



**FEMALE COUNCILLORS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT INTERESTS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
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DECLARATION

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

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Chrissie Njala my mother, father and lifetime friend. I am because you are, your choices and commitments are the wings on which my journey has thus far found flight. Thank you Mama.

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ABSTRACT

The global pursuit of Gender equality has popularly been coupled by strategies aimed at increasing female politicians, in effort to enhance the inclusion of women's interests in development. This study assessed the extent to which female councillors' gender resemblance enhances the representation of women's development interests in local governance. Utilizing Pitkin's, and Critical Mass theories of representation, a mixed methods inquiry was conducted across three local governments in Malawi, to study: (i) Predominant patterns in how representation is modelled amid constituents, and male and female councillors; (ii) Policy prioritisation patterns amid constituents and male and female councillors;; (iii) and the differential impact of female councillors' gender resemblance and critical in enhancing the representation of women's interests in local development and governance. While uncovering that representation, and the dynamics that influence its modelling amid constituents, and male and female councillors, are quite divergent; and that women's interests are largely non-homogeneous across diverse classes; the study found that female councillor's gender resemblance narrowly enhanced the representation of women's interests local development planning. At large, the policy priorities of most individual councillors, were more influenced by their communities' general characterisation of development; regardless of whether such characterisation was gender-equitable or not. The study also found that, the adoption of women's interests in congressional settings of development planning was barely mediated by female councillor's resemblance and critical masses, being largely subject to political party priorities and the friendliness of institutional policies and measures. The study, thus demonstrated that without: strategic institutional measures, and in-depth sensitisation of the public in gender equality; most politicians, being voter-driven, are likely to prioritise as their *publics* even at the expense of gender equality. The study also exposed an inherent contradiction in the notion of utilizing geographically mandated positions such as councillors, to champion the interests of a chosen section (women), at the expense of the multiplicity of constituency interests that such positions come with.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADC	Area Development Committee
AEC	Area Executive Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CBO	Civil based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDPs	District Development Plans
DEC	District Executive Committee
DGO	District Gender Officer
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GAM	Gender analysis matrix
GoM	Government of Malawi
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MEC	Malawi Electoral Commission
NSO	National Statistics Office
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGN	Practical Gender Needs
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SGN	Strategic Gender Needs
SRW	Substantive representation of women
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAPs	Village Action Plans
VDC	Village Development Committee
WEF	World Economic Forum

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This chapter discusses the background to the study; the research problem and specific objectives and questions which guided study; the study's significance and limitations, as well as an overview section of the entire thesis, ahead of a concluding section for the chapter.

1.1. Background to the study

According to the 2019 Global Gender Gap Index, women and men have unequal access to socioeconomic opportunities and outcomes. The index shows that the socioeconomic status of an average woman (from a total of 149 countries of the world that were assessed) is worth just about 68% of what her male counterpart enjoys across social, political and economic spheres of everyday life (World Economic Forum, 2019). With no single country on earth where men and women are equal in status (UN Women, 2019), gender inequality ranks among the most crosscutting global issues of the contemporary times.

According to Jayachandran (2015), gender inequality has stronger positive correlation with underdevelopment, as almost all less developed countries record far greater levels of inequality between men and women in comparison to developed countries. With identified causes for such ranging from women's suboptimal access to empowerment opportunities across political, social, economic spheres of life, Jayachandran further observed that most under developed countries and societies including across Asia, the middle east and Africa, have cultural norms that exacerbate favoritism toward males.

In recognition of the above phenomena, various policy instruments at global as well as at regional levels purport that gender equality should be a prioritised pursuit in global development efforts.

Some of the policies include: the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2004 AU, Solemn Declaration of Gender Equality in Africa, the 2008 SADC, Protocol on Gender and Development, just to mention a few. The crosscutting prescriptions in all these policy instruments necessitates state governments to domesticate policies, strategies, laws and campaigns that can alleviate the various challenges that women face in effort to curb gender inequalities (UN women, 2019). Inglehart, Norris and Welzel, (2002), attributed the contemporary global attention on gender equality to the works and demands of gender equality and feminist movements across the world.

In view of the central place that governance institutions have in shaping socioeconomic policies and outcomes, most feminist movements have continuously sought the revisiting of women's role of in governance through increasing the numbers of women politicians and decision makers, as drawn from the resemblance and critical mass theories of political representation (Childs and Krook, 2008). The theories argue that when the numbers of women politicians increase, women politicians, being naturally more privy to fellow women's interests on the basis of their gender resemblance, they tend to gain coalitional tendencies around defending the interests of women constituents in policy making settings. Aside mere democratic fairness on matters of participation in governance for women, the two theories are also justified in the belief that, since men (males) and women (females) exist across different gender dimensions, the interests of men (who have dominated policy spaces since traditional times) are different and at worst competing to women's interests (Anderson and Eswaran, 2009; Costa, Sawyer and Sharp, 2013; O'Neil, Kanyongolo and Wales, 2016). Empirical results such as Aisedu, Branstette, Babulal and Malokele (2019), who carried out studies across 159 countries, to assess the effect of increased women's representation on policies, have gone a long way in vindicating the notion that there is a positive correlation between increases in the number of women politicians and the passage of women-friendly policies.

The foregoing also corroborated by a series of studies that were done in the Scottish Parliament by Chaney(2011); who assessed how women-related policy outcomes were reached at in times of both proportionate and disproportionate gender/sex compositions in the parliament. Upon analysis of observations made, Chaney concluded that female politicians predominantly influenced the adoption of pro women changes beginning with agenda setting and then popularisation of issues up until enactment.

Similarly, accounts by Bratton, (2005); Thomas, (1991); Thomas, (1994) also rally behind the argument that assemblies with high proportions of women are more inclined to pass more women-friendly policies and at a faster rate, than assemblies with very few women present. Such vindications have continued to inspire a lot of campaigns and initiatives, and thus growth in the global numbers of women politicians. Since the year 1960, over 110 women have ascended to the office of prime minister or president in 70 countries (UN Women, 2016). The global proportion of female parliamentarians has also increased from 11.3 percent in 1995 to 24.3 percent (Jalaza and Farida, 2016; UN Women, 2016).

1.1.1. Women and Gender inequality in Malawi

Malawi which is a developing country also shares Jayachandran's observations pertaining gender inequality and its stronger prevalence in developing countries. According to NSO (2019), the average Malawian Woman has an income that is about 50% and 71% of what the average man earns in the country's formal economy and in agriculture, respectively. Women's disadvantaged situation in Malawi is further typified in the observation that, whereas 52% of all households live below the poverty line in Malawi, and 25% of households living in extreme poverty, World Bank (2011) reported that female headed households constitute 73% of those in extreme poverty.

Being a democratic country, with national and local domains of government, the country's governance revolves on three major categories of elected positions, namely: a nationally elected presidency, which aside being head of state, also sets up and oversees the executive arm of government; constituency-elected Members of Parliament (MP), who constitute the national assembly; and finally locally elected councillors, who constitute the country's local government councils.

It is worth noting, however, that despite calls for increased women's representation through elected political positions, being equally at large in Malawi, and thereby yielding a though gradual progress on the same, the percentages of elected female politicians across the three spaces are still very low. According to MEC (2019), Malawi which has had six presidential successions, of whom only one was a non-elected female president, has never seen the election of a female candidate, as president. Further, MEC reported that at parliamentary level, female members of parliament who constituted only 5.6% of all parliamentary seats after first democratic elections in 1994, are now at 22% as of the latest elections in 2019, where a total of 193 parliamentary seats were being contended for. Finally, within Malawi's local government system, which has a cumulative total of 462 seats (across 28 district councils, four city councils, two municipal councils and one town council), only 14.5%(67) of them are women (MEC, 2019).

1.2.Problem statement

UN women, (2019) and OECD (2020), maintain that despite the global resolve to eradicate gender inequality with urgency, progress has been way too slow, and even backtracking in some nations where gaps are widening. WEF (2019) projected that at the current pace of progress, closing the global gender gap may take the world another 200 years.

Concurrently, it is also worth noting that while literature has captured a variety of studies such as Aisedu et al (2019), which vindicate the notion that increasing the number (proportion) of elected female politicians fast-tracks the attainment of gender-equitable outcomes in development, the last five decades have equally witnessed an ascension of empirical evidence that is contradictory to the notion. According to Celis (2008), whose works are quite seminal in pointing out the deficits of studies that have popularly vindicated the positive correlation between increases in the passage of pro-women policies, with increases in the numbers of women politicians; most studies have erroneously done so because of methodologically shortfalls. Celis' central argument for such a critique has been that most of such studies tend to overlook scrutinizing the actual and not symbolic contribution of female politicians in the attainment of women friendly policy outcomes, in instances where the two might have merely coincided, but not be related in any way.

Building on the contentions of Celis (2008), many studies have thus been conducted to scrutinize the actual and not symbolic contribution of women politicians in the attainment of women friendly policy outcomes, including: Mackay (2008), who conducted a study on the representational practices of women in the Scottish parliaments from the year 1999-2009. Mackay found that despite increasing in number, most female politicians did not seem to demonstrate a notable and consistent effect on policy outcomes.

Within the Malawian frame of politics, Chiweza, Maganga and Wang (2016), also studied the performance of the Malawian parliamentary women's caucus from 1995 to 2014. The assessment examined the extent to which the women's caucus contributed towards women-friendly outcomes. The study found that, while increases in numbers of women MPs coincided with increases in the passage of gender sensitive policies at times, almost all the time, female MPs never seemed to be the central reason for such passage, including instances where particular women MPs were in the fore front of opposing the passage of women-friendly laws and policies. Contrary to the projected tendency that women politicians somehow are inclined to rally behind women-related issues when tabled in parliament, the study showed that female members of parliament did not seem to unite on gender lines but divided along their political party lines even at the expense of women's interests. The above discussion goes a long way in indicating the elusive nature of gender equality, regardless of the multiplicity of remedies being undertaking across the globe.

The captured literature tensions also reveal that there are a lot of grey areas when it comes to understanding what constitutes effective representation for women and the attainment of gender equality. Further, it demonstrates that there are uncharted truths behind how some women leaders, and their increased numbers in congressional policy settings have proven to enhance the representation of the interests of women, and why others have failed to demonstrate the same. It is on the basis of these theoretical and practical gaps that this study was conducted, in effort to contribute towards understanding the factors that truly mediate the equitable inclusion of women's interests, and other marginalised groups in local development planning, and thus the alleviation of gender inequality.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The overall goal of this study was to determine the extent to which female councillors' gender resemblance enhances representation of women's interests in local development.

The following were the specific objectives of the study:

- 1) To examine predominant patterns in how representation relationships are modelled amid female councillors vis-à-vis male councillors and their female constituents.
- 2) To evaluate the extent to which female councillors in comparison to male councillors prioritise on women's gender needs in local development planning.
- 3) To assess the differential impact of gender resemblance in enhancing the representation of women's interests in local development planning, amid other factors.

1.4. Research questions

The study aimed at addressing the following key questions:

- 1) How do female councillors compare with male councillors in the way their representational relationship with women constituents are modelled?
- 2) How do female councillors and male councillors differ in the way their policy priorities compare with those of their female constituents?
- 3) What are the predominant mediating factors behind the adoption of women's policy interests in local development planning?

1.5. Significance of the study

The attainment of gender equality is fundamental to the achievement of an equal and just society for women and girls (United Nations, 1995). In view of the identified knowledge gap, the study sought to uncover the predominant mediating factors behind the substantive representation of women's policy interest in local development planning and governance. Advocates of decentralization argue that local governance avenues of policy making are a critical opportunity for the grassroots to: articulate their policy interests; enter arenas of political decision making; and to advance the interests of marginalized communities in formal spaces of policy making (Chiweza, 2016).

