
# Assessing the Parliamentary Contribution to the Elimination of Food Insecurity in Rural Malawi: An Historical and Grassroots Perspective, 1998–2018

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**DECLARATION**

I declare that this dissertation entitled *Assessing parliamentary contribution to the elimination of food insecurity in rural Malawi: An historical and grassroots perspective, 1998–2018*, is my own work. Neither the whole work nor any portion of it has been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university, and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged properly and the full references exhibited in the reference list.

**Gloria Kombo Dzidekha**

**Signed:** 

**Date:** **29 October 2021**

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ABSTRACT

Although Malawi is an agriculture-based economy, the country experiences extensive food insecurity, hunger, malnutrition, low productivity, and low income. Currently, food insecurity affects 58% of the population and 50.7% of the population live below the poverty line. In Malawi, parliament is key in the legal and policy-making processes. It also has a constitutional mandate to represent the people's interests and basic needs – in this case, food security, a fundamental human right; however, food insecurity still persists. The study assesses the parliamentary contribution to the legislation of policy that aims at reducing food insecurity. It examines the trajectory of the food security policy in the Malawi Legislature and its effectiveness, from the perspectives of citizens and Members of Parliament (MPs). The study further investigates the barriers that limit MPs from performing their functions towards achieving food security. It used qualitative methods, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and an historical document review. The study findings show that parliament does not optimally function towards improving food security policy mainly because of the Executive's dominance and control of parliament which affect legislative functions. The study further found that MPs disconnect from their constituency soon after winning elections. The findings also indicate that social accountability is slowly maturing among citizens, who still largely lack knowledge of human rights, governance and accountability. The study concludes that complex political factors influence and affect food security policy in Malawi.



**Keywords:** Malawi, parliament, food security, political economy, social contract, social accountability

**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

| | |
|---|---|
| AU | African Union |
| 3Cs | Chamber, Committee and Constituency |
| ADMARC | Agriculture and Development Marketing Corporation |
| ASAC | Agriculture Sector Adjustment Credit |
| CISANET | Civil Society Agriculture Network |
| CSG | Child Support Grant |
| DfID | Department of International Development |
| DPP | Democratic Progressive Party |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| FILP | Farm Input Loan Programme |
| FISP | Farm Input Subsidy Programme |
| FSRP | Fertiliser Subsidy Removal Programme |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GoM | Government of Malawi |
| HSG | Head of State and Government |
| HLPE | High Level Panel of Experts |
| HDI | Human Development Index |
| IHS | Integrated Household Survey |
| ICESCR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| IDA | International Development Agency |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| MCP | Malawi Congress Party |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NAC | Nyasaland African Congress |
| NFRA | National Food Reserve Agency |
| NSO | National Statistical Office |

| | |
|---|---|
| PAEbFI | Paradox of Agribased Economy but Food Insecure |
| PEA | Political Economy Approach |
| PoR | Paradox of Representation |
| PSG | Presidential System Government |
| PP | Proportional Piling |
| PTP | Parliamentary Training Programme |
| PRA | Participatory Rural Appraisal |
| ROL | Representation, Oversight and Legislation |
| SA | Social Accountability |
| SASSA | South Africa Social Security Agency |
| SAI | Social Accountability Initiative |
| SCT | Social Contract Theory |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SGRs | Strategic Grain Reserves |
| SO | Standing Order |
| SONA | State of the Nation Address |
| SSA | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| TA | Thematic Analysis |
| TIP | Targeted Input Programme |
| UDHR | Universal Declaration Human rights |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| WB | World Bank |

**Table of Contents**

## LIST OF FIGURES



## LIST OF TABLES

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction

Food security is a key component that contributes to the socio-economic development of every nation. Food is a life-sustaining element and a driver of productivity at individual, community, national and global levels (FAO, 2016; WHO, 2016). The SDGs are a UN blueprint guideline for nations that replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in an effort to achieve sustainable development by 2030 (UNDP, 2016). The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, and 3 are: Goal 1: *No poverty*, meant to end poverty in all its forms, everywhere; Goal 2: *Zero hunger,* meant to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 3: *Good health and well-being,* meant to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, respectively. All the SDGs are founded on the concept of human rights and the indivisibility of rights (Long, 2018; UNDP 2019; 2022; William, Exeter, Gibb and Hunt; 2019). Indivisibility of rights derives from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 which upholds that all rights are fundamentally united, equal, universal, indivisible and interrelated. The indivisibility of rights asserts that economic, social, cultural, civil, environment and political rights are equal and essential in order to achieve all the human rights. Some of the fundamental human rights include, right to life, right to food, education and health **(**UNDP, 2015; 2019**).** All these rights are interdependent on each other to be achieved.

