson observation schedule (see Appendix 6). The observations focussed on seven attributes related to democratic citizenship, namely use of active teaching/learning strategies; classroom interactions; productive engagement of students in lessons; promotion of critical thinking skills and creativity; responses to views and opinions of others; classroom atmosphere; and utilisation of authentic experiences and examples. The observation schedule had a rating scale for each attribute and all attributes had the same weighting ranging from 4 for the most positive attribute to 1 for the least positive attribute. The ‘best’ lesson in all attributes would, therefore, have a sum score of 28. Furthermore, the schedule included a checklist of interactive classroom practices. The findings from each case study school are presented in the sections that follow.

6.1.1 Namikango national secondary school

Social studies is offered as an optional subject in the senior section at Namikango national secondary school. Students have to choose one subject from a *set* made up of social studies, home economics, woodwork, French and agriculture. Social studies is, nevertheless, a popular elective subject with 80 students out of 125 opting for it. This means that the social studies class was one of the biggest at the school. Three double period lessons were observed, translating into 6 periods of social studies. Only three double lessons were covered because many form 3 students reported late after the release of JCE examination results. It was reported that, many students had to look for school fees before reporting to school. The school, therefore, had to wait for

substantial numbers of form 3 students to report so that they could choose amongst the optional subjects available. This process delayed the commencement of social studies lessons. The lessons observed had total scores ranging from 25 to 27 with a mean score of 26. Figure 3 below shows specific scores per lesson and per attribute and also the average scores.

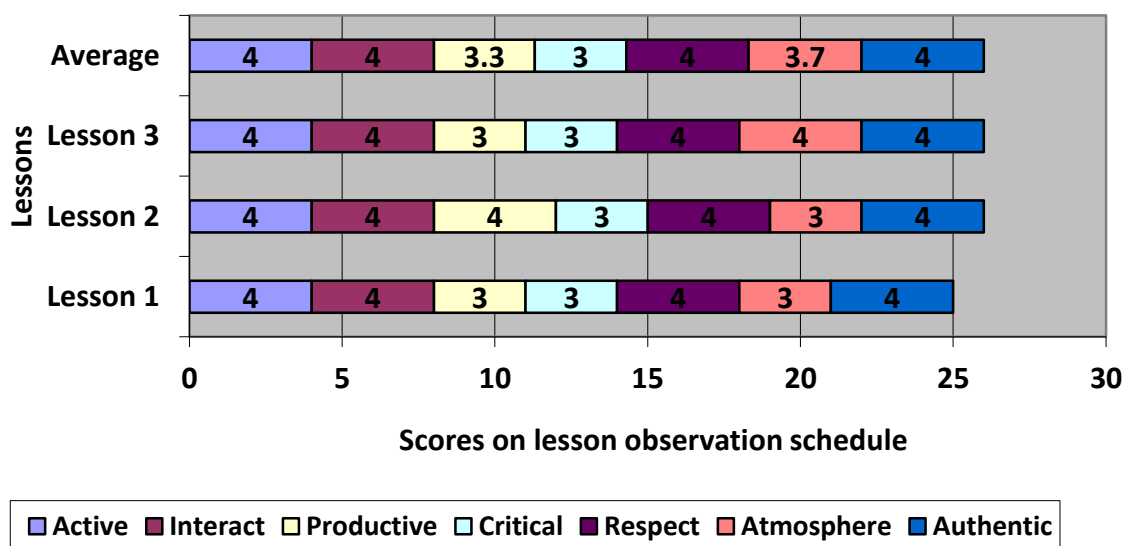


Figure 3: Lesson scores for Namikango national

In all lessons there was both vertical interaction and horizontal interaction between students and the teacher, and among students respectively. Students were actively involved in lessons through group discussion, group work, pair work, whole class discussion, jigsaw, reporting, and problem solving using statistics from textbooks. Students were also productively engaged for most parts of lessons as they worked in groups and on tasks. However, despite this level of engagement, lesson activities were interspersed with note taking from the chalkboard. Although students discussed important issues in groups, and used government approved textbooks as sources of information, they would still wait for the teacher to write down the ‘correct information’ on the chalkboard for them to copy. That notwithstanding, there were

many questions and tasks which promoted critical thinking and creativity in students. For example, students were challenged to provide reasoned explanations when responding to questions; many questions required students to use higher levels of thinking; and students were asked to formulate questions in groups to be posed to other groups on topics covered in class. On many occasions, lessons utilised authentic examples and students' experiences. For example, the use of atlas maps during lessons encouraged students to apply their map reading skills to understand differences in social development across the world. In one lesson the teacher played an audio recording of parliamentary proceedings in the Malawi National Assembly to generate a classroom discussion on a topical issue.

Although textbooks were in short supply, the availability of photocopied materials such as diagrams, tables, and case studies provided the resources to enhance students' learning. The classroom atmosphere was mostly free and relaxed, allowing students to express themselves freely. There were respectful relations between the teacher and students and among students. Students listened to each other and shared their opinions with due regard to the opinions of others. It may, therefore, be confidently concluded that the school was able to achieve a balance between active teaching/learning and advancement of content knowledge. An explanation of how this balance was achieved will be provided when considering factors that influence classroom practices later in section 6.3.

To get a view of pedagogical practices for the period outside the time spent at the school, schemes and records of work for the previous year and term were reviewed. Stake (1995) recommend documents as a substitute for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly. Since data collection at the school commenced in the first week of teaching in form 3; form 2 schemes and records of work were

reviewed to check previously recorded classroom practices. The form 2 class was chosen because it had progressed to form 3 with the same teacher. The schemes of work showed that active teaching and learning strategies were planned. The records of work showed that classes were designed to be interactive lessons in which students' experiences were utilised to make learning relevant. The records suggested that students were involved in group discussions, role plays, quiz, and discussions through jigsaw groups. These strategies encourage understanding and add relevance to learning. Authentic experiences also encourage transfer of learning to outside class situations. The references section in the schemes of work indicated frequent use of government approved students' textbooks and students' experiences.

Although the planned work had provision for use of local environment in most topics this strategy/resource was, however, not utilised. All teaching strategies employed were classroom based. Furthermore, the evaluative remarks showed that as the academic term progressed, there was some work that was not covered due to time limitations. This showed that there was too much content to suit available time. The most common remedy in such scenarios was to have extra lessons commonly known in Malawi as "make-up" lessons. An informal chat with teachers at the school indicated that they usually have "make-up" lessons during the evening prep period. To validate these classroom practices further, students reported during a focus group discussion that active strategies were employed in class.

When asked about what they do mostly in class during social studies lessons, they replied that:

We try our best to prepare before [the] teacher comes by studying notes so that when [the] teacher comes, we will not be in trouble when answering questions. (Student- Namikango national)

They put us in groups to discuss the ideas which we have so when the teacher come[s], we choose one presenter and present. (Student- Namikango national)

A link can be established between the classroom practices and the views at the school on the type of citizen the social studies programme would like to develop, as noted in chapter 5. The social studies teacher reported that social studies is meant to develop *personally responsible* and *participatory* citizens, while students reported that the aim of social studies was to develop *personally responsible*, *participatory*, and *justice-oriented citizens* (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). From the available evidence, it may successfully be argued that the constructivist classroom practices at the school are most likely to develop personally responsible, participatory and critical thinking citizens. It must be noted that in the observations made and the records kept, no evidence was found where attention was directed at developing students who would tread new paths and fight for social justice (Veugelers, 2007). It should be borne in mind that although citizen participation is important, upholding democracy requires citizens who are justice-oriented and are willing to tread new paths (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). It will be interesting to note in the next chapter, if the classroom practices are correspondingly supported by opportunities for students to lead democratic lives outside class.

The following section focuses on pedagogical practices at Nachiswe CDSS which, as noted earlier in chapter 5, has a different context in terms of teacher qualifications, and resource availability among other factors.

6.1.2 Nachiswe CDSS

Social studies is a popular subject offered to all form 3 students at Nachiswe CDSS. At the time of data collection, the form 3 class had an enrolment of 106 students. As a result, there was shortage of space in the classroom to the extent that 3 to 4 students were sharing a desk designed for two students, regardless of the fact that the classroom was already overpopulated with the desks. Data collection at the school took place in the month of October, which is part of the hot, wet season in Malawi, and with an enrolment of 106 students, the classroom was very hot and stuffy. Five double period lessons were observed, translating into 10 periods of social studies. Lesson scores ranged from 14 to 16 with a mean score of 15 (see figure 4 below).

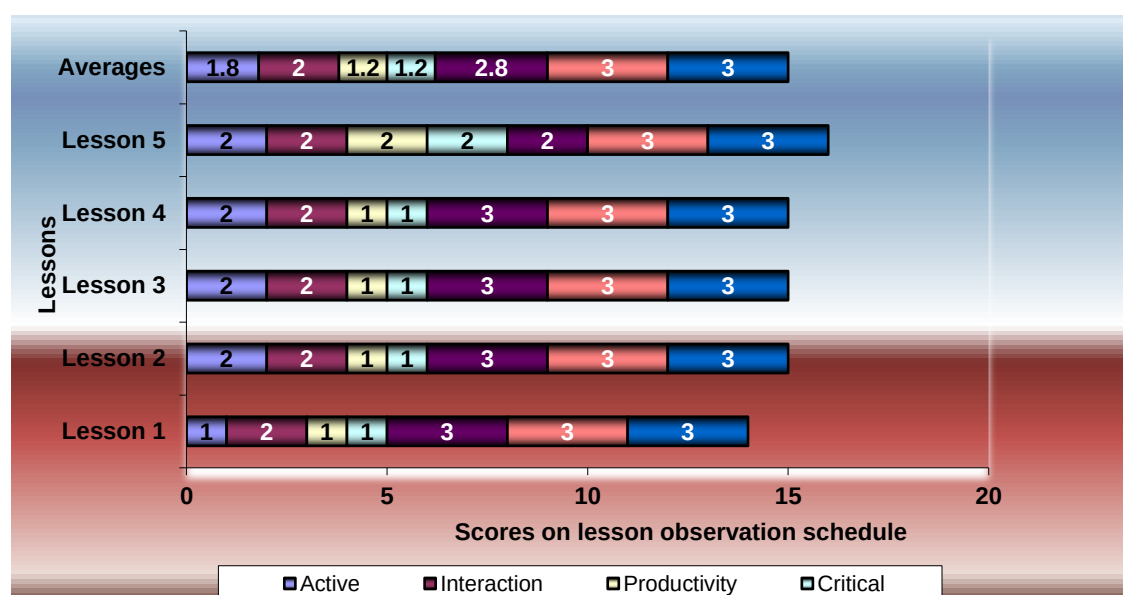


Figure 4: Lesson scores for Nachiswe CDSS

Most lessons were dominated by passive teaching strategies mostly the lecture method, interspaced with question and answer sessions and whole-class discussions. All these strategies only promoted vertical interaction between teacher and students. There was no horizontal interaction among students, who were mostly engaged through taking down notes from the chalkboard and listening to the teacher. Not

surprisingly, with the noted high temperature some students could be seen dozing, especially those at the back of the classroom. Opportunities for students to think critically and creatively were also found lacking. Questions required students to recall previously learned facts and some were responded to in chorus form. The lack of horizontal interaction among students meant that few opportunities were available for students to listen to and react to views and opinions of others. The atmosphere in the classroom was, nevertheless, free and relaxed as students were free to interrupt the teacher if they did not understand a point. The only exception was on one occasion when some boys shouted down at girls for giving their opinions during a whole-class discussion. Students were given opportunities periodically to ask questions. The teacher used practical, real-life, and authentic examples in his explanations which added relevance to concepts taught. Besides the teacher's knowledge and experiences, the chalkboard was the only other resource utilised in all lessons.

To validate these findings, the study consulted the schemes and records of work. These documents provided a record of pedagogical practices that had taken place prior to the data collection period (Stake, 1995). Since data collection at the school commenced on week 6 of the academic term, the records of work provided information on pedagogy for the previous 5 weeks. The schemes of work showed a lot of content in the planned work section. This was not surprising considering the amount of content in the syllabus to be covered. The references section showed the use of two government approved textbooks. These were the only sources of information available. It should, however, be recalled that no textbooks were used in the observed lessons. The methods section of the schemes of work was not filled in, hence it was difficult to ascertain the teaching/learning strategies that were planned and utilised.

Further information collected through focus group discussion with students and an interview with the social studies teacher validated the lesson observations.

When the teacher was asked about the strategies that are used in most lessons, the response indicated frequent use of teacher-centred strategies because they save time. He singled out whole-class discussion as a prominent strategy:

Mostly it's class discussion, because as I said earlier on, it has to do with current affairs. Of course, the textbook and even the syllabus recommend some methodologies like debates, quiz, but then the challenge is time. Looking at the [syllabus] content, especially the MSCE content is just so much, so teachers always say 'why should I waste a whole 40 minutes for a debate or a quiz?' (Social studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

When students were asked what they mostly do during social studies lessons, they responded as follows (note the poor language): “*We get very attentive in listening to him*”; “*When a teacher ask question, I will answer that question*”. These responses indicate dominance of teacher-centred strategies. Such pedagogical practices are likely to develop conformist students who cannot raise critical questions and hence can easily acquiesce to the *status quo* (Monchinski, 2008). It has to be acknowledged that the teacher made effort to be knowledgeable about current affairs so that he could use relevant examples during his lessons. The teacher reported that with limited finances, the school could only afford government approved textbooks. However, he pointed out that most of the information in the textbooks, which were published in 2010, was out of date. For example, he made reference to some laws and policies which were cited in the textbooks but had since been repealed. He cautioned that unless teachers made more effort, students would be acquiring outdated information which would, in turn, be, irrelevant to current situations.

When asked about the sources of information for his examples, he said:

...mostly it's the newspapers and magazines but that is a challenge because as a school, we don't buy newspapers and magazines, so it's a teacher's effort" (Social studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

Even students acknowledged that the use of current examples by the teacher made it easy to understand concepts, and also that they had freedom to interrupt lessons and ask where they did not understand. They respectively stated that:

*If teacher teaches it is easy to understand
If anybody have a question (sic), the teacher allow[s] anybody to ask,
and he will answer clearly* (Students- Nachiswe CDSS).

These responses are in line with the observations made in class where students were free to ask questions without fear of interrupting the flow of the lesson.

The dominance of the transmission model (Freire, 1998) of lesson presentation reflects well on the views at the school about the type of citizen that social studies should develop. The head teacher, social studies teacher, and some students all indicated that social studies is meant to develop *personally responsible* citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). There is, however, an important disjuncture between the teaching at the school and the views of some students who said that social studies is meant to develop participatory students. So far, from the evidence collected from classroom practices and teaching records alone, it is difficult to substantiate the claim by the head teacher that social studies teaching resulted in student dissent and was, therefore, responsible for the breakdown in discipline at the school. A focus on outside class practices in the next chapter may, therefore, provide more insight into

how students translate this classroom knowledge into practice in the school. The next section presents findings regarding pedagogy at Chifule district secondary school.

6.1.3 Chifule district secondary school

At Chifule district secondary school, social studies is a popular optional subject which is offered in all the three form 3 classes. The head teacher stated that: *“we have three classes in form 3 and all of them are taking social studies except a handful of students who have opted not to take it.”* Students have the liberty to opt out social studies in favour of other subjects because social studies is not a core subject. The class that was followed by the study had an attendance of 33 students. Two double period and 3 single period lessons were observed. In total, 7 periods of social studies were observed. Lesson scores ranged from 17 to 25 with a mean score of 20 (refer to figure 5).

There were remarkable differences between double period and single period lessons. The double period lessons involved students actively and productively engaged while single period lessons were mostly teacher-centred. As can be noted from figure 5, lessons 2 and 5 were double period lessons while 1, 3, and 4 were single period. It should, however, be mentioned that in all lessons, note taking from the chalkboard was dominant. In general, observations showed frequent use of the lecture method together with strategies that promoted vertical interaction between teacher and students such as question and answer, and whole-class discussion. These strategies, however, involved few students in the classroom with an exception of double period lessons when students were involved in groups. In the groups, students used textbooks to respond to comprehension questions, and study illustrations and figures. It was observed that group work was mostly meant to advance lesson content and share

materials as opposed to developing interactive, collaborative group and democratic skills in students.

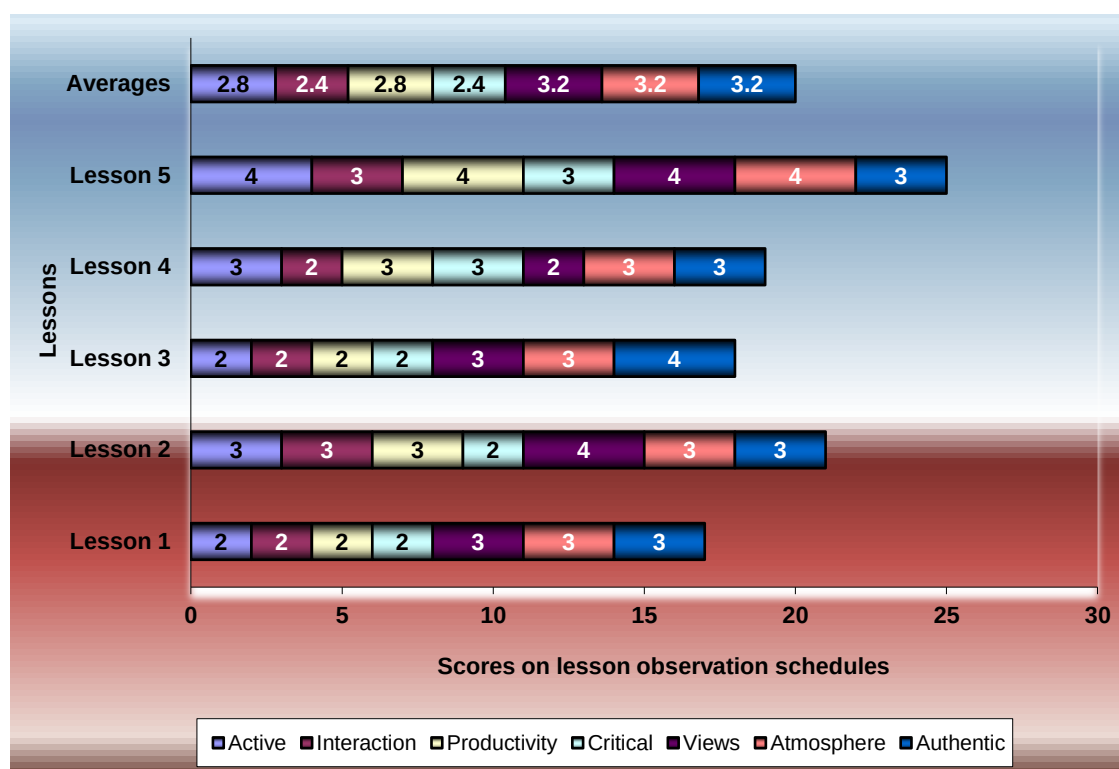


Figure 5: Lesson scores for Chifule district

The group work, nonetheless, promoted horizontal interaction among students as they structured their work and agreed on the best ways of presenting their responses to the class. The groups, furthermore, promoted interaction between the teacher and students through supervision and remedial assistance. Students further interacted with materials provided in textbooks to work on different tasks, and some of the group tasks required them to think critically. Similarly, some questions required students to think critically, and at times the teacher asked groups of students to pose questions to other groups. This promoted creativity among students since they made effort to pose questions that would challenge other groups. In contrast, students spent most of the time listening to the teacher and taking down notes from the chalkboard in single period lessons. Occasionally, they were called upon to respond to questions. Most of

the questions, however, required them to recall previously learned facts. The relevance of lessons was enhanced by the use of authentic examples and experiences. In most lessons, the teacher used practical and familiar examples and also encouraged students to provide responses derived from their own experiences. This enhanced understanding of concepts as students would link lesson content and its applicability to outside class situations. Effort was also made to link lessons to prior learning. Where students worked in groups, they showed respect for views and opinions of others. Students were also free to interrupt the teacher if they had questions, and the teacher's use of jokes created a free and relaxed class atmosphere.

However, the study was only able to validate these observations with students in a focus group discussion because schemes and records of work were not available. When students were asked about what they do most during social studies lessons, their responses included “*answering questions*”, “*being attentive*”, as well as “*asking questions*”. One student gave the following explanation:

Most times in social studies class, I like to be attentive and to participate because social studies needs crucial (sic) thinking. And for someone to be able to cope with social studies, he must be active. So I like to be answering questions and ... hearing what the teacher is saying. (Student- Chifule district)

A link can be established between the classroom practices at Chifule district secondary school and views held by some participants about the type of citizens that social studies is expected to develop. The social studies teacher and some students reported that the subject is meant to develop *personally responsible* citizens while other students held the view that the subject is meant to develop *participatory* and *justice-oriented* citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Although these positions showed tension between students and the teacher, classroom observations have shown

that there was limited participation and limited critical thinking opportunities, and that lesson activities were mostly centred on advancing lesson content. As argued by Davies (2012), lesson activities without critical analysis are not good for democratic citizenship. The next chapter will, therefore, show how this tension is further played in the daily life of students outside classrooms.

As noted in the sections above, there are some similarities and differences in classroom practices between the three schools. The following section highlights these similarities and differences in a cross case discussion.

6.2 Discussion of findings

From the foregoing observations and discussions, variations can be noted in pedagogy in social studies classrooms across the three schools. Figure 6 provides a graphic summary of the average scores for the seven attributes across the three cases. In addition, the three tables that follow compare pedagogical practices in the three cases with regard to teaching strategies (Table 14); activities undertaken in class (Table 15); and resources used (Table 16). The tables, however, show the availability/ use of the attributes, without highlighting their extent.

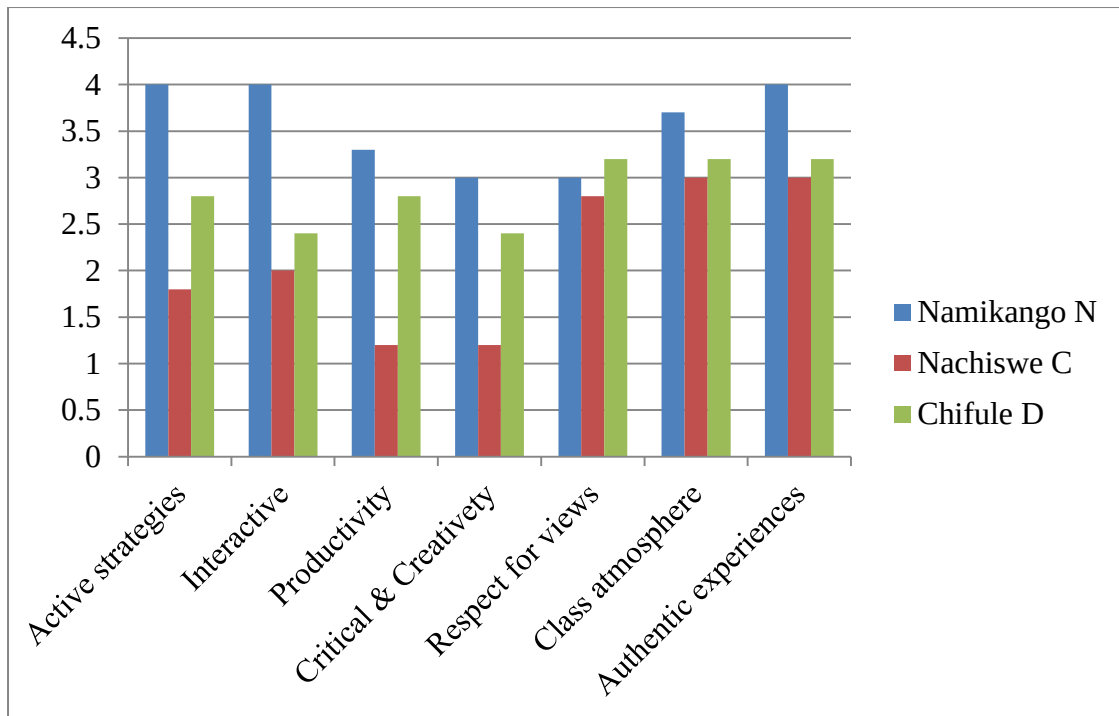


Figure 6: Comparative mean scores per attribute for schools

Table 8: Teaching strategies employed in class

Strategies	Namikango national	Nachiswe CDSS	Chifule district
Class discussion	√	√	√
Question and answer	√	√	√
Lecture	√	√	√
Group discussion	√	-	√
Discussion in pairs	√	-	-
Jigsaw	√	-	-
Case study	√	-	-

Table 9: Activities undertaken in class

Activities	Namikango national	Nachiswe CDSS	Chifule district
Asking questions	√	√	√
Answering questions	√	√	√
Copying notes	√	√	√
Discussing (groups & pairs)	√	-	√
Group work	√	-	√
Reporting	√	-	√
Problem solving	√	-	-
Individual work	√	-	-

Table 10: Resources used in lessons

Resources	Namikango national	Nachiswe CDSS	Chifule district
Students' experiences	√	√	√
Teacher's experiences	√	√	√
Chalkboard	√	√	√
Textbooks	√	-	√
Case study materials	√	-	-
Maps (Atlas)	√	-	-
Graphs	√	-	-
Audio recording	√	-	-

There are notable differences regarding teaching and learning strategies (Table 8); classroom interactions; productive engagement of students (Table 15); and promotion

of critical thinking and creativity skills between Namikango national secondary school and Nachiswe CDSS. These attributes are inclined towards the positive at Namikango national and towards the negative at Nachiswe CDSS. Chifule district secondary school comes in between with more active methods and more interaction in double period lessons and more teacher-centred strategies in single period lessons. As argued by Nouri and Sajjadi (2014), where students are kept productively engaged, and are allowed to interact in class and think critically, they are likely to become critical citizens who reflect and analyse issues before making decisions.

There are, however, some similarities in all three schools in the use of authentic examples and experiences in class, classroom atmosphere, and the respect for views and opinions of others. A free class atmosphere which encourages respectful interaction can promote a culture of tolerance among students. DeCesare (2014) argues that democratic participation is good in upholding democracy. It enables children to live with others, make informed decisions, and tolerate the views of others. Although these attributes are important in preparing children for their future roles, DeCesare (2014) argues further that democratic education is not just about the future. Participation gives children freedom to determine their own lives. Democratic education empowers children and gives them the capacities to exercise their freedom and agency.

Similarly Freire, (1998) argues that critical thinking and creative thinking should connect the reading that occurs in the classroom to the real world. He argues that authentic experiences from the point of view of the students and the teacher should be used to anchor learning, and connect curricular materials to everyday experiences of students. It can, therefore, be rightly argued that the pedagogical practices at

Namikango national secondary school socialises students for a culture of arguments while the practices at Nachiswe CDSS on the other hand, prepares students to a culture of answers. A culture of arguments prepares children for an uncertain and risky world that they would be growing into (Lambert, 2004).

Considering classroom practices observed so far, it can be claimed that Nachiswe CDSS is offering Education ABOUT citizenship (Kerr, 1999) since there is more knowledge transmission and less active learning and less critical thinking. Freire (1998) calls this practice *banking education* (Freire, 1998) or *nutritionist education* (Freire, 1985). In banking education, the teacher transfers knowledge to fill the students' hunger for knowledge through narration and lectures (Monchinski, 2008). In terms of citizenship, banking education domesticates and socialises students into a culture of silence which maintains the *status quo*. In contrast, the pedagogical practices at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools lean more towards Education FOR citizenship (Kerr, 1999).

The practices in these schools involve transmission of knowledge and active involvement of students in their own learning within classrooms. Between the two schools, Namikango national is further observed to lean more towards the maximal/thick ends of the citizenship continuum than does Chifule district (McLaughlin, 1992). With students at Chifule district secondary school being kept active in class through sharing textbooks and advancing lesson content, as opposed to critical thinking, it may further be concluded that the school is socialising students to become *participatory* citizens who can take part in solving the symptoms to social problems as opposed to *justice-oriented* citizens who would challenge the root causes of social problems (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

The use of authentic experiences was a common denominator in lessons observed in all schools. As noted earlier, social studies deals with everyday activities and using practical examples and experiences, therefore, promotes applicability of learned concepts to settings outside classrooms (Freire, 1998). It can, however, be alternatively argued that the dominant use of authentic examples by teachers in all schools is a manifestation of the traditional role of the teacher as an expert who masters the content and transmits to students who are considered less knowledgeable. In this case, teachers consider lesson preparation as acquainting themselves with the lesson content and its related examples, to arm themselves with knowledge to be subsequently transmitted to students. This can be explained by the practice whereby students effectively discuss issues, but they still wait upon the teacher to write down the ‘correct’ knowledge on the chalkboard for them to copy.

Understandably, with standardised national examinations used as a yardstick for measuring schools’ achievements, students look to their teachers to provide ‘correct’ answers. Freire (1998), however, regards top-down (centralised) evaluation of students as another form of authoritarianism. He argues that evaluations are not bad in themselves. What matters rather is their theoretical and practical implications. He further posits that evaluations that serve purposes of silencing criticism to promote domestication and a spirit of ‘speaking to’ should be resisted. Although teachers in all schools used authentic examples and experiences, it was noted that they were utilised differently, i.e., either to explain main concepts, or to involve students. At Nachiswe CDSS, practical and everyday examples were used to explain main concepts and aid students’ understanding, while at Namikango national secondary school authentic experiences were used to generate whole class and group discussions. At Chifule district secondary school, it was noted that there were more practical examples from

the teacher during single period lessons, and students' contributions in double period lessons. Monchinski (2008) posits that even where academic content occurs in subject matter, there is scope for generating class discussion by interposing generative themes with topical themes. Generative themes are contextual, generated from the everyday practices of students, while topical themes come from the subject matter. Discussions can be initiated using newspaper cuttings, pictures, or role plays (Monchinski, 2008). For example, the use of pictures, an audio recording of parliamentary proceedings, and other resources allowed students at Namikango national to contribute to lessons and share views (Table 10). This practice allowed students to relate their everyday experiences to lesson topics.