The local government setting within which the study was carried out, thus offered an opportunity for women's substantive representation to be tested on policy options that directly mirrored the everyday needs of women and girls in the grassroots, and more importantly, with the practical involvement of the women constituents themselves, being the intended direct beneficiaries of the discourse.

Most of the studies cited above and upon which this study was built on were predominantly contextualized within parliamentary settings, where key policy outputs are legislative in nature, and also that the assessment such legislative outcomes was heavily done by public policy professionals and not the intended direct beneficiaries themselves. According to Golubovic (2020), grassroots participation is a critical ingredient of participatory democracy as it provides an opportunity and creates conditions necessary for citizens to engage in political life regularly and not only during elections; It creates a framework for citizens to advocate for their legitimate interests and thus contributes to the development of a vibrant democratic society; It makes the work of public authorities more transparent and closer to their constituencies; It contributes to the quality of adopted public policy and its smooth implementation; And lastly, it facilitates CSOs' watchdog role in the implementation of adopted policies.

The study also added a significant variation to the standard methodology that most studies on the representational competencies of male and female politicians use. More often than not, the related studies utilized analytical models that are purely confined in political science theories on representation. This study however adapted gender analysis frameworks to its analytical model to ensure that the empowerment aspect of any leader's assessed actions or priorities are done in light of a feminist approaches, and particularly so, with through the direct participation of women, as the intended beneficiaries themselves. Further, the study also adds tremendous checks to the traditionally popular methodology on assessing gender resemblance and women substantive representation, having: coupled all assessments on female councillors with identical one's on male councillors, to ensure that other factors that may be pivotal to shaping a representative's capacity to represent women and girls are allowed detection.

Lastly, the study also combined both individual and congressional assessments of councillors' representational competencies to get insight into how different individual leaders can ably strategize around common constraints to achieve what others might be failing. On the overall, these adaptations serve as significant checks against unduly upholding the belief that particular female politicians perform astoundingly simply because they are female and not because of particular qualities and dynamics that transcend their gender orientations.

1.6. Structure of the thesis

Going forward, this thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on key concepts and the conceptual framework for the study. Chapter 3 focus on elaborating the methodology for the research. Chapter 4 covers on discussion of the findings and finally, chapter 5 highlights the conclusion and recommendations for the study.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the background to the study; the research problem, and specific objectives and questions which guided study; the study's significance and limitations, as well as an overview section of the entire thesis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter engages relevant literature, concepts, and theories pertaining to the objectives of the thesis.

2.1. Conceptualisation of women's empowerment

Gender dimensions impose untold opportunities and barriers to different groups of men and women across the globe. Literature pertaining the history of gender inequality shows that barriers associated with gender have heavily contributed to the mass erosion of women's/girls' sense of self-worth, their decision making power, their access to opportunities and resources, their power and control over their own life inside and outside the home, and their ability to effect change in life (Berger, Peter, Luckmann, Thomas, 1966). The pursuit of gender equality, and thus the achievement of a society where all people have equal power and equal opportunities, cannot happen without the women empowerment initiatives.

Women empowerment entails strategic actions aimed at improving women's self-awareness and ability make life choices, and also their access to and control over opportunities and resources (Nayak and Mahanta, 2009, Kabeer 2009, and Mayoux, 2005). Women's empowerment focuses; *social life* so that they are able to achieve an equitable dignity and livelihood in society; *economic life* so that they are able to achieve economic freedom on an account their significant contributions to the production process, and lastly their *political life* where they are anticipated to see an increased participation in decision making processes of society (Kabeer, 2009). According to Hyden and Court (2002), gender equality and women empowerment strategies have since 1950, evolved to the recognition that development cannot be managed without changing the institutions of governance as that is where development policies and outcomes are shaped.

This has accorded a central place to political empowerment of women, as a key means to paving way for all other forms of empowerment.

2.1.1. Women's interest.

According to Kabeer (1992), gender inequalities inflict two categories of issue-based interest across women's (or men's) political and socioeconomic spheres of life. These are strategic interests and practical interests:

Strategic gender interests pertain to issues that women face because gender confinements restrict them to positions that are subordinate to men in society (Molyneux, 1985). They relate to gender divisions of labour, and power and control including such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies (Moser, 2003). A common trait about the strategic gender interests is that if solved, they would rectify the unequal power between men and women.

Practical gender needs or interests on the other hand refer to the basic needs of women for them to cope up with their daily livelihood in fulfilling their socially constructed and accepted roles in society (Kabeer, 1992). Moser (2003) defines them as resources or amenities which women perceive as necessary for their basic survival. They are the proximately perceived inevitabilities mostly with a bearing on living conditions and they include food, water provision, health care, and employment (Kabeer, 1999; Rahman, 2013; and Moser, 2003). In summary, they are amenities whose availability or lack thereof, characterizes the living conditions of women as compared to men. Much as addressing practical gender needs improves the living conditions of women (or men), they do not rectify or transform the existing gender relations nor challenging women's subordinate position in society.

2.1.2. Gender analysis

Feminist theorists emphasize that the empowerment of women cannot effectively happen if gender analysis techniques are not integrated in policy processes. Gender analyses are systematic assessments that explore power relations between women and men in society, and how such shape their experiences and interests (Rahman, 2013).

The underlying assumption here is that women and men exist on different sides of development or policy problems, and as such they require a strategic set of different but mutually inclusive policy solutions.

According to Kabeer (1992), such analyses are pivotal in identifying the different gender needs and interests which can inform policy making process. In essence, gender analyses can be used to assess the extent to which any development plan, policy and program is *gender-aware* or *gender-blind*. FAO (2014) explained *gender awareness* as a policy's recognition of the differences in the needs and interests of men and women. *Gender blindness* on the other hand typifies policy making approaches that either ignore or are not aware of the need to recognize the different needs and interests of men and women. On the overall, the systematic procedures that are provided by gender analysis techniques can help policy makers to devise policies that rectify and not perpetuate gender disparities (Ochola, Washington, Sanginga, Pascal, Bekalo and Isaac, 2010).

2.1.3. Gender Analysis tools/frameworks

According to March, Smyth, and Mukhopadhyaya (1999), the following are among the most commonly used gender analysis tools or frameworks by gender equality practitioners, development programmers and public policy makers:

2.1.3.1. Moser Gender Planning/Analysis framework

The Moser Gender Planning Framework is gender analysis tool for development planning which was developed by Caroline Moser in the 1980s (World Bank, 2011). Moser developed the tool to shape development planning towards freeing women from subordination, and allowing them to achieve equality, equity, and empowerment. According to Moser, gender relations impose three categories of gender roles among men and women and these are; productive roles, reproductive roles and community-managing roles.

She therefore advocated that policy interventions should not undermine but respond to different categories of practical (immediate) and strategic (longer-term) issues that men and women face in the confines of their different gender roles (Marle and Karin, 2006).

The Moser framework thus centres on identifying the strategic and practical needs of men and women across their gender roles, the potential impact (intended and unintended) of policies on gender relations, the identification of strategic measures for upholding equity and empowerment of disadvantaged women and girls, and how women and/or gender-aware stakeholders are (or are to be) involved across policy cycles (World Bank, 2011).

2.1.3.2. Gender analysis matrix (GAM)

The GAM was designed by Rani Parker in 1993 as a participatory tool through which anyone regardless of their level of expertise in feminism can ably identify the differences in the way a policy affects women and men (Parker, 1993). Parker advocated that in view of the different issues that affect women and men, the impact of development policies in a community can be gauged in terms who is impacted the most, how they are impacted and what inequalities remain, among other question that may be deemed relevant. The framework mainly guides in assessing the impact or bias of any policy based on the extent to which it touches on the following four levels of society; women, men, household and community as follows (Ludgate, 2016):

- a) *Women*: this levels looks at the extent to which different ages and groups of women that are impacted by a policy with respect to their gender needs.
- b) *Men*: this levels looks at the extent to which different ages and groups of men that are impacted by a policy, with respect to their gender needs.
- c) *Household*: under household, the framework looks at the extent to which a group of people living as a family even if they are not part of one nuclear family, are impacted by a policy as a household.
- d) *Community*: under community, the framework looks at the extent to which a policy serves to benefit just everyone within the impact community of policy.

2.2. Conceptualisation of representation

Representation is defined as the activity of making citizens voices, opinions, and perspectives present in public policy processes (Pitkin, 1967). Judge (2007) further defines representation as the making of decisions by representatives in the assumption that they reflect the pressing problems, concerns and interest of the represented.

The two definitions connote an adapted (indirect) method through which citizens though absent, can essentially participate in democratic decision making processes. According to Chingaipe (2010), the concept of representation is essentially propagated to replicate the Athenian model of democracy, in modern day democracies where due to large populations, it is no longer feasible to have large populations present in one place. A fewer group of political actors, therefore, have to speak, advocate, symbolize, and act on the behalf of their constituents in the political arena. While classical theories on political representation were not originally aimed at addressing gender issues, their explanations on how interests of any represented groups can be effectively heard and addressed in policy chambers became of significant focus to feminist studies (Childs, Sarah and Joni Lovenduski, 2012).

2.2.1. Women's representation in decentralized public policy systems

Chingaipe (2008) indicates that in modern democracies, the ideal of citizen participation which is the democratic means by which people can induce social reforms, is mostly operationalized through systems of elected and accountable representatives, and furthered through decentralization approaches to governance. The word decentralization refers to the process of transferring of political, administrative and fiscal authority from a central government to a local government (Oxford Dictionary, 2020). Local governments are therefore subnational governments where locally elected governors are allowed a greater chance of achieving locally driven and responsive development and governance. In such a setting, people are able to participate more directly in governance processes (Sikander, 2015).

Local governments also facilitate the mobilization of local resources and incorporation of local knowledge and needs into local development planning and the implementation (Hussein, 2017). Advocates of decentralization argue that local governance avenues are a critical opportunity for grassroots women to articulate their interests, to enter arenas of political decision making, and to advance women's interests (Chiweza, 2016).

2.3.Theoretical framework

The following subsections discuss the theory key theories that explain the representation of women, ahead of a justification on the study's analytical approach.

2.3.1. Pitkin's theory of representation

Pitkin is perhaps the most influential of all classical theorists of representation. In view of contentions around what representation connotes, Pitkin argued that the practice of representation cannot be examined using one universal approach because the relationship of any representative and those represented are contextual to how both the two define their relationship (Pitkin, 1967).

In her conceptualisation on what constitutes representation, she argued that four independent questions frame the methodology to understanding the rules of any representation relationship, and thereby understanding the behaviour of both the represented as well as the representative. This means that different people will always perceive and define representation differently depending on which of the questions is (or are) influencing their perspective the most as follows:

- a) What mandates one to be called a representative?
- b) What sort of relationship should representatives and the represented have?
- c) Who is best placed to represent the represented?
- d) And what constitutes effective representation?

Pitkin (1967) used her four-question analogy to devise the following four different models of representation relationships amid the represented and their representatives: the *trusteeship and Delegation models*, the *resemblance model* and the *substantive model* of representation (Pitkin, 1967; Pitkin, 1972).

The *Trusteeship and Delegation models*

These two characterize approaches that seek to understand how representatives lead or relate with the represented? Firstly, Trusteeship on one hand, typifies representatives who lead as free agents and leading on behalf of the represented as a matter of their own discretion (Mattila, 2017). This connotes high attribution to the idea that representatives somehow know what is best for a people even without strategic contact and accountability with the represented. It therefore follows that under such a perspective, constituents exhibit a somewhat passive type of relationship onto their representatives.

Secondly, in conceptualising the *Delegation model*, Pitkin (1967) sees representatives as delegates who are solely reliant on following the instructions of their constituents, so as to act out their exact intents all the time. This model implies a type of relationship where a representative is probed into constant contact and accountability by the represented. Essentially, the delegate model typifies the belief that only the represented knows what they need and not the representative.