Similarly, the SDGs are integrated and interrelated; action in one goal affects outcomes in another goal and that development should balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. The realisation of SGDs is also an achievement of many human rights (UNDP, 2022). Looking at the multi-dimensional nature of SDGs, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, depends on the other SDGs to thrive. Some SDGs that are critically connected to SDGs 2 are 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 13 and 15(UNDP, 2015; HLPE; 2020). Goal 1: End Poverty, meant to eradicate all forms of poverty. Goal 4; Education which ensures an inclusive and equitable quality education and promote sustainable opportunities for all, one of the fundamental human rights. Goal 5: Gender Equality, which promotes women

empowerment, economic growth and sustainable future. Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation that sustains life; Goal 8 which is decent work and economic growth, which promote per capita income and economic growth and development. Goal 13: Climate Action; which is meant to promote natural resources for sustainable future and Goal 17 which is Life on land (UNDP, 2020).

With this integration in SDGs, there is a critical nexus between Goal 2: Zero Hunger and all the SDGs because Zero Hunger influences the achievement of all SDGs and human rights including the right to life, the right to food, health, and education. Hunger and malnutrition has been the main cause of underdevelopment, in Africa, as it causes poor health, low levels of energy, causing low education attainment, low income among other challenges and all of which can in turn cause greater hunger and malnutrition creating a vicious cycle to humankind (FAO,2016; HLPE, 2021). On the other hand, when people have adequate food, they are energetic and healthy which increase their productivity and income per capita and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). When income per capita increases, it improves people's wellbeing and development as they have capability to access all essential needs of life (Long, 2018;HLPE, 2021;UNDP, 2022 FAO, 2016; William, et al,2019). It is therefore, important that all goals are approached holistically to achieve a greater impact of not only Goal 2, but also the rest of the goals and rights to ensure that they are achieved by 2030 (UNDP,2015; HLPE, 2020).

Although food is a right and important to human well-being, at least 1 billion people are currently hungry and food insecure (FAO, 2016). This situation causes malnutrition of all kinds, high mortality and morbidity rates, low productivity and low income, with Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) being the most affected (FAO, 2016; World Bank, 2011).

Being a basic right, food security should be one of the key areas in governance. There are many institutions of governance mandated to ensure right and SDGs are achieved and that food security is provided to citizens. Parliament is one of these institutions of governance. Parliament, as a people's representative, maker of laws and policies, and a broker of national development; is a source of political and economic decisions and authority of nations (IPU, 2015; May 2004; World Bank, 2018). In most cases, politicians as duty bearers, including Members of Parliament (MPs), make promises and agree with citizens through the social contract reflected in constitutions, policies, manifestos, development plans and the provision of service delivery. However, weak

institutional governance structures emanating from political and economic power complexities, have affected institutions of governance, particularly parliament. As a result of this, legislators largely do not fulfil their constitutional mandates and promises during their tenure (Keefer, 2004; Sahley, 2005; Tostensen, 2017; Laskar, 2014; Perry and Villamizar-Duarte, 2016). Moreover, the self-interests of most politicians are paramount when dealing with issues, rather than representing the interests of the people they are meant to serve (Booth et al., 2006; Chingaipe et al., 2016; Chirwa, 2005; Patel, 2008; Sahley et al., 2005; Tostensen, 2017). This tendency has affected the socio-economic progress in Malawi.

Although the constitution mandates the government to ensure the *right to food*, food insecurity has been extensive, especially in rural Malawi. In most cases, parliamentarians as duty bearers seem not to fulfil their constitutional duties, promises and manifestos, thus failing to represent the people's interests as expected of them (Patel, 2008). This study sought to assess the legislative contribution to the reduction of food insecurity in rural Malawi. It shows that legislators, after having entered into the social contract with the people, change their stance, resulting in the political and economic power dynamics affecting the legislative food security policies in Malawi.

### 1.1 Study Context

Malawi is a land-locked country in SSA, densely populated, with an agriculture-based economy. It is located in the south-east of the continent, bordering Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique, with a land size of 118 484 square kilometres. The country is experiencing a rapid population growth; between 2008 and 2017 it grew from 13.1 million people to approximately 17 million translating to a 34% increase. The population is expected to double by 2030. The rise in population is putting pressure on land and farm size and reducing food productivity as well as affecting the environment (GoM, 2017; NSO, 2017; World Bank, 2018).

#### 1.1.1 Economy

The Malawian economy is one of the least developed, making it one of the poorest countries in the world. The World Bank (2018) asserts that although it has embarked on economic and structural reforms, Malawi is still slow to establish and sustain significant economic growth and development over the years.