As noted in the discussion, there were some notable differences in classroom practices in the three schools. Two schools have classroom practices that lean towards Education FOR citizenship while Nachiswe CDSS practices Education ABOUT citizenship. The causes of these differences can be located at various levels ranging from the school to the central government. Section 6.3 below presents the factors that influence classroom practices in each school.

6.3 Factors influencing pedagogy in social studies

This section presents factors that influence pedagogy in social studies classrooms in the case study schools. Themes emerging from the data indicate that classroom practices are a consequence of the context and type of school, the nature of the subject, and curriculum content and standardised national examinations. The section, therefore, presents the findings following the themes, after which a discussion of how each theme affected classroom practices and processes in each case study school is made. The section closes with a cross-case discussion.

6.3.1 Type of school

As noted earlier, the three schools belong to different categories, and have noteworthy differences regarding their access to resources, the subjects that they offered, and the way their students performed at PSLCE among other factors. These factors influence the teaching that takes place in the respective schools. For example, the number of students in social studies classes at each school varied widely with 80 students enrolled at Namikango national; 33 at Chifule district; and 106 at Nachiswe CDSS. What follows is a discussion of how the type of school contributed to classroom practices at each school.

Namikango national secondary school

Lesson observations at Namikango revealed the presence of interactive teaching and learning approaches supported by the availability of resources which aided students learning. The following factors related to the type of school contributed to pedagogy. The first factor is the school timetable. Social studies is an optional subject in the senior section, and is offered alongside other optional subjects in what are called *sets*. Through the *sets* social studies is allocated more time when compared to other subjects. For example, social studies had two double periods a week. However, because it was offered at the same time with other practical, optional subjects, such as woodwork, and home economics, which required three periods, there was a free period after the social studies class. The social studies class, therefore, used this extra period for extra- lessons, class discussions, note- taking, and group assignments. The period also gave the class more time to engage students in active and interactive learning processes. The second factor is the availability of resources in the school. As noted in section 5.1.1, besides the higher school fees that the students pay, the school also obtains grants from central government. The funds afford the school to purchase

expensive teaching and learning resources. For example, the school has facilities such as a photocopying machine, computers, and printers.

These facilities are used to enhance learning and promote students' involvement in class. For instance, on a number of occasions, the teacher photocopied diagrams, graphs, and tables from textbooks and newspapers, and distributed them to students in groups for them to use during assigned tasks. Such practices give students authentic experiences and in some cases foster critical thinking and creativity. Although the class was relatively big, the resources were effective in aiding students' learning. It was also reported that the school at times supplements the Textbook Revolving Fund (TRF) to beef up its stock of textbooks. This is a significant initiative because the amount of money that students pay towards TRF is not only fixed centrally by MoEST but is also very low, and the fund is consequently unable to meet the resource needs of schools.

Furthermore, the school occasionally receives book donations from local government offices such as that of the District Education Manager (DEM). The third factor is that being a national secondary school, there was an expectation from students, teachers, and the general public for the students to do well in national examinations. Looking at performance in national examinations (refer to Table 13), one may confidently conclude that Namikango national is one of the best performing public secondary schools in Malawi. This status gives students motivation to work hard in and outside class. This could be the reason why students work hard independently and put into practice lessons they learn in class. For example, the social studies teacher mentioned that students have a tendency to write self-initiated essays and, in turn, asking the teacher to mark them. In this way, students develop higher order generic skills such as

the ability to marshal an argument and to write persuasively. According to Nouri and Sajjadi (2014) self-assessment gives students an opportunity to critically analyse and reflect on their knowledge and experiences. All these factors allow the students to study more and achieve more both in social studies and other subjects.

It should, be mentioned that although the syllabus suggests the use of the environment as a resource, all the teaching and learning at Namikango national secondary school was classroom-based. Actually, a teacher who held the view that the school was doing all it could to provide teaching and learning materials wished that the school had enough resources that could afford it to organise field trips to give students first-hand experience with relevant concepts taught in class.

When asked what would happen if more resources were available, the social studies teacher said:

I think there could be issues of perhaps field trips. There are some issues which we just tell students, may be issues of courts and whatever, at least they could have been travelling to such places ... and ... appreciate what is there on the ground. (Social studies teacher- Namikango national)

It was further reported that the size of the class was another factor hindering the use of the environment as a resource. As a result, the class resorted to classroom-based teaching and learning strategies. It should be noted that with a class of 80 students, class control could also be a challenge, as far as field visits are concerned. Contrary to the teacher's explanation, however, the deputy head stated that field trips and educational visits were encouraged and do take place at the school. When the question of trips organised as part of subject and class experience was posed to him, he explained that:

It varies from the patron and the class teachers. Sometimes the class teacher says I am taking my history students to such [and] such [a] place. Sometimes a patron of a club says I am taking my students for such [and] such a club. It varies. (Deputy Head- Namikango national)

The position taken by the deputy head could, however, be interpreted as official, aimed at saving the face of the school in general and that of the office of the Head teacher in particular. It was noted that the school offered a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, but the patronage was poor. Most students opted to study when it was time for clubs and societies. The reason cited for this students' lack of interest was the absence of field trips and educational visits.

Nachiswe CDSS

Nachiswe CDSS does not receive any subvention from Government; it relies on the fees that it collects from students. However, the amount of fees paid by students is very low compared to the price of resources needed by the school. The reason is that most CDSSs serve rural, poor communities which rely on subsistence agriculture which makes government reluctant to raise school fees. The school, therefore, operates from a position of minimal resources. For example, for social studies lessons, the only teaching and learning materials available at the school were the government approved textbooks. The social studies teacher reported that although supplementary materials such as magazines and newspapers are required in teaching, the school could not afford them. The textbooks are activity-based, and have diagrams, tables, and pictures which could be used to enhance learning. However, considering that only few copies were available, and without complementary photocopying facilities, it was difficult to utilise them in a class of 106 students. As a result, the few textbooks were kept in the library where students could access them at their own time. Malawian secondary schools procure textbooks through the TRF whose amount is fixed by

MoEST. At the time of data collection, the TRF was at MK250-00 per student per annum. However, with the rising cost of textbooks, a student's contribution over a period of 4 years in secondary school could not afford to buy even a single textbook for social studies. As if this situation was not bad enough, with 10 subjects on offer, the amount was too thinly spread to have any impact.

Even the official from MoEST acknowledged that TRF was not effective in meeting the needs of schools, especially CDSSs:

At the beginning, the TRF could enable the schools to procure... a considerable number of textbooks, but currently, maybe because that TRF has not been increased, it has remained the same for over a decade, its purchasing power has gone very low and once these schools especially CDSSs collect the revolving funds from their students, in a term they are just able to procure very few copies of these textbooks or reference books. (MoEST official)

To the question why the government had kept TRF static when prices of books were increasing, he responded that:

Members of the community have been complaining...issues of the economy, the way the economy of the country has been running, so for the Ministry also to decide that we have raised these school fees it has been difficult. (MoEST official)

With few textbooks being shared by a very large class, the teacher became the only source of information, and this resulted in the dominance of teacher-centred strategies.

Another factor which influenced pedagogy was the size of the class. It should firstly be remembered that while government selects 40 students per class to conventional

(national and district) secondary schools, it selects 50 students per class to CDSSs. This means CDSSs have greater class enrolment than that of conventional schools. In addition, Nachiswe CDSS combined two classes into one, as noted in chapter 5 (section 5.1.2), due to shortage of classrooms. This resulted in the form 3 class having 106 students. With such a big class and with no teaching and learning resources available for it to use, it was very difficult for the teacher to meet individual students' needs and to employ teaching strategies which could accommodate student collaboration and cooperation.

In addition, there was not any space in the classroom for students to sit in groups when need arose. If anything, even if this were possible, with such a large class, there would be too many groups for effective learning to occur, hence the possible need to move some groups outside the classroom to create space. Ironically, this would, in turn, create management problems regarding group supervision, teacher's attention, and class discipline. Furthermore, moving outside would necessitate moving furniture around within the class and taking some of it outside. All this could consume too much time, which the school was justifiably unwilling to provide to cope with already existing pressure of work. This resulted in dominance of teacher-centred strategies, at the expense of strategies that promoted horizontal interaction among students.

Chifule district secondary school

Chifule district secondary school runs three streams from form 1 to form 4. Each class has its own classroom, and in the light of the fact that in-take/enrolment is centrally government-controlled; the number of students per class is relatively low. For example, the form 3 class was the biggest form at the school with an enrolment of 145 at the time of data collection. This meant that on average, there would be around 48

students per class. The school was offering a total of 14 subjects and social studies was offered in each of the classes. This meant that the teacher: student ratio in social studies classes was not too high. The form 3 class that was being followed by the present study had an attendance of 33 students. This is relatively a manageable number for students to share resources and to interact with each other during lessons. The school makes an effort to buy textbooks for all subjects every year thereby increasing its existing stock.

Commenting on the use of TRF, the social studies teacher said: *“Each year we make sure that we buy some books for social studies. This year, they have just done that.”* Although the textbooks are kept in the library, they are available for use during lessons whenever required. Because the form 3 classes study the subject at different allocated times, the same textbooks are used consecutively to enhance learning. This spreads the available textbooks to all students as they use them in groups during lessons. This is the reason why most of the group tasks were meant to allow students access information and illustrations from textbooks.

Although the school had the opportunity to use television programmes to enhance learning, there was no effort to use this resource in social studies lessons. It appeared that teachers were not making effective and maximum use of the television facilities available at the school. It should also be mentioned that the environment was not utilised as a resource in teaching and that there was no mention of using the environment in interviews with teachers and students. It should, nevertheless, be mentioned that the Wildlife club at the school was very vibrant and it used to organise trips for students to enhance their learning experiences. A detailed discussion of extra-curricular activities is made in chapter 7.

6.3.2 Curriculum content and standardised national examinations

A review of the senior secondary social studies syllabus shows that the subject is content-driven. The syllabus has 12 themes, specified further into topics each with prescriptive objectives and scope of subject matter coverage or content. The content column shows both the depth and breadth of subject matter coverage. The syllabus prescribes how much ground should be covered in each of the academic terms. It can be argued that there is too much content to be covered against the available time. This can make the achievement of the aims of social studies problematic. Appendix 11 shows a page of the 81 page syllabus document indicating theme, topic, objectives, content, and suggested activities, learning resources, and mode of assessment.

Regarding examinations, as noted in chapter 1 (under section 1.1.1), there are standardised national examinations centrally administered by MANEB. The social studies examination at senior level, MSCE, has two papers. Paper I is multiple choice with 50 items of 1 mark each (refer to appendix 12A for sample questions). The test items demand students to make recourse to memorised facts. With a high content validity, students have a chance of passing the examination if the whole curriculum is ‘covered’. This may, therefore, force teachers to ‘deliver’ the curriculum at the expense of developing skills and dispositions. Paper II has sections A and B with 60 and 40 marks respectively. Section A has 3 structured questions of 20 marks each (see appendix 12B for sample questions). The questions mostly demand recall of previously learned facts. Section B has three essay questions and students have to answer any 2 for a total of 40 marks (see sample in appendix 12C). These questions require higher cognitive processes in students such as analysis and application. For an analysis of paper II examinations for some three years, refer to Appendix 10. Combining papers I and II, it can be strongly argued that on balance, social studies

examinations focus mostly on recall of facts. Students can, therefore, pass the examinations by making recourse to previously learned facts. With a congested syllabus, most teachers would also resort to *banking education* (Freire 1970a). Lambert (2004) asks a pertinent question regarding curriculum content on whether there is too much content in the curriculum so that teachers who would like to engage in inquiry have little or no time to do it? As will be noted below, the syllabus content and national examinations have an influence on pedagogy in social studies in the three schools.

Namikango national secondary school

For Namikango national secondary school there was no specific mention of curriculum content and national examinations during interviews. However, from the pedagogical practices, the effects of a congested curriculum and national examinations were readily apparent. Firstly, the availability of an extra period for social studies, when other students were learning technical subjects provided the subject with a safety valve to deliver more content, take down notes, and for students to do their assignments. For this reason, social studies students used to remain behind after the class to copy notes or complete assignments that had commenced during lesson time. Secondly, as noted earlier in the present chapter, note-taking was a dominant part of classroom practice. Although students had information and illustrations from textbooks, and could also discuss effectively in groups, they still looked to the teacher to write down notes on the chalkboard for them to copy. This meant that the students were looking for the teacher's version of 'true' information which in this case would be uniform to all students. This 'correct' information would be the one that would mostly be taken as correct answers during examinations. Thirdly, the practice of writing up self-initiated essays by students and presenting

them for marking to their teacher could also be a reflection of the students' own motivation to prepare adequately for national examinations. When the social studies teacher was asked about the motivation of students in writing up self-initiated essays, he responded that *"maybe they would like to polish up ...their language or arguments so that when exams come, maybe they shouldn't have problems with answering such questions."* Although this practice is not detrimental to effective citizenship, the pressure of expectation from parents and the community may result in the balance tipping off in favour of performance in national examinations, and against development of citizenship skills and dispositions. From the foregoing discussion, it can be argued successfully that curriculum content and national examinations played a role in the classroom practices at Practice.

Nachiswe CDSS

As noted in chapter 5 (section 5.1.2), Nachiswe CDSS has less time for teaching and learning to accommodate extra-curricular activities, and no time for extra classes because students commute long distances to and from home. Thus, in order to make the most of the available time, the transmission model of lesson delivery dominated. At the school, the connection between high curriculum content and national examinations was explicitly made. In their remarks, the social studies teacher and the head teacher noted the contradiction between the aims of the subject, and the amount of content in the syllabus. Although the syllabus suggests the use of active teaching methods, the amount of content makes it difficult to employ such strategies. When asked about what should be done to ensure that the aims of social studies are achieved, the head teacher responded that *"It was... supposed to go together with some skills... so that it shouldn't just be theory... it should also be practical."* And when the social studies teacher was asked about the factors that influence classroom

practices, he was quick to mention national examinations. His response indicated that due to high content, he is selective in what is covered in class to drill the students for national examinations:

Mostly it's the exam. Sometimes you look at the previous MANEB question papers, so you feel like 'I just have to stick to these topics; they are the ones that have been coming time and again.' So if time is not allowing, you say the best is 'what are the past papers giving out to the students?' so you stick to that." (Social studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS).

Furthermore, he stated that some topics are skipped if there is an overlap with other subjects. For example, he cited an overlap of topics between social studies and life skills. Commenting on how difficult it is to find time for lesson activities that may add relevance to students' learning, he gave the following example:

For example, may be you are teaching [the topic] genocide, so you feel like may be let me show the films that have been made on the Rwandan genocide. The school may feel like, - 'you mean you should waste a whole 1 hour 20 minutes showcasing a movie? I think that is improper. I think if that is an issue, maybe find your own time outside the teaching hours'- so a teacher is a little bit discouraged. (Social studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

Where there is competition for timetable space, it may be difficult to negotiate for time for other learning activities besides traditional teaching. In addition, where examinations are centralised, development of skills and dispositions give way to transmission of knowledge. For example, the comment by the social studies teacher below provides a summary of the decisions that teachers contend with when faced with centrally determined national examinations:

“If you try to divert to the practical, it means you may not finish the syllabus, and the students will not be ready for the exams.”

Chifule district secondary school

The issue of subject matter content and national examinations did not feature highly in interviews at Chifule district secondary school. That notwithstanding, lesson activities showed the influence of subject matter content on lessons. It was noted that most single period lessons were taken up by teacher explanations and note taking from the chalkboard. Even in double period lessons where students worked in groups, there was less discussion and more of sharing resources for the advancement of lesson content. When students discussed concepts in groups and ended up with correct answers, they would still wait for the teacher to write down the ‘correct’ content on the chalkboard in the form of notes. This means that although the students get involved in the construction of knowledge, they still look forward to the teacher as an expert who has a final say on what should count as correct knowledge. From the classroom practices, it was apparent that the amount of content affected the pace of lesson delivery and the extent of student involvement in lessons. Contrary to this observation, the social studies teacher reported that the amount of content in the curriculum was just adequate for senior secondary school students. He stated that, in contrast to college students, secondary school students should focus on knowledge acquisition and not be bothered with higher level skills such as synthesis. Emphasising that for students in secondary schools, understanding was enough, he said:

Yeah, they don’t need to go up to the moon, eeeh? Aaah, no! The Bloom’s taxonomy, they don’t have to go as far as synthesizing, evaluating, no let us leave that for college. (Social studies teacher-Chifule district)

From the point of view of the examinations, as shown by the analysis in Appendix 10 and the amount of content in the syllabus, the teacher appears to have a strong case. However, from an educational standpoint, education should not only focus on knowledge but also on attitudes and skills (Farrant, 1983).

6.3.3 Nature of the subject

Social studies deals with emerging and topical issues occurring in society. Davies (2010) states that one of the central issues in citizenship education is that students should be exposed to contemporary issues and that there should be occasions for lively debates. Lively debates entail students and teachers following social issues keenly. Furthermore, contemporary and topical issues should enable students to be active and interact in their learning as they bring their experiences to the learning setting. It should be acknowledged that to involve students productively in their own learning requires a teacher who is resourceful and creative to connect generative themes with topical themes (Monchinski, 2008). To make the subject worthwhile, the teacher and students should bring to the class relevant and current examples to make learning contextual and authentic. The nature of the subject was noted to be a positive factor influencing pedagogy in various ways in the schools.

Namikango national secondary school

There was a lot of student involvement and use of authentic experiences in lessons at Namikango national secondary school. When the social studies teacher was asked about factors that influence his teaching, his response centred on the nature of the subject and how he connects generative themes to topical themes (Monchinski, 2008) to enhance students' learning:

I think largely it's to do with current affairs. What's there? What's new, and how does it relate to some topics in social studies? So as a teacher, usually I have to pay keen interest in whatever is happening outside.
(Social studies teacher- Namikango national)

This kind of practice is supported by Freire (1998) who advocates that the role of the teacher should be to develop the curiosity in learners so that they can look for information, keep seeking answers, and ask more questions. Similarly, students found the nature of the subject and the way it was handled to be a motivation. When asked if they faced any challenges learning social studies, a student responded that “*According to me, there is no any problem because what we study in the books is what happens in our life of every day.*” The subject’s popularity amongst the form 3 students was also attributed to its nature. This explained why the subject enrolled 80 students, while the remaining 55 students were shared amongst the remaining 4 optional subjects.

Nachiswe CDSS

Classroom practices at Nachiswe CDSS were characterised by teacher-centred pedagogy and vertical interactions. There were fewer opportunities for students to contribute their experiences towards learning. The teacher was the main source of information. The teacher, however, used practical and everyday examples in his explanations which made it easy for students to understand concepts. The teacher made reference to the rural setting of the school and how it might be difficult for most students to have access to news and contemporary issues. He, therefore, indicated that he had to be very current to provide authentic and relevant examples to students:

There are some issues that they [students] are familiar with, may be because one of them or two of them listen to the radio, or watch TV, so they bring that to the attention of the class, but in most cases, I am the one who has to familiarise them with that current issue. (Social studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

As stated earlier, the teacher lamented over the lack of money to buy newspapers at the school which gives him a challenge in accessing current issues and information. Nevertheless, the use of authentic and up to date examples was the main strength of lessons at Nachiswe CDSS, which is a reflection of the nature of the subject and teacher resourcefulness.

Chifule district secondary school

At Chifule district secondary school the nature of the subject was similarly observed to be another factor that influenced pedagogy. Students were called upon to use authentic examples from their life experiences. Furthermore, the teacher also used examples which were familiar to students and relevant to lesson topics. This was attributed to the nature of the subject by students and by the head teacher. For example, the head teacher said *“In social studies most of the times, the concepts are not very new to the students..., and so it is easy to involve the students, it is more interactive.”* Because the subject deals with familiar and everyday situations, students were able to relate what they learn in class to their life situations. Students cited changes in their lives because of social studies. The changes included taking care of school property, taking care of natural resources, and not discriminating against anybody on the basis of their sex. The nature of the subject makes it easy for students to see its relevance and as a result apply their learning to life situations.

Having looked at the factors that influence class practices thematically, the study now presents a cross-case discussion of these factors to draw out differences and similarities across the schools.

6.4 Discussion of findings

In the present section, the factors that influence pedagogy in the case study schools are discussed, pointing out similarities and differences that exist between the schools and linking the discussion to the main theoretical concerns. Themes emerging from the data show that pedagogy is influenced by several factors which also affect the schools differently. However, it can be argued that in all schools, the main factor is the type of school and this has a major influence on social studies pedagogy. Firstly, the constructive classroom practices taking place at Namikango national are a factor of the school's relatively good resource base, and the extended curriculum that gives students wide subject choices, and how the school timetable handles the many existing subjects, to create subject combinations known as *Sets*. Owing to the *Sets*, social studies has 2 extra periods per week which gives the class time to study curriculum content, complete assignments, and employ active teaching and learning strategies.

In contrast, Nachiswe CDSS which has limited resources but very high class enrolment due to shortage of classrooms faces many practical challenges in employing active teaching strategies. Since all students in Form 3 study social studies, it becomes impractical to use active and interactive strategies in a meaningful and productive manner in a class of 106 students. As a result, the transmission mode of lesson delivery dominates. On the other hand, Chifule district secondary school with all form 3 classes offering social studies as a popular option allows for a manageable teacher-student ratio, and sharing of limited teaching resources between the classes. As a result, classroom practices oscillate from teacher-centred in single period lessons to active strategies in double- period lessons. The lesson activities, however, do not promote creativity and critical thinking since attention is focussed on advancing

lesson content through sharing of textbooks and other learning resources. The findings from Nachiswe CDSS confirm the observations made by Mwala (2012) who carried out a study exploring the involvement of students in social studies lessons in four CDSSs in Malawi. His study found a preponderance of teacher-centred pedagogy, and attributed classroom environments as being responsible for the practices. Mwala's study reflects the findings at Nachiswe CDSS where the classroom environment renders use of active and interactive strategies impractical.

Similarly, another study by Ngalande (2010) undertaken in Malawi explored the implementation of social studies in primary schools. Ngalande found that among other factors, lack of resources, and the fact that the teacher was the only source of information resulted in the dominance of teacher-centred strategies. Although there are remarkable differences between primary and secondary schools in Malawi, one common denominator between primary schools and CDSSs is that they are all poorly resourced due to limited finances. The finding from Ngalande's study could, therefore, shed light on the teacher-centred strategies at Nachiswe CDSS since the teacher and the chalkboard were the only resources available to students in class (Ngalande, 2010). No studies involving observation of classroom practices have been undertaken in district and national (conventional) secondary schools. The information generated by the present study, therefore, makes a modest contribution towards filling this gap.

A study by Hals and Lindebæk (2010) targeted one district and two national secondary schools in Malawi. The study sought social sciences teachers' and students' perceptions of democracy and students participation at the 3 schools. In the study, which did not distinguish the district school from the national schools, teachers and

students reported that there was participation of students in class through discussions, question and answers, and expression of their ideas and opinions. These findings correspond well with the findings of the present study where there was more participation at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools than at Nachiswe CDSS. However, the students reported that some teachers felt uncomfortable to allow students to express their opinions, and that, in contrast, social studies teachers listened to and respected their views more than other teachers (Hals & Lindebæk, 2010). In addition, some teachers stated that they were afraid of teaching some topics about politics and using practical examples for fear of consequences from the school leadership. This finding might imply the presence of an authoritarian climate in schools. Alternatively, it might signify that the development of citizens for democracy may be a lone effort for social studies programmes, as opposed to whole schools. Considering that the present chapter concerns itself with classroom practices in social studies classes, the roles of other teachers and school leaders can only be verified by looking at outside classroom practices, a task that is accomplished in chapter 7.

Another factor influencing pedagogy was curriculum content and standardised national examinations. This factor featured mostly in interviews at Nachiswe CDSS, and was less explicit at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools. Since national examinations focus mostly on content knowledge, *banking education* (Freire, 1998) became dominant with the aim of delivering the curriculum and preparing students for examinations. Although curriculum content and national examinations were not explicitly expressed at Namikango national and Chifule districts schools, their influence was apparent in classroom practices. While there was interaction among students in double period lessons at Chifule district secondary

school, it was mostly aimed at advancing the ‘delivery’ of subject content. An example common to all schools was the practice of teachers writing notes on the chalkboard for students to copy in their notebooks. This practice took place even in situations where students had discussed lesson concepts and showed very good comprehension. It can, therefore, be argued that students wait for the teacher’s version of ‘true’ information which has to be captured and be presented as ‘correct’ answers during examinations.

A similar finding was made by Mhango (2004) in a case study where he explored how a primary school social studies teacher implemented the methods learned in teacher training college in the classroom setting. Although the study took place at a primary school, it has relevance to the present study because it focussed on the teaching of social studies in an educational system where centralised examinations are given prominence. Mhango (2004) found that among several factors, the dominance of the lecture method; and question and answer method were meant to allow the teacher to cover as much content as possible to ensure that students are ready for national examinations. Equally of interest to the present study, is the fact that Mhango found out that the teacher in the case study school used resources which facilitated efficient transmission of knowledge, such as the chalkboard for illustrations, and chart paper for diagrams.

The final factor is nature of the subject. The nature of social studies, particularly its interest in contemporary and topical issues influenced pedagogy in all three schools. The most apparent influence was noted regarding the use of authentic experiences and real world examples. The only difference in practices concerned teacher creativity and resource availability. For example, at Namikango national secondary school the

teacher used relevant examples and involved the experiences of students in groups and in plenary to enhance lesson activities. At Chifule district secondary school the teacher and students both contributed to lessons by providing authentic examples, while at Nachiswe CDSS authentic examples were provided mostly by the teacher and little effort was made to utilise the experiences of students.

In summary, it may be noted that the use of authentic experiences played a positive role in pedagogy, and this is attributed to the nature of the subject, particularly that it is issues-based. A similar finding may be identified in the study by Hals and Lindebæk (2010) in which subject teachers of other social science subjects were afraid of using practical examples for fear of repercussions, and that social studies teachers were more open than others. One may, therefore, conclude that the nature of the subject is a contributing factor to such classroom practices.

From the discussion in this chapter, it can be drawn that variations in pedagogy exist in the three case study schools due to various factors. From the classroom experiences, students learn subtle messages which they internalise. From the findings of classroom practices, a conclusion may be drawn that Nachiswe CDSS with its focus on *banking education* is offering Education ABOUT citizenship while Namikango national secondary school leans more towards Education FOR citizenship due to interactive pedagogy which also promotes critical thinking. Chifule district secondary school, on the other hand, hangs in between the two offering a thin approach to Education FOR citizenship, due to its focus on knowledge transmission, and student involvement in non-critical and non-reflective pedagogy.

As noted in the discussion, the three factors which influence classroom practices weigh up differently from one school to another. Efforts by schools to provide

education for democratic citizenship face some facilitating and constraining factors. These factors can be located at various levels in the education system and in society. Classroom practices are a factor of different influences, some taking place in schools and also outside the influence of schools. For example, curriculum content and national examinations affect the practices in all schools due to an overcrowded, content-driven curriculum which is subject to standardised national examinations. Since the national curriculum is centrally developed and imposed on schools through policy directives, and is monitored through inspection, MoEST should take the responsibility for the role that curriculum content plays in pedagogy. Within the realm of MoEST, responsibility should be apportioned to MIE and MANEB which are the organisations responsible for national curriculum development, and centralised national assessment respectively.

Brophy (n.d.) advances the view that the logic of instructional design is rooted in the alignment between curriculum goals, content, instructional methods and assessment. Brophy further states that a degree of overlap between what is taught and what is tested provides an opportunity for students to learn. If this balance is not maintained, it may require changes in the curriculum content, or in the test content, or in both to achieve an optimal alignment. Similarly, Tabulawa (2013) considers the curriculum as a structure that constrains innovation in pedagogy. He questions the contradiction that exists between the constructivist aims of curriculum which focus on processes and the specification of content in behaviourist terms which focus of the product. Tabulawa (2013, p. 149) blames the tight specification of content as ‘teacher surveillance’ which inhibits teacher creativity and spontaneity, especially, considering that examinations also follow specified objectives. As a result, in an environment of high competition,

the aims of the curriculum suffer as “self- interest takes precedence over collective interest” (Tabulawa, 2013, p. 154).

Another factor influencing classroom practices is the nature of the subject which facilitates interaction and use of authentic experiences in schools. The nature of the subject can be attributed to the subject discipline which is issue-based and discusses contemporary content among other factors. This finding, therefore, agrees with the views of Davies (2010) who states that when learning citizenship, students should be exposed to contemporary content. Furthermore, the integrated approach followed in the Malawi curriculum allows cross fertilisation of ideas from different social science disciplines, and allows room for interaction. In this regard, MoEST and MIE should be applauded for decisions made at curriculum planning level which have a positive effect on curriculum implementation. It should, however, be borne in mind that the study noted differences in how the authentic experiences were utilised in the three case study schools. School specific factors and teacher creativity played major roles in classroom practices. Nevertheless, one needs to further consider that school-level factors are influenced by the category or type of school. School categorisation results in labelling of schools consequently causing them to be treated differently. Even central government treats schools differently as revealed by the labels they give them as far as funding, staffing, and student allocation to schools are concerned. Classroom practices resulting from the type of school can, therefore, be attributed to the decisions by MoEST/central government which has maintained the different treatment of schools according to the labels in a supposedly democratic country.