While both the delegation and trusteeship models are very prescriptive in explaining how leaders can lead in relation to the people they represent, they are limited in that they ignore the effect of institutional aspects on the process as well as the outcomes of representation.

The Resemblance Model

This is also known as *descriptive representation*, and is perhaps one of the most popular models in feminism. This is because it centrally responds to questions on who is best placed to represent a people. The model focuses much on whether a representative resembles the group they claim to represent (Heywood, 2013). In essence, the model implicitly claims that a representative's similarity in characteristics and background to the represented, makes him/her privy to the interests of the people he or she resembles leading to a more accurate and effective representation.

Now, within the nexus of feminist, gender equality and policy studies, the resemblance model of representation is predominantly justified by the belief that since women and men have different biological or social experiences, their interests are at best different and at worst conflicting (Mansbridge, 1999). It is this model that has informed the belief that to represent women effectively, one must be a woman too (Kayuni and Chikadza, 2016). This conceptualisation of representation, however, largely ignores the contextual dynamics that influence policy processes, but also the fact that the capacities of women leaders as representatives cannot be presumed identical and as such it is blind of the fact that as individuals, women leaders have different capacities or strategies which are key in their attainment of results or failure thereof.

Lastly, *Substantive representation* unlike the previous three models, emphasizes the philosophy that representation is merely a means to an end, not an end in itself (Pitkin, 1967). Under this analytical approach, representation is seen in terms of what representatives achieve for the represented and not on who they are, how they ought to lead/ and also how they ought to relate with their constituents.

2.3.2. Critical mass theory

The critical mass theory was adapted by Kanter (1977) and furthered by Dahlerup (1988), from a sociological research that centered on finding the effects of new groups in organizations. The theory was largely premised on Pitkin's model of descriptive representation, and it argues that an increased presence of women politicians in policy chambers results in increases in the adoption of policies that empower women and promote gender equality (Childs and Krook, 2009).

Kanter (1977) asserted that, as an underrepresented group (female representatives) increases in number towards equal proportions with the dominant group, divisions between the groups begin to moderate such that the competing interests of the dominant group begin to merge with those of the minority group. Kanter explains the operationalization of such change in that as women increase, they begin to find individual pride and collective confidence by which they are able to withstand any pressures. This she claimed leads to tendencies where they begin to operate as coalitions/alliances in challenging male domination. Kanter also proposed that the strength of slight increases in proportions of women leaders (with minimum at 15%) are equally influential if some among the few women are oriented in feminism.

In extension, Dahlerup (1988), replicated Kanter's approach in assessing the performance pressures of saleswomen. Dahlerup models women in sales career as a comparison for female politicians based on the reasons that as of the time; they both were professional minorities in male dominated industries; they both were prone to harassment and stereotyping; and that they both had to put up with a lack of traditional legitimacy. The conclusion of her study, however similar in major ways, did not uphold Kanter's correlation of particular numbers to women's corroborated influence in policy spaces.

Dahlerup (1988) argued that while it proved that numbers would at some point influence changes, she discovered that the constant facilitators for such were critical acts and critical actors among the women. Dahlerup (1988) described critical acts as actions or phenomena that lead to a growing feminist consciousness among women politicians as a group. Once a feminist consciousness intensifies, she purported that it causes the critical mass required to sway policy deliberations. Building on her analogy, Dahlerup thus coined the concept of critical actors, referring to individual women leaders whose understanding of feminist approaches and possession of a corresponding ability to articulate or influence issues by some way are able to sway even majorities to rally behind a particular stand, and thus push for the necessary change (Celis 2008; 2009). This in essence upheld Kanter's final claim that the presence of feminist women causes alliances to build and it leads to positive changes in the interest of women. Applications of the theory in light Dahlerup's propositions have gained quite a reputation by accurately explaining how numbers and critical actors have at times led to changes, but also at times failed to do so.

Weaknesses of the critical mass theory

In spite of the foregoing successes, Literature often depicts the critical mass theory as self-contradictory along the fact that it restricts change for women to be solely reliant on numbers of other women and not any other drivers and this faces contrary empirical evidence quite more often than not.

For instance, Bratton (2005), studied three different state legislatures over a period of four years to ascertain if numbers really determine results for women. Contrary to the view that legislatures with very few women (below 15%) lack the critical mass, it was observed that women leaders in legislatures with fewer women seemed to be more united and persuasive in advocating for legislations that pertain to the interests of fellow women, than when the numbers were higher.

Secondly, the theory is also faulted on its failure to postulate on what really constitutes a critical mass, when such a proposition is claimed to be its backbone. While Kanter suggested a threshold of 15% and Dahlerup reviewed it to 30%, Thomas, (1994) failed to find consistent critical mass attributes across all U.S. state legislatures at a threshold of 31%.

Similarly, Towns (2003) also disproved the existence of any particular point between 15% up to 40% where numbers of women leaders seem to have similar effects around the world. According to Childs (2004), the purported influence of numbers under the facilitation of critical acts might as well be mistaken for the persuasiveness of the issues themselves. A good example to this end is aforementioned discovery by Chiweza (2016), who observed that numbers do not seem to impact coalitional tendencies among the Malawi Parliamentary caucus of women.

Rather, it was pressure groups and lobbyists that are external to the policy chamber that could be observed as impacting the passage of policies in Malawi. This therefore indicates that even when it comes to shifting votes from men who might be a majority, it would be erroneous to attribute such to any critical mass of women.

Thirdly, the critical mass theory's restriction to the descriptive model of representation erroneously carries the impression that without women, and especially feminist women, men cannot impact tremendous changes for women. Along this line, Tremblay and Pelletier (2000), argue that if a feminist consciousness is the key behind the claimed critical mass tipping point, feminism being a theoretical and philosophical technique is not restricted to women alone. Along this strand of reasoning, being a man or woman does not make one privy to gender analytical capabilities, let alone the clear-cut ability to perceive social problems with a gender dimension. Further, it was argued that whether a representative is male or female, the critical determinant of one's effectiveness as a representative is one's individual orientation towards accurately appreciating the interests of women. This implies that feminists could also be male and that men could hence offer effective substantive representation for women. On the flipside, it also implies that certain women can be devoid of the necessary orientation and so having more women may not always translate to change for women.

Fourthly, while the preceding discussion focuses on an individual's orientation to gendered dimensions of reasoning, one key factor which is claimed as overlooked by proponents of both the descriptive representation and critical mass theory is that representation does not occur in neutral vacuums, but rather in institutional settings which are not always of an inherent tolerance gendered democracy.

For instance, Espírito-Santo, Freire and Serra-Silva (2018), carried out a study in 12 countries and 87 political parties from the year 2006 up to 2012. The study aimed to assess the impact of one's gender on their policy preference. The results revealed that political party preferences were more determining in the shaping of members' policy preferences.

2.4. Conceptual framework

Having examined the key literature modelling the dynamics surrounding the substantive representation of women's interests in development and governance, the study utilised a conceptual framework which combined elements of Pitkin's theories of representation, the critical mass theory of representation, and Gender Analysis tools, as indicated in the figure below:

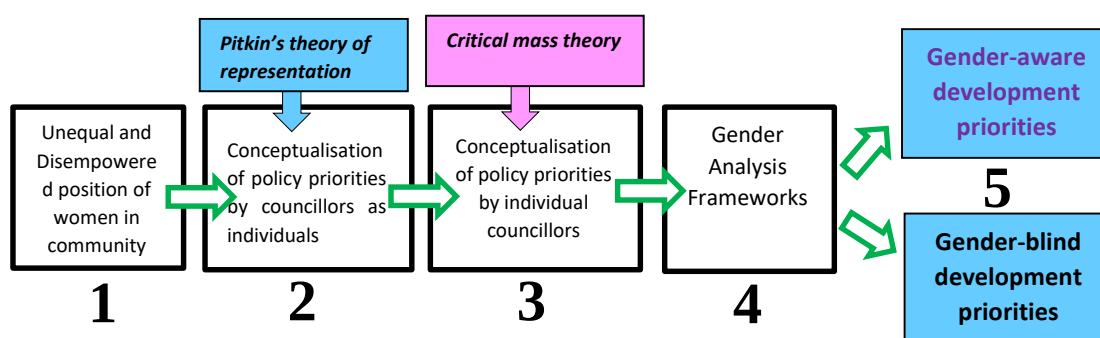


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

With reference to reviewed literature, the conceptual framework sets off with the background that women compared to men, are a marginalized community (Moser, 2003). This position renders their outcomes across social, economic and political aspects of life very unequal (Kabeer, 1999). The study, thus draws on the theoretical parameters used in Pitkin's theories in characterising the different models of representation, to examine predominant patterns in how representation relationships are modelled amid female councillors vis-à-vis male councillors and their female constituents. Since Pitkin (1967) typifies the process of representation as a two-way agenda where both the representative and the represented have roles to play towards each other, analysis of the dominant models of representation amid male councillors, female councillors, and female constituents, were used to expound on the extent to which gender resemblance serves to create a more beneficial representational relationships and outcomes amid constituents and their councillors.

To effectively structure inquiry around evaluating the extent to which gender resemblance, enhanced councillor's awareness and representation of women's interests in local development planning, the study further utilised an adapted gender analytical framework in gauging and ascertaining congruencies amid the identified priorities of male councillors, female councillors and female constituents.

The gender analysis frameworks made it possible for observed policy priorities to be further assessed in terms of their bearing on empowering women by way of improving women's self-awareness and ability to make life choices, and also their access to and control over opportunities, as demonstrated by Nayak and Mahanta, (2009); Kabeer (2009); and Mayoux, (2005).

Further, the study's operationalization of objective 2 and 3, supplemented to Pitkin's analogy by drawing on the critical mass theory, to examine the congressional dynamics and behavioural patterns of female councillors and their critical masses (Kanter, 1977). The critical mass theory thus helped in understanding the factors that hinder or mediate the adoption of women's interests in congressional setting. The figure below depicts the model of local policy making in Malawi.

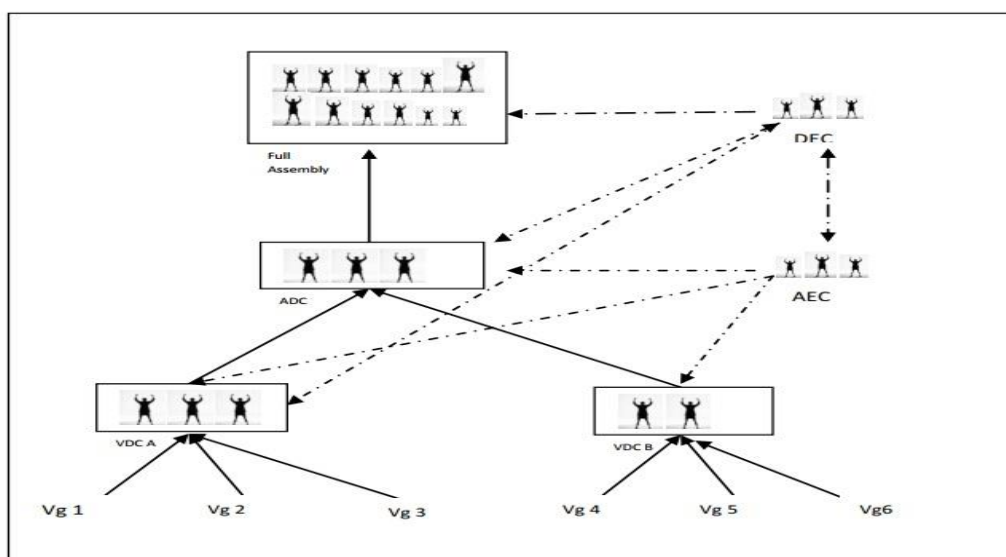


Figure 2.2 Model of Local Development Planning in Malawi
Source: Guide book on Decentralization in Malawi (2005)

As indicated above, the model of local policy/development planning in Malawi revolves around the following avenues: The *Village Development Committee (VDC)* is a representative body for a village or group of villages and it is expected to facilitate planning and development at the community level through direct and regular interchanges with the villagers (Chingaibe, 2010). The functions of VDCs are to consolidate priority needs of the community into VAPs which are later submitted to *Area Development Committees (ADCs)*. ADCs compile priorities of VAPs which are later submitted to the *District Executive Committee (DEC)* (GoM, 2013). *Area Executive Committee* and *DEC* are technical and advisory committees to the ADC and the full assembly respectively. After the ADCs have submitted their proposals, the DEC compiles them into DDPs (GoM, 2013).