6.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed social studies classroom practices in the case study schools and the factors that influence them. The chapter has shown that although the syllabus

may state aims of a subject, the achievement of such aims is not a straight forward undertaking. Many factors mediate the achievement of stated aims. Using data from classroom observations, interviews and documents, the study has noted that there are wide variations in pedagogy across schools due to reasons ranging from school type, nature of social studies, to curriculum and examination influences. Some of these factors facilitate the development of skills and dispositions for democratic citizenship while others constrain them. The schools in the present study have presented three classroom settings each making efforts to achieve the same goal as stated in one common national syllabus. However, the classroom practices have shown that the classroom space is fraught with contradictions which may affect the outcomes of education for democratic citizenship. Such contradictions are likely to create variations in citizen habits and dispositions. Recourse to literature has shown that there may be some tension between stated aims of social studies and outside class practices. Chapter 7 discusses outside class practices which may facilitate or constrain democratic living among students.

CHAPTER SEVEN

OUTSIDE CLASS PRACTICES AND DEMOCRATIC LIVING

7.0 Chapter overview

It is argued that democracy is best learnt through practice which means if the school is to teach democracy, students must be given opportunities to practice it (DeCesare, 2014; Hinde, 2008; Thornberg, 2010). Ironically, others warn that the school is not the best site for fostering democracy because schools serve as institutions of social order (Carr & Pluim, 2015; Ruitenberg, 2010). Ordinarily, this contradiction implies that if democracy is to be learnt at school, the school must be a place where the tension is negotiated. The present chapter discusses how this tension is negotiated on the school landscape. This is done by exploring opportunities made available to students to practice decision-making in the school and to live democratic lives, and challenges that schools encounter in offering education for democratic citizenship. For each discussion, a presentation is followed by a cross case discussion to highlight similarities and differences characterising the cases.

The discussion begins with a framework on student participation in school affairs. This framework enables the study to explore how problematic and political participation can be by focussing on whether the participants have powers to influence change or not. This approach is reflective of critical pedagogy, it being the theory that underpins the study. In relation to the overarching framework of the study, participation can either be passive hence develop personally responsible citizens, or active. The study, nevertheless, considers some passive forms of participation such as

boycotts to be effective in sustaining democracy because they take a justice-oriented approach. What matters, therefore, is the end result of participation.

7.1 Framework for student participation in school affairs

Several writers have argued that the best way to teach democracy is by engaging in democratic practices in the school (Bradshaw, 2014; DeCesare, 2014; Hinde, 2008; Thornberg, 2010). It is further argued that if democratic citizenry is the expected outcome of education, democratic processes and practices should be enacted throughout schools (Hinde, 2008; Leighton, 2012). Against this backdrop, it may be argued that if the aim of citizenship education in Malawi is indeed to develop participatory citizens for democracy (Ministry of Education, 1998), then students should have opportunities to practice citizenship skills and democracy in schools. This expectation is actually in line with the Malawi Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) which calls for decentralisation and participation of stakeholder groups in educational decision making (Davies, Harber, & Dzimadzi, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2000a). Similarly, the *Customer Service Charter* for MoEST includes students among its customers and partners and it states that “customers have a right to participate in arriving at decisions or recommendations aimed at addressing their respective issues” (Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 3). In other words, these policy documents advocate that students have a right to participate in school decisions and also have a voice on matters that affect them in school.

From a human rights perspective, Article 12 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which Malawi is a signatory, states that when adults are making decisions that affect children, the children have the right to say what they think should happen and to have their opinions taken into account

(<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>). The article clarifies that children should not have authority over adults, but should be involved in decision making and that adults should listen to children's opinions. The article recognises that the level of participation will depend on the maturity of the child, with the views of teenagers given more weight than those of pre-school children. Considering that secondary school students in Malawi are grown up children approaching the legal age of adulthood (voting age is 18 years), and in line with the CRC, the present study explored student participation in affairs that affect them in schools.

Flutter and Rudduck (2004) distinguish between student participation and consultation. They describe participation as a process where students have active and direct involvement in school matters at some level. In contrast, they consider student consultation as a situation in which students are invited to contribute because they are deemed to have information which may be worthwhile in improving a practice or a situation. Turner (1990) refers to consultation as citizenship from above, and contrasts it with citizenship from below where citizens make own efforts to be heard without waiting for an invitation from authorities. Glaeser et al. (2007) argue that education supports participation. Along the same vein, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) think that more participation leads to democracy. Both sources, however, caution that not all participation is in support of democracy. Participation can be problematic, for instance, if it advances undemocratic aims (Davies, 2012). For example, participation has ever been used to support autocratic regimes such as the Nazi in Germany (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002; Glaeser, et al., 2007). Locally, one may cite the historic coerced participation of youths through the MYP under the one party regime as undesirable too.

Participation is further problematic because it involves asymmetrical power relations, e.g. between ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’, teachers and students, and the government and the governed (Arnstein, 1969). Critical and reflective participation, however, is instrumental when it comes to upholding democracy (Davies, 2012). Arnstein (1969) posits that citizen participation entails citizen power. While many people applaud the idea of participation of the governed in their government, when the governed and the ‘have nots’ start demanding a share of power, the whole idea begins to be looked at through political and ideological lenses (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein (1969) developed an elaborate typology of 8 levels of citizen participation ranging from manipulation to citizen control. Manipulation maintains the status quo while citizen control means that citizens have substantial degrees of power. The typology is presented as a ladder and it clusters types of participation in 3 hierarchical levels. These are non-participation at the lowest level, which includes manipulation and therapy. The next level is degrees of tokenism which includes informing, consulting, and placation while the final level is degrees of citizen power which includes partnerships, delegated power, and citizen control (Arnstein, 1969).

Leighton (2012) contends that the biggest potential or hurdle in teaching citizenship education is the school ethos. It is not enough for students to learn the values of citizenship in a classroom; they should also live the life of citizenship the rest of their school days. The following section discusses the spaces that students have to lead democratic lives and participate in matters that affect them in each of the case study schools. Furthermore, it presents the dynamics that are played out on the school terrain which may have implications on the type of citizen that is developed.

7.2 Student participation in schools affairs and democratic living

The study found that students have opportunities to contribute to school affairs and practice democratic living through formal representations as prefects and class monitors and also through extra-curricular activities. These spaces are, however, contested landscapes where tensions are played out between different interests. The sections that follow present the opportunities for participation according to schools.

7.2.1 Namikango national secondary school

The study noted opportunities for student participation in decision making and democratic living in the school in formal and informal capacities. These are discussed below under the themes of *formal student representation* and *extra-curricular activities* respectively.

Formal student representation

Students participate in school decisions through prefects who collectively make up the prefects' council and also through class monitors.

Prefects' Council

The school has a prefects' council made up of form 4 students, specifically 15 boys and 15 girls, and it serves a 1 year term. Head prefects and their deputies, hostel prefects, and prefects responsible for sports, library, school dispensary, technical subjects, computer, entertainment, physical science, home economics, and dining hall belong to the council. The prefects' council acts as a bridge between students and the school administration⁴ besides carrying out routine tasks such as supervision of cleaning. The study, however, noted that the prefects' council in this school is not

⁴The term school administration is loosely used in Malawi. It may refer to the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head, and it may also refer to all teachers in the school because of their role in enforcing school discipline.

democratically elected; rather it is nominated by teachers. Student participation is limited to consultation (Arnstein, 1969; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) of outgoing prefects who suggest names of candidates to be considered for nomination. Afterwards, teachers screen the suggested candidates through an interview process. Membership of the interview panel is a privilege of teachers with no student representation at all. After the interviews, successful candidates are announced to the student body as prefects. It can, therefore, be argued that this top-down imposition of prefects denies students an opportunity to experience the dynamics of a representative democracy.

As noted in chapter 1 (section 1.1.1), school rules and regulations in Malawi are centrally made by MoEST and handed down to schools. Schools, however, have some latitude to make minor rules. Where new rules are made, the prefects' council provides opportunities for students to participate in decision making and have a voice on matters of school governance. It was reported that before introducing new rules, students are consulted and parents' views are sought, in turn. For example, the deputy head claimed that the prefects' council was involved in enacting a rule that banned the use of cell phones by students in the school. However, during an interview with the head boy, he was unable to validate this claim because he found the rule already in place when he came to the school in form 1. Considering that the head boy was in Form 4, it means the rule might have been enacted over 4 years before the present study was conducted. More significantly, however, the lack of fresh examples in the intervening period could be an indicator that student involvement in the making of school rules is not a common practice. The head boy further clarified that when it comes to making school rules, the school deals with parents, and that students are just informed of the outcome.

It can, however, be doubted if parents have substantive powers to influence school decisions. For example, during the period of data collection, the boarding master, who had confiscated a cell phone from a previous form 4 student got a phone call from the student's parent asking him to give back the child's cell phone. This demand was made despite the fact that parents had 'agreed' that once a phone is confiscated, it should never be handed back to the owner and that the school should decide what to do with it. This experience may suggest that the rule had been imposed on the parents as well. It can, therefore, be argued that although the school employs some kind of democratic procedures, in practice power rests with school authorities and that parents, and the prefects' council simply rubber stamp decisions made by school administration. This kind of participation, which has no influence on the outcome of decisions and rules, can be described as tokenistic (Arnstein, 1969). This observation agrees with the views of Yamada (2014) who argues that although there have been efforts to decentralise decision making in Africa, the process may result in the re-concentration of powers to schools and head teachers.

Additionally on involvement of the prefects' council, it was further claimed by the deputy head that some prefects are involved in deliberations where students' discipline cases are resolved:

When we have discipline cases, we invite the prefects to come and participate in the discussions together with the teachers so that an informed decision should be made when we are giving a verdict of some kind. (Deputy Head- Namikango national)

However, in the interview with the head boy, he explained that prefects are only involved in resolving discipline cases occasionally, as witnesses. It can, therefore, be claimed that student participation in school decisions is not a common practice. To

validate this claim further, the school held a management board meeting during the data collection period. However, there was no student representation in the management board. When asked if the school would consider including students in most of the decision making bodies at the school, the deputy head responded that:

I think sometimes it's difficult, because students come here to learn. As such we should not make things more open to them. As you are aware that this school is a co-educational, so making things open to them I think..., there can be no learning here. So, even the standards in terms of their academic performance can easily go down. (Deputy Head- Namikango national)

The social studies teacher also acknowledged that student participation is limited to selected issues. Reasons for the selective involvement of students in school decisions will be considered under challenges encountered in education for democratic citizenship later in section 7.4. The study, nevertheless, noted that the school creates spaces regularly for student consultation (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). Every academic term the school administration invites students to present their views, through the prefects, on issues that affect them. This was disclosed by the deputy head and the social studies teacher when asked about existing opportunities for students to practice democratic living. Similarly, students in a focus group discussion agreed that they have a voice in school affairs through consultation meetings with prefects:

On decision making, the school selects some students who gather problems from the students and then they are reported to the management so that they make a decision on what to do about that. (Student- Namikango national)

The school can, therefore, be commended for opening up spaces to hear student voice. Robinson and Taylor (2007 p. 6) state that student voice does not only include the

spoken voice, but also the many ways in which students express their feelings or views about any aspect of their school experience. Student voice, therefore, covers student consultation (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) or citizenship from above (Turner, 1990) and also citizenship from below (Turner, 1990) where students take the initiative to be heard. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) describe consultation as a two way process of flow and exchange of views. It involves sharing information and garnering feedback. The initiator, however, retains the power and authority to make decisions. Robinson and Taylor (2007), nevertheless, advise that schools should be willing to make changes in policy and practice as a result of student consultation. The study noted that when issues are presented to school management, responses vary depending on the issues at hand.

When asked if management considers students' views seriously, the social studies teacher hesitantly agreed, saying:

Mmmmmh, (laughs), aaaaah, I think (some silence), they do, they actually consider their views seriously. Aaaaah, because when they bring concerns out, and they are neglected, the school knows that, that will be a recipe for a disaster. (Social studies teacher- Namikango national)

Similarly, some students expressed satisfaction with management's response to their views while others were not happy. When asked, in a focus group discussion, how they get involved in running school affairs, some of their responses were as follows:

Aaah, we [do] not help the school through decision making because, ...our teachers made (sic) their decisions on their own, not asking any student to help them, but to command us. (Other students mummer in agreement in the background) (Student- Namikango national)

I disagree to that because the last time we had problems around the school, some taps were closed so the prefects' council asked us what the administration should do. So we told them that they should open some taps so that people should not be around one tap. So the prefects' council took the issue to the administration, and after some weeks, the taps that were closed were opened. So I disagree that they make decision[s] on their own. (Student- Namikango national)

It is worth noting that student voice can be challenging to implement in practice. There is a difference between giving students a voice and taking the voice into account. Bragg (2007), actually, warns that student voice is not unmediated. It is guided, supervised, and facilitated through techniques that delimit what can be said (Bragg, 2007). Thus, the study noted that although the school opened up spaces for student consultation, the landscape was not unproblematic since teachers sanctioned which voices were acceptable. It was noted that student consultation brought tension between teachers and some students. While conformist views were welcomed by teachers, critical views were not acceptable. Students who were critical were considered rebellious and were, consequently, blacklisted as troublesome. As one student commented: *"Sometimes when we tell prefects about our problems, when they offer our concerns to the administration office, sometimes teachers... try to research, to make someone to be [like] a rebel, the troublesome boy"*. As a result, some students felt afraid to give their opinions during student consultations. This type of student consultation is, therefore, tokenistic (Arnstein, 1969). Students may be heard, but they lack the power to ensure that their views are heeded by the power holders, hence lack the assurance that the status quo can be changed. The consequence of this practice is that students learn to censor their views to ensure that only acceptable views are spoken. When uniformity of voice is privileged over multiple voices, and when critical views are suppressed, a culture of silence reigns (Freire, 1985). From

these experiences students learn silent lessons that it is not acceptable to hold dissenting views and that critical voice is unwelcome to people in authority.

Class Monitors

In considering democratic living and decision making, the issue of class monitors did not feature highly at Namikango national secondary school. It is, nevertheless, worth noting that every class is assigned a teacher, known as a *form teacher*, who is responsible for its general welfare. Furthermore, every class has two class monitors, a boy and a girl who are democratically elected. The class monitors provide a link between students in a class and the administration through the form teacher. Students, therefore, have an opportunity to experience the dynamics of a democratic election when selecting class monitors. Furthermore, students also have an opportunity to express their views regarding teaching and learning directly to the form teacher every day during what is termed the *form period*. This is a daily interaction between form teachers and their classes during which the daily attendance register is taken. Whenever there are issues requiring the attention of school administration the form teachers bring them to the attention of the deputy head. Of interest to this study, class monitors keep a period register which every teacher signs after teaching. The period register, which is handed in to the deputy head every day, allows the school to monitor teacher attendance. In spite of these mechanisms to ensure that students' right to education is respected there were, still, some cases of teacher absenteeism. For example, during a focus group discussion, students reported that the *life skills* teacher had a tendency of missing classes. They recounted that for their Junior Certificate course (first 2 years of secondary education), the teacher turned up not more than 20

times⁵ and when they complained to the form teacher, there was no change. When they insisted that the teacher should change his bad conduct, they were told by the form teacher to drop the subject if they were not happy with the teacher's conduct. This case shows how powerless students can be when they have an issue against an authority figure. This experience may send subtle messages to students that it is a fruitless effort to demand accountability from people in positions of power. Thus, although there are channels for expression of student voice, these channels may be tokenistic (Arnstein, 1969) since students do not have effective powers to change the status quo. In a cultural setting where adults are never considered to be in the wrong, such practices may socialise students to unwritten rules of adult impunity.

Extra-curricular activities

Further opportunities for decision making and democratic living at Namikango national are offered through extra-curricular activities. Students are involved in a variety of sporting activities, clubs and societies, and religious activities. White (2004) identifies timetabled activities and whole school processes as two ways in which the aims of the curriculum can be realised by the school. The school timetable at Namikango was designed to give students opportunities to get involved in all the above activities every week, specifically, sports on Tuesdays, religious activities on Wednesdays, and clubs and societies on Thursdays. The wide range of activities available in the school spread the chances for students to belong and associate with others, practice leadership and decision making (Keser, Akar & Yildirim, 2011). Additionally, it gave students the freedom to choose among the various activities available. Associating with others in a group gave students opportunities to experience group dynamics and learn rules of social interaction.

⁵Life skills has 3 periods per week in the Junior secondary section, and one academic year has around 42 weeks.

Clubs and Societies

A number of clubs, societies and religious organisations. The religious organisations are a reflection of the existing religions and denominations in the wider society. The religious organisations meet mostly during weekends and students are mainly involved in prayers and singing. Observations during data collection showed that Wednesdays' religious activities were limited to choir practices. The rest of the students either study, walk around and chat, or are involved in general cleaning. In relation to democratic living, the clubs and societies give students opportunities to lead associational lives (Kerr, 1999), to democratically choose their own leaders and also challenge existing rules. One student acknowledged that they democratically elect leaders for clubs and societies, but stated that there was no latitude for students to make rules because rules were already made. *"... with different clubs, we are the ones who choose the leaders ... this one should be the leader of this club, but in making the rules, we do not make the rules."*

During data collection, observation was made regarding some extra-curricular activities in session, e.g., Aerobics, French, and Writers/Drama clubs. Activities in clubs and societies allowed students to practice Education THROUGH citizenship since they provided an opportunity for students to put into practice some concepts learned in class (Kerr, 2000). It can, however, be claimed that the clubs were not necessarily meant for the development of students' democratic dispositions. Being a boarding school, the extra-curricular activities were meant to give students opportunities to be engaged after classes and during weekends. In spite of the wide range of extra-curricular activities available, students had the freedom to choose to belong to them or not. As a result, some students could be seen walking around, and others studying in groups when it was time for extra-curricular activities. For

activities taking place outside the school such as field trips, students had to contribute money for transport.

Sports

Various sporting activities were identified at Namikango national secondary school. Generally, they may be categorised into two. Firstly, there were school teams involving football, netball, volleyball, and basketball which compete against other schools. It was reported that this group intensified training whenever the school was preparing for inter-school games. Secondly, there were inter-hostel games between the four hostels at the school. Hostel teams were involved in football for both boys and girls, and netball for girls only, and winning teams were awarded points. In fact, points were awarded to hostels depending on a combination of factors including the performance of hostel teams, hostel cleanliness, and academic performance of the hostel residents. At the end of the academic term, the winning hostel received a cash prize to spend towards a party for its residents. In this case, both boys and girls contribute towards the success of their hostel and encourage each other to do well. The amount of cash reward was decided upon on a yearly basis by the administration. The winning hostel for the term prior to data collection received a cash reward of MK60,000-00. It may be argued that this arrangement does not only encourage competition among hostels but also cooperation between members of a hostel as they contribute towards its success. It also serves to improve the school's overall academic performance and cleanliness. The practice at Namikango national secondary school of linking achievement in sports to academic achievement is, however, in contrast to the views of Shults, McSurley and Salguero (2013) who argue that achievement in sports gives students an opportunity to experience a sense of fulfilment outside the

academics. The position taken by Namikango, therefore, shows its high priority for the pursuit of academic merit over other arenas at the school. It should be recalled that the school also separately rewards high academically achieving students through the *Manken awards* and educational visits (refer to section 5.1.1). Where alternative achievements are linked to academic merit, it may result in fostering a spirit of competition more than cooperation.

7.2.2 Nachiswe CDSS

Nachiswe CDSS also offers space for students to formally participate in school affairs, make decisions, and lead democratic lives. These opportunities include serving in leadership positions as prefects and class monitors, and also through extra-curricular activities.

Formal student representation

Formal student representation occurs through class monitors and prefects. The prefects collectively form a Student council.

Student Council

The student council is a formal structure in which students' interests are represented. The council is made up of the head boy and head girl, their deputies, and prefects responsible for sports, entertainment, sanitation, mail, bee garden, and library. Through the council the prefects are expected to represent fellow students and participate in decision making on matters that affect students. There were both boys and girls for all prefect positions in the council except for mail and bee garden where there were only boys. When asked to explain this discrepancy, the head teacher responded that "*it's something girls can't like.*" This disparity could, therefore, be a reflection of cultural practices in the wider society where women are considered less

inclined than men to perform certain tasks. This suspicion is expressed in the light of the fact that the mail prefects walked 6 kilometres to the post office to collect mail every day. More importantly for the present study is the practice of student participation (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) in which students elect prefects through a democratic process. At the school, all form 3 students are allowed to compete for positions in the student council. The election process involves students declaring their interest to contest for positions, canvassing for votes in classes, and voting by secret ballot. The head teacher proudly declared that the school creates space for students to practice democracy: *"We involve the students directly, and those that are aspirants, they go around classes to campaign."* Students also agreed that there was a democratic process of choosing representatives, with one of them stating that *"...in classes, when we want to vote for a head boy, or a head girl... we have a chance to vote a person we want."* This practice, therefore, gives students an opportunity to practice and experience the dynamics of a democratic election. Once candidates express their interest, they attend interviews where their suitability is checked. Only teachers have the privilege to be on the interview panel. Those who pass the interviews are allowed to campaign, and once a secret ballot has been conducted, teachers vet the results and announce the winners to the student body. It should, however, be acknowledged that despite the apparent democracy described above, the study considered the process problematic in that teachers had the final word on who would be declared winners. In other words, although the school provided space for democratic elections, the landscape was highly problematic and demonstrated a high power influence by teachers (Gervedink Nijhuis et al., 2013). Through a process that one may term *'administrative manoeuvring'*, personally responsible candidates (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), who are preferred by teachers were likely to emerge as

winners. Through the interview and vetting processes justice-oriented candidates (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), who are not preferred by teachers, may be unjustly eliminated from the contest. It was not, therefore, surprising to learn that both the social studies teacher and students acknowledged notable teacher influence in the election process that ensures that only ‘acceptable’ candidates carry the day. Explaining the outcome of the voting process, the head teacher alluded to some *administrative manoeuvring*, stating that:

... after everything, then we have a committee of teachers that sits down, analyses the results of the ballot paper, and sometimes you may find someone who is winning a position but is not a favourite of the teachers.

(Head Teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

Depending on the behaviour of the leading candidate, the committee can “*make changes somewhere.*” Furthermore, interviews with the head girl, head boy, and sanitation prefect (girl) revealed the extent of teacher influence in elections, and showed that students’ choices were not always respected. For instance, the head girl reported that she never expressed interest to run for any position in the student council but was invited for interviews. This means that she was the preferred candidate by the teachers. Not surprisingly, she eventually ‘won’ the position of head girl. On her part, the sanitation prefect contested for the position of head girl. After voting, however, her name came up as the ‘winner’ for the position of sanitation prefect. It can, therefore, be asserted that democracy at the school only exists as a façade (Davies, 1999). The students appear to have power to choose their leaders, but in practice the process is a smokescreen through which the school administration uses power and exercises control over students. It may plausibly be argued that the fact that students have not been removed, or that students who did not apply for any position in the

council have been invited for interviews is enough reason to make them feel proud as responsible students who have gained the recognition of teachers.

The student council at the school is, therefore, an elite group separated from the body of students which, consequently, results in the formation of new hierarchies on the school terrain (Fielding & Rudduck, 2002). This assertion is even more compelling considering the fact that interviews and observations showed that being a prefect at Nachiswe CDSS elevates the status of students to that of ‘teacher assistants’ and that the prefects serve mostly the interests of teachers. Prefects at the school have a lot of authority over fellow students. They supervise general cleaning; order fellow students to tuck in their shirts and blouses; and punish students who disobey school rules e.g. missing sports training. These tasks privilege the prefects and allow them to dominate the rest of the students. For instance, on one occasion the female sports prefect found some boys whose shirts were not tucked in. She then wanted to punish them, something the boys resisted. This angered her, and she consequently took them to the staffroom and handed them over to a teacher saying: *“they don’t want to listen to me. You will deal with them because they take me as a nobody!”* Although this appeared as a mere worry on the part of the prefect, it was actually a statement by somebody wielding great authority. A further implication for such practices is that students learn that a person in position of authority has to dominate others. These practices can only result in the perpetuation of autocratic rule since students will acquiesce to autocratic practices.

As argued earlier, students who are preferred to be in the students’ council are those who exhibit *personally responsible* (Westheimer & Kahne, 2014) and *adaptive* (Veugelers, 2007) behaviour while those that are seen as *critical and autonomous* are removed (Veugelers, 2007). From these experiences, students may learn subtle

lessons that to ascend to positions of leadership they have to speak the language that teachers want to hear (Robinson & Taylor, 2007). For example, when the head boy was asked about his election campaign message, he replied that he was telling students that under his leadership, the school would be kept cleaner than before. He stated that he got the idea of focussing on cleanliness from teachers who complained against the previous student council for poor supervision of cleaning. Leighton (2012), however, cautions that young people can get disillusioned with authority if experience teaches them that the only opinions and arguments of interest to teachers are those that reproduce the opinions and arguments of the same teachers.

The study observed that although the student council was in place, no formal spaces were created for student consultation (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) on matters that required student input. This means that the school was not willing to hear student voice. The only forum for participation was through the involvement of student council members in two decision making platforms. Firstly, the head prefects are members of a school-based committee which was set up to identify beneficiaries of bursaries offered by an NGO known as Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED). The CAMFED committee, as is locally known, is made up of the head teacher, deputy head, head boy, head girl, a village head, 2 guardians, and 2 PTA representatives. The mandate of the CAMFED committee also included issues of school governance. The presence of this committee, therefore, allows student leaders to share the decision making platform with adults and represent student interests on governance issues. While such effort is commendable, Thornberg (2010) warns that where students and adults share the decision making platform, there is power asymmetry against students which results in loss of negotiation power.

The study, however, could not ascertain if students' views were being respected or not because there was no opportunity to observe any meetings in progress. Secondly, the head teacher reported that whenever new rules are being enacted, the student council is consulted for its input. The proposed rules are first deliberated by the CAMFED committee, teachers, and parents before consulting the student council. Moreover, the head teacher reported, there had been times during these consultations when the student council made additions to the suggested rules. When asked if students have the power to question suggested rules during consultations, the head teacher responded that:

...these rules and regulations that we have here were critically scrutinised by the teachers, the PTA, including that school-based committee, the CAMFED committee that we were talking about, so we think they are okay. (Laughs) Yea! If someone say 'what if you remove this rule' then we will start questioning them, why? ... Yes, so if you start tolerating such things then we are diluting our rules and regulations."
(Head Teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

This response shows that the said student consultations are a matter of tokenism (Arnstein, 1969). Thus, contrary to the school's claim regarding consultation, this process could best be described as *informing* (Arnstein, 1969) the student council. Arnstein (1969, p. 219) describes *informing* as one-way communication from officials to citizens with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation. This is a significant observation because, as Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) explain, information sharing serves the purpose of building legitimacy for new rules and policies. From the conduct of the elections and the 'consultation' processes, the school sends subtle messages that have implications on the socialization of citizens.

The practices at the school show that the only views and opinions that are accepted are views that echo the expressed and implicit views of teachers (Leighton, 2012). In this case, the school environment does not allow students to think critically and hold their own views. This environment is likely to develop compliant and conformist citizens who always follow the official line of thought (Freire, 1970a; Monchinski, 2008). Furthermore, the students are being socialised into an environment where they may think that it is not acceptable to oppose the views of people in power.

The authoritarian stand taken by the school is consistent with the views of the head teacher who suggested that social studies was responsible for the breakdown of discipline at the school. To ensure that the school develops *personally responsible citizens* (Westheimer & Kahne, 2014) who exhibit good character, the school administration has a strong grip on practices taking place on the school terrain. However, Leighton (2012) alerts that when students learn about their rights and responsibilities; freedoms and duties; they expose the established social order to scrutiny and gain an understanding of social change. Similarly, after learning about rights and responsibilities in social studies, students at Nachiswe CDSS made efforts to apply their understanding to school practices by questioning some decisions and school regulations. As a reaction, the school kept a clear demarcation between classroom learning and outside class practices. The following statement by the social studies teacher is revealing:

... there have been some instances where ... students were challenging the authorities to say that 'but as long as social studies is concerned, this thing is supposed to be done like this'; and then the authorities were like 'no, this is a school, its run by its own set of rules not what you are taught in class' (Social studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

When probed to provide a specific example, he explained that:

... may be you are teaching the issue of Justice, so you tell them that you have a right to be heard, and then this student has got a discipline issue with the school. The issue is 'you have committed a crime, now you have to go for suspension.' And much as the student may try to say 'I have got witnesses, I am not the one' but the school will stick to the rules and say 'okay, as far as we are concerned, you committed a crime and then you have to go home for suspension' (Social studies teacher-Nachiswe CDSS)

From experiences of this kind students learn that people in authority should not be questioned. It should be borne in mind that among the school's complaints regarding student behaviour was the allegation that students focus more on their rights and freedoms to the neglect of their duties and responsibilities. However, it can be argued that by not allowing students to access their rights and carry out the corresponding responsibilities within the school setting, the school was denying the students a safe environment where they would learn to practice democratic living. As Freire (1998) argues, there should be a balance between authority and freedom. Authoritarianism is a rupture in favour of authority against freedom; while unrestrained freedom is a rupture in favour of freedom against authority.

The foregoing discussion shows that Nachiswe CDSS is a contested terrain filled with tension. School authorities provide façade democracy (Davies, 1999) and shrink the democratic space through authoritarian rule. When such school practices are considered alongside the classroom practices, it is clear that the school is offering Education ABOUT citizenship (Kerr, 1999) where knowledge is transmitted in class, but is not expected to influence behaviour outside class. This may result in the

development of conformist citizens (Freire, 1985) who lack the courage to tread new paths.

Class monitors

Students are further formally involved in decision making and democratic living at Nachiswe CDSS by serving as class monitors. Each class has two monitors, a boy and a girl, democratically elected by class members. The class monitors are tasked to ensure that students' right to education is respected. For example, they keep a period register, and also inquire about any teacher who does not turn up for lessons. Students reported that when they have issues that require the attention of school management, they report through the class monitors, or directly either to their form teachers or the head teacher. In this case, class monitors serve as a link between students and the school administration. When students were asked what they do if they have issues to bring to the attention of the school administration, they responded that:

If a form teacher is not helping us, we go to the headmaster. (Student-Nachiswe CDSS)

No we send the class monitors. (Student- Nachiswe CDSS)

When probed whether there have been cases when they had to seek the intervention of the head teacher, one student responded that *"not yet!"* This response was significant because by the time it was being made the students had on several occasions complained about one of the teachers. Particularly, one of the students complained that: *"... and for this time, the agriculture teacher is not teach us (sic). So, we have sent the class monitor to ask the form teacher ... and this time we are waiting for the answer which she will be answered."* The social studies teacher confirmed that the agriculture teacher had a tendency of missing classes and that the head teacher was aware of the issue. Although the school administration was strict on students'

discipline, it appeared relaxed when it came to handling students' complaints against teachers. These practices may send unspoken messages that people in power are not expected to be accountable for their actions.

Extra-curricular activities

The school provides space for various clubs and societies to enrich students' experiences. These include religious associations, social clubs, and sports. Religious associations and social clubs are considered one category and they conduct their activities at the same time. Students, therefore, have to choose between the two. As noted in chapter 5 (section 5.1.2), the school reserves the 9th period on Tuesdays and Thursdays for clubs and societies, and sports respectively. This means that the school sacrifices lesson time in the interest of extra-curricular activities.

Clubs and societies

There were a number of clubs and religious organisations available. Additionally, there are other clubs that are externally driven by NGOs. These clubs are sponsored by outside organisations and usually aim at meeting the objectives set by the parent organisation. Some of them offer sponsorship to girls and others teach life skills. For example, Red Cross Society sponsors girls from the catchment area and also runs a club, *Girls Guide*, which trains girls in leadership skills. It should, however, be noted that most of the clubs and societies at the school were inactive, and there was little effort by the school to monitor their activities. Although time was created on the school timetable for clubs and societies, most students left for home during club time. Only few students who mostly belong to religious societies used the time to sing and pray. The social studies teacher reported that the school pays more attention to sports than clubs and societies '... *if it's time for clubs and societies, only those students that*

have a passion, the rest will go home; while for sports, it's a must'. It was further noted that where club patrons and matrons work outside of official working hours to accompany students on trips, the school did not compensate their time and effort. Commenting on this lack of support, the social studies teacher complained that: *'Even if they write a report to say that we went to place A, we did this and that, the office will just receive that and say 'thank you for putting us on the map', that's the end'*. This, however, should not be surprising bearing in mind that the school had very limited resources. Actually, it is for this very reason that the clubs that were active at the school were mostly those that are externally driven. Activities by these clubs were facilitated by visitors from the parent organisations alongside club patrons/matrons, and students were being provided with soft drinks and snacks during the activities. Considering that students spent the whole school day without having a meal, this may be considered as a good practice and a possible reason for student participation.

For those clubs and societies that were active, there was centralisation of power by some of their leaders. The social studies teacher explained that chairpersons of clubs and societies made unilateral decisions on issues that otherwise require deliberation by members. This practice could be a manifestation of students' experiences of what it means to be in a position of authority and power. Where students are socialized to authoritarian practices by power holders, they are less likely to challenge centralisation and hierarchical power relations. Because most clubs and societies were inactive at the school, students appeared to have a free period on Tuesdays. The only exception was when the school had upcoming sporting events, when the Tuesday period was also utilised for sports training.

Sports

Sports, especially football and netball, are the most vibrant extra- curricular activities at the school and get the most support from the school administration. At the beginning of the academic year, the school organises inter-class football and netball competitions to identify players for school teams. Once school teams are formed, games are regularly arranged with other schools throughout the year. As noted earlier, sport has a privileged position over other activities at the school in several ways. Firstly, when the school team is preparing for a game, both Tuesdays and Thursdays are taken up by football and netball training. Thus, clubs and societies are cancelled on Tuesdays to pave way for training. Although only few students make it into school teams, all students are expected to watch the training and absconders are punished by prefects. Secondly, the school subsidises transport expenses for sports trips to ensure high student patronage. This is in contrast to trips by clubs and societies where students bear the full cost of transport. Finally, teachers who serve as sports patrons/matrons, commonly known as sports masters/mistresses, were paid honoraria for accompanying students to sporting activities. Actually, according to the social studies teacher, sports mistresses/masters were also paid honoraria for supervising training. These incentives were, however, not made available to club patrons and matrons.

The sporting activities, it should be acknowledged, teach students the skills of cooperation as team members, decision making as they decide which teams to play against (Shults et al., 2013), negotiation with teachers to convince them on their choice of teams to play against, and organisation in sensitising other students to pay contributions for transport. The social studies teacher was asked about opportunities

available in the school to allow students to practically participate in decision making and he responded that:

... in sports they may be asked to decide on their own which school they want to play against, where, and how best can they organise a trip ... But other than the extra-curricular activities, I think there is no such platform where there is that clear identification to say that students are given that opportunity to participate. (Social studies teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

It should be acknowledged that sports trips were very popular with both students and teachers at the school. Moreover, trips did not only serve sporting purposes, they also included visits to places of academic interest located close to the sporting venue or on the way to it. For example, it was learnt that during a recent trip to a sporting event, students had an opportunity to visit a tea processing factory in the tea growing area of the Shire Highlands. In other words, sports trips promoted effective use of scarce resources in the school by ensuring that sports add value to the experiences of students.

As Leighton (2012) asserts, sports clubs provide an opportunity for students to have a sense of fulfilment and achievement besides their academic experiences. Unfortunately, not all students manage to benefit from such experiences because although the cost of transport for the trips was subsidised by the school, some students fail to meet the difference due to poverty. It can, nonetheless, be argued that although classroom practices and some outside class practices did not provide space for students to practice democratic living, the extra-curricular activities, especially sports, offered students some space to participate in decision making and influence school affairs. Ironically, however, a concern may be raised that these skills were practiced

by very few students considering that the sporting landscape is limited to football and netball. Alternatively, it can be argued that decisions regarding sports appear peripheral when compared with substantive issues such as school rules and regulations where students are denied any influence. As a result, students may develop misleading perceptions that serious decision making is a privilege of adults, and that one cannot influence rules unless she/he is in a position of power.

7.2.3 Chifule district secondary school

Chifule district secondary school also offers a number of opportunities for student participation in decision making and democratic living. These range from taking up formal leadership positions to informal activities as students negotiate their daily experiences at the school.

Formal student representation

Students at Chifule district secondary school are also involved in decision making and participate in school affairs through formal positions such as school prefects and class monitors.

School prefects

The school had several prefects who link up students and the school administration. Apart from the head prefects and their deputies, other prefects, both boys and girls and in equal numbers, were responsible for catering, science, library, health, entertainment, sports, and sanitation. Furthermore, there were other prefects responsible for dormitories, bringing the total number to 35. Of these, 14 were girls and 21 were boys. As noted in section 5.1.3, there were 7 dormitories for boys and 3 for girls, which accounted for the smaller number of female prefects. Of interest to the study is the observation that prefects at the school were not democratically elected.

The study found that student participation in the selection of prefects at Chifule district was limited to consultation (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) of outgoing prefects who suggest names of students to replace them. Once suggestions are made, teachers scrutinise the names and choose depending on the behaviour and academic performance of the suggested students. In this process, some of the suggested names are replaced with those deemed suitable by teachers. In addition, those nominated for the positions of head boy and head girl attend interviews conducted by a panel that is devoid of student representation. As explained later in this section, this practice brings tension between students and teachers.

Once selected, the prefects take up responsibilities related to their portfolios and are required to report to the school administration any issues within their jurisdiction. For example, catering prefects are expected to take responsibility for issues with respect to food and cleanliness of the school kitchen. These positions are meant to allow prefects to make decisions regarding their areas of responsibility and to create space for student voice. In this regard, the social studies teacher reported that the “*prefects act as a bridge between the administration and the students body.*” Additionally, the head teacher stated that the school had several committees such as catering, sanitation, sports, and membership of these committees included prefects responsible for these areas. However, the head boy contradicted this claim and clarified that no students are involved in committees except for the bursary committee where only head prefects are involved. Similarly, a list of responsibilities in the staffroom noticeboard showed the presence of students in the bursary committee only. This suggests that, in reality, students have a limited role in school decision making processes.

It is, nevertheless, worth mentioning that the school had some channels open for students to express their views. For example, students were free to approach the head teacher, deputy head, or any other teacher whenever there were issues requiring their attention. Students considered this freedom as a mark of democracy in the school. In a focus group discussion, the students were asked about opportunities they have to lead democratic lives and they said: *“We have the right to express our views”,* and *“if you have any problem, we have responsibility [freedom] to go and find a teacher who can help us.”* It may, however, be doubtful that a student can experience genuine freedom of expression in a one to one encounter with a teacher considering the power imbalance that tends to exist between the two parties. Worse still, it can be challenging for a student to present critical views to a teacher in a cultural setting where adults are never considered to be in the wrong. It is not surprising, therefore, that the social studies teacher explained that students have freedom of speech as long as it is exercised with caution: *“They know what to say, at what time, to who, because they cannot speak something to an authority which they were not supposed to!”* As noted from the preceding quote, the word ‘authority’ represents a vertical relationship and the expected conduct in such an encounter.

The study, also, noted that the school practiced democracy from above (Turner, 1990) through student consultation to hear student voice (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). Every academic term, prefects are invited to solicit views from students on issues that should be looked into by the school administration. When views are presented to the administration, some students find the feedback satisfactory while others do not. For example, the statement below illustrates how student voice contributed to school improvement:

...when I was in form 2, there was a certain issue about our diet. We used to be eating beans the whole term without any change. If there was any change, maybe it was having some cabbages. So they had to report the case to the administration and they told the prefects to have a discussion with us and then take the main points ...and report to them. And I saw that when we did that, we had a change and it is now still improving. (Student- Chifule district)

As noted earlier, where participation is sanctioned from above (Turner, 1990), student voice can be mediated and guided, imposing limits on what can be said (Bragg, 2007). This was also the case at Chifule district secondary school. Some students accused the prefects of dodging critical and thorny issues which they considered potentially offensive to teachers. They attributed this to the selection process of prefects through which teachers choose conformist students (Freire, 1985) as prefects.

Further responses to the question regarding feedback from the administration revealed the sentiments below:

...the response always comes positive to the administration, and comes negative to us, because when they are choosing prefects, they choose people who will be faithful and will be under them. So when the prefects go there, they miss some points which some students said, which they think it will be painful for other teachers to be hearing. So when the responses are coming, they come that some points were not said, and the answers are not there. (Student- Chifule district)

...they [prefects] want to be taken as good people. They just ... say things there that please the administration only, not the one[s] we have told them to say there. (Student- Chifule district)

In this case, it can be argued that student voice is used as an additional mechanism of control (Robinson & Taylor, 2007) which privileges uniformity of voice over multiple

voices. Other students explained that whenever students who appear to be liberal and *justice oriented* (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) were suggested as prefects, the administration removes them in favour of those involved in religious societies who may be deemed to be *personally responsible* (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004): “...*they want people who are prayerful. Those who are members of SCOM, like the head boys, since I came to this school, each and every head boy had been chosen from SCOM. Yes, they are highly favoured.*” From the tone of the students during the focus group discussion, it was apparent that there was a high sense of student activism at the school. The students appeared disappointed at the choice of prefects by the administration because it opted for *conformist* students (Freire, 1998), leaving out the *justice-oriented* ones (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) who would not hesitate to stand up for the rights of fellow students. Although prefects were chosen by teachers, students expected them to advance student interests. In cases of perceived injustice, students expected the prefects to side with them against teachers and to, in turn, take the lead in seeking redress. For example, when asked about the opportunities they had to practice democracy, some indicated that their right to education is respected while others said they have freedom of expression. One particular response emphasized the expectation of students from their prefects in terms of protection of students’ rights:

...it depends [on] the prefects which are present at that time. If the prefects are very courageous, and they don’t think twice before they do an action, they just encourage people to have a strike. But if the prefects are those ones which are chosen by the administration, they just take the cases and report it to the headmaster. (Student- Chifule district)

It should be noted that in secondary schools in Malawi, the word ‘strike’ is mostly used when referring to ‘riots’. The head teacher acknowledged that the school had a history of student riots. This history should, however, not be surprising considering

that when student voice is facilitated and used as a mechanism of control, students may develop alternative means of expressing their views. Ruitenberg (2010) warns that closing spaces for expressing grievances may mean opening up new battlefields. Similarly, Robinson and Taylor (2007) posit that student voice does not only include the spoken voice, but the many ways in which students express their feelings or views about any aspect of their school experience. When student voice is initiated by students themselves, it can lead to changes that can enhance their experiences (Robinson & Taylor, 2007).

The study, likewise, noted efforts towards democracy from below (Turner, 1990) with students taking the initiative to have their views heard without waiting for an invitation from the school administration. For example, at the time of data collection, the school's head girl had just been suspended for leading a group of students to riot. She had organised the riot in reaction to a rumour that the school was intending to suspend some students, for teasing and bullying form 1 students, without giving the suspects the opportunity to be heard. Actually, students in the focus group discussion reported that 34 students had already been given letters of suspension from school without being heard, hence the riots. However, the social studies teacher disagreed with this information and clarified that at that time investigations were still underway and no student had been suspended.

It should, however, be mentioned that the schools handling of discipline issues was problematic. When students committed an offence warranting suspension from school, their cases were heard in the presence of their parents. They were, therefore, required to go home and get their parents for the next disciplinary hearing. Moreover, disciplinary hearings took place on Fridays only, and students, in the meantime, were

not allowed to attend classes but remained at home until their cases were heard. In this case, it can be argued, the students' right to be heard before being condemned, as enshrined in the Malawi constitution, and their right to education were negatively affected. This practice could be an expression of resistance to the top-down policy directive from MoEST that students should be heard before being condemned (Ministry of Education, 200b). This observation agrees with the findings of a study by Sakala (2009) who noted that although the advent of democracy in Malawi resulted in teachers losing the privilege and discretion of administering punishment without due regard to students' rights, schools circumvent the rules and meet-out harsh student punishments.

Harber and Sakade (2009) warn that the school can be a site where children learn violent behaviour. This violence can be in visible forms such as bullying and gender discrimination (Davies, 2005). This study noted contradictions between students' claims for their rights and their actions towards fellow (junior) students. Student activism against perceived injustices at Chifule district secondary school was undermined by many cases of human rights abuse perpetuated by senior students against form 1 students. For example, bullying and unfair treatment of form 1 students were common acts with more cases of abuse among boys than girls. For instance, during the data collection period, the school's water supply was disconnected due to unsettled water bills. With water-borne toilets and over 500 students on campus, the burden was left to students to collect water from a water pump for the dormitories and the school kitchen. Both senior and form 1 girls were seen collecting water for the kitchen and dormitories. However, on the boys' dormitories side the task was left to form 1s only. Worse still, some form 1 boys reported that besides collecting water for the toilets they were forced to wash clothes

and collect bathing water for form 4 students. This practice shows tension between students' demands on one hand and their actions on the other. In a related development, although prefects are considered a bridge between students and the administration, some prefects were reported to be abusing their powers by serving self-interests at the expense of their constituents. This issue is explored later in section 7.4 under 'challenges encountered in education for democratic citizenship'. The above discussion shows that the school landscape at Chifule district is filled with tension. As students try to transfer concepts learned in the social studies class to outside class settings, they do it selectively showing tension between their demands and their actions. Students are, for instance, willing to demand justice from teachers while using their seniority to abuse junior students.

Class monitors

The school provides further opportunities for student participation in decision making and democratic living through class leadership roles, especially as class monitors. Every class has both boy and girl monitors who are democratically elected. These leaders link students and staff through form teachers. The class monitors ensure that students' right to education is respected by keeping a period register where teachers sign after teaching and also inquire about absentee teachers. For example, when the social studies teacher was asked if students have opportunities to put into practice concepts learned in class to outside class situations, he responded that:

I will be giving you this example of human rights ...because since they know their rights, the right to learn for example. ... when no teacher is coming to their class, they can come, maybe they can send the monitor to come to the staffroom and collect the teacher if he is there, or ask after him if he is not there. (Social studies teacher- Chifule district)

Such practices provided students with an opportunity to ensure that their right to education is respected. Furthermore, the practices gave students responsibility over their own learning and made sure that teachers who did not fulfill their teaching responsibility were held accountable. When monitors experienced problems regarding these responsibilities, they channeled their concerns to the deputy head through their form teachers.

It may, however, be argued that the aforementioned channels and procedures were tokenistic because they did not necessarily give students effective powers to influence change (Arnstein, 1969). It was noted that while the school was fast in responding to issues of student indiscipline, it took time to resolve perceived cases of teacher indiscipline. For example, during data collection, there were cases when class monitors went to the staffroom to look for a teacher and the teacher would not be in the school but the school management did not take any immediate disciplinary action. Furthermore, when a teacher missed classes persistently it took time for the school to address the issue regardless of availability of clear evidence from a period register. The vertical power relations between teachers and students brought further tensions to the fore as some teachers expected students to treat them with respect while they did not honour their teaching commitments. Where the administration was reluctant to resolve issues, students at the school took matters into their own hands and demanded change.

The following narrative, from a focus group discussion, offers a good example of how students demanded change by confronting a teacher:

...there was a certain teacher with a tendency of coming late in class, may be is having 2 periods, but she comes when the last period is coming to an end. So we had to report the case to the form teacher, and when the

form teacher advised the teacher, she just had to ignore us and stopped teaching us [altogether]. So when she was afraid [of] losing her job, she started coming again and ... that time it went worse. So one day in class I said 'Madam, the way how you teach and ... the mood ...don't make us feel comfortable ... to ask questions, and we don't get some of your points'. So she answered that 'I don't have that time of answering those silly questions.' And then I said that 'if you don't have that time so why do you spend your time coming here?' So she just said 'I am leaving!' So I answered 'you can go!' and the other students followed my side. So when she went there and reported, I was told that 'why didn't you [tell] your form teacher?' But I [had] already told the form teacher and she knew about that case. So they gave me a punishment to have a slasher and clean a certain area. (Student- Chifule district)

The fact that the students were punished for demanding accountability from a teacher may send messages that challenging people in positions of power may mean treading on a slippery terrain. Likewise, students may learn that whenever people in authority break rules, it may not be appropriate for people to take them to task. Consequently, young people may acquiesce to a culture of apathy. For students at Chifule district secondary school, however, these experiences were unable to silence them. On the contrary, they apparently developed skills to navigate the terrain and have their views taken into account. One tactic was to employ what they called “*irony*” which involved talking about the problem to the concerned teacher but in an indirect way. Another tactic was to pass their views through teachers that are dedicated and have a sense of responsibility. Explaining this approach, one student said:

... for example, let's take the case of a certain teacher maybe is not teaching well, and you have told a teacher who does not miss a class and teaches very well and students pass his subject well. That teacher [may]

pursue the other one to do well, but if you tell the issue to another lazy teacher, it will cause some problems to you. (Student- Chifule district)

These experiences reflect the views of Eikenberry, Blaszak, Buttner, Morrisette and Redden (2009) who consider the classroom as a testing ground for life in the broader context. More importantly, they argue that while it is true that it is difficult to practice democracy in a classroom setting due to power differences between the teacher and students one must always bear in mind that even life in the broader society is filled with power differences. They, therefore, consider the classroom as a better playground to negotiate these power differences. The important thing is to make the power open to influence and change by those who it affects.

From this discussion, it can be argued that although the school facilitates some token student participation (Arnstein, 1969) through consultation (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004); students, nevertheless, have some degrees of power (Arnstein, 1969). This power particularly comes from their efforts towards democracy from below alongside other initiatives to fight for social justice. Ascending participation considers citizens as active political agents and bearers of rights (Turner, 1990).

Extra- curricular activities

The school offered a number of extra-curricular activities designed to allow students lead associational lives (Kerr, 1999). The activities included clubs and societies, and sports.

Clubs and societies

The school timetable distinguished between religious and social clubs. These met on different days, giving students freedom to belong to both. Teachers were assigned to clubs as patrons and matrons. The clubs were also parallel organisations of the

existing religions and denominations in the wider community. The religious clubs met on Thursdays. In practice, it was noted that Thursdays were mostly used for choir practice by different Christian denominations. A walk around the school on Thursdays revealed choirs practicing in various classrooms. It was reported that worship meetings, which also involved most students, were conducted on Saturdays and Sundays. This was understandable considering that there was more free time on weekend days. Social clubs on the other hand, met on Fridays. How active a club was, depended on the interest and support it received from its patron/ matron. Some clubs were very active while others were almost non-existent. When the social studies teacher was asked how active the clubs at the school were, he responded that “*Some are active, others are not. Talk of wildlife, very active, ...yes... they make a lot of trips, that’s about wildlife, but these other clubs, their existence might only be on paper.*” Wildlife was, indeed, the most active and vibrant club as it was involved in various activities. For example, on the final week of data collection, the club was organising an excursion to Mulanje Mountain, the highest mountain in Malawi, which hosts the highest mountain peak in Central Africa. Furthermore, students in a focus group discussion stated that the previous term, the Wildlife Club had a 3 day excursion to Lake Malawi National Park with sponsorship from Telecom Networks Malawi, a mobile phone service provider. Talking about the benefits they derived from the club, students attested that they had opportunities to see places of educational interest that they could, otherwise, not afford personally “*It is just like a chance to see some places which could be difficult for us to reach.*” Besides trips, the club also maintained a school woodlot that contributed towards improving the environment:

For example, [as] Wildlife [Club] we have our woodlot there behind the football ground and we have been planting trees and we are also having

a programme to plant trees this term, so it changes the structure of the school. (Student- Chifule district)

The study also noted that the Writers' Club and Drama Club were also active. One student stated that members of the Writers' Club write poems and short stories which are posted on the school noticeboard and recited during functions such as form 4 farewell parties. Apart from activities that improve language skills the Writers' Club members also conduct community service as revealed by the response below:

... for example, three weeks ago we had a general cleaning at (name withheld) health centre as Writers' Club, and also we have some stories, and some poems being pasted at the noticeboard. (Student- Chifule district)

It should, however, be stated that there was no direct and deliberate link between the extra- curricular activities and citizenship education. The activities were carried out as part of the school's regime of activities. No effort was made to link with social studies and its aims. The activities, nevertheless, foster the development of skills required in citizenship and other subjects as well. Belonging to clubs offered students the opportunity to practice Education THROUGH citizenship as the students provided services within the school and in the community (Kerr, 1999). In other words, the services complemented classroom practices and particularly allowed students to apply to outside class situations skills learned in class. The experiences enabled students to lead associational lives, gain skills of planning, negotiation, tolerance, and critical thinking (Kerr, 2000; Shults et al., 2013). One may, however, add that some experiences give students opportunity to take risks in a safe environment, and these skills are essential in the development of a democratic citizen. However, with few

clubs being active, only few students had the opportunity to gain skills from these outside class experiences.

Sports

The school had a formal programme for sports which ran through the length of the academic year. Most important to the school was an inter-class netball and football competition, *The Headmaster's trophy*, which was competed for in all the 3 terms of every academic year. The winning teams were given a prize of MK5000-00 each; MK3500-00 each for runners up; and MK1500-00 each for third placed teams. Classes/teams, therefore, accumulated their money up to the third term after which the members of the class topped it up to hold a party. As indicated on the school timetable, the interclass games were played on Tuesdays and Wednesdays after class time. On finals day afternoon classes were cancelled to give way to the games. Observations showed that the interclass games provided class members with a very good opportunity for cooperation. Because the rewards were shared by all class members, the games encouraged cooperation and team spirit among students. This for example, became evident as class members cheered their respective teams. In addition, the inter-class games helped with identifying players for school teams. The school had football, netball and volleyball teams which played against other schools. The sporting events brought up a lively spirit at the school among students and teachers. To ensure that students took the games seriously, teachers in the sports committee assigned officiating personnel for the games, and made deliberate effort to watch some of the games. These sporting activities, therefore, provided students with a sense of achievement and fulfilment outside their academic life (Shults et al., 2013).

The section that follows offers a discussion of findings from the three case studies by comparing and contrasting them and making recourse to relevant literature and theoretical underpinnings.

7.3 Discussion of findings

The findings of the study have shown that in all the case study schools there exists formal spaces for students to participate in school affairs and school decisions, and lead democratic lives. These spaces are, however, contested and are sources of tension between students and administration, and among the students themselves. The present section discusses these spaces under two general themes namely, *democracy from above* and *democracy from below*. These themes are based on Turner's conceptualisation of *descending citizenship* and *ascending citizenship* respectively (Turner, 1990). A prominent issue across these two themes is *student voice*, which also has implications for education for democratic citizenship.

7.3.1 Democracy from above

Democracy from above covers formal channels of student participation that are sanctioned by the school administration (Turner, 1990). It is also described as *elite democracy* because participation awaits the initiative or the consent of people in positions of power (Turner, 1990). The study noted cases of *democracy from above* in all schools through the role and conduct of prefects and class monitors. It is firstly worth noting that the total number of prefects varied from one school to another. This is understandable considering that the number of subjects offered by schools differs from school to school. That said, however, of special interest to the present study is the number of prefects responsible for academic areas in each of the schools. At Namikango national 5 out of 30 prefects were responsible for academic areas, namely

library, home economics, physical science, technical subjects, and computer, representing 20% of positions in the prefects' council. In contrast, at Nachiswe CDSS, out of 16 prefects, only 1, (6.3%) was responsible for an academic area, namely library. Chifule district was only next to Nachiswe as only 2 of its 35 prefects (5.7%) were in academic areas, i.e., library and science. While one may be compelled to think that these statistics are a mere reflection of variation in subjects that were being offered by each school, it may plausibly be argued that the real significance of the statistics is that they provide evidence that Namikango national takes academic achievement more seriously than its two counterparts do.

Of further importance to the study is the way the prefects were chosen in the schools. There was top- down selection of prefects by teachers at Namikango national and Chifule district, with student input limited to prefect consultation (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). The top-down selection process, therefore, denied Namikango national and Chifule district students the opportunity to experience the dynamics of a democratic election. The practice, it can be argued, has the potential to socialise students to accept the choices of people in positions of power even in matters that require student/citizen representation. In contrast, at Nachiswe CDSS there was student participation (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) in voting by secret ballot. While students at Nachiswe CDSS had the opportunity to experience the dynamics of participatory democracy (Giroux & Penna, 1979), it may not be ruled out that the *administrative manoeuvring* associated with the election process taught students to acquiesce to the choices of people in positions of power. Besides that, students may get disillusioned with democracy if they note that their choices will not count in any way because it is only decisions of people in authority that matter (Leighton, 2012).

The study noted efforts to hear student voice (Robinson & Taylor, 2007) through student consultations at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools. This practice gave students a chance to contribute towards school improvement. Despite the student consultations (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004), student voice at these two schools was problematic because it was mediated, guided and supervised through techniques that delimited what could be said (Bragg, 2007). Student voice can be problematic if it does not accommodate critical views or if the school only listens to the voices that agree with what it wants to hear (Robinson & Taylor, 2007). At Namikango national, critical voice was silenced, and uniformity of voice was privileged over diversity (Robinson & Taylor, 2007) while at Chifule district student voice was used as an additional mechanism for control (Robinson & Taylor, 2007). These are significant observations considering that in circumstances that disallow expression of dissenting views and disagreement, democracy gets suppressed (Ruitenberg, 2010). From these experiences, students learn tacit messages (Giroux & Penna, 1979) that expressing views contrary to those held by people in power can be a risky undertaking and also that it is not acceptable to criticise people in positions of power. At Nachiswe CDSS, in contrast, there was no effort to hear student voice. Prefects served the interests of teachers and used their status to dominate fellow students. This practice, therefore, also potentially taught students that only people in positions of power deserve to have a voice. Similarly, the practice possibly also made students to acquiesce to the choices of people in positions of power.

The study has further revealed that through conducting class monitor elections and expressing their views on teaching/learning matters the classroom space provided students from each school an opportunity to practice democratic living and contribute towards school affairs. In all the schools, class monitors were elected democratically,

and each school had mechanisms to ensure that students' right to education was being respected. However, these mechanisms were tokenistic (Arnstein, 1969) since in all schools, students lacked effective powers to militate against teacher absenteeism. This point is expounded in section 7.3.2 below.