Across all the elucidated structures, Councillors, are the most influential actors in development planning process at local level, seeing they are the only ones who can participate across all those structures of local policy making, from grassroots, to the council, aside their veto powers over the final consolidation of the district development plans, as well as the approving of local governance and development budgets at full assembly level. The utilised analytical approach was thus chosen to satisfy the structured and interactive nature of the local policy planning in Malawi, which neither of the theories alone could exhaustively cover, to explain the dynamics behind the mediation of women's substantive representation in local governance.

2.5.Conclusion

This chapter discussed the literature pertaining to the objectives of the thesis. The first section covered on the conceptualisation of women's gender needs and policy interests. Thereafter the chapter covered on the literature pertaining to women's representation ahead of theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology for the research. It highlights the research design, data collection and tools, data analysis, the study's limitations and ethics.

3.1. Research design

While the research utilized a mixed methods approach to model observed phenomenon along with in-depth discussions, quantitative approaches were utilized quite selectively as compared to qualitative analysis. Building on Bogdan and Biklen (2006), who contended that studies that seeks to understand social phenomena in natural settings are better articulated through qualitative approaches. The research chosen approach enabled the researcher to interrogate knowledge, attitudes and behavioural phenomenon from the viewpoint of councillors and others within the chosen contexts.

3.1.1. Target population and Sample

McLeod (2019), defines a target population as the total group of individuals from which the sample might be drawn or who the finding of the study can be applied to. In view of the objectives of this study, the target population comprised individual actors and institutions that directly participate across the different stages of the decentralized/local policy cycle in Mzuzu city council, Lilongwe district council and Lilongwe city council. The three councils have proportions of female councillors at: 20% (3/15), 3 % (1/34) and 30 % (8/27) respective (MEC, 2019), and these variations helped in controlling inquiry around the dynamics that mediate the adoption of women's interests at council level in respect to objective 3. These informed the sample of respondents that was selected and engaged in the study and they were as follows:

Firstly, the study targeted male and female councillors owing to their critical roles in representing the interests of their constituents through the local government development structures in Malawi.

As indicated in the literature review, councillors are the only agents that sit on all the local governance structures in the setting of Malawi. Being the centre of the investigation, a balance of male and female councillors was deliberately sought after and they eventually also determined the wards from which ADC members and ward constituents were chosen.

Additionally, the study also targeted gender equality practitioners from Civil Society Organisations and community-based organisations that participate in local development planning processes. This is because Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Community based organisations (CBOs) form part of the voices that attend local development meetings. They use their technical dispositions to lobby for policy considerations and they also at times heavily influence local development progress through their own initiatives.

Fourthly, the study engaged the Directorate of Planning and Development and district gender officers (DGOs) from across all the involved councils. These were critical because of their first hand experiences with councillors in the planning chambers, and in the development of development plans.

3.1.2. Sampling technique and sample size

Sampling is the process of selecting a representative group from the population under study (McLeod, 2019). Table 3.1 provides a summary of the categories of respondents which is followed by an elaboration on the sampling techniques that were utilized.

Type of Respondent	M	F	Total
Councillors	8	8	16
Constituents	40	60	100
District Council staff (Planning & Gender)	3	3	6
CSO/CBO staff	3	3	6
ADC Committee members	8	8	16
TOTAL POPULATION			144

Table 3.1 categories of the respondents

3.1.2.1.Purposive sampling technique

The councils and councillors engaged were chosen using the purposive sampling technique. According to (Black, 2010), purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling) is a technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study.

The sole criteria for their selection were based on gender characteristics. The researcher sought to have a balanced set of male and female councillor(s) in the chosen jurisdictions to make it possible to compare the individual inclinations of councillors. The researcher also made sure that all corresponding male councillor(s) chosen for a female councillor were emanating from a ward with a tallying socioeconomic profile.

Nevertheless, the researcher made sure that the councils from where the chosen councillors come from should among themselves, have variations in the proportion of women councillors. As such the survey engaged eight female councillors and eight male councillors. These were from Mzuzu city council, Lilongwe district council and Lilongwe city council. The three councils have proportions of female councillors at: 20% (3/15), 3 % (1/34) and 30 % (8/27) respective (MEC, 2019). These variations helped in controlling inquiry around the dynamics that mediate the adoption of women's interests at council level in respect to objective 3.

The purposive sampling technique was also used in selecting district council staff and CSO/CBO staff which was on the basis that they emanated from the respective councils and communities where the councillors were coming from. Their technical expertise and participation in local development planning was pivotal towards sourcing triangulated information on the capacities and behaviour of the councillors in and outside the council.

3.1.2.2.Purposive sampling and Stratified random sampling

The sampling technique used to select constituents were twofold. First, it was purposive on the basis that they had to be constituents of the chosen councillors.

The researcher also sought to engage people of the voting age for their potential interest and sentiments over political issues in their communities.

The second technique used was stratified random sampling to ensure that the final set inferred upon comprises categories that were representative of the socioeconomic layers of their areas. According to Nickolas (2019), stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller groups known as strata. In stratified random sampling or stratification, the strata are formed based on members' shared attributes or characteristics.

A mix of education and income level traits were used to ensure that all classes of people have their voice represented. A total of 40 men and 60 women had their responses inferred into this study as constituents. As for the, ADC members engaged, they were all chosen on the condition that they sit with the chosen councillor in VDC and ADC meetings. The chosen 16 emanated from a total of 8 ADCs.

3.2.Data collection

This research utilized a survey approach to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from a mix of primary and secondary data sources as follows:

3.2.1. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were administered using questionnaires to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from the 16 councillors engaged, the constituents and the ADC members as well. According to Bernard (1988), semi-structured interviews are the best way to shape the direction of a discussion while still allowing room for things that were not anticipated to emerge naturally. Each of these three groups had a special questionnaire designed in line with how they fit into the objectives of the study. The interviews were carried out in their corresponding homes so as to allow the researcher pick on the true situation of their households beyond the answers given. To ensure that no data is missed, voice recorders were used.

3.2.1.1.Attributes of the respondents

For each of the respondents, the study also sought to collect details pertaining their educational level, marital status, age, and occupation. This was important in helping to ensure that the sampled population was representative enough, but more importantly, to enrich the study's inference of dynamics that can only be implied (Blom, A., & Korbmacher, J. (2013).

3.1.1. Key informant interviews

Part of the primary data was also collected through key informant interviews with district council staff from planning department and gender Offices, and technical staff from CSOs working in the areas. Purposive sampling techniques were employed in the selection of these key informants.

According to Ritzer (2007), key informants are generally associated with qualitative research in which a researcher interviews knowledgeable participants as an important part of the method of investigation. The key informants were thus selected based on their experiences with the councillors at individual level but also at councils.

3.1.2. Document review

Supplementary secondary data was gathered through document reviews. Document review is a qualitative research technique of data collection through reviewing official documents to give voice and meaning around an assessment of a topic (Bowen, 2009). In effort to collect comprehensive data especially pertaining to assessing the content of local development plans, VAPs from each of the councillors' wards, as well as DDPs for each of the three councils were also reviewed. The intention behind this was to be able to assess the outputs of a councillor's claimed commitment to promoting the interests of women and girls from his or her area.

3.2.Data analysis

Guided by the objectives of the research, the study employed the content analysis method over the data that was collected. According to Downe-Wambolt (1992), through the content analysis method conclusions can be inferred from collected data through comparing data attributes to theories as well as other authoritative empirical scholarships. That way systematic generalizations were made upon each of the key themes that were being investigated. Where quantitative data was utilized, the study used Microsoft excel to present as well as analyse it. Upon a systematic categorization of the key themes being posed by the objectives of the study, the following three themes formed the basis of coding/analysing data:

3.3. Research ethics

In the course of conducting the study, the following ethical considerations guided the process: At the beginning of every interview or interaction with all involved respondents, the reason for the study was clarified to the interviewee. According to Dooley, M., Moore, E., Vallejo, C. (2017), ensuring that rationale and implications of a study are made known enables participants to express their reservations should they be uncomfortable to participate thus ensuring an informed consent was given by the participants and no one was forced onto such.

Secondly, the researcher being cognizant of the political nature some of the information being discussed, stressed on the confidentiality standards being upheld in the process. Participants were thus assured that none of their identities would be recorded or openly discussed anywhere else.

Lastly, the researcher emphasize that all participants had the right to withdraw at any point in the research should they become uncomfortable and no longer free to continue participating.

3.4. Limitations of the study

Due to limitations of time as well as resources, the study could not cover as many councils as possible especially from all the three regions of Malawi or even beyond Malawi. This means that while other approaches were undertaken to ensure that the data is as generalizable as possible, such generalization is only quite authoritative when limited to explaining the dynamics surrounding women representation at local levels of governance. It is for this reason, among others that the study sought to supplement its source data with information pertaining attributes of all engaged respondents, to ensure that a generalizable spectrum of respondents was inferred on the study. According to Blom, A., & Korbmacher, J. (2013), an elaborate profile of respondents in research is critical to informing analyses of implied dynamics.

The study is also limited in its assessment of the substantive performance of councillors on mostly practical needs and less on issues of strategic concern. It must be pointed out nevertheless that practical needs offer a more effective assessment in view of their associated non-complexity compared to brevity of time given to undertake the research.

Contrary to strategic needs, practical needs are also easier to draw generalization from as they are systemic in nature.

Thirdly, the study was limited in that quite an emerging or field, most gender related jargons necessitate conceptual clarification for most participants to relate before proceeding with the interviews which prolonged the scheduled time for the interviews.

3.5.Conclusion

The section has discussed the practical techniques of the study. It has covered on the design of the research, data collection tools, methods and analysis, and research constraints. Largely, the study is predominantly qualitative in approach.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents an analysis of the findings of the study. The first section analyses the socioeconomic attributes of the study's respondents. Thereafter, sections two to seven draw on the objectives of the study to discuss the findings of the study as per themes indicated in chapter 3. The chapter concludes in section eight with a summary.

4.1. Attributes of the respondents

Description	Councillors	Constituents	Council staff	CSO staff	VDC/ADC members
Age Range(yrs.)	22 to 48	21 to 44	24 to 46	20 to 44	38 to 55
Mean Age	34	24	31	27	44

Table 4.1: Age of respondents

As indicated above, the age ranges for all surveyed councillors, constituents, council staff and CSO contain both youth (below 35years) and adult (above 35years), their cumulative average age falling 24 years of age. For ADC/ VDC members however, the ages of all the indicated respondents range between 38 and 55, thus comprising adults only.

This lies as a potential cause on why VAPs, which eventually graduate into DDPs might not have an equitable coverage of the concerns of the youth. It may also pose as a potential cause of discrepancy to the sentiments of female constituents seeing their average age is 24. With the exception of council staff and CSO staff, the study purposively engaged individuals that were married or with at least a child under their parentage. This was incorporated in the sampling technique to align the proposition that responsibilities of marriage or parenthood heavily shape an individual's openness and attitudes to productive aspects of life (Kulik, 2001).