The discussion in the present section so far has revealed contradictions between stated aims of the social studies syllabus (Ministry of Education, 1998) and social relations between teachers and students, as well as between prefects and students. Giroux and Penna (1979) argue that changing the goals of curricula may not be enough to bring about desired change if attention is not paid to the social relations of the classroom and school encounter. They assert that the hidden curriculum has the capacity to undermine the goals of social (studies) education (Giroux & Penna, 1979). Similarly, Ruitenberg (2010) questions the role of the school in fostering democratic capacity since schools serve as institutions of social order. She, however, advances the idea that the physical space of a school offers non-formal and informal education which can be utilised to offer students opportunities to engage with their social imaginaries (Ruitenberg, 2010). In this vein, all case study schools offered spaces for students to practice Education THROUGH citizenship (Kerr, 1999) through clubs and societies. Club and societies potentially offer students associational life and enable them to develop leadership and negotiation skills, and attitudes of tolerance which are necessary for democratic living (de Weerd, Gemmeke, Rigter & van Rij, 2005).

The study noted that all schools offered extra-curricular activities through sports, clubs and societies. Membership for the clubs and societies was voluntary, hence giving students the freedom to choose whether to join a club or not, and to choose which activities to participate in. Furthermore, leaders of clubs and societies were chosen by members through elections, offering students a further opportunity to

practice the dynamics of democracy (Giroux & Penna, 1979) in an arena with limited teacher interference. Lobman (2011) observes that out-of-school activities develop attributes such as critical thinking and creativity, and advises that effective programmes should challenge and support students to develop culturally, emotionally, socially and intellectually. The study noted variations in the level of emphasis given to out-of-school activities by each school with Namikango national emphasising hostel-based competitions; school level sports with high prefect influence at Nachiswe CDSS; and interclass sports and clubs at Chifule district. This variation cannot be taken for granted due to its potential to catalyse disparities in the development of relevant skills and dispositions among students in the schools. Also of great interest to the present study are the practices at Nachiswe CDSS and Chifule district secondary school where students contributed money to support sporting activities. The contributions towards sports trips for the school team at Nachiswe CDSS, and towards the *Headmaster's Trophy* at Chifule district encouraged a spirit of cooperation and solidarity which are essential for democratic living. On its part, the rewarding system at Namikango national secondary school which attached achievements in sports, particularly hostel games, to academic performance of hostel occupants potentially encouraged a spirit of competition among students that possibly rendered the system detrimental to democracy. It can, therefore, be argued that by rewarding the end product of sporting and academic activities, Namikango national secondary school neglected the processes and qualitative attributes which are instrumental in developing flexible, creative, and critical thinkers that are needed to create and recreate democracy (Lobman, 2011). These practices at Namikango national may teach students unwittingly to value only those accomplishments that are linked to academic superiority. As Smyth (2012) rightly cautions, emphasis on competition and

individual acquisitiveness results in changes in social relations which get skewed away from communal betterment.

The study has also noted that, the spaces that schools facilitate for student participation are mediated and guided (Bragg, 2007) to ensure that students stay within designated boundaries. Such participation can, however, be problematic because it may develop passive citizens (Turner, 1990). When authorities set boundaries for participation and facilitate which voices should be heard, democracy gets suppressed. Freire (1985, p. 85) argues that it is unlikely that authority can “sponsor the means for the people to unmask it more than it is willing to be unmasked.” Similarly, it is unlikely that top-down means of participation can encourage the development of critical, justice-oriented citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) for fear that they may later confront power and authority (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). It may, therefore, be argued that the type of participation sanctioned by authorities is one that allows schools to meet aims that have the consent of teachers and parents, and not for democratic renewal. These aims may include, for example, maintaining high academic achievement, and developing disciplined students to uphold traditional values as was the case at Namikango national secondary school and at Nachiswe CDSS respectively. Friedrich, Jaastad and Popkewitz (2010) argue that democracy unfolds on its own hence prior planning is undemocratic. This statement means that the best way to develop a vibrant democracy is to allow democratic practices emerge spontaneously. The next section discusses those occasions when democracy emerged from below.

7.3.2 *Democracy from below*

Democracy from below (Turner, 1990) covers the means that students use to have their voice heard without waiting for an invitation from teachers and it involves cases where students make effort to claim their rights and face authority either individually or in solidarity with others. Democracy from below is, therefore, spontaneous and active, and results in citizen agency (Turner, 1990). Robinson and Taylor (2007) believe that when student voice is initiated by students themselves, it can lead to changes that can considerably enhance students' experiences. As earlier alluded to, the study noted cases of *democracy from below* in the three schools as students tried to claim their right to education following cases of teacher absenteeism. The approaches taken by students at each school, and the reactions they got from their teachers, however, deserve special attention at this juncture. At Namikango national secondary school, students took a *participatory* approach (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) when a teacher had almost abandoned his class. Students kept reminding the form teacher during the morning registration period until the latter got fed up with their complaint and told the class to drop the subject. Afterwards, the students stopped complaining although there was no change in the state of affairs.

In a similar case, students at Nachiswe CDSS took a *personally responsible* approach (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). They sent a class monitor to inform the form teacher and kept awaiting a response from the latter but to no avail. In contrast, students at Chifule district secondary school took a *justice-oriented* approach (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) by confronting the concerned teacher after their plea through the form teacher had not yielded any result. The students were, in turn, punished for taking this unconventional approach to student voice. From these experiences students possibly learned that it is a fruitless effort to hold people in positions of power accountable.

Furthermore, these experiences have the potential to make students acquiesce to impunity from following rules set by people in positions of power. Consequently, the practices may end up developing citizens who are afraid to tread new paths and to hold leaders accountable (Veugelers, 2007).

Scholars on critical pedagogy warn about the hidden curriculum in schools which sends subtle and tacit messages to students (Giroux & Penna, 1979; Nouri & Sajjadi 2014). They argue that social relations in schools tend to convey hidden messages that could result in creating docile citizens who may easily be controlled by the powerful. Thus, it cannot be ruled out that, for their activism, Chifule district secondary school students learnt that demanding accountability from people in positions of power may mean treading on a slippery ground and can lead to retribution (Fielding & Rudduck, 2002). Alternatively, they could become conscious and alert to the observation that to transform a problematic situation, they must be willing to take risks and suffer consequences for the sake of social justice. As Freire (1985) argues, to overcome present problems requires risk taking and creative planning for the future.

Other instances of *democracy from below* were noted when students, who had allegedly committed offences, were judged and condemned without being heard. Student reactions to these perceived injustices, however, varied from one school to another. At Nachiswe CDSS students took a *personally-responsible* approach (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) by complaining to the administration on an individual basis. On the contrary, students at Chifule district secondary school took a *justice-oriented* approach (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) whereby they protested in solidarity by rioting. Such instances were, however, absent at Namikango national secondary school. Freire (1998) argues for praxis in the fight for social justice. Only praxis in the

context of communion makes *conscientization* a viable project. He describes *conscientization* as a “practice of man with other men (sic) united by their action and by their reflection upon that action and upon the world” (Freire, 1985, p. 84-85). It can, therefore, be asserted that the practices by students at Chifule district were likely to socialise students to become active citizens who can cooperate to uphold democracy. The practices at Nachiswe CDSS, in contrast, were bound to socialise students to suffer in silence even when confronted by a problematic situation. Put differently, the culture of silence at Nachiswe CDSS can best be appreciated as a likely recipe for the production of adaptive (Veugelers, 2007) and conformist citizens who cannot challenge the status quo (Freire, 1985).

The discussion in the present section has also shown that the school, as a site for democratic citizenship education, is a terrain filled with tension. With respect to student participation, decision making, and democratic living the study has shown that schools are selective and they mediate the practices that take place on the school landscape. These practices are negotiated between teachers and parents on the one hand, and students on the other, and further mediated by other interests found in schools such as maintaining high academic performance, e.g., at Namikango national; developing ‘cultured’ students ,e.g., at Nachiswe CDSS; and maintaining school discipline as revealed at Chifule district. The relations between teachers and students and their interactions give rise to a silent pedagogy that students internalise and give each school a distinct culture. This culture may, therefore, work for or against development of democratic citizenship skills and dispositions. The following section, which considers challenges encountered in education for democratic citizenship, explores the question of school culture further.

7.4 Challenges encountered in Education for Democratic Citizenship

A number of factors were identified as impediments towards attaining education for democratic citizenship skills in the three schools. It should be pointed out that the centralised curriculum and national examinations pose a challenge to the development of democratic citizenship skills and dispositions in schools. Their role has been discussed earlier in chapter 6 (section 6.3.2). This section, therefore, discusses culture, and other factors specific to each school. The presentation follows a thematic approach in which a theme is presented and discussed according to schools before moving on to the next theme. A cross-case discussion follows after the themes.

7.4.1 Culture

It is argued that schools do not exist in an ideological vacuum. Schools are located within a wider society and their organisational culture is also influenced by the societal culture (Gervedink Nijhuis et al., 2013; Tabulawa, 1999; 2013). In relation to African culture, Chonzi (2007) states that traditional African societies stress the importance of obedience and respect for elders among the youth. Therefore, the macro-culture together with the history of colonialism and post-colonial dictatorships do not give a good precedence for democracy in schools (Chonzi, 2007). In this study, the influence of the macro-culture was noticeable in the interaction between students and teachers in all schools. The influence of culture on education for democratic citizenship in schools is the main concern of the present section.

Namikango national secondary school

As noted earlier, Tabulawa (1997) states that African traditional cultures consider children with a deficit view. Related to the above statement, school authorities at Namikango national were observed to have a deficit view of students. Students were

viewed with suspicion and as immature. For example, only parents were consulted when making major decisions at the school. When asked if students were involved in making rules that govern the school, the deputy head responded that:

... they don't have a say on school rules and regulations, because some of the school rules and regulations are given to us by Ministry of Education ..., [for] some of the rules made by Namikango secondary school, we discussed them with their parents. And their parents understood them, they signed for them, even the students they also sign in the presence of their parents (Deputy Head- Namikango national)

The school administration worked with parents only because it viewed students with suspicion and consequently, it treated them with caution. Against this backdrop, students could not be trusted with the responsibility of making decisions regarding school affairs. The statement below provides a good summation of the school's poor view of students and why parents should be kept aware of all school rules:

...other students are clever, they can go to parents and say, 'there is such- such an issue there,' and parents say, 'but we don't know that'. So to avoid the parents being unaware of some of the school rules and regulations that's why we allow the parents to know what rules are here at Namikango for fear of learners trying to lie to them (Deputy Head- Namikango national)

Apart from citing students as being irresponsible, the school also considered students as 'immature'. As a result, decision making on governance issues was a privilege of teachers and parents. When asked about the possibility of students leading democratic lives at school, the social studies teacher said:

Usually they want things, you know kids, actually many of them, I should say they are not really that mature, they don't think like adults, so some of the things they may come up with may be too playful. So we as a school,

there isn't much room for students to practice democracy. (Social studies teacher- Namikango national)

Since the school views students through cultural lenses as immature and irresponsible, it was noted that even though there were efforts to hear student voice, the school was not receptive to negative and critical views from students. This could be a further reflection of the cultural view of Malawi which expects children to respect and obey adults, who are also considered infallible. Furthermore, teachers' lack of trust in students implied that students were viewed as children and not as young citizens who should be trained in the skills and values of democratic living and decision making. Along the same vein, it can be argued that sharing decision making space with students would erode the cultural privilege of teachers as adults and fountains of knowledge. This finding resonates with the views of Tabulawa (1997) who argues that African traditional culture places responsibility on the shoulders of teachers as adults to teach, model, and discipline the child so that she/he becomes a responsible adult.

Nachiswe CDSS

Nachiswe CDSS is located in a rural part of Malawi serving families that mostly depend on subsistence farming for their livelihood. With the average rural adult literacy rate of 15.3% (Government of Malawi, 2011), teachers are considered highly as fountains of knowledge and a light to the community in most rural areas. Nachiswe CDSS is, therefore, a type of school that is heavily influenced by the cultural orientation of the community. Unlike the other two (boarding) schools where students and parents do not belong to the immediate school community, at Nachiswe parents may double as community. This may mean less likelihood of tension between parents' and community's values which may, in turn, translate into fewer opportunities for

cultural dynamism. The study found that at the school, there was a lot of emphasis on good behaviour, and there was apparent gender division of labour. It was also noted that there were clear expectations on the part of teachers for them to instil discipline in students to help them grow into respectable adults. Similarly, the local community and parents respected teachers for their knowledge, and their presumed role of bringing up children/students to become responsible citizens. The community and teachers, therefore, spoke the same language of making sure that students develop into personally responsible adults. Students were, consequently, expected to be disciplined and to be obedient to teachers unconditionally. Thus, one may argue that the school's approach was to develop conformist citizens instead of citizens who ask questions (Freire, 1998; Lambert, 2004). With respect to making school rules, the school gained parental consent to make new rules or change existing ones provided by MoEST to make them more autocratic. Without any checks and balances from critical parents, the school used this opportunity to reduce democratic spaces for students. Commenting on the contribution of parents in making school rules, the head teacher explained the process as follows:

...one time or I can say two times, we called for a meeting whereby we had PTA members, guardians, village headmen, in the hall. We sent messages through the students, so the guardians came, gather[ed] in the hall, whereby we reviewed our school rules and regulations. We do this after complaining about misbehaviour: 'Why do we have this?' So you find someone say 'do you have school rules and regulations?'; 'yes they are there'; 'can we have them?' you kind of distribute to them at random, then you go through them. 'Do you need to make some changes somewhere?' they say 'what if you make some changes because this misbehaviour is too much now'. So it's like we are involving them in the production of such rules and regulations. (Head Teacher- Nachiswe CDSS)

The above narrative shows that parents gave the school the mandate to change the existing rules, to make them stiffer as a remedy for apparent students' misbehaviour. It was also noted that at times the community reinforced the school's authoritarian approach towards school discipline by blaming the school if students exhibit unacceptable behaviour. To ensure that it maintains a morally good stand in the community, the school became more autocratic in dealing with students. The social studies teacher explained that some rules were deliberately too punitive to please the community. These experiences show existing tension between local school conditions on the one hand and 'top- down' school rules and regulations from MoEST on the other.

These findings support the views of Harber and Mncube (2010) who argue that significant shifts in practices in schools and teachers rarely happen when mandated from above. There is always resistance at organisational, cultural and individual levels (Harber & Mncube, 2012). The findings further highlight tension between community values and democratic values which may justify the conclusion that the altering of school rules can be a form of resistance to centralised decision making, and top-down imposition of rules. Thus the findings of the present study are in agreement with Sakala's (2009) assertion that there is resistance to following laid down discipline procedures in some secondary schools in Malawi because teachers feel that democracy and human rights undermine school discipline. Put differently, following top-down rules and regulations that are in line with democratic governance could be perceived as a loss of power and privilege by some teachers. Kerr (2013) warns against wholesale importation of Western initiatives into other cultures. Similarly, Tabulawa (2013) posits that western innovations transferred wholesale into African

cultural settings are bound to fail because they pose a threat to traditional socio-cultural systems. Following Tabulawa's argument, the actions of teachers and parents at Nachiswe CDSS can rightly be interpreted as a form of cultural resilience resulting from the encroachment of Western and democratic values on their socio-cultural landscape.

From the foregoing discussion, it can be noted that culture plays a big role in the affairs of Nachiswe CDSS. It should be, particularly, noted that although culture is dynamic, elders mostly feel uncomfortable with change taking place among the younger generation, hence their skepticism of change. The set up at Nachiswe CDSS has shown that teachers, parents, and the community team up to exercise control over students. This is a privileged position for teachers since they have the respect of the same parents and community, and the authority over students. The consequence was that progressive and democratic elements at the school were viewed with suspicion and were suppressed using autocratic rules. Thus, considering that the school landscape did not allow democratic practices to thrive, it cannot be ruled out that some students at the school learned to uncritically follow the dictates of adults and people in power.

Chifule district secondary school

At Chifule district secondary school, the wider culture also influenced the interactions between teachers and students, and the involvement of students in school affairs. While the school makes an effort to keep lines of communication open between the administration and students through prefects and class monitors, students are, nevertheless, rarely involved in decision making in matters that affect them. The bursary committee is the only one that has student representation at the school,

turning decision making a privilege of teachers and parents. For example, when the school's water supply was disconnected, an emergency meeting was called by the school administration to brainstorm how they would handle the presence of students at the school without water but there was no student representation at the meeting. Instead, students were just informed about the teachers' decision at an emergency school assembly.

The study noted that major decisions were made by teachers in consultation with executive members of the Parent- Teachers Association (PTA). Worse still, the PTA members were invited selectively by the school, which meant that the school set the agenda for the meeting, selected its participants, and steered the proceedings. The head teacher indicated that they only involved all parents whenever there were serious issues which had *"to do directly with students that there will be a change that will affect all the students."* Furthermore, it was noted that involving parents in serious issues was advantageous to the school because it was able to easily enlist the parents' support against unpopular changes likely to be contested by students. According to form 3 students who took part in the focus group discussion, their parents had never been invited to any discussion during the years they had been at the school. It was, however, likely that full parental involvement would be required due to the water problem at the school. With the school's water supply disconnected due to unpaid bills amounting to over MK8 million, the school administration thought it necessary to call for a meeting with the PTA executive to deliberate on how money would be raised to settle the bill. The head teacher suggested that to settle such a huge bill, it would require an additional once-off payment from every student; a decision which could only be made by parents:

I am sure that will not just end at the PTA executive; that should go to the parents. That's where I am sure they will advise that we call all the parents. (Head teacher – Chifule District)

It may, therefore, rightly be asserted that this kind of participation is manipulative (Arnstein, 1969) and extractive (Yamada, 2014). Porter (2014) suggests that for community participation to be effective there should be a power shift that ensures that parents 'claim' their own spaces instead of being 'invited' into decision making spaces.

Cultural influences were further manifested in the relations between boys and girls. Although the school made efforts to provide equal opportunities to boys and girls in all formal activities, an apparent superiority complex was noted among boys and this had the potential to affect efforts towards development of citizenship skills for democracy. In most communities in Malawi, males are expected to take leading roles while women are expected to be submissive. Formally, the school did not condone gender-based discrimination but boys subtly resisted the power and authority of girls. For example, at times boys caused trouble in class and refused to be disciplined by female class monitors. In one instance, a boy twisted the hand of a girl in class to the extent that she had to seek treatment at a nearby health centre. The victimized girl complained that several girls had also been abused by the same boy. When the boy was summoned to the staffroom, he admitted twisting the girl's hand saying he did that because girls in their class '*pose big*' (*amasamalika*). These selected cases, coupled with those of senior students molesting form 1 students in the dormitories, could be stumbling blocks to the attainment of education for democratic citizenship because hidden practices in the school tend to reinforce bad cultural practices.

As alluded to earlier, although it is acknowledged that prefects act as a bridge between students and the administration, there were also reported cases of power abuse by prefects. For example, students in the focus group discussion raised a complaint about not being able to use the library to the maximum. School rules allowed students to read books in the library, but not take books out on loan. This was understandable considering the limited stock available in the school, and also the fact that teachers needed the books for use in class. However, students complained that they had limited access to the library because it was not kept open at scheduled times. My observations validated this claim when one teacher wanted to use the library but found the librarian about to move out. She had to plead with the librarian to stay on so that she could look for some textbooks. It can be imagined that if a teacher had to plead with the librarian, students would have no power to influence the opening and closing if they acted on an individual basis. Asked if they had brought this issue to the attention of the library prefects, students' responses showed further problems of power abuse. They detailed that the prefects had the opportunity to take as many books as they wished out of the library. As a result, they did not attend to complaints from students since their own needs were met, and they did not want to spoil their relations with the librarian.

Similarly, dining prefects had the opportunity to get as much food as they wanted, while the rest of the students were served with very small portions. One student sarcastically said, *"They even get a whole pail of rice, while the rest of us only have a cup."* However, the victimised students did not report the matter to authorities for fear of being considered as trouble makers by the concerned prefects. Szeftel (1998) posits that corruption is common in all societies. He, however, asserts that the problem is that in Africa, corruption and power abuse appear to be acceptable. It can, therefore,

be argued that the silence by the aggrieved students at Chifule district was a mere reflection of a wider society problem, and one way in which the practice of rent seeking gets propagated in society.

7.4.2 School- specific factors

The study has revealed some challenges which do not fall under a common theme because they are specific to particular schools. The theme *school- specific factors* was, therefore, used as an umbrella heading for these challenges. The challenges are: the pursuit of academic excellence at Namikango national secondary school; type of school at Nachiswe CDSS; and ‘misunderstanding of democracy’ at Chifule district secondary school. This section presents these challenges, highlighting how they relate to education for democratic citizenship.

Pursuit of academic excellence- Namikango national secondary school

Considering the total actions undertaken at Namikango national secondary school, it can be argued that the school’s efforts were mostly directed towards achieving and maintaining academic excellence. This argument is based on a number of observations and initiatives undertaken by the school. Firstly, the school had a system where it rewarded the best performing students in academic terms. The presence of rewards such as the *Manken Awards*, were aimed at encouraging students to achieve highly so that the school could maintain its stand as a star performer in national examinations. The finding that the school is unable to fund some learning activities, such as field trips in social studies, which would benefit whole classes, but makes efforts to fund trips for best students in all classes shows where the interests of the school rest. It should further be borne in mind that when the school rewards outstanding sports performance through hostel competitions, the awards were further

linked to academic achievement of the hostel residents. This should be considered a problem because, focusing narrowly on rewarding merit encourages competition and develops individual capacities (Hinde, 2008). Competition creates tension with development of citizenship skills and dispositions. Citizenship education encourages students to work together and cooperate in carrying out tasks. Rewarding academic merit creates elites, which supports bureaucracy (Chun, 2013).

Furthermore, Goldthorpe (1997) states that the idea of meritocracy works against a just society in the interest of the liberal market. Secondly, the pressure of public expectation could have an undesirable effect on education for democratic citizenship. Parents and guardians who had children at the school expected their children to pass national examinations with flying colours, and to get selected to public universities. This is the reason why they are willing to contribute towards the PTA fund, which is used to reward teachers whose students perform very well in national examinations. It was reported that during PTA meetings, parents emphasise that the school should not tolerate any form of activity which might distract students' attention from attaining highly in examinations. The high attendance during PTA meetings, despite long distances travelled by parents to the school, is considered as a testimony of their commitment to the school's academic aims. Furthermore, the deputy head stated that during these meetings, the school takes note of parents' seriousness regarding students' academic performance through *'the tone of their speeches'*.

With the school focused on academic achievement, involving students in decisions regarding school affairs and allowing them to lead democratic lives is considered counter-productive. Thirdly, it was noted that the school was willing at times to compromise on school rules as long as students were engaged in academic activities

that prepare them for national examinations. Students were allowed to engage in academic group discussions when it was time for extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, the school allowed boys to remain in classrooms at night to read beyond bedtime. School rules indicated that all students should retire to bed immediately after evening prep at 09:00 pm. However, boys were allowed back into the teaching area in the night to read, without the supervision of a teacher. In contrast, girls were not allowed back into the teaching area. This could be one of the reasons why the performance of boys in national examinations was better than that of girls. When asked why boys, and not girls, were allowed back to the teaching area in the night to study, the social studies teacher responded that:

In fact, that was not supposed to be the case. In fact they are supposed to be in their hostels sleeping, but we just remain silent, may be not to push them too hard because sometimes it may not be necessary to do so. We see no harm with that, being boys. It's different from the girls, we need to take much more [care] towards the girls. (Social studies teacher-Namikango national)

It can, therefore, be argued that where improving academic performance is the motive, the school ignored rules to allow students opportunities to study and prepare more for national examinations. With the school focused narrowly on academic achievement, the development of skills for democratic citizenship suffered.

Type of School- Nachiswe CDSS

As noted in chapter one, Nachiswe CDSS did not get any subvention from central government. It relied on the fees that it collected from students. Because most CDSSs serve rural communities relying on subsistence agriculture, government was reluctant to raise school fees even when the cost of commodities went up. As a result, the

amount of fees paid by students was very little compared to the cost of materials. It can, therefore, be argued that the tension characterising government's conduct left the school in a financially unenviable position. To make matters worse, in spite of the little revenue collected, as a requirement, the school had to remit tuition fees to central government. The school, therefore, operated from a position of minimal resources. Without resources, the school was unable to buy enough recommended textbooks and supplementary teaching and learning materials, to provide for a range of extra-curricular activities; and to fund outside school activities.

It should be borne in mind that during sports trips even members of the school team had to contribute towards transport costs. This resulted in less opportunities for all students to interact and develop skills for group living. Another challenge against efforts for education for democratic citizenship was school enrolment. It should firstly be recalled that while government selected 40 students per class for district and national (conventional) secondary schools, it allocated 50 students per class for CDSSs. It may be argued, therefore, that more concern went to hostel overcrowding, due to its immediate political and health consequences, than to classroom overcrowding. It can also be asserted that enrolment in national and district schools was more controlled than in CDSSs. Centralised school enrolment meant that the school had little control over student enrolment. Unlike most national and district secondary schools that had boarding facilities, in CDSSs students commuted from home. CDSSs, therefore, had higher enrolment due to transfers from one school to another. This resulted in CDSSs overshooting their recommended enrolment.

Furthermore, overcrowding was worse at Nachiswe CDSS due to shortage of classroom space which caused the form 3 class to enrol 106 students. With limited

funding and large enrolment, Nachiswe CDSS had limited capacity to focus on active teaching/ learning strategies, and to take care of out of class needs of students. Although the school offered extra-curricular activities through clubs and societies, it was difficult for them to be effective. Without mid-day meals, it was apparent that at the end of the school day, most students were hungry and had no motivation for extra-curricular activities. An informal chat with few students indicated that most students walked or cycled for over 6 kilometres to school, and many of them did not have money to buy a snack during break. It was, therefore, apparent that by the end of the school day, their motivation was to go home. This setup denied students the opportunity to interact after classes. The only opportunity for students to interact was in classrooms and during the short periods of break. This made it difficult for students to develop other skills necessary for democratic living such as organisation and decision making.

Students' "misunderstanding of democracy"- Chifule district secondary school

Glaeser, et al. (2007) state that education leads to participation, and that there is a lot of activism in schools. However, they argue that not all activism is in support of democracy. One may also add that not all activism is in support for causes of justice. There was a lot of activism at Chifule district secondary school, and students cooperated to defend particular causes. However, not all causes that they fight for were justice oriented. When the head teacher was asked if the school had met any challenges related to social studies, he answered that students had a *"misunderstanding of democracy"*. In his view, students emphasised their rights at the expense of their responsibilities: *"...some of the challenges I have met are that students... do not understand properly... some of the concepts such as if we teach*

them about rights". Adding that *"it's like they just take it straight that 'I have this right; I have this right' and then they have to demand that."*

In addition, an incident was narrated in which some form 4 boys used to tease and bully form 1 students. When this was brought to the attention of the boarding masters, the school carried out an investigation, and gave the suspected students charge sheets, i.e., letters indicating that they had a case to answer at a disciplinary hearing. The following night, the students bullied the form 1s so much that some had to jump over the brick fence to flee from the school while others sneaked out and informed boarding masters. The police were called, and they took the suspects into custody. When the rest of the students in that class heard that their colleagues had been locked up by the police, they ganged up, ranted at the head teacher and the boarding masters, and went to the police station to demand the release of their colleagues. This experience showed lack of understanding of the principles of human rights and democracy. Such practices could, therefore, make the school sceptical about involving students in decision making since students' actions may be looked at with suspicion by teachers.

7.5 Discussion of findings

The study has noted that the school terrain is a site of struggle between cultural values and democratic values. In all three schools, there was tension between school culture, which is a reflection of the wider societal culture, on the one hand, and democratic values on the other. It was noted that teachers treated students as children, and not as young citizens. All schools instead opted to work with parents, either directly or through the PTA when making decisions which affected students. Related to this finding, Bradshaw (2014), similarly, notes the tension between practices in the wider

society and expected school practices. She points out that students do not vote and do not serve in juries because society considers them incapable of fulfilling these responsibilities. How then are teachers expected to treat them as fully competent decision makers? These contradictions raise questions about how democratic can school practices ever be.

It should, however, be noted that the schools had different motives for parental engagement. At Namikango national, students were viewed with suspicion and as immature. The fear of the school administration was that if given a chance, students would make unwarranted demands that would deter them from academic work. In addition, parental engagement was sought as a cover against student deception. Nachiswe CDSS, in contrast, emphasised discipline and responsible behaviour. Parental engagement was, consequently, sought to legitimise authoritarianism. The school worked with parents to get their consent to make rules more autocratic and exert more control over students. At Chifule district secondary school where there was high student activism, parental engagement was sought as a buffer against students' negative reaction to new rules. In this case, parents were used to shield school administration whenever unpopular decisions were made, since each parent had the responsibility of informing her/ his own child about the new rules. These findings agree with the views of Wyse (2008) who noted that the war of liberation continues in Africa as countries continue to face neo-colonialism on many fronts including cultural, political, and social.

The positions that were taken by the case study schools find further favour in the views expressed by Bradshaw (2014) who points out some tensions that may exist in efforts to democratise schools and involve students. She wonders what schools would

do if there was conflict between the needs of schools and the needs of parents. Similarly Pike (2007) states that parents would find an education system offensive if it promotes values which are different from their religiously held views. The findings of this study show that democratic values are sometimes at odds with Malawian cultural values. Learning from international comparative studies on citizenship education, this is not unexpected. Kerr (2000), states that whenever countries are faced with global and local challenges, they turn to the curriculum. He, however, observes that curriculum purposes and aims can easily be drawn up, but their successful achievement is a long term project taking several generations of teachers and students. He, therefore, warns that concepts that have worked in some settings should not be transferred wholesale into other contexts. There is need to adapt them to fit their particular contexts. Besides culture, each case study school also had its own specific challenges. As discussed earlier in section 7.4.2, the pursuit of academic excellence at Namikango national secondary school, the type of school at Nachiswe CDSS, and students' 'misunderstanding of democracy' at Chifule district secondary school all posed challenges to the development of skills and dispositions for democratic citizenship. These different challenges may mean that although the schools belong to one education system, they may be socialising students to varying citizenship skills and dispositions which may ostensibly result in developing different kinds of citizens.

7.6 Chapter summary

The present chapter has looked at the school terrain as a site where citizenship is practiced. It has been noted that the school landscape is a contested terrain filled with power differences between teachers and students. The way this power is exercised and negotiated differs from one school to another, hence giving each school a distinct

character. The chapter has further discussed the challenges faced by schools in developing citizens for democracy. In all cases, culture has been a major player in school practices. The role of culture, however, is not uniform in all schools. Its influence is determined by the type of school and the politics that is played on the school terrain. The following chapter provides a general discussion of the findings of the study, and ties up the findings together to give a coherent picture.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

8.0 Chapter overview

The present chapter discusses the findings of the study, links the study to the underpinning theoretical framework, and states the lessons learned. The study set out to explore if pedagogy and school practices in secondary schools were facilitating the development of active citizens for a democratic Malawi. To answer this question, the study focussed on the views of teachers and students about social studies; pedagogy and its influencing factors; school practices; and challenges that schools face in education for democratic citizenship. The chapter is structured to allow discussion of each research question to ensure adequate attention and coverage. Links are made across research questions/issues and across case study schools in order to build a coherent picture of practices in schools.

8.1 Views of teachers and students about social studies

One of the aims of the study was to explore research participants' understanding of social studies. As such, the study sought the views of participants regarding the aims of social studies, the kind of citizen the school system is expected to develop, and the apparent outcomes of teaching social studies in schools (Chapter 5). In all the schools, there was an understanding of social studies as aimed at preparing students for participation in their communities and in a democratic country. This is in line with the participatory role of the citizen as highlighted in the syllabus where the stated aim of social studies is "to provide students with the skills, which will enable them to

actively participate as citizens of a democracy” (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. v). The emphasis on the link between participation and democracy is not surprising considering that social studies was introduced in the Malawi school curriculum after the advent of democracy in 1993. This understanding and the link between democracy and participation agrees with earlier studies carried out in Malawi. Ngalande (2010) found that primary school teachers had a good understanding of the way social studies should be taught while Hals and Lindebæk (2010) found that students and teachers in district and national secondary schools had good understanding of democracy. Similarly, Mwala (2012) found that teachers in CDSSs had positive perceptions of learner- centred approaches.

What was problematic, in the current study, were the views of research participants on the role of the school in developing these participatory skills in students. In all case study schools, head teachers and teachers saw the role of the school as raising awareness of the need to participate. The study considers awareness-raising as problematic because it can be a pointer towards privileging transmission of information over development of skills and dispositions. These views by head teachers and social studies teachers, it can be argued, place a strong foundation for banking education (Freire, 1998) and Education ABOUT citizenship (Kerr, 2000). A clearer and more problematic picture emerged when the study sought the views of research participants about the kind of citizen that the school should develop. In all three schools, teachers’ and head teachers’ responses showed that the school should prepare personally responsible and participatory citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). This view was also shared by students especially at Nachiswe CDSS. On the other hand, some students at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools indicated that schools should prepare justice-oriented citizens (Westheimer &

Kahne, 2004). These responses show tension between the views of students (at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools) on one hand and teachers (and students at Nachiswe CDSS) on the other, with respect to the expectation of the kind of citizen schools should develop.

As will be elaborated later in this chapter, the different expectations make the school terrain slippery, which results in conflict between students and teachers. It should be borne in mind that although the curriculum and schools espouse participation, not all participation can be in support for democracy (Davies, 2012; Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002; Glaeser et al., 2007; Waliaula, 2014). Participation without critical reflection can result in students following blindly the dictates of teachers and others in authority (Sigauke, 2012; Waliaula, 2014). The study, therefore, advances the view that to uphold democracy; schools should develop justice-oriented citizens. The study agrees with the views of Sigauke (2012) that genuine citizenship education should help students to filter, unmask, and identify biased information from non-biased information; identify rhetoric and manipulative information, and expose hidden intentions in political discourse.

The study, however, acknowledges that education for social justice can be problematic for schools, both in Malawi and beyond, where there are contesting demands and hierarchical power relations on the school landscape. The study further examined the views of participants about the apparent outcomes of teaching social studies. In line with the expectation that schools should develop personally responsible and participatory citizens, most participants at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools described social studies as having positive outcomes manifested by the improved behaviour of students. In contrast, the head

teacher at Nachiswe CDSS was critical of social studies claiming that it was responsible for the breakdown of discipline at the school. This claim, however, contradicts the views of students at the school who indicated that they believe that school should develop personally responsible citizens. Furthermore, it is worth noting that while views of students from the other two schools were justice-oriented, only Nachiswe CDSS students' views focussed on personal responsibility. This contradiction shows that although students and teachers had thin/ minimal interpretation of the aims of citizenship (McLaughlin, 1997), there was still tension on the school terrain. This chapter reveals how the power dynamics unfolded and how power was contested on the school terrain in the sections that follow.

From the views sought in the study, it can, therefore, be argued that head teachers and teachers in all schools, and students at Nachiswe CDSS had minimal, thin and narrow interpretations of citizenship which is thin and narrow (McLaughlin, 1997; Turner, 1990). Thin citizenship leads to participation which is unproblematised, and can result in addressing symptoms of social problems while root causes are ignored. Such a type of citizenship cannot challenge the status quo (Freire, 1985). On the other hand, students at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools had maximal interpretations of citizenship which is justice-oriented (McLaughlin, 1997). This concept of citizenship is thick and activist (McLaughlin, 1997), and can challenge the status quo to bring about transformation. Maximal interpretations may develop citizens who are willing to tread new paths and challenge power hierarchies in schools and society (McLaughlin, 1997; Veugelers, 2007). Although both the head teacher and students at Nachiswe CDSS had minimal interpretations of citizenship, the complaint by the head teacher about student misbehaviour could be seen as an indication of a desire to further domesticate students. Alternatively, it could be part of

resentment by some teachers against the incursion of democratic and Western values on Malawian cultural values. This later view is consistent with the findings of a study by Wyse (2008) who asked the perceptions of primary school teachers in Malawi about social studies and national identity. The study found that social studies was trying to promote national identity in a terrain which was influenced by Western incursions. She noted that the boundary between Western identity and Malawian identity was fluid, and that the West had more power over African identities, and consequently Malawian identity.

It can, therefore, be asserted that the views of head teachers and teachers, as authorities in all schools, are to develop personally-responsible citizens and uncritical participatory citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) who can easily be controlled. In contrast, the justice-oriented views of students in two schools show that students may be willing to fight for their rights and to claim them in schools. The presence of these conflicting views brings head teachers and teachers on one hand, and students on the other on a collision path. The next section looks at how the expectations about the kind of citizen and how to develop such a citizen were actualised in classrooms through pedagogy.

8.2 Pedagogy and its influencing factors

The study explored practices in form 3 social studies classes to determine if in reality, they promote students' active citizenship skills and dispositions for democracy (chapter 6). The findings show a wide variation in practices across case study schools. Using Kerr's (2000) framework for conceptualising citizenship, the study noted that Namikango national secondary school offered Education FOR citizenship with active teaching/learning approaches in class, horizontal classroom interactions, and

promotion of critical thinking and creativity. These practices were supported by a school culture of cooperative and collaborative learning among students; and availability of resources. The study argues that these classroom practices were undertaken with the aim of helping students to become better individual learners. Furthermore, the cooperative efforts in class were undermined by the value that the school placed on standardised national examinations. Brophy (n.d.) states that cooperative learning enhances individual accountability because each student in a group is tested individually on what has been learned. It was noted that there was no further effort to allow students to work together beyond academic classroom assignments to achieve other aims for a just community or society. It should, however, be mentioned that some students at Namikango national came together, as a result of learning social studies, to improve sanitation at the school kitchen. As noted earlier, this kind of participation only addresses symptoms of a problem, but does not interrogate and address root causes (Kahne & Westheimer, 2004). One may, therefore, conclude that the classroom practices at the school were likely to develop critical, participatory, and tolerant citizens.

While critical thinking, participation, and toleration are good for democratic citizenship, the challenge is that, as Johnson and Morris (2010) argue, these skills develop citizens who can participate in society from an individualistic perspective. Johnson and Morris distinguish critical thinking from critical pedagogy, stating that while critical thinking teaches students to think critically, critical pedagogy teaches them to think politically. Critical pedagogy counteracts the individualistic and competitive approaches to learning allowing students to work in solidarity towards aims of social justice (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Parallels can be drawn between the classroom practices and the views of the deputy head and the social studies teacher at

the school regarding social studies as aimed at developing participation skills in students, and hence participatory citizens. Although students at the school had maximal interpretations of citizenship (McLaughlin, 1997), it can be argued that the classroom space did not offer them an opportunity to interrogate and challenge power structures. This could be due to national examinations which were the central focus of students and teachers. It can be argued that standardised national examinations play a mediating role in the citizenship dispositions and behaviours of students in class.

The classroom practices at Nachiswe CDSS may, in contrast, be described as Education ABOUT citizenship with transmission of knowledge from the teacher to students (Freire, 1985; Kerr, 2000). Students were passive in class with limited opportunities for critical thinking and creativity. Freire (1998) describes such classroom practices as banking education or nutritionist education (Freire, 1985). Banking education domesticates students and silences critique (Freire, 1985). It is manipulative in that learners are taken as passive objects and not thinking subjects. Freire (1985) further argues that banking education promotes a culture of silence where students carry orders from above, and cannot think on their own. Citizens who have been socialised into a culture of silence cannot raise questions even where things go wrong. Furthermore, they are instrumental in maintaining the status quo. Citizens who lack the capacity to reason and question are not good for democracy because they can easily be manipulated by people in power to conserve unjust practices. It may, therefore, be posited that students at Nachiswe CDSS were being socialised into a culture of silence and hence could easily be domesticated. Such students are likely to develop into citizens who are unable to tread new paths or to problematize taken for granted occurrences.

The study considers classroom practices at Nachiswe CDSS as a reflection of the school environment. Nachiswe CDSS had very limited resources to support teaching and learning, and had the highest teacher-student ratio of the three schools. With very limited resources and public examinations lurking, banking education was considered as the only option to ‘deliver the curriculum’ efficiently. This view confirms the findings of a study by Mwala (2012) who explored teaching strategies in social studies lessons in 4 CDSSs, to ascertain if they were in line with the participatory strategies recommended in the social studies syllabus. Mwala (2012) found that the school environment was not conducive to the use of participatory methods. Lessons were teacher-centred, there were no teaching and learning resources, and there were challenges with class management due to overcrowding in classrooms.

With management of education and power centralised at MoEST headquarters, this study, therefore, locates these challenges at the national level, and to MoEST in particular. This is the case because MoEST privileges national and district schools by providing funding for their operations while ignoring CDSSs. This assertion finds support in MacJessie- Mbewe and Kholowa (2010) who fault the education system in Malawi for reproducing social inequalities in that poor and rural children from CDSSs receive poor quality education while conventional (national and district) secondary schools offer high quality education to the rich. This argument is advanced further later in the concluding chapter. Considering the views held by both teachers and students at Nachiswe CDSS that the school should develop personally responsible citizens, an association could be made with the classroom practices. The practices validate the view that the aim of social studies was to develop personally responsible citizens, and one should bear in mind that the classroom practices did not provide evidence to validate the claim by the head teacher that social studies was responsible

for student indiscipline at the school. The observation will, however, be followed up further when school practices are considered.

At Chifule district secondary school, the evidence in this study suggests that classroom practices oscillated between Education ABOUT citizenship and Education FOR citizenship (Kerr, 2000). Classroom practices ranged from banking education (Freire, 1985) in single period lessons to active and interactive strategies in double period lessons. In both cases, however, there were limited opportunities for critical thinking and student creativity. Participation with limited critical thinking can be problematic; participatory citizens who do not think critically can easily be manipulated and can follow blindly the dictates of people in power (Sigauke, 2012; Waliaula, 2014). Focusing on participation without critical thinking can result in participation for causes that can foster democracy as well as for anti-democratic causes. These observations at Chifule district relate well with the views about citizenship held by the head teacher and social studies teacher where it was shown that the aim of social studies was to develop skills for participation in students, and that the role of the school was to raise awareness for participation. This observation is, however, in contrast to the justice-oriented views held by students. It should, therefore, be emphasised that the classroom space did not necessarily provide students with opportunities to practice their sense of agency. The content-driven curriculum and national examinations strongly influenced classroom practices, and provided limited room for practicing democratic skills.

The study further noted that authentic experiences and examples were used by teachers in all schools and students at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools. However, there was no effort in all schools to problematize taken-for-granted issues. In short, there was no problem- posing education (Freire, 1985).

The present study advocates that problem-posing education creates the difference between critical thinking and critical pedagogy because it problematizes taken-for-granted situations. Problem-posing education allows students to develop the power to perceive politically (Monchinski, 2008). Monchinski (2008) explains that the role of the teacher is to present situations, which students are familiar with, in a manner that will get them thinking about those situations in new ways. This is done by bringing out the controversy in issues (Asimeng-Boahene, 2014). Problem-posing brings out the critical consciousness in students and opens their eyes to see beyond the surface, and see issues from different perspectives.

From the pedagogical practices, the study posits that the case study schools were apparently socialising students into becoming different kinds of citizens ranging from conformist citizens at Nachiswe CDSS; uncritical participatory citizens at Chifule district; to critical, participatory but individualistic citizens at Namikango national secondary school. These conceptual contradictions are problematic for democracy because they reinforce the hierarchical structure into which schools are categorised. Without the skills for problematizing taken-for-granted situations and for viewing issues from political and structural standpoints, it is unlikely that these citizens can unite and demand action in the interest of a just society. Monchinski (2008) believes that the everyday classroom is a site of so many *limit situations*. He advances the argument that teachers corseted by the curriculum often find their hands tied and institutional mandates infringing and limiting their creativity. It can, therefore, be argued that the classroom space in the case study schools was a limiting factor due to the demands of a content-driven curriculum and a centralised system of assessment. The following section focuses on outside class practices to explore, in particular, how power dynamics are played within school cultures. The section further explores

whether there are alignments or contradictions between stated views, classroom practices, and outside class practices within schools.

8.3 Outside class practices and democratic living

The study explored opportunities available to students to participate in school affairs and decisions, and to lead democratic lives alongside challenges that are encountered in education for democratic citizenship (chapter 7). Attention was, therefore, paid to outside class practices and school culture. The study observed that schools provide formal spaces for democratic living through student representation, and through efforts to hear student voice. Initiatives where the opportunity for participation was granted by authority figures were termed ‘democracy from above’ or ‘elite democracy’. The study found democracy from above to be problematic because it was mediated by teachers. Furthermore, the study identified efforts for ‘democracy from below’ in which students claimed their own spaces to be involved and to be heard (Porter, 2014; Turner, 1990). The study further observed that student voice and participation in decision making were slippery surfaces which exposed tensions between cultural norms and democratic principles. These observations are discussed in the sections below.

8.3.1 Student representation

Student representatives, commonly known as prefects in schools, were reported to be part of the formal management structure in all schools. Through the composition of the prefects, and their areas of responsibility, the study observed a pattern which built a coherent picture of areas of emphasis in each school. This pattern was apparent at Namikango national and Nachiswe CDSS. At Namikango national, the composition showed emphasis on academic areas since 20% of the prefects were for academic

responsibilities. This was in contrast to 6.3% for Nachiswe CDSS, and 5.7% for Chifule district secondary school. The claim for academic merit at Namikango national is further validated by several academic awards such as the *Manken awards* (chapter 5), and the inclusion of academic merit alongside sports achievements (chapter 7) among others. In contrast, Nachiswe CDSS showed its inclination towards cultural practices and beliefs by having boys only as prefects in two areas where it was assumed that girls could not manage due to physical limitations. This observation already sets the two schools on divergent paths: towards pursuit of academic merit for one (Namikango national), and towards social reproduction for the other (Nachiswe CDSS).

The study also raised questions regarding the way student representatives were chosen. At Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools there was top-down imposition of student representatives through appointments by teachers. This practice shows how problematic the concept of student representation is since the power to appoint representatives did not rest in student hands. This practice brought tension between the general student body and the school administration regarding issues of legitimacy. Students indicated that schools prefer personally responsible students, over justice-oriented students (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Students held the view that prefects often served the interests of teachers instead of representing the students' interests. These observations show that teachers were not willing to work with students who had divergent views, but rather only with those with 'acceptable' views. The study found this practice to be problematic since education for democracy should encourage embracing difference and celebrating diversity. The study recognises this as the contradiction between the traditional role of the school as a means of social control, and its role for raising critical consciousness for participatory

democracy (Harber & Sakade, 2009). The choices that teachers make provide an invisible pedagogy (Leighton, 2012) to students that it is not acceptable to hold different opinions and views from mainstream or official views. By contrast, Nachiswe CDSS practiced '*delegative democracy*' (Ruitenberg, 2010) in which there were competitive elections for positions in the students' council. This apparent democratic process was, however, problematic due to *administrative manoeuvring* whereby teachers' choices of personally responsible (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) students prevailed over students' choices.

An alignment can be observed between the way student representatives are chosen in all schools, and the views of teachers and head teachers about the kind of citizen that schools should develop. The practices privileging personally-responsible students over justice-oriented students, socialise students to regard fighting for social justice as unacceptable and problematic. Such practices are, therefore, likely to develop conformist citizens who will be afraid to tread new paths (Freire, 1970b).

8.3.2 Student voice

The issue of student voice revealed how power dynamics was at play on the schools' landscape. Robinson and Taylor (2007) posit that student voice does not only include the spoken voice, but the many ways in which students express their feelings and views about any aspect of their school experience. In this case, student voice covers the spaces where students are 'invited' into, and the spaces which students 'claim' on their own (Porter, 2014). At Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools the study noted effort by school administration to hear student voice by 'inviting' students to present views through prefects (Porter, 2014). These practices allowed schools to get contributions from students and incorporate them in decision

making. However, Bragg (2007) cautions that student voice is not unmediated; it is rather guided, supervised, and facilitated through techniques that delimit what can be said. Similarly, the forums for student voice at Namikango national and Chifule district secondary schools were not unproblematic since teachers sanctioned what they perceived as acceptable views and ‘rebellious’ views respectively.

Each school had its own mechanism for mediating student voice. At Namikango national, teachers followed up on students who presented critical views and marked them as rebellious. This had the effect of silencing students for fear of retaliation from teachers (Fielding & Rudduck, 2002). At Chifule district, prefects sieved out critical views and presented only ‘acceptable’ views to teachers. This means that student voice was used as a control mechanism and not for democratic renewal (Robinson & Taylor, 2007). The result is that students learned to censor their views to ensure that only ‘acceptable’ views were spoken. This is an undesirable situation considering that when uniformity of voice is privileged over multiple voices, a culture of silence reigns since critical views are suppressed (Freire, 1985). From these experiences students learn that it is unacceptable to hold dissenting views and that critical voice is unwelcome to people holding power. An important relationship may also be drawn between the practices discussed above, on the one hand, and the views from the two schools about social studies which, it was indicated, were meant to develop personally responsible citizens, and participatory citizens, on the other. In this case, it may convincingly be argued that these practices were encouraging the development of citizens who cannot critically participate in affairs in communities and society. It should, however, be acknowledged that the outside class practices at Namikango national were a contrast to classroom practices at the school through which critical thinking and creativity were promoted. This contradiction between classroom

practices and outside class practices had potential to send subtle messages that critical thinking is a classroom endeavour meant to encourage students to pass examinations, and not a skill for life outside the class.

The experience at Nachiswe CDSS was different. There was no effort to hear student voice. *A culture of silence* (Freire, 1985) which was dominant in classrooms was also prevalent outside class. A hierarchy of power and authority was noted ranging from the head teacher, teachers, to prefects in which the prefects acted as ‘teacher assistants’ and helped in reducing democratic space for students. It was apparent that the school was domesticating students into conformist citizens (Freire, 1985). Such citizens cannot challenge the status quo since they will be afraid to tread new paths.

However, the study was still unable to validate the claim by the head teacher that social studies was responsible for indiscipline at the school. The unsubstantiated claim by the head teacher could be part of an outcry against democracy by some teachers as noted by Sakala (2009). In his study on compatibility of human rights and school discipline, Sakala found that there was resistance to following laid down discipline procedures, which followed human rights approaches, by some head teachers and teachers in some schools in Malawi. He added that there was a feeling that democracy and human rights undermined school discipline. Similarly writing in the context of South Africa, Harber and Mncube (2012) argue that there is always resistance to change at organisational, cultural, and individual levels. They assert that significant shifts in practices in schools and teachers rarely happen when mandated from above (Harber & Mncube, 2012).

Robinson and Taylor (2007) claim that when student voice is initiated by students themselves, it can lead to changes that can enhance students’ experiences. The study

noted that there was ‘democracy from below’ in which students made effort to have their views heard by school authorities (Turner, 1990). These were cases, for example, where the initiative was taken by students, who were not prefects, to make their voice heard as opposed to the invitation for views by teachers. In all case study schools, students followed formal procedures to channel their views through which class monitors, and form teachers were utilised on issues to do with teaching and learning, and prefects on other issues. As noted earlier, these channels were problematic because teachers were not authentic in listening to student voice and that some voices were marginalised (Bragg, 2007; Fielding & Rudduck, 2002).

When students felt the need to claim their rights, their agency varied from one school to another. In cases where students had complaints against subject teachers, and were not helped by the formal procedures, their reactions varied according to their orientations (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). At Namikango national, they took a *participatory* approach, where they continuously reminded the form teacher until he got fed up with them. Afterwards, the students also gave up on the issue. At Nachiswe CDSS, they took a *personally responsible* approach, where they kept waiting for a response from the form teacher although their problem was not resolved. At Chifule district, the students took a *justice-oriented* approach whereby they confronted the concerned teacher. The students at Chifule district were, however, punished for taking this unconventional approach to student voice. The study, therefore, argues that the existence of formal channels for student voice may not necessarily result in school improvements. The channels may be tokenistic (Arnstein, 1969) and may be used as further mechanisms of student control (Robinson & Taylor, 2007). The present study further noted cases of student activism such as student riots at Chifule district secondary school where students stood up to challenge authority when they felt justice

had been miscarried. The study argues that the increased cases of violence at Chifule district are in reaction to the school's mediation and control of student voice. The study, thus, agrees with the assertions of Ruitenberg (2010) that closing spaces for the expression of dissent opens up new battlefields in schools. If schools were open to diverse and critical views from students, cases of student violence would be minimised. This view finds support in the findings of Luhanga (2010) in a study on whether school discipline and human rights can go together in secondary schools in Malawi. In the study, students stated that school discipline could be enhanced if they were involved in decision making because some rules, which appear to infringe on their rights, could be repealed.

The confrontation taking place at Chifule district secondary school is, however, not surprising considering the polarity of views about social studies and types of citizens between the head teacher and social studies teacher who believe in personal responsibility, on the one hand, and students who believe in social justice, on the other. Further instances of students' cooperation by their own initiative were noted through students' contributions in sporting activities such as the *Headmaster's Trophy* (chapter 7). It may, therefore, be plausibly argued that students at Chifule district secondary school could make effective citizens for democracy because they did not shy away from taking action to ensure that justice is maintained. No cases of student activism were noted at Namikango national and Nachiswe CDSS. It is, however, difficult to explain what sets apart Chifule district secondary school from the two other schools. A possible explanation could be that the school did not have pressure from within and from outside to perform excellently in national examinations as was the case with Namikango national. It could also be that, it was not under direct cultural pressure from parents to develop well behaved and morally upright citizens

like Nachiswe CDSS was. Tension was, nevertheless, noted in that although students were justice-oriented at Chifule district, there were cases of power abuse whereby senior boys bullied form 1 students and some prefects used their positions of power to serve personal interests.

8.3.3 Student participation in school decisions

Related to the question of student voice is the participation of students in decision making in school affairs. It was established that students in all schools did not participate genuinely in decisions that affected them. Their participation was *tokenistic* (Arnstein, 1969), often limited to being informed about decisions that had already been made by adults. The only decision making platform that teachers shared with students was the bursary committee at Nachiswe CDSS and Chifule district secondary school. The study was, however, unable to determine how much influence the students had in the bursary committees considering the asymmetrical power relations in favour of teachers (Karlsson, 2002; Thornberg, 2010). In addition, the study considers bursary issues as peripheral compared to substantive issues of school governance. A similar finding was made by Karlsson (2002) in South Africa where it was noted that despite learner inclusion in School Governing Councils being mandatory, learner participation in schools decisions was limited to less substantive issues such as sports and fund-raising activities.

The study observed that all schools viewed students from a cultural standpoint. Furthermore, schools manifested a deficit view (Tabulawa, 1997) of students as immature and held them with suspicion thereby finding them unfit to take part in school decisions. Instead, schools involved parents and guardians, either directly e.g., at Namikango national and Nachiswe CDSS, or indirectly through the PTA executive,

e.g., at Chifule district, in arriving at school decisions. The decision making platform was, therefore, a privileged space reserved for adults. The study further noted that although schools involved parents and guardians, their participation was not genuine. This observation is similar to the findings by Rose (2003) concerning community participation in primary education in Malawi. Rose found that instead of being a sustained effort to enhance accountability, community participation was a once off activity and was extractive as it was aimed at mobilising resources from parents to meet specific needs.

The present study observed that participation by parents was also manipulative (Arnstein, 1969). Schools sought parental involvement to legitimise authoritarianism (Nachiswe CDSS), shield teachers from anticipated negative students' reaction to new rules (Chifule district), and to avoid student deception and ensure conformity to new rules (Namikango national). The study argues that centralised policy formulation and teacher recruitment by MoEST makes effective participation by parents and communities problematic. Centralisation causes dilemmas in schools regarding accountability and ownership (Porter, 2014; Rose, 2003). Participation of parents in the decision making space is at the 'invitation' of schools, hence the schools steer the agenda (Porter, 2014).

From the foregoing discussion, it can be noted that participation in school decisions even on matters that directly affect students is problematic. There is a cultural and professional privilege to decision making in all schools. As observed, because teachers have a deficit view of students (Tabulawa, 1997), they do not allow them to take part in decisions. Furthermore, as 'fountains of knowledge' on educational matters, teachers delimit how parents and guardians should be involved in school

decisions. Decision making in schools is, therefore, a fortified space for teachers and it is their privilege to decide who should be allowed in and what role she/he should play. This observation is in tandem with the findings of a study by Karlsson (2002) about School Governing Councils (SGC) in South Africa. South African schools are mandated by policy and law to establish SGCs to oversee the process of school democratisation. The policy requires stakeholder representation and participation, including parents and learners, in SGCs. Karlsson's study was aimed at exploring the effectiveness of the SGCs and one of the areas of focus was stakeholder participation during meetings. The study found that school principals and teachers dominated meetings due to their power positions related to education, access to information from government, being executors of decisions, and their influential positions within schools (Karlsson, 2002). Thus, the setup in the case study schools constitutes a setback for democratic citizenship because it denies students access to the spaces where they can practice decision making on issues that matter in their lives. From this, students may get concealed messages that decision making is a privilege of people in positions of power and that people can only contribute to their own welfare at the invitation of those in power.

The lack of democratisation of the decision making space can be situated within the centralised system of education. The centralisation of decision making, teacher recruitment, and teacher deployment at MoEST headquarters works against democratisation of education. Centralisation leaves schools with little space to make their own decisions. Furthermore, centralisation entails that schools are accountable to MoEST headquarters up the hierarchy, rather than to communities and students that they serve at the grassroots level. Where students and communities merely receive services and cannot hold service providers accountable, wrong lessons may be learned

for the education of democratic citizens. Such a system treats communities and students as beneficiaries and not as citizens (Porter, 2014). The practice socialises students into a culture which cannot scrutinise office bearers as long as communities receive some kind of service regardless of the standard. Furthermore, centralisation promotes a culture of secrecy since citizens may not have readily available information of the expected standards against which to hold service providers and office bearers accountable.

8.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the findings of the study and provided interpretations through the lenses of critical pedagogy as the underpinning theory. Giroux (2004) argues for the place of formal schooling as a site for raising critical consciousness where students learn how to read their world critically and participate in shaping and governing it. The chapter has, however, shown that even in schools where critical thinking and creativity are promoted there is no effort to reach critical pedagogy. No evidence was found where schools and teachers tried to make politics apparent in pedagogy. This could be a reflection of the pressure which schools face due to an overcrowded curriculum and standardised national examinations. Alternatively, this could be an indication of a tense and restrictive political landscape in the education system and schools which does not allow teachers and students the freedom to freely discuss controversial issues. The study has shown that the education of citizens for democracy in secondary schools in Malawi is problematic due to the contested nature of the educational terrain. It has been demonstrated that education for democratic citizenship is impeded by a lot of limiting factors both within the classroom, on the school terrain and at national level. Apart from these shared limiting factors, each school has its own culture which is privileged through pedagogy and outside class

practices. It can, therefore, be argued that each category of the case study schools is apparently socialising students to distinct citizenship roles; hence, each school may appear to be developing its own kind of citizens. The next chapter, which concludes the study, ties up this argument.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

9.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the main argument of the study, a statement of the study's originality as a contribution to knowledge, and conclusions that have been drawn from the study. Lastly, it presents the implications of the study that may be translated into action, policy interventions, or further research.