Description	Councillors	Female constituents	Council staff	CSO staff	VDC/ ADC members
Married	73%	80%	75%	70%	60%
Widows	12.5%	7%	0%	10%	40%
Divorced	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unmarried	12.5%	13%	25%	20%	0%

Table 4.2: Marital status of respondents

This helped to ensure that the study engaged with individuals that have a genuine interest in progressive livelihood, owing to their necessity to provide fair living conditions to themselves and their dependents.

Description	Councillors (15)	Female constituents (100)	Council staff (8)	CSO staff (10)	VDC/ ADC members (20)
Primary education	0%	40%	0%	0%	40%
Secondary education	79.2%	47%	0%	0%	60%
Tertiary education	20.8%	13%	100%	100%	0%

Table 4.3: Education levels of respondents

The sampled sets show various levels of education attainment. Literature on education levels depicts that education is critical because it induces transformation in the attitude and perceptual capacity of people (Sheppard, 1979). Further, Sheppard also contended that it influences the income earning chances of individuals hence shaping their relative access to health, status and job security.

While an attempt was done to ensure that respondents from the female constituents set were cutting across all the indicated levels of education for a wider perspective from the group, all other respondents were literate enough to read, write and above all to appreciate the basic analogies that were utilized along the objectives of this study.

Description	Female constituents (100)	VDC/ADC members (20)
Idle	5%	0%
Farming Formal	64%	75%
Employment	7%	0%
Informal Employment	11%	5%
Business	13%	20%

Table 4.4: Occupations of respondents

According to the table above, most respondents were economically active; being predominantly engaged in small income activities. It was also observed that agriculture was the most common profession among them, which a majority of them also coupled with small businesses like; grocery tuck shops, agricultural commodities and others.

7% of the respondents were also observed as working in formal jobs, with most of them working in public institutions like schools and hospitals. Since such job opportunities are largely shaped by education attainments, formal jobs were secured by a very small number of women, with a majority of them in informal jobs such as housekeeper, shop keeper and others. The foregoing was found to be in line with mainstream literature which postulates that Malawi is largely an agro-based economy and that women make up a majority of the agricultural labour force in Malawi (Riley.1995; FAO, 2019 and UN Women, 2018).

4.2. Conceptualisation of representation by councillors and women constituents

Pitkin (1967), argued that representation models are shaped by how representatives perceive representation. The research therefore sought to understand how councillors characterized representation as per the influence of their peoples' conceptualisation of representation. To further test the extent to which gender resemblance and critical masses shape the relationship between councillors and women constituents, the study surveyed and compared the way male councillors, female councillors, and female constituents define and approach the practice, within the context of the local development planning framework. For each of the groups, the researcher categorically described scenarios of the different models of representation to infer on how each viewed the concept and practice of representation.

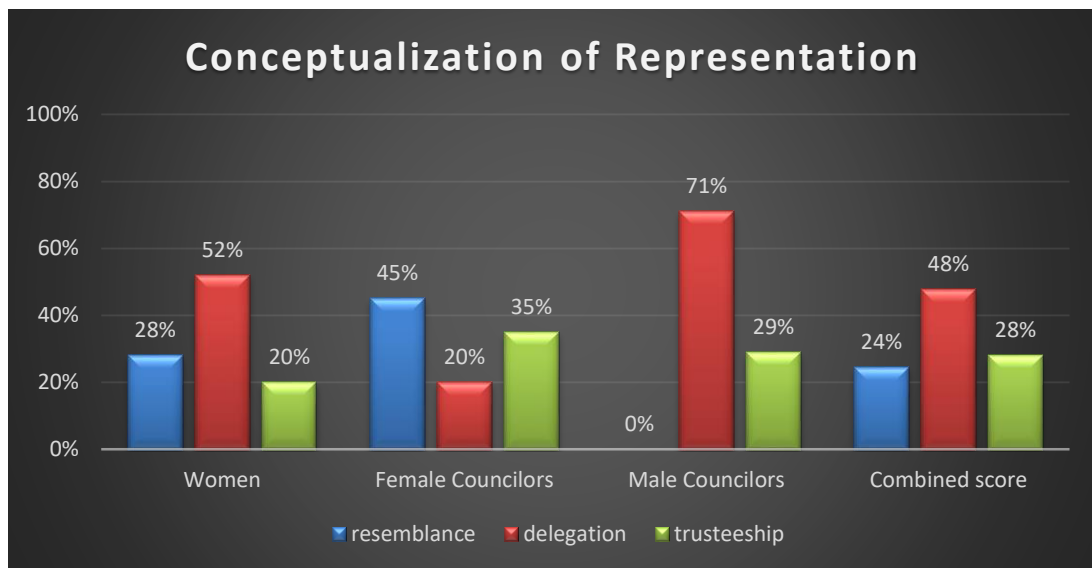


Figure 4.1. Conceptualisation of Representation

The findings of the exercise have been presented in Figure 4.1 as follows:

4.2.1. Conceptualisation of representation by women (constituents)

The data above indicates that 52% of the women that were interviewed perceived councillors as their delegates. It also shows that 28% of the women upheld the notion that representation rests in the extent of the representative's resemblance with them. Only 20% inclined towards the trustee model.

Analysis of the findings depicted that there is a correlation between women's socioeconomic characteristics of educational attainment and economic activity and how they idealize their relationship a councillor. The delegate and resemblance models were assented to by women with a minimum of secondary education and also those that were economically active either through employment or business ventures.

This group of women had a higher sense of awareness on their rights and on the mandates and avenues of local government and councillors, which they often monitored and initiated dialogue with.

The foregoing strongly resonates with Carman's (2007), who claimed that citizens do have opinions on representational roles and that those views vary substantially according to respondents' backgrounds.

Bearing in mind that Pitkin (1967), argued that constituents who think along the delegate model often probe the most into how their representative is leading, these women typify the assertion of Kabeer (1999) and Mwalughali (2013) on empowered women. Kabeer (1999) asserted that women empowered through knowledge and awareness are more active when it comes to re-defining and pursuing their life choices. Further, economically active women are also usually more aware of the fact that they can be agents of change over what they desire, which makes them more politically active in personal, family and public decision making (Mwalughali, 2013).

Most of the 28% that typified the descriptive model were also quite similar in social economic attributes and political activity to those in the delegate model. They both rallied behind the idea of women-centred and bottom-up approaches to development. They both also agreed in their sentiments against trustee leadership patterns; claiming it leaves no room for their say, but also that it is typical of leaders that are corrupt and partial. The point of separation between those in the two models however was that those that demanded descriptive representation had never had a female councillor before, while those in the delegate model had ever had a female councillor. The two groups also seemed to share sentiments on the idea that eventually, the approachability and receptivity of a leader is more important than their resemblance to them. Such a dynamic depicted why the delegate model is most preferred and may likely be growing in prominence on the overall.

It therefore follows that women may opt for male councillors on the basis of leadership strategies and results, even at the expense of female candidates. This observation also strongly mirrored Pitkin's argument to the end that the most vital question in modelling representation is often what representatives achieve for the represented and not who they are or how they do it (Pitkin, 1972).

On a separate note, the 20% who chose the trustee model typified a negative correlation to socioeconomic traits such as levels education and basic awareness of their civic rights and duties. This group also largely comprised of those emanating from rural community settings where patriarchal traditions are still predominant. These women rarely seemed to probe on the performance their leaders and they relayed such statements as:

Wamkulu salakwitsa, komanso Mayi wodzilemekeza sajijilika pagulu, which translates as a wise person doesn't dare to question the elders and that a wise woman doesn't degrade herself by talking too much in public settings (Female ADC representative, Chitukula, Lilongwe)

The above strongly corroborated Chingaipe (2010), who explained that many women especially in rural areas do not patronize any avenues of local policy making, and that even when they do, they are restricted from participating freely because of male domination and stereotypical tendencies within such settings. On the overall, this section posed strong implications to the end that constituents' predominant perspective of representation has an effect on the model of representation that is typified by their councillors (regardless of their gender). In turn, such determines the extent to which the councillors are able to understand the interests of their women constituents. Further analysis in subsequent sections depicts that the way most councillors model representation directly typifies the type of constituents they are dealing with. This stands as a potential cause of doubt on how much credit may be unduly accorded to the gender resemblance of effective female councillors, when their efficacy is due to their typified model of leadership and representation, something which male councillor could also equally utilize.

4.2.2. Conceptualisation of representation by male and female councillors

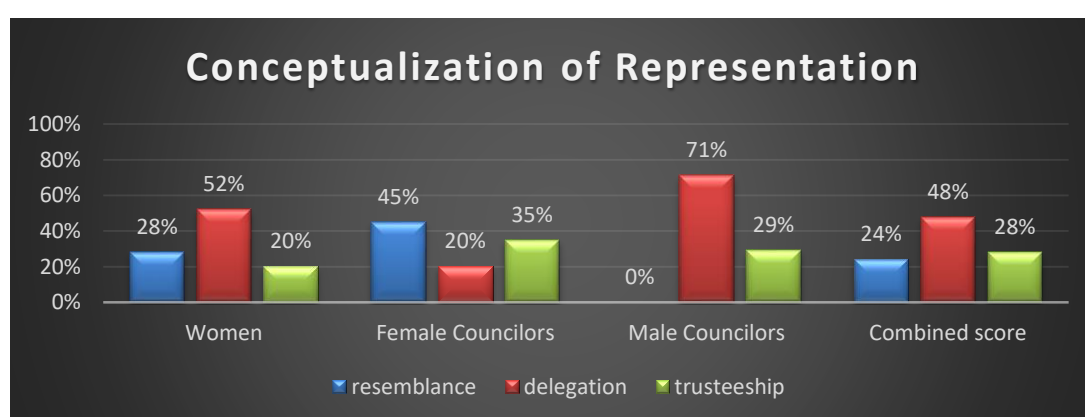


Figure 4.1 Conceptualisation of representation (repeated)

The chart above shows that on the overall, the three models rank as follows: the delegate model (48%), trustee model (28%) and descriptive model (24%).

Further, it reveals that 71% of male councillors typified the delegate model, which was seen in only 20% of female councillors. Most (45%) female councillors rather typified the descriptive model of representation, seconded by the trustee model at 35% and then the delegate model at 20%, which were respectively supported by 23% and 0% of male councillors.

The foregoing indicates that there are strong differences in the way male councillors and their female counterparts perceived and/or operationalised representation. The more puzzling observation lied on why the typified patterns of male councillors seem to be more in sync with the overall preferences of women constituents, than the female councillors. These observations necessitated a closer inspection of the factors that predominantly shape the representation patterns of the councillors. The inquiry uncovered that the prominent motivations were: *Expectations of their constituents*¹, *Gender and Background*², *Gender and Development Advocates/Practitioners*³ and *Mentors/Models*⁴.

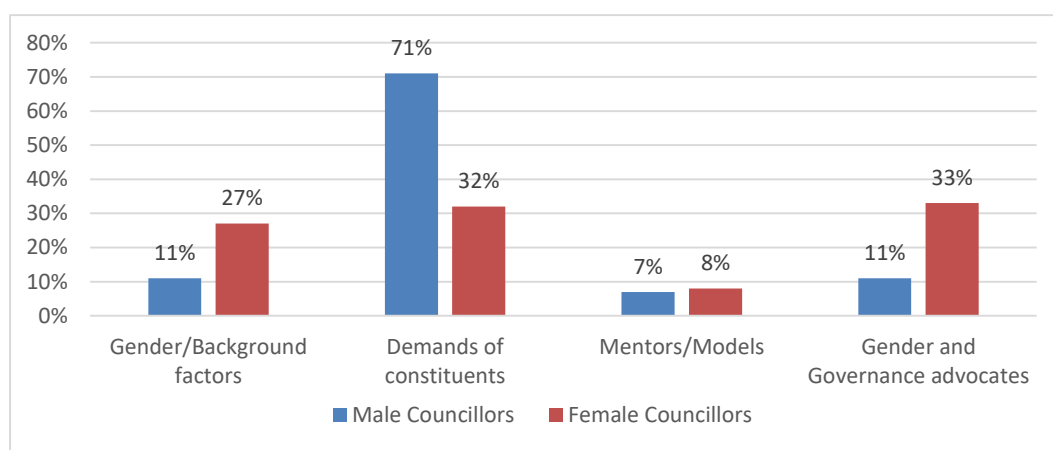


Figure 4.2: what motivates the way councillors model representation

The results show that 71% of male councillors seemed to be predominantly influenced by their observed dictates and expectations of constituents.