9.1 The main argument of the study

The main aim of the study was to explore if pedagogy and school practices in Malawian secondary schools promote the development of active citizens for a democratic country, in the context of a centralised education system, hierarchical arrangement of schools, standardized national examinations, and a cultural setting where children are expected to be submissive to elders. The study also examined if schools belonging to different categories are socializing students to similar experiences for one democratic country. The study was carried out in three public secondary schools, belonging to different categories, which were used as case studies. The main argument of the study is that Malawian secondary schools socialise students to different practices, experiences and cultures, which may result in developing distinct citizenship skills and dispositions, depending on the category to which a school belongs, hence each category of schools is apparently developing its own kind of citizens.

The study concludes that the three case study schools have different traditions and aims which have historical and cultural roots. Some of these aims and traditions are in tension with each other and they contradict the aims of education for democratic citizenship. Consequently, each school appears to socialise students to a distinct culture thereby seemingly developing its own kind of citizens. This argument is advanced on the premise of the evidence and interpretations drawn from the study which are summarised in this chapter. Using evidence from the study, it is arguable that Namikango national secondary school is apparently developing critical, participatory and individualistic citizens. The classroom practices considered alongside school culture encourage individualistic competition and rewards individual merit in every aspect of school life, and train students for a competitive, market-driven economy. The pervasiveness of the market is, however, lamentable because it narrows opportunities for developing non-market skills and dispositions (Galston, 2004). The present study asserts that the goal of Namikango national secondary school closely resembles the one set by the colonial government, whereby a few (national) secondary schools were meant to develop elites among the natives to take up leadership roles in the private and public sectors (Lamba, 2010; Mafela & Mgadla, 2000). By controlling access to education, the colonial government set apart a few natives from the rest of the subjects, to become elites. The national school has preserved its privileged and elite position among the first in the hierarchy of secondary schools in a supposedly democratic Malawi.

In contrast, based on the evidence gathered by the study, it is clear that Nachiswe CDSS is apparently developing conformist, personally responsible citizens. The school's aim is to develop citizens who are expected to uphold cultural values and conform to existing norms. Considering the hierarchical relations between children

and elders, and students and teachers in Malawi, the school is likely to be domesticating students into conformity to existing cultural practices. Conformist citizens are influential in conserving the status quo. It must be reiterated that personal responsibility may be good for community living, but is not sufficient for sustenance of critical and democratic citizenship. Considering the tensions between traditional cultural values and democratic principles, the students at Nachiswe CDSS may acquiesce to authoritarianism since they have been socialised into a *culture of silence* (Freire, 1985). The study, therefore, considers this outcome from Nachiswe CDSS problematic for sustenance of democracy. This scepticism also stems from the low quality of education offered at the school, which the study deems unjust. From a standpoint of critical pedagogy, the study advances the view that students at Nachiswe CDSS are marginalised.

On its part, Chifule district secondary school, through classroom and outside class practices, ostensibly socialises students into becoming some type of activist and justice- oriented citizens. This is most apparent in cases where students work together for common causes in sports, and in fighting perceived injustices. However, with limited opportunities for critical thinking and reflection in classroom practices, this fighting spirit at times turns into blind activism. The students are risk-takers and do not hesitate to tread in uncharted waters whenever they encounter a problematic situation. While this spirit is commendable for the sustenance of democracy, critical pedagogy requires *praxis* which is an interaction between theory, action and reflection (Breuing, 2011; Freire, 1985). Emancipatory action should be accompanied by critical reflection which, in the case of Chifule district secondary school, seems to be at times absent in the students. Blind activism is a danger for democracy because it can degenerate into lawlessness. Blind activism notwithstanding, the study maintains that

Chifule district secondary school holds the highest potential for developing citizens who can uphold and sustain democracy. The district school, therefore, offers lessons for democratic citizenship and a window of hope for democracy.

What is problematic, however, is the tension between students on the one hand, and teachers on the other. The teachers favour personally responsible citizens and consider justice orientations as problematic. This makes the school a contested landscape between forces of domestication by teachers, and forces of liberation by students. From this tension, the study posits that the justice-orientation on the part of the students is not a result of conscious planning, but rather a consequence of other influences coming into play on the school landscape. As teachers mediate student demands, and students try to demand justice from authorities, the dynamism on the school terrain leads to adjustments on both sides and results in the development of a negotiated, hybrid culture (Leighton, 2012). This dynamism is a positive democratic process considering that democracy is a diverse and contested process towards the ends of justice, prosperity and peace (Davies, 1999). Regarding academic achievement, most students at Chifule district secondary school attain MSCE but very few make it to national universities. Consequently, the graduates are likely to play a secondary role in the economy. This is a similar role that was envisaged after gaining independence and was promoted during the one party dictatorship era for district schools (i.e. provision of middle level manpower for industries and the public sector) (Lamba, 2010).

From a conceptual perspective and a systemic standpoint, the study views the practices and school culture at Chifule district secondary school as taking a social reconstructionist approach (Ross, 2004; Skilbeck, 1984) which is the approach advanced by the social studies syllabus (Ministry of Education, 1998). In contrast, the

study interprets the practices and school cultures at Namikango national secondary school and Nachiswe CDSS from a social reproduction perspective (Ross, 2004; Skilbeck, 1984). The study views the two schools as aimed at preserving the status quo but with school practices characterised by dissimilar levels of consciousness, and contradictions in their underlying purposes. To Namikango national secondary school, preserving the status quo entails maintaining its position of privilege as a high achieving school. Any challenge to the current status will, therefore, be problematic. Thus, all practices at the school are directed towards maintaining its competitive advantage, and it has MoEST as a powerful ally in achieving this goal. The policies and decisions centrally made at MoEST give the national school a competitive edge to maintain its position up the hierarchy. Actually, it may further be argued that MoEST has a stake in maintaining the existing hierarchy.

Freire (1985) posits that it is naïve to expect the dominant classes to develop a type of education that would enable the dominated to perceive social injustice critically. This argument is elaborated further later in this section. In contrast, the practices at Nachiswe CDSS are aimed at conserving the status quo at the micro, grassroots level since any changes and new developments are considered incursions on cultural and traditional values, hence problematic. Therefore, to develop culturally and personally responsible citizens effort is made by teachers, with the consent of parents, to keep out any invasive practices that may disturb the social fabric. This situation, as long as it lasts, is favourable for policy makers, and for this reason no serious attempts are made to invest in activities that can raise the critical consciousness and structural perception of students. Thus, the study agrees with the assertion by Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) that it is unlikely for the state to promote social justice education because this education can, in turn, be used to confront power and authority. With

these contradictions and tensions, the curriculum aim of developing participatory citizens for a democratic society is, therefore, more rhetoric than real. Because the three schools have different interests, any efforts at developing active citizens for democracy will be problematic. This is the reason why the present study argues that each case study school through its socialisation process is apparently developing a different breed of citizens.

The study locates the challenges faced in education for democratic citizenship at the national or systemic level, and to MoEST in particular. It situates the preservation of hegemonic relations at policy level for several reasons. As a departure point, the current setup benefits the elite whose children have access to quality education in national secondary schools. Goldthorpe (1997) asserts that the matching of educational opportunity to perceived natural ability creates meritocracy. Meritocracy works for liberal markets and not for a democratic society where social justice should prevail. Furthermore, meritocracy rewards children from advantaged social backgrounds since the elite are able to invest towards the education of their children. This investment enables them to claim a market share of the desirable employment existing on the market.

In addition, MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010) argue that through the system of education, government reproduces social inequality whereby children of the poor go to CDSSs, while children of the elite go to conventional (national and district) secondary schools. While acknowledging the contributions of writers on the relationship between high-stakes testing and democracy, Ydesen (2014) problematizes this relationship and questions whether it is an antagonistic or symbiotic one. Ydesen (2014) advances arguments put forward by proponents of high-stakes testing that testing supports democracy because standardised testing at

least gives every pupil the same and equal opportunity for success, as opposed to other evaluation types where teachers play the role of arbitrary gatekeepers. Ydesen further argues that standardised testing helps in the establishment of educational standards and transparency which are of benefit to democracy.

Another argument is that transparency and comparability of school results generated by testing provides an opportunity for parents to make informed decisions about the choice of schools. It can, however, be contended that the arguments of a symbiotic relationship focus on the end result of testing and ignore the processes leading to testing. In addition, these assertions may hold in a society where schools have comparable resources and parents have a choice of where to enrol their children as opposed to a system where schools belong to a hierarchy of categories into which students are selected following outcomes of examinations. Giroux and Schmidt (2004, p. 220) argue that “if students are going to be held to the same standards of learning, then there must be the means to ensure that all the students have access to the same conditions and resources needed for them to meet these standards.” In the case of Malawi, the allotment of more resources to conventional secondary schools while ignoring CDSSs works against the democratic principles of equality and social justice.

As alluded to earlier, when we consider that educational policies are made by the elite, it is also arguable that the policy makers have a stake in the preservation of the status quo. Thus, a change in the status quo will be problematic because it will translate into loss of power and privilege. To protect the national school as a site of prestige and the district school as a space of middle level privilege, a number of initiatives are undertaken. These include centralised funding which favours the conventional (national and district) schools and side-lines the CDSS; resource availability characterised by a hierarchy of resources with the national school having

the most facilities in terms of laboratories, workshops and classrooms while the CDSS has the least. This affects the curriculum offered in schools with the national school offering technical subjects which may open up better opportunities for employment for its graduates than the other schools down the hierarchy. In the same vein, the national school has staff with better qualifications than the district school, and the CDSS has staff with the least qualifications. Such qualitative inputs in favour of conventional schools and against the CDSS give the national and district schools a competitive edge.

9.2 Originality/ Contribution to knowledge

The present study makes claims to knowledge through a number of ways where originality has been manifested. The first is in the research design. It has to be appreciated that being a qualitative case study, the study is situated within a Malawian context. Several studies undertaken in education prior to this study concerned themselves with specific areas in either a single category or only two categories of secondary schools. No study has had a comprehensive focus on public secondary education (secondary schools across all three categories) as a site where democratic citizenship is practiced. This study, therefore, reduces an existing gap regarding the understanding of citizenship practices across the secondary school categories. Furthermore, being a multiple case study where the researcher spent considerable time at each school, using various methods of collecting data, the study provides insights into both classroom practices, and school cultures on their role in socialising students into existing and expected roles in society.

Secondly, the study has brought new evidence-based interpretation to the way secondary education is viewed in Malawi. Using critical pedagogy as a theoretical

lens, the study has problematized what has, up to this time, been taken for granted. It has brought to the fore the politics of secondary education in Malawi, revealing who is benefitting from the current hierarchical structure, and at whose expense; and why the goal of developing active, critical citizens for democracy is problematic and remains a rhetoric.

Lastly, the study adds Malawi's voice to the research and discussion about experiences of countries that embraced democracy after the fall of communism, and the use of education as a form of human engineering to change practices that have deep cultural and historical roots. The study notes that western ideologies imposed on countries in the global south may be adopted at the official level, but to get to the grassroots they have to be mediated by a hierarchy of gatekeepers whose interests, power and privilege may be challenged by the new ideologies. As a result, the interface between the existing and new ideologies creates hybrid ideologies which are culturally and politically negotiated. As observed in the literature review, there is a dearth of literature on the role of schools in citizenship socialisation of students in sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception of South Africa due to its unique history of conflict against apartheid. The present study, therefore, fills a gap in literature on the experiences of countries in sub-Saharan Africa on citizenship education by adding a voice from Malawi.

9.3 Implications of the study

The fields of education, citizenship, and democracy are broad areas which can be challenging to comprehend. Bringing the three fields together in the study of education for democratic citizenship creates extra challenges of focus against coverage. Studying education for democratic citizenship in secondary schools in

Malawi, therefore, presented me with difficult choices about what to include and what to leave out; and the approach to take in studying practices in schools. As a result, critiques about the design of the study, the approach taken, and interpretations made are expected and welcome. At the same time, it is worth accepting that the design of the study was robust and has raised pertinent issues which may raise awareness, and inspire others to action through change in practice, policy decisions or further research. These constitute the implications of the study. The present section, discusses pertinent issues which may lead to gaps requiring further research; contradictions which may require policy interventions; and tensions which may necessitate reconsideration of practices. This is done under two sub-headings, namely implications for further research, and implications for actions and recommendations.

9.3.1 Implications for further research

To get an in-depth understanding of practices taking place in schools which develop citizenship dispositions and skills in students, the study used a qualitative, multiple case study design. The strength of this design was that it allowed the researcher to use various methods over time to understand school practices. Consequently, only three schools belonging to different categories were studied. From the perspective of a qualitative study, it has to be acknowledged that the results cannot be readily generalised to other settings. Nonetheless, the results may be applicable to settings similar to the case study schools. Alternatively, the results may be used as pointers to practices taking place in schools similar to the case studies. Since case study research pays attention to the context (Yin, 2014), a deeper understanding of citizenship practices may be obtained by research designs which can include schools of different contexts to the ones studied here. Comparisons can be made between schools similar

to the ones studied here and others which may have a different context. One such area where further research can focus on could be comparative studies in citizenship practices between a CDSS in a rural area (like the one in this study) and another one in an urban area. Such a study may raise interesting issues considering that urban areas have more access to information, and there are significant differences in adult literacy rate between rural and urban areas (Government of Malawi, 2011). These differences may have implications regarding student involvement in class and outside class, and involvement of parents in school governance. Similarly, a comparative study of school practices between a district boarding secondary school (similar to the one in this study) and a district day secondary school (mostly found in urban areas) may also unearth interesting comparative findings.

As noted in chapter 1, section 1.1.2, the study targeted public secondary schools only. For practical reasons, private secondary schools were excluded although they enrol about 20% of secondary school students (Zeitlyn et al., 2015). A study of citizenship practices in private schools would, therefore, be worthwhile. The context of private secondary schools is different from public schools because, private schools do not get government funding hence they rely on student fees; the power to enrol students lies with individual schools; and may also be driven by profit motives. The profit motive may drive schools to teach for examinations in order to appear more effective, while the funding based on fees may entail students and parents having a voice and effective control in governance.

The study noted that although there were variations in teaching strategies and classroom practices in case study schools, no teacher practiced problem-posing education. In problem-posing education students discuss controversial issues in class

whereby teachers look for controversies in issues or problematize taken for granted state of affairs (Asimeng-Boahene, 2014). Literature indicates that teachers may shun teaching controversial issues because of lack of training on how to handle controversial issues, or due to a volatile/ hostile teaching environment (Hess, 2004). This study was unable to ascertain the reasons why teachers did not problematize issues in class. That notwithstanding, this finding is worth taking note of by teacher education institutions which train social studies teachers in Malawi. Furthermore, the teaching of controversial issues in schools could be taken up as an area for further research.

Relatedly, the findings on classroom practices in social studies could be considered as a departure point for further research on modes of social studies teacher education in various teacher education institutions in the country and get teachers' perceptions about how confident they feel their teacher education prepared them for practice in classrooms. The study noted with interest that the three teachers in the case study schools were products of different teacher education institutions. However, it maintained its focus on classroom and school practices and the context in which the teachers were working. It was considered that the issue of teacher education and its influence on practice could be an issue for further research.

The study has also observed that the task of developing democratic citizens by schools is problematic. There are a lot of competing interests, contradictions, and tensions making the school a contested terrain for citizenship education. It is stated that democratic citizenship is learned best by practice. Furthermore, democracy and citizenship are concepts that are contested and evolving. This poses challenges to countries which have adopted democratic governance in the recent past where

everyone, including teachers, is still learning the skills, attitudes, and practices of democratic citizenship. This study has brought to the fore three exciting experiences (case studies) of citizenship education. The report of these case studies can serve as a baseline for further action-oriented research where researchers can work with the schools in the process of democratisation. The reflections and experiences resulting from the action research may be useful to social studies teacher educators, not only in sharing the experiences to a wider audience, but may also inform practice in teacher education. Resources permitting, this is the future direction that this research intends to take.

9.3.2 Implications for actions and recommendations

The present study has established that there is a mismatch between curriculum aims, on the one hand, and practices in schools, on the other, regarding the development of understanding, skills, and dispositions for democratic citizenship. Practices in the classroom as a site for citizenship are constrained by a congested and prescriptive curriculum and the demands of standardised examinations which only assess students' knowledge and understanding. This lack of alignment between aims, methods, content, and assessment tilts the balance in favour of content acquisition, and against development of skills and dispositions (Brophy, n.d). Although the curriculum requires students to carry out project work (social action/ community action projects) to gain civic efficacy and cooperative skills and dispositions, schools lack time for such actions. Furthermore, because examinations assess students' knowledge and understanding only, schools do not see the motivation to teach beyond what is assessed. The study, therefore, recommends a harmonisation of curriculum aims, teaching strategies, and assessment procedures to include assessment of skills.

The study has established the existence of clear guidelines on human rights in schools regarding how to handle students' discipline issues. However, policy guidelines on school democratisation are lacking. This results in variation in practices between schools regarding the role of students in school governance, student voice, and contributions of parents and communities. If students are to be socialised into a culture of active democratic citizenship, the school should become an arena where democracy is not only taught, but is also practiced. This necessitates a recommendation that there should be clear guidelines on school democratisation, and that schools should be supported to ensure that teachers have the attitudes and capacity to work with students and communities/ parents in school governance. Furthermore, schools should open up to multiple voices from students and consider students as young citizens, and students should be enlightened on various legitimate avenues for expressing dissent without resorting to violence (Ettang, 2014). In this case, schools should be willing to listen to student voice without holding up students to what they say (Leighton, 2012).

The study has, furthermore, established tension between traditional cultural practices and democratic citizenship principles. Teachers, as adults and 'fountains of knowledge', enjoy a position of power and cultural privilege in the school. As such they mediate changes that take place on the school terrain, and are particularly cautious of changes that may challenge or erode their power. For this reason, teachers play a gatekeeping role for democracy in schools, and ensure that school democratisation is stripped off its perceived problematic elements. This creates thin and passive versions of citizenship in schools. This observation is, however, not surprising considering that most educators were trained within traditional, authoritarian pedagogics and power relations (Hammett & Staeheli, 2011). The study,

therefore, recommends that MoEST should regularly conduct in-service training on school democratisation for teachers and head teachers to ensure that schools are well prepared and open up for democracy.

To make school democratisation meaningful, the study recommends devolution of powers and decentralisation of some decisions from MoEST to schools. Schools should be given powers to make decisions and take action on some avenues. For example, schools should be given powers to recruit teachers depending on existing needs and established vacancies. This will be a worthwhile effort towards improving school efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. Additionally, in consultation with parents, schools should be given the power to adjust school fees to ensure that they raise funds to offer comparably effective education. This action will elevate education standards especially in CDSSs where the only sources of revenue are school fees.

9.4 Concluding reflections

The present study has revealed a clearly articulated disparity between the aims of social studies advanced in the curriculum on the one hand and school practices, on the other, making education for democratic citizenship appear a mere rhetoric than reality. This disparity can be attributed to several factors, the main one being the tension between democratic principles and cultural factors. The study acknowledges that education is not value-free and that school practices are influenced by the wider culture. As a result, caution should be exercised when borrowing practices that have worked in one cultural setting into a different setting. This caution, however, raises questions about the standards of democratic citizenship against which countries are evaluated. It has been noted that democratic principles against which many countries are evaluated are Western-centric and hence at variance with African traditional

culture. When one considers that democratisation of sub-Saharan Africa was a Western imposition, particularly a condition for receipt of aid, many questions can be raised about ownership of citizenship education initiatives.

The present study affirms that significant shifts in practices in schools and teachers rarely happen when mandated from above. For the reason that democracy puts authority and privileges of power holders at stake, there is always resistance at various levels. As a result, power holders at cultural and school levels collaborate to protect traditions which have historical roots. Only narrow and thin versions of democracy are allowed to filter into the school. The absence of deliberate initiatives, beyond the curriculum goals, on school democratisation may, therefore, not be unintentional.

The study, nevertheless, understands that democracy and citizenship are concepts that are contested and still evolving. Education for democratic citizenship is, therefore, an unfinished business. The presence of the social studies curriculum with its aims for developing an active and participatory citizenry, and the contestation that takes place in schools between students and teachers are viewed as windows of opportunity. The negotiations taking place in the case study schools, and the apparent developing of different kind of citizens by each school should be viewed as a gradual process through which each case study school is adapting to the ‘incursions’ of democracy on its landscape. With time and continuous contestation, it is hoped that each school will progress on a journey towards the aims of social justice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Permission Letter to MoEST



To: The Secretary for Education, Science and Technology
Private Bag 328
Capital City
Lilongwe 3
Malawi
(Attention: Director of Secondary Education)

From: Peter N.W. Namphande
C/O Chancellor College,
University of Malawi
P.O. Box 280
Zomba, Malawi

Date: 23rd June, 2014

Dear Sir/ Madam,

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

My name is Peter Ngwinjo William Namphande. I am a doctoral student on a joint programme with the University of Ulster (United Kingdom) and the University of Malawi (Malawi). I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements for my doctoral degree in Education. The title of my research is: *Pedagogy, school practices and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawi secondary schools*.

The aim of the study is to explore how school cultures and classroom practices in secondary schools are promoting the development of active citizens for a democratic society in Malawi.

This is a qualitative study that follows a multiple case study approach. Three public co-education secondary schools in the following categories will participate in the study: a national secondary school, a district/ conventional secondary school, and a community day secondary school. At each school, I

will carry out interviews with the head teacher, social studies teachers, and form 3 students. I will also conduct a focus group discussion with students; observe social studies lessons and extra-curricular activities; and review school/ teaching documents. The data collection is expected to take place in the first term of the 2014/2015 academic year, most likely from September to December, 2014. I will also interview key informants from the Ministry of Education headquarters and Malawi Institute of Education.

I hereby seek your permission to approach the institutions indicated above to provide participants for this study.

The proposal for the study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Ulster Research Ethics committee to ensure that all research ethical procedures have been followed. Furthermore, the research governance regulations require that participants of this study be protected in terms of keeping their identities anonymous and their information confidential.

It is expected that the Ministry of Education will benefit from the study through the findings and recommendations which will provide feedback on how effective the school system is in educating citizens for a democratic society. The challenges that teachers and schools encounter in developing active citizens for a plural society will also be discussed. This information will enable the Ministry to develop policies that will support further the work of teachers and schools in developing active citizens for a democratic and plural society.

If you require more information, you can contact my supervisors using the contact details provided: Professor Linda Clarke, University of Ulster, Cromore Road, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, BT52 1SA, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, e-mail: lm.clarke@ulster.ac.uk or Dr Samson MacJessie- Mbewe, University of Malawi, Chancellor College, P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi. E-mail: smacjessie-mbewe@cc.ac.mw

I am looking forward to your favourable consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Peter N.W. Namphande

Research student (University of Ulster/ University of Malawi)

p.namphande@ulster.ac.uk or pnamphande@cc.ac.mw

Phone: +265 (0) 1 524 222

APPENDIX 2: School Information sheet

Please supply the required information by filling in the spaces. This information is for research purposes only.

Name of School: -----

Type of school: -----

Proprietor of school: -----

Year established: -----

School motto (If applicable):-----

Size of school (Tick in the appropriate box below):

Single stream		Double stream		Triple stream	
---------------	--	---------------	--	---------------	--

Students' enrolment:

Form	Boys	Girls	Total
1			
2			
3			
4			
Totals			

Teaching staff: (Please fill in the information in the table below. Do not write names of teachers).

Number of teachers by sex:

Males	
Females	
Total	

Number of teachers by qualifications:

Qualification	Number of teachers
Master's degree	
Bachelor's degree	
Diploma teachers	
MSCE plus T2 teachers	
Others (Specify): _____	

MSCE RESULTS: (Please indicate the pass percentage at MSCE for the past three years, the percentage of students who were eligible to seat for public university entrance examinations, and the percentage of students who were selected into public universities)

Year	Pass (%)	Eligible for university entrance (%)	Selected into public universities (%) (If applicable)
2014			
2013			
2012			

Note: Public universities include constituent colleges of the University of Malawi (UNIMA); Lilongwe University of Natural Resources (LUANAR); Mzuzu University (MZUNI); and Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST).

SPECIALISED ROOMS (Please write in the corresponding boxes below how many of the following specialised rooms are available in the school. Any further information/ comments can be written on the space provided below the table):

Science Laboratories		Libraries		Computer Laboratories		Technical workshops		School hall	
----------------------	--	-----------	--	-----------------------	--	---------------------	--	-------------	--

Comment: _____

SOURCES OF FUNDING (Please indicate the school's sources of finances/ funds as specified below):

- i. **Main source of funding** _____
- ii. **Secondary source of funding** _____
- iii. **Tertiary source of funding** _____

APPENDIX 3A- Key Informant's Information Letter



23rd June, 2014

Pedagogy, school practices and the promotion of active citizenship in Malawi secondary schools

My name is Peter N. W. Namphande. I am studying for a joint doctoral degree with the University of Ulster (United Kingdom) and the University of Malawi (Malawi). My supervisors are Professor Linda Clarke (University of Ulster) and Associate Professor Samson MacJessie- Mbewe (University of Malawi). I am inviting you to take part in my research study. Before you decide, it is important to understand what the research is for and what you will be asked to do. Please read the information and do not hesitate to ask any questions about anything that might not be clear to you. Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.

The aim of the study is to explore if school cultures and classroom practices in secondary schools are promoting the development of active citizens for a democratic society in Malawi. According to the Malawi Junior Secondary school syllabus, the rationale for Social Studies is “to provide students with skills, which will enable them to actively participate as citizens of a democracy”. This study therefore, is set out to explore the classroom practices in Social Studies lessons and out of class experiences in schools and ascertain if they encourage the development of active citizens for democratic citizenship.

You are being asked to participate because your organization is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of school curricular in Malawi. This research will require about 45 minutes of your time. During this time, you will be interviewed about the philosophy behind social studies/ citizenship education, aims of the subject, classroom practices and out of school experiences in secondary schools. The interview will be conducted at a place convenient to you, for example your office. Please find attached to this letter an outline of questions to give you an overview of the issues to be discussed during the interview. I hope this guide will also help you in preparing for the interview.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will keep this information sheet. You will also be asked to sign a consent form. If you choose to take part, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason.

There are no identified risks in taking part in this research. There are no costs to you for taking part in this study nor are there any financial benefits to you for taking part.

Information from this research will be used only for the purpose of the study and any reports/ publications that may result from this it.

The interviews will be tape recorded, but the tapes will be destroyed immediately after they have been typed up. The typed interviews will be safely kept in a locker at the University of Ulster, and only I and the research supervisors will have access to them. After ten years all the information will be destroyed.

The study has been reviewed by the University of Ulster Research Ethics committee to ensure that all research ethical procedures have been followed.

If you require more information regarding the study, you can contact my supervisors using the following contact details: Professor Linda Clarke, University of Ulster, Cromore Road, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, BT52 1SA, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, e-mail: lm.clarke@ulster.ac.uk or Dr

Samson MacJessie- Mbewe, University of Malawi, Chancellor College, P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi. E-mail: smacjessie-mbewe@cc.ac.mw

Peter N.W. Namphande

Research student

University of Ulster/ University of Malawi

p.namphande@ulster.ac.uk or pnamphande@cc.ac.mw

Phone: +265 (0) 1 524 222

APPENDIX 3B- Head Teacher's Information Letter



23rd June, 2014

Pedagogy, school practices and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawi secondary schools

My name is Peter N.W. Namphande. I am studying for a joint doctoral degree with the University of Ulster (United Kingdom) and the University of Malawi (Malawi). My supervisors are Professor Linda Clarke (University of Ulster) and Associate Professor Samson MacJessie- Mbewe (University of Malawi). I am inviting you to take part in my research study. Before you decide whether to take part or not, it is important that you understand what the research is for and what you will be asked to do. Please read the information and if you have any questions, feel free to ask me. Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.

The aim of the study is to explore if school cultures and classroom practices in secondary schools are promoting the development of active citizens for a democratic society in Malawi. According to the Malawi Junior Secondary school syllabus, the rationale for Social Studies is “to provide students with skills, which will enable them to actively participate as citizens of a democracy”. This study therefore, is set out to explore the classroom practices in Social Studies lessons and out of class experiences in schools and ascertain if they encourage the development of active citizens for democratic citizenship.

Three public co-education schools will participate in the study as case study schools: these are a national secondary school, a district secondary school, and a community day secondary school. At each school, the following people will contribute to various aspects: the Head teacher, the Form 3 Social Studies teacher, and Form 3 students. Your school was chosen because it is in a very good position to provide adequate data for the study being a co-education secondary school which offers Social Studies. You are being asked to participate because you are the Head teacher of this school. This research will require 45 minutes of your time. During this time, you will be interviewed about classroom practices and out of class experiences offered to students. The interview will take place within the school premises.

Participation in the study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign a consent form. If you choose to take part, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason.

There are no identified risks in taking part in this research. There are no costs to you for taking part nor are there any financial benefits to you for taking part in the study.

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and identity. Your name and the name of the school will not be mentioned anywhere. While the interviews will be tape recorded, the tapes will be destroyed immediately after they have been typed up. The typed interviews will be safely kept in a locker at the University of Ulster, and only I and the research supervisors will have access to them. After ten years all the information will be destroyed.

Information from the research will be used only for the purpose of this study and any reports/publications that may result from it.

The study has been reviewed by the University of Ulster Research Ethics committee to ensure that all research ethical procedures have been followed.

If you require more information, you can contact my supervisors using the following contact details:
Professor Linda Clarke, University of Ulster, Cromore Road, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, BT52 1SA,
Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, e-mail: lm.clarke@ulster.ac.uk or Dr Samson MacJessie- Mbewe,
University of Malawi, Chancellor College, P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi. E-mail: smacjessie-mbewe@cc.ac.mw

Peter N.W. Namphande

Research student

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Phone: +265 (0) 1 524 222

APPENDIX 3C- Social studies teacher's Information Letter



23rd June, 2014

Pedagogy, school practices and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawi secondary schools

My name is Peter N.W. Namphande. I am studying for a joint doctoral degree with the University of Ulster (United Kingdom) and the University of Malawi (Malawi). My supervisors are Professor Linda Clarke (University of Ulster) and Associate Professor Samson MacJessie-Mbewe (University of Malawi). I am inviting you to take part in my research study. Before you decide whether to take part or not, it is important that you understand what the research is for and what you will be asked to do. Please read the information and if you have any questions, feel free to ask me. Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.

The aim of the study is to explore if school cultures and classroom practices in secondary schools are promoting the development of active citizens for a democratic society in Malawi. According to the Malawi Junior Secondary school syllabus, the rationale for Social Studies is “to provide students with skills, which will enable them to actively participate as citizens of a democracy”. This study therefore, is set out to explore the classroom practices in Social Studies lessons and out of class experiences in schools and ascertain if they encourage the development of active citizens for democratic citizenship.

Three public co-education schools will participate in the study as case study schools: these are a national secondary school, a district secondary school, and a community day secondary school. At each school, the following people will contribute to various aspects: the Head teacher, the Form 3 Social Studies teacher, and Form 3 students. Your school was chosen because it is in a very good position to provide adequate data for the study being a co-education secondary school which offers Social Studies. You are being asked to participate because you are the Form 3 Social Studies teacher at this school. During this time, you will be interviewed about classroom practices and out of class experiences offered to students. This will take place at your school. This will require 45 minutes of your time. I will also observe at least 6 Social Studies lessons in a Form 3 class. These will be single period lessons of 40 minute duration.

Participation in the study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign a consent form. If you choose to take part, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason.

There are no identified risks in taking part in this research. There are no costs to you for taking part nor are there any financial benefits to you for taking part in the study.

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and identity. Your name and the name of the school will not be mentioned anywhere. While the interviews will be tape recorded, the tapes will be destroyed immediately after they have been typed up. The typed interviews will be safely kept in a locker at the University of Ulster, and only I and the research supervisors will have access to them. After ten years all the information will be destroyed.

Information from the research will be used only for the purpose of this study and any reports/publications that may result from it.

The study has been reviewed by the University of Ulster Research Ethics committee to ensure that all research ethical procedures have been followed.

If you require more information, you can contact my supervisors using the following contact details: Professor Linda Clarke, University of Ulster, Cromore Road, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, BT52 1SA, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, e-mail: lm.clarke@ulster.ac.uk or Dr Samson MacJessie- Mbewe, University of Malawi, Chancellor College, P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi. E-mail: smacjessie-mbewe@cc.ac.mw

Peter N.W. Namphande

Research student

University of Ulster/ University of Malawi

p.namphande@ulster.ac.uk or pnamphande@cc.ac.mw

Phone: +265 (0) 1 524 222

APPENDIX 3D- Student's Information Letter



23rd June, 2014

Pedagogy, school practices and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawian secondary schools

My name is Peter N.W. Namphande. I am studying for a doctoral degree at the University of Ulster (United Kingdom) and the University of Malawi (Malawi). I am inviting you to take part in my research study. Before you decide, it is important to understand what the research is for and what you will be asked to do. Please read the information and if you have any questions, feel free to ask. Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.

The aim of the study is to explore if school cultures and classroom practices in three case study schools are promoting the development of active citizens for a democratic society in Malawi. The study involves three public/ government schools which enroll both boys and girls. You are being asked to participate because you are one of the Form 3 students who have been at this school starting from Form 1. You will be interviewed in a students' focus group about activities that take place in your Social Studies classroom and other activities that take place outside the class. This discussion will take place within the school premises and will take about 45 minutes.

Your participation is voluntary. You can decide to take part or not. If you decide to take part, you will keep this information sheet. You will also be asked to sign a form to show that they have understood and have accepted. You can change your mind to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. When you wish to withdraw, you will simply write a note that you no longer wish to continue in the study, address it to me (Mr P. Namphande), and leave it at the reception. There will be no consequences following your withdrawal from the study.

Your name and the name of your school will not be written anywhere. This will make sure that nobody else will know that the information you give us has come from you. The information will be used only for the study and the reports/ publications that will come from it. Nothing harmful will happen to you for taking part in the research. You will not pay anything and you will also not receive any money for taking part in the study. For more information, you can contact my supervisors: Professor Linda Clarke, University of Ulster, Cromore Road, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, BT52 1SA, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, e-mail: lm.clarke@ulster.ac.uk or Dr Samson MacJessie- Mbewe, University of Malawi, Chancellor College, P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi. E-mail: smacjessie-mbewe@cc.ac.mw

Peter N.W. Namphande

University of Ulster/ University of Malawi

p.namphande@ulster.ac.uk or pnamphande@cc.ac.mw ; (Phone: +265 (0) 1 524 222)

APPENDIX 4A- General consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Project title: Pedagogy, school practices and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawian secondary schools

Name of Chief Investigator: Professor Linda Clarke

Please initial

- I confirm that I have been given and have read and have understood [] the information sheet for the above study and have asked and received answers to any questions raised
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to [] withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without my rights being affected in anyway
- I understand that the researchers will hold all information and data [] collected securely and in confidence and that all efforts will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified as a participant in the study (except as might be required by law) and I give permission for the researchers to hold relevant personal data
- I agree to take part in the above study []

Name of subject

Signature

Date

Name of person taking consent

Signature

Date

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

APPENDIX 4B- Head teacher's Consent Form for Students



CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS *(To be signed by the Head teacher)*

Project title: Pedagogy, school practices and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawian secondary schools

Name of Chief Investigator: Professor Linda Clarke

I (Name) (Designation) of (Name of school) having been given and read and understood the information sheet for the above named study and have asked and received answers to any questions raised give consent for (Name of student) (Class) to take part in the study.

This consent is given on the understanding that:

- Her/ his participation is voluntary and that she/ he is free to withdraw at anytime without giving a reason and without her/ his rights being affected in anyway
- The researchers will hold all information and data collected securely and in confidence and that all efforts will be made to ensure that she/ he cannot be identified as a participant in the study (except as might be required by law) and she/ he gives permission for the researchers to hold relevant personal data
- He agrees to take part in the above study

Any questions regarding this consent can be directed to me on the following contact information:

..... (Full Name)

.....

Name of Head teacher/ teacher

Signature

Date

Name of person taking consent

Signature

Date

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

APPENDIX 5- Student's Assent Form



ASSENT FORM

Project title: Pedagogy, school practices and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawian secondary schools

Name of Chief Investigator: Professor Linda Clarke

I..... (Name) ofSecondary school in..... (Class) confirm that I have been given, have read and have understood the information sheet for the above study and that I have asked and received answers to any questions raised.

I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without my rights being affected in anyway.

I further understand that the researchers will hold all information and data collected securely and in confidence, and that all efforts will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified as a participant in the study (except as might be required by law), and I give permission for the researchers to hold relevant personal data.

I agree to take part in the above study.

_____	_____	_____
<i>Name of student</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
_____	_____	_____
<i>Name of person taking assent</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
_____	_____	_____
<i>Name of researcher</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>

APPENDIX 6- Lesson observation schedule

School: Class: Date: Time:

Area of Focus	Rating scale	Explanation of behaviour to justify the rating	Comments
To what extent are active teaching/ learning strategies employed? - Most students actively involved in the lesson - Some students actively involved in the lesson - Few students actively involved in the lesson - No students actively involved in the lesson	4 3 2 1		
To what extent are classroom interactions promoted (Between teacher & students; Among students)? - Interaction among students highly promoted - Some interaction among students and between teacher & students - Interaction limited to teacher and a few students - No opportunities for classroom interaction created	4 3 2 1		
To what extent are students productively engaged in the lesson? - Students' engagement highly promotes learning - Students' engagement promotes some learning - Students' engagement promotes very little learning - Students' engagement done as a matter of class routine	4 3 2 1		
To what extent are critical thinking skills promoted in students? - Most questions/ tasks encourage students' thinking & creativity - Some questions/ tasks encourage students' thinking & creativity - Few questions/ tasks require students' thinking & creativity - All questions/ tasks encourage rote learning in students	4 3 2 1		
To what extent are views and opinions of others respected in the class? Students' views & opinions are well respected by			

<i>teacher & other students</i> - Teacher respects views & opinions of students & encourages class to show respect - Students respect others' views & opinions but teacher does not demonstrate respect. - No respect for views & opinions of others by teacher & students	4 3 2 1		
To what extent is the class atmosphere free? - Free & relaxed classroom atmosphere - Free classroom atmosphere - Tense classroom atmosphere - Autocratic classroom atmosphere	4 3 2 1		
To what extent are authentic examples/ experiences utilized to enhance learning? - Authentic experiences highly used to promote learning - Some authentic experiences utilized to promote learning - Limited use of authentic experiences to promote learning - Authentic experiences not utilized to promote learning	4 3 2 1		
Checklist of interactive pedagogical activities (Tick in the corresponding)			
Group work		Futures' wheel	
Debate		Presentations	
Role play		Reporting	
Pair work		Discussion	
			Others - specify

General observations

.....

.....

.....

.....

Note: Rating scale of 4 to 1. 4 for Most Positive attribute and 1 for Absence of attribute or the Least attribute

APPENDIX 7A- Interview Guide for Key Informants

Ministry of Education and Malawi Institute of Education officials

Bio data

Name/Code		Position		Sex	M/F
-----------	--	----------	--	-----	-----

When did government decide to introduce Social studies/ Citizenship education in the secondary school curriculum?

What prompted the Government/ Ministry of Education to introduce Social Studies in the secondary school curriculum? *(Did Cooperating partners/ donors play a role in introduction of the subject? If they did, what role did they play?)*

What lessons were learned from other systems/ democracies that influenced the Malawi curriculum? *(Were there adaptations, or they were wholesale imports?)*

What are the aims of social studies/ Citizenship education in the secondary school curriculum?

What kind of citizen do we want the school to develop? *(What qualities or characteristics do we want the student citizen to have?)*

To develop this 'Good citizen' what roles are teachers and schools expected to play?

What preparations took place in schools prior to the introduction of social studies/ citizenship education? *(How were teachers prepared to handle social studies as citizenship education?)*

How are students assessed on the acquisition of social studies/ citizenship education skills?

What teaching/ learning materials are available in schools to help teachers teach social studies well? *(Is there a variety of materials; How do schools acquire these materials; how is their authenticity ascertained?)*

Apart from the classroom teaching, what actions are schools expected to undertake to ensure that the aims of Social Studies/ Citizenship education are met? *(How well are these actions done in schools?)*

What factors influence the teaching of Social Studies/ Citizenship education in secondary schools?

In your view, is the teaching of Social Studies/ Citizenship education the same in all categories of public secondary schools? *(National, District, and Community Day secondary schools); (If there are differences, what is the cause of the differences? If there are differences what implications does this have on the aims of Social Studies/ Citizenship education?)*

What opportunities exist in schools for students to practice democracy?

What roles are parents and communities expected to play in the running of affairs in schools?

Thank you so much for taking the time to grant me the interview

APPENDIX 7B- Interview guide for Head teachers

Bio data

Name/ Code		School		Sex	M/F
------------	--	--------	--	-----	-----

In which academic year did your school start offering Social Studies?

How many classes do you have in Form 3 and how many of these are Social studies classes?

Is it compulsory for all students to study Social studies or the students have a choice? *Why?*

In your view, why was social studies introduced in the secondary school curriculum?

In your view, what activities should be done to ensure that the rationale for offering Social studies is realized?

What does the school do to ensure that the aims of social studies are realized?

What opportunities do students have to practice '*living a democratic life*' within the school setting?

How are students involved in the running of affairs in the school? (*Why is student involvement in the running of affairs in the school like this?*)

What opportunities exist in the school for students to voice their concerns/ issues to school management?

Is there a difference in the nature of teaching between Social studies and the other subjects taught? *How?*

Have you seen any immediate benefits on the part of your students as a result of studying Social studies?

What challenges, if any have you encountered from the students as a result of studying Social Studies?

Did the introduction of democracy in Malawi and citizenship education in school result in any changes in the running of school affairs? *How?*

What roles do parents and community members play in the affairs of the school?

Thanks so much for your time and your views

APPENDIX 7C- Interview guide for Social Studies teachers

Bio data

Name/ Code		School	
Professional Qualification		Sex	M/F

When did you join the teaching profession?

For how long have you been teaching Social Studies?

What preparation/ education/ training did you get as a social studies teacher? *(Was this adequate to enable you handle the subject in a satisfactory manner? Was the preparation relevant to your work? What more could be done? Whose responsibility is it to provide more assistance?)*

What are the aims of teaching Social Studies/ citizenship education?

What do you do as a Social Studies teacher to ensure that the aims of Social studies are achieved?

What does the school do to ensure that the aims of social studies are achieved?

From your experience of teaching social studies, what qualities of a citizen do you think the country wants the schools to develop? *(Why do you think so? Is the school doing enough to develop this kind of citizens? What more can be done?)*

What teaching/ learning materials do you use for social studies/ citizenship education? *(Where do you get these materials? How relevant do you find them to be?)*

How do you assess if students have developed the skills for citizenship/ social studies?

Is there a difference in the teaching approach between Social Studies and other subjects? *Explain please.*

What teaching methods/ strategies prevail in most Social Studies lessons? *(Why are these methods/ strategies prevalent?)*

What challenges do you encounter in teaching social studies?

What factors influence your teaching of social studies/ citizenship education?

In your view, do you think the students are benefitting from learning Social Studies? *How?*

Have you or the school as a whole met challenges from the students as a result of learning Social studies? *If yes, please explain*

How do the students put into practice the concepts they learn in Social Studies?

How are the students involved in the running of affairs in the school? *(Why is their level of involvement in school affairs like that?)*

What opportunities are available in the school to allow the students to practice decision making?

What opportunities are available in the school to allow students to practice living democratic lifestyles?

What roles do community members and parents play in the affairs of the school?

Thanks so much for your time and your responses.

APPENDIX 7D- Moderator's guide for Form 3 Students FGD

Bio data

Name of school		School category	
----------------	--	-----------------	--

Name/ Code	Class	Sex	Name/ Code	Class	Sex
	F3	M / F		F3	M / F
	F3	M / F		F3	M / F
	F3	M / F		F3	M / F
	F3	M / F		F3	M / F

Welcome.

Welcome and thank you for accepting to take part in this focus group. Each one of you has been selected to participate because your point of view is important to the study. I know that you are busy and I greatly appreciate your contribution to the study. This discussion is not a test, as a result there will be no strict right or wrong answers. I am very much interested in what you think and how you feel. The aim is to get your opinions and it does not mean that you always agree to the opinions and views of others. Still if you agree with others' views, it will be good to say it.

Overview of the topic

The purpose of the discussion is to find out how democracy is practiced in the school. This covers what happens in social studies classes and also what happens every day outside the class. The aim is to understand how you as students are developing the skills of becoming citizens of a democratic country.

I will be recording our discussion because I do not want to miss any information. Names will not be included in any reports and the information from this discussion will be kept confidential.

Warm up task

I think it will be good that we remind each other of our names, where we come from and what hobbies we have. I am Peter Namphande, I stay in Zomba. I like watching soccer and I support Liverpool FC. I am also a student and this research is part of my studies.

Any questions?

Questions for discussion

How many periods of Social Studies do you have in a week?

What do you think are the aims of Social Studies? / Why do you think Social Studies is taught?

From your experiences of learning social studies, what type of citizens do you think the country wants you to become? (Why do you think so?)

What do you mostly do in class during Social Studies lessons? Describe please

How have you benefitted from studying Social Studies?

Have you met any problems as a result of studying Social studies?

Apart from studying in class, what else do you do in relation to Social Studies outside the class? / Have you ever tried to put into practice the concepts/ knowledge/ skills that you have learned in Social Studies? *How?*

How are students involved in the running of affairs in the school?

What opportunities do students have to practice democracy in the school (both in class and outside class)?

What do students do when they have issues to bring to the attention of the school management/ administration?
(*What has been the outcome of such efforts? What has been the response from school administration?*)

What extra- curricular activities take place in the school? *If there are any extra- curricular activities how are they organized? What benefits do you get from your involvement in the activities?*

What roles do parents and community members play in the affairs of the school?

Conclusion

As we come to the end of the discussion, let me remind all of you that what has been discussed in this focus group will be kept confidential. I should also ask each one of you to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of every member of the group by not discussing the comments that have come up during the discussion. This should remain strictly anonymous and confidential. Are there any questions?

Lastly, I would like to thank each one of you and all of you for sparing your time to take part in this FGD. I very much value your opinions and views and also appreciate your involvement.

Zikomo kwambiri

APPENDIX 8- Test specification grid

Question No: ----- Year: -----

Examination items	Level of difficulty of item (Bloom's taxonomy)					
	Knowledge	Comprehension	Analysis	Application	Synthesis	Evaluation

Comments: _____

APPENDIX 9- Observational protocol

School/ Code		Date	
Activity		Time	

<i>Length of Activity:</i>	
<i>Descriptive Notes</i>	<i>Reflective Notes</i>

Source: Creswell, (2013, p. 169- 170)

APPENDIX 10: Analysis of past examination papers- Social studies paper II

Question No.	Levels of difficulty of question items (Bloom's taxonomy) and years																	
	Knowledge			Comprehension			Analysis			Application			Synthesis			Evaluation		
	2014	2012	2009	2014	2012	2009	2014	2012	2009	2014	2012	2009	2014	2012	2009	2014	2012	2009
1				✓	✓	✓												
(a)	✓				✓	✓												
(b)					✓	✓												
(c)				✓	✓	✓												
(d)				✓	✓	✓												
2	✓				✓	✓												
(a)					✓	✓												
(i)				✓	✓	✓												
(ii)				✓	✓	✓												
(b)				✓	✓	✓												
(c)		✓	✓	✓														
(d)		NA	✓		NA			NA			NA			NA			NA	
3				✓		✓		✓										
(a)																		
(i)			NA	✓		NA		✓	NA			NA			NA			NA
(ii)				✓	✓	✓												
(b)				✓	✓	✓												
(c)	✓				✓	✓												
(d)				✓	✓	✓												
4				✓							✓	✓						
5										✓	✓	✓						
6						✓				✓	✓							

Note: The paper has two sections, section A and section B. Section A has three questions 1 to 3 and has a total of 60 marks. These are structured and students answer all the questions. Section B has three questions, and students answer any two. These are essay questions and carry 20 marks each. This section therefore has 40 marks. Paper II has a total of 100 marks.

APPENDIX 11: Sample Page of the Senior Syllabus

Appendix 11: Sample Page of the Senior Syllabus

Theme	Topic	Objectives	Content	Suggested teaching/learning activities/experiences	Suggested teaching/learning resources	Suggested mode of assessment
7 Conflict Resolution	Refugee Crisis in Africa and the World	1 Identify areas of refugee concentration in the World	• Areas of refugee concentration in the World	• locating areas of refugee concentration on the world map	• world map/globe • students' experiences • atlases	• map work • short answer questions
		2 describe the impact of refugees in the world	• Impact of refugees: - pressure on resources on recipient countries - environmental degradation - trafficking of drugs and live arms	• collecting pictures showing the impact • brainstorming on impact of the refugees • dramatizing on the impact of refugees • producing graphs from refugee data • debating on the impact of refugees • analysing the collected data on impact of refugees	• students' experiences • radio/TV • newspapers • books • refugee data • atlas/globe • world map	• map work • short answer questions • written tests • written reports • graph work
		3 identify the conventions for the protection of special groups	• Conventions for the protection of special groups - prisoners and prisoners of war - refugees and stateless persons	• discussing the conventions	• books • TV/Radio • students' experiences	• short essay
		4 explain the challenges faced in the implementation of the conventions	• Challenges - violation of regulations - corruption	• researching on the challenges • interviewing • locating on the local map places where refugees are illegally found	• books • TV/Radio • students' experiences	• short essays

Page 66 of 81

APPENDIX 12A: Sample Questions From Paper 1

Appendix 12A
Sample questions from Paper I

2015 EXAMINATION NO. _____ Page 8 of 8 M194/I

44. Which of the following can be reasons for misuse of social services? 1. vandalism 2. poverty 3. ignorance 4. maintenance A. 1 and 2 B. 3 and 4 C. 2 and 3 D. 1 and 4 45. Which of the following financial institutions is responsible for managing government payments? A. Commercial Banks B. Malawi Stock Exchange C. Central Bank D. National Bank of Malawi 46. Widow cleansing which is practised in some societies in Malawi is a manifestation of _____. A. poverty B. witchcraft C. ignorance D. cultural beliefs The Finance Minister of Country X announced that 57% of the year's budget will be sourced from bilateral relations. Use this information to answer Questions 47 and 48.	47. Which of the following is true about country X? A. high population growth B. dependence on foreign aid C. high levels of debt D. inadequate social services 48. Which of the following is essential for a reasonable economic development in country X? A. agricultural development B. human resource development C. social service development D. sustainable development 49. Which arm of the Malawi Government is responsible for representing the views of the people? A. The Judiciary B. The Executive C. The Media D. The Legislature 50. Which of the following is a disadvantage of globalisation to developing nations? A. stiff competition with the developed world B. influence of bad weather on agricultural produce C. discouragement of racial harmony D. promotion of unity among companies
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END OF QUESTION PAPER

NB: This paper contains 8 printed pages.

APPENDIX 12B: Sample Questions from Paper II, Section B

Appendix 12B
Sample questions from Paper II, Section A

2014

EXAMINATION NO.:

Page 2 of 8

M194/T1

Section A (60 marks)

Answer **all** questions from this section in the spaces provided. Each question carries 20 marks.

1. a. Explain any **two** ways in which the Malawi Defence Forces is important.

(4 marks)

- b. State any **four** ways in which the local government sources its revenue in Malawi.

(4 marks)

- c. Describe any **three** roles of unions and associations to workers in a country.

(6 marks)

Continued/...

Appendix 12C
Sample of Paper II, Section B.

EXAMINATION NO.: _____
Page 6 of 8 M194/II

M194/II

4. Explain any **six** characteristics of a country that is politically developed. (20 marks)
5. Discuss **six** critical issues that should be considered when providing social services in a community. (20 marks)
6. Explain any **six** practices that affect the implementation of the population policy in Malawi. (20 marks)

Continued/...

Appendix 13- Permission from MoEST

Ref.No. C3/1/1

22nd August, 2014

FROM: THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY, PRIVATE BAG 328, LILONGWE 3,

TO : Mr. Peter N.W. Namphanda,
C/o Chancellor College, University of Malawi,
P.O. Box 280, Zomba

CC : The Head teachers:

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

: The Education Division Managers, SEED and SHED

RE: CLEARANCE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Reference is made to your letter in which you asked for permission to conduct research in the three selected secondary schools as indicated above.

Ministerial approval has been granted for you, Mr. Peter N.W. Namphanda to conduct qualitative study in the three requested secondary schools. However, the ministry would like to advise you to involve the learners after their class work.

By copy of this letter, the Education Division Manager, South East and Shire Highlands Education Divisions are advised to take note.



C.C. Musso

For SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

APPENDIX 14A: UU peer review report

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

RG2 PEER REVIEW REPORT FORM

Project Title

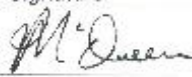
Pedagogy, school experiences and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawian secondary schools

Chief Investigator

Professor Linda Clarke

On the basis of the assessment below, this application:

- should proceed to the appropriate School/Faculty Research Governance Filter Committee ☐
- should be amended by the applicant as indicated in the comments and then proceed to the appropriate School/Faculty Research Governance Filter Committee for further consideration ☒
- requires substantial changes and should be revised and returned for further review ☐
- is not viable in its current form and should be withdrawn by the applicant ☐

Peer Review conducted by (please print)	Signature	Date
1. Paul McQueen		14.3.2014
2.		

Please answer the following questions

1. Please state your area of expertise in relation to reviewing this application (i.e. the subject, the methodology, or both).

Lecturer in Education.

2. How does the proposed research make a contribution to the knowledge base? Is it otherwise justified for educational or training purposes?

This is a fascinating study set in the social and cultural context of a country emerging from dictatorship. Not only does the study highlight the importance of teaching Citizenship in Malawian schools but proposes to give an insight into the pedagogy used and its impact on the lives of school children.

APPENDIX 14B- UUREC Outcome



Memo

To: Professor L Clarke, Room B250, School of Education, Coleraine

From: Elaine McCormick, Research Governance Section, IH12, Jordanstown

Date: 27 June 2014

Ref: FM/JD

University of Ulster
Research Ethics Committee

Project Number: REC/14/0048

Project Title: Pedagogy, school experiences and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawian secondary schools

Outcome: Approved to proceed subject to minor changes/clarification

Please find attached the comments of the Research Ethics Committee on your recent application.

You should address these comments point by point in a covering letter and highlight or underline any revisions made to the application and associated materials. Please send your response (either 1 copy, or by e-mail to e.mccormick@ulster.ac.uk) to the Research Governance section. You should note that your application does not require to be resubmitted for reconsideration at a future meeting, but you should also note that you cannot commence any research on human subjects until your response has been considered and a letter of approval has been issued.

If you have any queries, please contact Nick Curry or Elaine McCormick.

If you do not intend to proceed with the project or if you anticipate a significant delay in responding to the concerns of the committee, please contact the Research Governance section.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Please quote the **Project Number** in all correspondence.

Thank you and best wishes.

Elaine McCormick
Admin Officer
Research Governance
e.mccormick@ulster.ac.uk
Ext: 66518

BELFAST ■ COLERAINE ■ JORDANSTOWN ■ MAGEE

APPENDIX 14C- UUREC Approval



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Research Office

Our Ref: NC:GOV

20 June 2014

Professor L Clarke
Room B250
School of Education
University of Ulster
Coleraine

Dear Professor Clarke

Research Ethics Committee Application Number: REC/14/0048

Title: Pedagogy, school experiences and the promotion of active citizenship in three Malawian secondary schools

Thank you for your recent response to matters raised by the committee. This has been considered and the decision of the committee is that the research should proceed.

Please sign, date and return the Chief Investigator Undertaking form and RETAIN all other documents for the study file. Please return the attached undertaking prior to commencing the research.

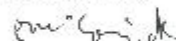
Please also note the additional documentation relating to research governance and indemnity matters, including the requirements placed upon you as Chief Investigator.

The committee's decision is valid for a period of three years from today's date (this means that the research should be completed by that date). If you require this period to be extended, please contact the Research Governance section.

Further details of the University's policy are available at www.ulster.ac.uk/researching along with guidance notes, procedures, terms of reference and forms.

If you need any further information or clarification of any points, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely


Nick Curry
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BELFAST ■ COLERAINE ■ JORDANSTOWN ■ MAGEE

AUTHOR'S RESUME

Peter Ngwinjo William Namphande was born on 26th January, 1970 in Zomba district. He attended primary schools in Zomba and Chikwawa districts. He did his junior and senior secondary education at Zomba Urban Distance Education Centre and Malosa secondary school respectively. In 1990, he was selected to the University of Malawi, Chancellor College to pursue a Bachelor of Education programme, which he passed with credit in 1995. In 2005, he was awarded a scholarship under the NORAD Fellowship programme to study for a Master of Philosophy degree at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, a programme he successfully completed with an A grade in 2007. While in Norway, he secured a research grant from Save the Children Norway (*Redd Barna*) as partial funding towards his Masters' research expenses. In 2008, he received an award for 'Outstanding Quality in Education' from Volda University College, Norway for successfully completing an education project on 'Capacity Building for Democracy in Teacher Education- Malawi and Norway'. In 2013, he commenced a joint doctoral research programme in Citizenship Education with the University of Ulster in the United Kingdom and University of Malawi. His studies were co-sponsored by the British Commonwealth Scholarship Commission and the Malawi Government through the Department of Human Resource Management and Development.

Peter Ngwinjo Namphande has worked with the Malawi Government first as a secondary school teacher from 1995 to 2000 where he served in various positions including head of department, deputy head teacher, and acting head teacher at Mulanje secondary school. In 2000 he was promoted to the post of Senior Education Methods Advisor, a position he held up to 2002 when he was again promoted to the post of Principal Education Methods Advisor. He joined the University of Malawi,

Chancellor College in 2004 as Assistant Lecturer in Social Studies Education in the department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies. At Chancellor College, he has served in various positions of responsibility such as Deputy Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department, Programme Coordinator for the Bachelor of Education (Primary) programme; Assistant Teaching Practice Coordinator; Project Coordinator of the Global Citizenship Education project between University of Malawi, School of Education and University of Ulster, School of Education; and Assistant Project Coordinator of the ‘Democracy Through Pedagogical Entrepreneurship’ project between Faculty of Education, University of Malawi and Volda University College, Norway. He is currently the Teaching Practice Coordinator at Chancellor College.

Ngwinjo William Namphande has published in reputable refereed journals such as *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* and has also contributed chapters to edited books on Climate Change and Environmental Education as well as Education for the Marginalised. He has presented papers on education for democratic citizenship, critical pedagogy, and environmental education at international conferences locally, regionally, and overseas. He is a member of the national steering committee on Critical Thinking in Education in Malawi, a member of the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (EEASA) and also a trustee of Sparkle Malawi.