¹ This mostly had to do with the predominant model of representation typified constituents.

² Their share of experiences and challenges in the community. Gender issues were mostly noted by women.

³ The demands and trainings regularly posed by activists and organisations on governance and development.

⁴ Prominent politicians who either mentor them or inspire them.

On the other hand, female councillors' conceptualisation of representation was observed as being a function of three (3) predominant dynamics. Their predominant inclination entailed the balancing of the interests imposed by their background as women; and a bit more predominantly, the overall expectations of their community, and those of feminist and gender equality lobbyists that predominantly work with them.

Because of this, quite a high number of the female councillors came to adopt the role of championing the underrepresented interests of women and girls, at least as individual players. This observation matches the finding of Bengtsson and Mattila (2009), who indicated that the descriptive model of representation often gets adopted by leaders and constituents that emanate from communities with a history of gross marginalization.

This study's findings, however, differ from Bengtsson in that such inclination was observed as primarily emanating from the targeted advocacy or trainings of female politicians by feminist lobbyists and not just because of their background. Most male councillors, on the other hand were observed as possessing an all-inclusive approach when it came to their perspective on representation, and so predominantly characterising the delegate model of representation. The figure below depicts the overlaps in the conceptualisations of constituent the councillors.

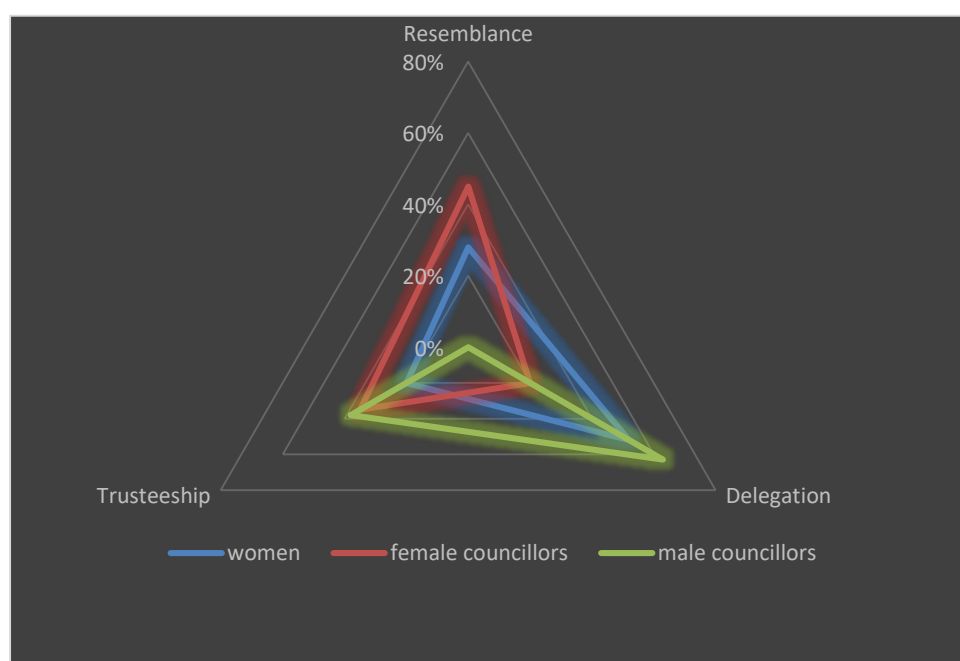


Figure 4.3. Overlaps in conceptualisation of representation

On the overall, the foregoing serves as potential explanation as to why male political candidates are predominantly able to beat female politicians in securing the votes of even women and girls, despite having more women voters in most local government areas of Malawi. Further, it also possibly explains why upon being given the vote as first timers, retaining seats should be quite challenge for quite a higher number of female councillors, of whom, only 20% typified the most preferred approach to representation by the general electorate.

Championing women's (sectional) interests by female councillors was thus observed as posing a very tough political career, in the face of the multifaceted set of expectations and interests at constituency level. This, therefore, leaves room for questions on who or who else can be tasked to champion the representation of sectional interest as opposed to representatives of geographical constituencies in local governance.

4.3. Gender analysis of policy priority patterns of different actors in local development planning

This section sought to understand how male councillors and female councillors in relation to female constituents, gender equality experts and the general electorate prioritise on developmental needs within their respective communities.

Using gender analytical frameworks to analyse and rate the prioritisation patterns of the different respondents, the central rationale was to utilize women's own constitution of policy priorities, and at a technical level, the conceptualisation of feminist and gender equality experts, to ascertain the appropriateness and thus representativeness in the perspectives of the different actors. On the overall, councillors being the most influential actors in the sieving and prioritising of issues in development planning, were assessed in terms of whether they made gender-aware priorities or not.

According to the data in figure 4.4, the prioritisation patterns of women constituents (yellow line) rank as follows; Women's PGN (50%), Household needs (30%), Women's PGN (10%), Community needs (10%), Men's PGN (0%) and Men's PGN (0%).

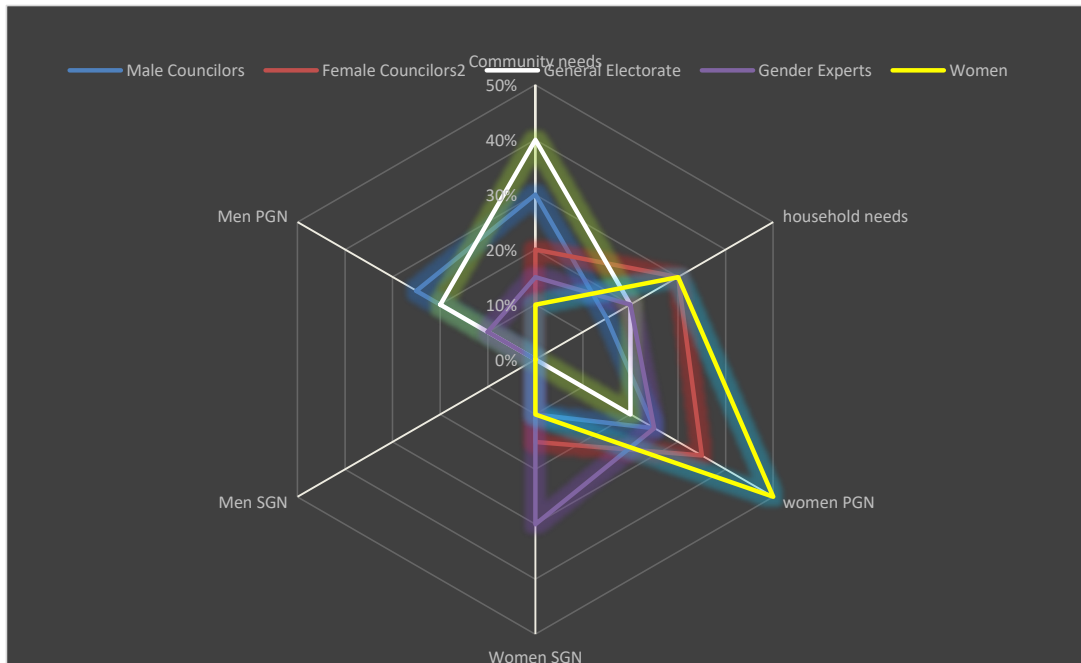


Figure 4.4. How different actors prioritise gendered needs

Essentially it indicates that most women prioritise survival needs such as availability of affordable maize, safe water supply and others that are seconded by household needs. Most women seemed to have quite a heightened concern over household needs because of their immediate gender roles; of managing children's and household welfare. This resonates with UNICEF (2006), who purported that women's gender roles equips them with a quicker appreciation of matters most in pushing for the welfare of family life and social issues such as health, nutrition, and education.

Further, the data demonstrated a fair level of congruence in their policy prioritisation patterns of women constituents, female councillor and gender experts. Their congruencies as depicted by the overlaps of the yellow, red and purple charts, predominantly revolved around the following gender needs as per the following medians: Community needs (15%), Household needs (27%), Women's PGN (37%), Women's SGN (18%).

Largely, the priority patterns of the women constituents and female councillors differed with gender experts in that the latter demonstrated very strong commendation for Women's SGN (30%), and also some consideration for men's PGN which none of the former never opted for.

While gender equality experts like Kabeer (1999); Rahman (2013); and Moser (2003); assert that women need more of development focus to be on addressing strategic needs, only 10% of the women, made priority of strategic issues like business capital, land and inheritance rights. Predominantly, the 10% comprised women that were more achieved education-wise, some in formal employment and others businesses, but also those belonging to different groups that are capacitated by gender practitioners.

The mentioned influence of feminist lobbyist in the setting of policy priorities can also be observed on the prioritisation patterns of some of the female councillors who unlike most of the women constituents, also attempt to focus on strategic issues. This observation reflects the impact of gender activists' demands on the women councillors. While this does not indicate that the experts may be inaccurate about the true order of the needs of women, one of the few plausible explanations for this is that feminist techniques and perspectives are not natural to all women. This reflects the assertion Kanter (1977) that feminist orientation changes the way women see themselves and what they fight for.

With respect to findings of Norris (1991), (Reingold 2000), Wangnerud (2000), Swers, (2002), among others, who argued that female representatives know what the needs of their fellow women are better than male representatives, and that the descriptive model of representation exposes people to the interests of their own, as signified by the 28% of women who opted for it, the data above indicated some fair congruence in the priorities of most female councillors and those of female constituents.

Contrariwise, however, this study's findings differed in that such congruence was observed as being merely categorical and not generalizable to all women. Except for the priorities of classes of women with whom a female councillor seemed to share strong similarities in background, the study discovered that in specific terms, the things that constituted priority interests across diverse classes of women were diversely non-homogenous.

This meant that except when looking at more of the biological attributes of women, and the diverse needs that such entail, it could be somewhat erroneous to assume that a councillors' gender resemblance(which was observed as being limited to a section of

his/her constituents), renders them naturally aware of the specific interests of women, outside fit leadership strategies.

Besides the foregoing, another startling observation rather pertains to how the perceptions of gender experts, and the general electorate demonstrate a divergent influence on the prioritisation patterns of male councillor in comparison to female councillors. Male councillors tilt more towards the perceptions of the general electorate while female councillors seem to be pulled towards an overlap of the preferences of gender experts and a section of the women constituents.

Further, though on a lesser scale, women councillors also seemed to have a slight preference towards addressing needs that are of community level relevance.

In connection to the aforesaid, the study uncovered that community level needs quite popular in the grassroots, who tend to characterize them as more meaningful development, being more tangible and visible than the strategic issues that experts contend for. These projects include building school blocks, community markets, community roads and others. The foregoing was evidenced by statements such as:

“While we know that it is important to address strategic issues and empower vulnerable groups, we cannot risk using our limited resources to prioritise on them. Let organisations focus on that. If we dedicate too much of our priorities to that, most people will not count them as tangible enough at the end and they may not think you are delivering as a leader. For the good of our political career, it is better to build bridges and build school blocks so that the work of our hands can speak for us (Male Councillor, Mzuzu City)”

It therefore followed that, in the hopes sustainably securing ones political career, quite a majority of the councillors, regardless of gender, seemed more determined to utilize their limited tenures and limited available resources in appeasing the predominant community perceptions even at the expense of challenging gender inequality.

Regardless being more knowledgeable of the gendered needs of fellow women, the study noted that female councillors were also willing to shift their delivery to the tune of the general electorate so as to appease more people and thus secure a re-elections. Such a paradox revealed that feminist and gender equality experts, can only influence policy processes effectively, when the awareness of the general public is equally

attuned to their terms. The more aware people are on the technical connotations of how inequality is created and sustained, their demands and choices will equally pull the prioritisation patterns of councillors in the right direction.

4.4. Factors that mediate the adoption of women's interests of local policies.

Having assessed how different actors conceptualise representation and how councillors differ from other actors in the way they prioritise on the gender needs of women, this section focused on identifying and explaining the specific factors that mediate or hinder the adoption of women's and gender experts' priorities in local development planning, as follows.

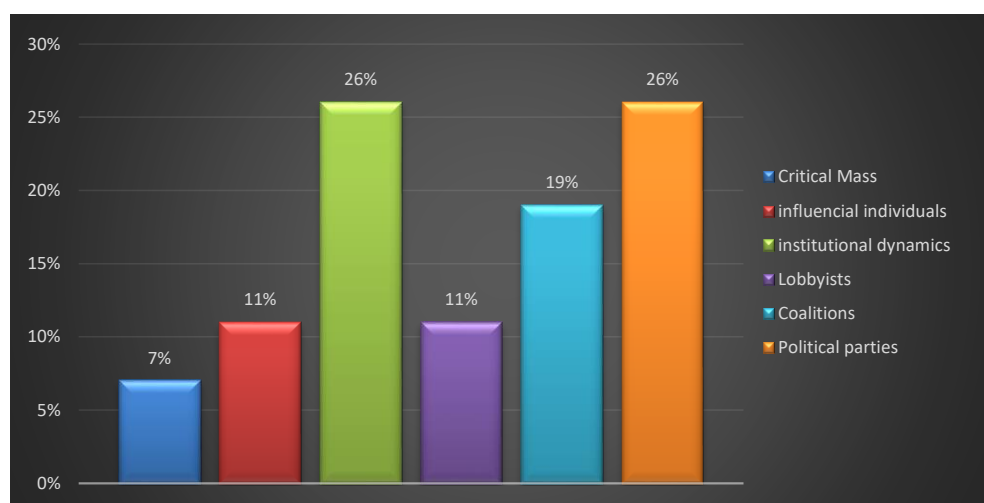


Figure 4.5. Factors that mediate the adoption of women's interests

i. The role of the critical mass in influencing policy direction

As indicated in the figure above, 7% of all engaged respondents indicated that numbers do indeed have a noticeable effect in the shaping of local development planning. With reference to guidelines on how VDCs and ADCs should comprise gender balanced compositions, female councillors expressed the observation that beginning with the local level committees, instances where these rules are followed portray deliberation patterns where women are able to speak as a coalition in driving the agenda along with female councillor, whenever present.

However, while numbers were seen to improve the way women were free to speak and ensure that they influence the prioritisation process through the ADCs and VDCs, this mostly pertained to urban locations. Most women from rural locations, where sociocultural norms usually affect such chambers with patriarchal approaches, did not like to patronize the meetings, and even when present, their presence was largely symbolic as they rarely expressed themselves. This is in agreement with Chingaipe (2010) who stated that cultural constraints usually disempower women from speaking freely and naturally in civic spaces.

Further, it was observed that female councillors numbers rarely impacted significant changes in council deliberation across all the three local governments. Regardless of proportion of female councillors, such higher level chambers being characterized with stronger levels of politicisation, often had female councillors aligning with political party colleagues and not on the basis of gender.

This corroborates the findings of Chiweza (2016), where the Malawi women MPs caucus also typified disintegrations on the basis of party lines. It is also important to note that, the study observed a somewhat negative correlation between levels of politicisation in the different avenues of policy making, and the efficacy of feminist and interventions such as the building of women leaders' forums and movements. The strengths of such seemed effect stronger patterns of coalitional behaviour in the less political chambers of policy making, as compared to the higher level avenues.

ii. *The role of critical/influential actors in shaping local policy processes*

As conceptualised by Dahlerup version of the critical mass theory, the study indicated that 11% of the respondents accorded importance to the way people tend to listen to councillors that have perceived status, connections, high knowledge and likability, and thus critical actors. With the average level of education for most councillors being secondary education, individuals that are more educated and with an intensive career experience before politics, and those who seemed to possess abilities of organising their presentations better, could easily shift even the predispositions of those that were initially in the opposition. It was further reported that such individuals, usually became even more likable, as through their being more enlightened, they more ably contended institutional challenges that challenged the mandate of the council, not being intimidated or manipulated.

This corroborates the assertions of Milbrath (1965) who purported that educated politicians possess more information and capacity by which their ability to participate in politics is enhanced. Regardless of the aforementioned, the study found that critical actors seemed to thrive in the condition where the councils has no political party with a majority of councillors present.

iii. How coalitions shape policy dialogue in council business

The findings above indicate that coalitions are the second most influential determinants on whether any interest is passed or not at the council level as portrayed by 19% of the respondents. It was noted that decision making through the instrumentality of critical actors is heavily shaped by coalitions that are created for the mutual benefit of those involved.

These entail temporary loose alliances that are agreed upon by a select number of councillors. Mostly, these loose structures happen at the informal level through the efforts of either councillors or feminist advocates with critical attributes. It must be understood that, because of the way local government funding is prescribed in the laws of Malawi, financial dependency of the local councils on central government transfers often renders their income unpredictable. As such the plans and budgets of most councils are never fully catered for and this means they always have to re-prioritise and adapt even in their expenditure.

While that on its own can stop the fulfilment of any interests, this study paid more focus on how this shapes the context for coalitions in the hope of safeguarding prioritised interests from being shot down. Many councillors indicated that as a result of coalition related compromises, many champions of women's rights and empowerment rather settle for more tangible and more all-encompassing developments and community related needs such as roads, bridges and school blocks instead of pursuing a social impact cause, whose results are more tangible to people with a technical perception and not the general electorate. This meant that aside using political party affiliations to influence decisions of initial interest to others, where no party is dominant, people are open to support others peoples' priorities, in the hope that they would also be supported on their interest later.

The above resonates with Martin and Vanberg (2005), who purported that most policy chambers are ruled by coalition partners that are willing to negotiate necessary compromises for their mutual existence and success. It further agrees with (Fischer, 2015) who found that no single collective actor is able to decisively effect policy making but that as Coalitions are a cornerstone of decision-making structures, and they inform us about patterns of conflict, collaboration and power among actors.

iv. *Institutional (Organisational) factors affect decision making in the council*

The findings above do indicate that institutional related issues have the most paramount effect in limiting the representation of particular interest in local development planning. This theme of factors pertains to how the operational structures in the policy framework affect the mandated policy making actors who are councillors in driving the agenda. Firstly, it was noted that in all of the councils surveyed, there are serious power struggles behind the stalling of their respective progresses. The foregoing resonate with Chasukwa (2013) and Tambulasi (2009), who respectively found that council business is often characterized with conflicts involving at councillors and the secretariat as well as with members of parliament; traditional authorities and government fields agent.

One particular conflict noted in the course of this study was that despite the clear elaboration of responsibilities and coordination the councils' and their secretariats, the later somewhat stronger influence in determining which interests are implemented or not, seeing they manage the execution of all council affairs. While 26% of the respondents see the fulfilment of their intended interests as revolving around institutional factors more than any other, every councillor interviewed indicated that top down tendencies inculcated in the way the secretariat handles business affect the fulfilment of their intended development plans.

“Most council officials are never transparent and prudent about finance related issues, and as such unanticipated deficits in the council budgets are realigned even without the consent of the councillors” (Male Councillor, Mzuzu).

This has a bearing on what gets implemented and what is left out. In essence, the foregoing depicts that without proper measures and a strong culture of accountability, the actual process of citizen participation and representation of their interests through their councillor can be at risk of becoming a mere symbol of the idealized.

On the flipside, there were observations which purported that councils operated differently at times depending on the specialties of technical staff available. It was noted by councillors of one of the councils that since the DEC is responsible for compiling, analysing and advising the councillors on how best to prioritise their development plans, the way gender balance is inculcated across the plans has gained strong shape since the introduction of focal officer on gender and development in the councils.

Comparing with periods when the council had no such officers in place, their introduction is going a long way in enhancing gender mainstreaming on a more consistent basis unlike the random efforts played by Non state advocates and activists, who at times have no funding and are nowhere to be seen.

Being that most advocates and gender experts usually focus their interventions more on women leaders, There was never enough time for male councillors to attain the same edge over the gender dimension of policy development as women councillors. The councillors argued that the constant in-house training and mentorship that both the male and female councillors are now given in relation to every important decision that has to be made, strongly shapes the council's willingness to accommodate a balanced gender impact. While this might not be typical of all councils, it may suggest a possible area of further exploration.

v. *The role of advocacy in shaping policy*

Advocacy work was identified among the most important factors that shape the way representation of women's interests are concerned. 11% of the councillors indicated that intensive advocacy work strongly shapes the way the needs and interest of women and other marginalized groups are incorporated into the decisions of the council. While it was referred to the least, there is a crosscutting concession to the impact that advocacy has played in influencing the way councils prioritise development.

Interviewing one councillor from Lilongwe district, where the occupation of most rural communities is agriculture and so a majority of their women and girls work in the same, it was revealed that intensive advocacy work at the council and with each and every councillor therein has seen tremendous policy action by the council to promote joint-tenancy of land as well as policies to promote inheritance rights for widowed spouses and orphaned families. This is in agreement with the findings of Chiweza (2016), who found that advocacy work led to quite an increase in passage of policies that favour women. This also speaks highly in terms of how the critical mass theory overlooks the influence of influential policy actors who are external to policy chambers.

vi. *Political parties*

As discussed in passing through the other factors, political party politics have quite a strong influence in shaping council's willingness to accept particular interest.

From the submissions of 26% of the respondents, it was revealed that inter-party⁵ competitions compromise the objectivity of the councils in decision making processes. Most councillors who were not from the ruling party expressed that strong counterparts from ruling political parties are often very powerful in the council to the point that even council secretariats heed them the most. This was also reported in the findings of Joly and Dandoy (2018), who reported that political parties especially when in power often use state resources to boost the delivery of results that uniquely align with the promises of their parties. The end result becomes that local governments become captured to prioritise on the crosscutting manifesto/agenda of parties in power.

Building on the foregoing, it was further revealed that under such circumstances, the situation is worse when ruling parties have majority representation in the council, such that consensus largely depends on who said what and not what was said.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter presented an analytical discussion of the research findings. The first section delved on the socioeconomic profile of all respondents that participated in the research and the implication of their different attributes on the findings of the research.

⁵ Political party

The second section discussed on the differences in how the female councillor and male councillors conceptualise representation for women, and the factors that shape such. While most female councillors, by virtue of their proximity to gender and development experts, typified the descriptive model of representation, overall perceptions have the model preferred the least preferred. For women constituents, demographic attributes on education and economic activity seemed to have a strong bearing in shaping the way women constituents relate with their councillors. Where women were predominantly more educated and economically active, their interest and capacity to actively participate in politics proved enhanced and they therefore preferred and imposed the delegate model of leadership. The delegate model which seems to be more patronized by male councillors was observed to be the most preferred model even by women constituents.

The foregoing was followed by a discussion on the way women constituents, councillors, gender experts and the general populace prioritise on the gender needs of women in local development plans. The study found that there are slight discrepancies in the way women perceive their needs from the way gender experts view them.

It also revealed that most communities characterize development as more centred on tangible community amenities and this determines voter's perception on great leadership delivery. It was also observed that most female councillors have a more advanced perspective of women's interests. Nevertheless, most male councillors and some female councillors adopt prioritisation patterns that ignore gendered approaches to appease the perception of the "voting" general electorate.

The final section discussed the various factors that mediate the adoption of women's interests in congressional contexts of local policy making. The study found that while the foregoing somewhat vindicates the resemblance premise in that most women and female councillors seemed to act as a collective especially in the VDCs and ADCs, as the avenues get more political with every the upper chamber, capacity for women to act as a coalition is failed as they divide along political lines. The most important observation of all was that the policy chambers are highly competitive and have very dynamic institutional factors such that whoever rules, needs to master the art of adapting.

This resonates with Celis (2008) who pointed out that Institutional contexts are not stable configurations, but dynamic systems which impose the need for adaptability and flexibility on actors with intention to advance the needs and interests of women.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.Introduction

This study sought to understand the extent to which the gender resemblance and critical masses of female councillors, enhance the substantive representation of women's interests in local development planning. In effort to build on previous related studies on the descriptive model and substantive models of representation in Malawi, this study sought to assess the compared performance of male councillors and female councillors from the perspective of the women they represent, as well as gender equality experts. The study also utilized a gender analytical framework to compare the representational differences of male and female representatives, and the factors that mediate the promotion of women's interest in council level policy processes.

This chapter thus relays the overall conclusions of the study as drawn from its array of findings, aside discussing its implications on policy and practice; as well as recommending on potential areas for further study on the topic.

5.2.Conclusion

On the overall the findings of the study demonstrate that gender resemblance and critical masses thereof, barely enhanced female councillor's capacity to effect the substantive representation of women's policy interests in local policy and development planning processes. Rather, the study found that women's representation is enhanced whenever there was a strong nexus of: representation models that typified the delegate type of relationship a councillor and women constituents; and councillor' self-cultivated abilities to navigate through political, institutional barriers and other types of contextual factors of the policy making process.

Firstly, in examining predominant patterns in how representation relationships are modelled amid female councillors vis-à-vis male councillors and their female constituents, the study found that there are strong differences in the conceptualisations of leadership and representation approaches of male councillor's vis-à-vis female councillors. While about 63% of engaged male councillors typified the delegate model of representation, most female councillors strongly typified the resemblance model predominantly due to their strong and systematic exposure to feminist advocacy and orientations.

On the other hand, the study found that most women constituents opted for a councillor who typified the delegate model of leadership and representation. with an observed strong trend of dissatisfaction among many women constituents over inequalities as a result of growing knowledge on their rights and roles through local development systems through education and civic education, many women were observed as getting to assume an active political culture; in demand of open, interactive, delegable and accountable councillors regardless of gender. However, women who have less education rather seemed to not know how much of this privilege they were forfeiting as they cared less even when their leaders who behaved anyhow, which in turn, did shape and reinforce the type of leadership that existed as far as representation models are concerned.

Secondly, the studies evaluation of the extent to which female councillors in comparison to male councillors prioritise on women's gender needs in local development planning, revealed that at a broader level, male councillors and female councillors do not prioritise on gendered needs the same. Most female councillors' awareness and prioritisation patterns of gendered needs and policy interests have quite a categorical resemblance with those of women constituents as they both prioritise on practical gender needs first, then household needs second. At a specific level however, such similarity only mirrored that of very small sections of women constituents with whom they had strong similarities as there was an observed lack of homogeneity in the specifics pertaining what various communities of women conceptualise as priority interests.

It is therefore arguable that, Gender background and experience, unless being loosely interpreted through the lens of biological resemblance, are too fluid of phenomena for resemblance to be easily reached even among personalities of a similar sex.

Lastly, the study found that the impact of gender resemblance and critical masses in enhancing the representation of women's interests in local development planning is largely minute. Due the multiplicity of factors involved with respect to the institutional setting of the policy process, representative's efficacy to champion any interests lies in a nexus of many other attributes other than gender resemblance. Championing minority or sectional interests to upset inequalities was also observed as posing a very tough political career.

5.3.Implications of the study on policy and literature

In view of the above findings, scholars must consider competing interpretations of what constitutes 'good substantive representation as articulated by different actors inside *and* outside of legislatures. There is therefore need for intensified focus towards promoting the empowerment of women through knowledge, to a place where they would be able to make the right choices and demands for the sustainable attainment of gender equality. In agreement with Kabeer (1999), the study indicates that gender equality strategies cannot bypass the process of contending women's lack of knowledge. Civic education causes women to gain a capacity by which they can re-examine and redefine their own life choices and pursue their own goals.

Further, the study indicates that political representatives respond the most to the perceived expectations of their constituents. However, some communities' average knowledge and awareness limits their ability to appreciate what their more critical needs are. As such if what experts advocate for is not in line with the priorities of the grassroots, politicians will never be trained enough to do what is best. The implication is that there is need for more investment in civic education of the public so that once they are aware, they will be able to shape their leaders' towards the right direction through various ways that connote democratic accountability.

Thirdly, the quality of the representational relationship between representatives and the represented deserves greater attention. The study shows that while most of literature focuses on how to get more women into power, enhancing the quality of the communication and connections between the represented and the representative has an effect in the way both male and female representatives are able to articulate the needs of women, thus contributing to the attainment of gender equality.

Lastly, the study also indicates that discussions on women's substantive representation in policy should never underestimate policy institutions. It therefore follows that beyond a representatives resemblance or representational style with their people all of which enhance his/her understanding of the people's needs, policy contexts and institutions require representatives that are strategic, influential and powerful enough so as to successfully contend against contextual barriers through making critical collaborations and partnership with other powerful actors to challenge a status quo.

5.4. Areas for further study

In terms of future research, the study recommends for more inquiry on whether it is viable or appropriate for constituency leaders to be predominated with the duty of representing sectional interests at the expense of the whole. What could be the best strategy of adapting the paradoxical nature that the foregoing raises so that equality is not promoted at the expense of ones' political career?

Being that the study also calls for a strong recognition of the fact that women's representation does not take place in an institutional vacuum and that it is shaped by the context, even as it can also shapes it, There is therefore need for more inquiry into how politics and other institutional dynamics reinforce inequalities such as women's marginalized status.

Another critical area for future research consideration pertains to the role or impact of Gender focal officers in promoting gender mainstreaming in councils. Technical gaps in the way experts and lay people perceive gender representation calls for explorations on what their effect would be in attaining sustainable empowerment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with random women and girls.

1. HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Name:	Marital status:
Village:	Age:
Traditional Authority:	Number of children:
District:	Profession
	Level of education

2. PRIORITY ISSUES

- a. Major day by day challenges faced by the family
- b. Desired interventions (5)

3. TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH REPRESENTATIVE

- a. Proximity to councillor
- b. Observed differences in the agency of male and female councillors to them

4. IMPACT AND CHALLENGES OF VAPS

- a. Status of life before intervention
- b. Recommendations in the administration of VAPs

APPENDIX 2:

Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with male and female councillors.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name:	Level of education
Sex:	Previous Profession
Age:	Political Affiliation
Marital status:	
District and Ward:	

2. INITIAL MOTIVATIONS FOR BECOMING A COUNCILLOR

a) What or Which of these motivated you to become a councillor

- Develop my ward
- Agent for gender Equality, Social Inclusion
- My people/Political party
- Future MP ambitions

3. INCLINATION OF PREFERENCES(top 5)

a) self-reported priorities,

4. POSITION ON GENDER SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

a) What is your knowledge and reaction to that?

b) Do you think as a leader you have a special responsibility to advocate for the interests of Women or focusing on developments that benefit everyone all the time is better for you?

5. REPRESENTATIONAL STYLE

a) Do you think your age and gendered experiences enhance or limit your capacity to represent marginalized and vulnerable women and Children

b) As a representative, which is better for you and on a scale of 1 to 5:

- To study your constituents and decide what you think is best for the town?
- Or to make time/ways of having them tell you what they want and give them feedback every step of the way

c) How often do you report back to the people on progress of council meetings (*to be triangulated*)

- d) Have you ever visited or invited to the meeting any groups of marginalized and vulnerable families from your town(*to be triangulated*)
6. REPRESENTATION BEHAVIOUR
 - a) Voting behaviour; on a scale of 1 to 5, how often does he/or she speak about specific concerns of poor or vulnerable women or girls during council meetings. (*to be triangulated*)
 - b) How many bills/proposals have you ever tabled in a council meeting and how much of them are gender specific(*to be triangulated*)
7. PARTICIPATION ON VAPS AND WITH KEY COMMITTEES
 - a) What do you know about VAPs and DDPs
 - b) Are you a member of any of the groups listed
 - c) Do you have a position in of any of the groups listed
 - d) do you attend every VDC meeting of the group on a scale of 1 to 5
8. PERSONAL INITIATIVES
 - a) Are there any groups of marginalized women or children that you have ever helped since your career? And How
9. ANALYSIS OF MICROLEVEL MEDIATORS OF SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION
 - a) To what extent do you think your Resemblance in sex and in experiences to women or any groups makes you a better advocate for them?
 - Have you ever seen people who are not women, but champion the cause of women better than women?
 - Are there any other ways by which one can be made to become good at representing women when he is not a woman
 - b) Representation Style: Which one is more powerful in determining what one strongly advocates for;
 - Resemblance vs. Delegation
 - Resemblance vs. Trusteeship
 - c) On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you think anyone who is not a woman can be changed in terms of understanding, willingness and ability to advocate for women

- Resemblance vs. Party Ideology
- Resemblance vs. Feminist Lobbyists
- Resemblance vs. Feminist Orientation

10. On a scale of 1-5 can anyone who is not a woman be better in representing women through any of those?

11. ANALYSIS OF MACROLEVEL MEDIATORS OF SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION

- a) Which factors do you think have more power in determining how a council to decide for a policy that favours women's interests more?

APPENDIX 3:

Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with sampled members from: VDC members, CBOs and Council staff

1. knowledge on interests of women and girls
 - a. Understanding of the five key issues facing all women
 - b. Understanding of the five key challenges facing girls
 - c. What interventions and changes do you know of that have impacted women and girls?
2. Congruence of passed DDP or resolutions to interests of and women n general
 - a. General reaction and activity of sessions over Women empowerment related discussions
 - b. Content analysis of DDP or policies or laws passed
3. Congruence of Idealized style and patterns of representation
 - a) Do you think there age and gendered experiences qualify any one when it comes to the way you have observed the championing of the interests of marginalized and vulnerable women and Children
 - b) on a scale of 1 to 5: how many what is the most common approach for most councillors
 - To study your constituents and decide what you think is best for the town?
 - Or to make time/ways of having them tell you what they want and give them feedback every step of the way
 - How often do most councillors report back to the people on progress of council meetings (to be triangulated?)
4. Proportion of councillors in How many councillors participate in the VDC on a scale of 1 to 5
 - a. Do you think women are more inclined towards patronizing such meetings than men or it does not matter
 - b. How often do councillors patronize these meetings(1-5)

5. ANALYSIS OF MICROLEVEL MEDIATORS OF SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION
 - a. TO what extent do you think your Resemblance in sex and in experiences to women or any groups makes you a better advocate for them
 - Have you ever seen people who are not women, but champion the cause of women better than women?
 - Are there any other ways by which one can be made to become good at representing women when he is not a woman
 - b. Representation Style: Which one is more powerful in determining what one strongly advocates for;
 - Resemblance vs. Delegation and
 - Resemblance vs. Trusteeship,
 - c. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you think anyone who is not a woman can be changed in terms of understanding, willingness and ability to advocate for women
 - Resemblance vs. Party Ideology
 - Resemblance vs. Feminist Lobbyists
 - Resemblance vs. Feminist Orientation
6. ANALYSIS OF MACROLEVEL MEDIATORS OF SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION (FOR FEMALE COUNCILLORS ONLY)
 - a. Which factors strongly influence the adoption of women's interests in a council planning meetings