The World Bank Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) Report for Malawi (2018) indicates that the rain-fed agriculture economy is fragile and vulnerable to external shocks, particularly climatic shocks and political influence. Agriculture provides livelihood to at least 90% of the poor households in both rural and urban Malawi. Three-quarters of the total exports come from agriculture and provide for 65% of total employment in the country. The sector employs at least 80% of the rural population. While the majority of the population depend on the agricultural sector, they produce only 30% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and most people remain trapped in low productivity and subsistence agriculture. Agriculture is the main source of food and income, employment, foreign exchange, and government revenue. At least 67% of the national income is derived from agriculture.

The World Bank (2018) indicates that the agricultural sector GDP has dropped by half of the economic outputs over the past 50 years and Malawi's economy remains among the global 15 national economies that are agriculture-based. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2017), the annual GDP growth rate in 2017 was at 4.5% and was expected to rise to 5.5% by 2020 and it is expected that a rise in population will affect the strength to which Malawi can reinforce its GDP per capita. The GDP per capita is expected to increase by 25%, only if the fertility rate is reduced by 2.3% by 2050.

Malawi has a number of policies meant to eliminate all dimensions of food insecurity and poverty deriving from the national development strategy known as the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), including the Agriculture and Food Security Policy (2016). These policies are largely inconsistent (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Tostensen, 2017).



### 1.1.2 Poverty and unemployment

Malawi's efforts at poverty reduction have been slow. The World Bank indicates that at least 50.7% of Malawi's population is poor, living below the international poverty line of USD 190 per day. Malawi also registered a slow pace of poverty reduction as compared to the average pace in SSA and its neighbouring countries (World Bank, 2018).

### 1.1.3 Food security situation in Malawi

The Malawi food security situation is determined by production and access to the maize staple. There are many contributing factors to the food insecurity of farmers' households in rural Malawi, including, land size, population growth, climate change and adverse weather conditions, low production, inadequate farm inputs, lack of markets and poor access to markets, food price volatility and the lack of irrigation farming (Anderson et al., 2018; Makombe et al., 2010). Food prices increase every year in July until February the following year, because the household food reserves decline, as farmers sell some of their food to private traders, to generate income. Later, during the lean season, they buy back the same food that they sold to the traders (Chinsinga, 2012; Makombe et al., 2010).

Apart from these factors, political influence and power also affect food security policy-making. (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Devereux, 2002b; Hickey, 2006; Makombe et al., 2010). The dominant role of the agrarian agriculture in the economy places maize availability at the centre of politics and the social contract between the state and its citizens (Cammack, 2017; Chinsinga, 2012). A combination of these factors in Malawi has therefore created a *Paradox of Agriculture-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI)* over the years. This term, *PAEbFI,* will be used throughout the study.



### 1.1.4 Famine

Malawi has a notable and long history of famines. From 1949 to 1950 Malawi had a famine (Booth et al., 2006; Devereux, 2009). In 2001/2002 Malawi experienced another famine which left between 47,000 and 85,000 people dead from hunger-related illnesses (Booth et al., 2006; Devereux, 2009; Rubin, 2008). Drought is one of the key causes of famine. Furthermore, the donor advice to the Malawi government to sell the national Strategic Grain Reserves (SGR) when a famine was looming and the delay in their response to the situation, worsened the famine (Booth et al., 2006; Devereux, 2009).

### 1.1.5 Malnutrition

Malnutrition remains a persistent public health challenge in Malawi. At least 37% of the Malawian children are malnourished, with about 1.4 million suffering stunted growth because they are

chronically undernourished (UNICEF; 2018; WFP, 2017). Under-nutrition in women and children is also common. UNICEF (2018) asserts that there are several factors that cause malnutrition in Malawi, including poverty, food insecurity and over-dependence on maize, low education of mothers, and population growth. According to UNICEF (2018) 23% of child deaths in Malawi are related to under-nutrition and 4% of Malawian children under the age of five, suffer from acute malnutrition and the occurrence of child anaemia is at 64%.

### 1.2 Political System in Malawi

The colonial government influenced Malawi's political history. It used the Presidential System of Governance (PSG) that gave extensive political power to the governor as both Head of State and Government (HSG). It centralised and controlled all state and government matters. The Separation of Powers (SoP) was also undermined. The tendencies in the colonial system of government therefore spilled over to the one-party rule and the multi-party governments in Malawi (Hussein, 2004).

After independence in 1964, Kamuzu Banda became the President as well as Head of State and Government (Hussein, 2004). He maintained the PSG. His regime was oppressive and also centralised state and government affairs (Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Hussein, 2004; Patel, 2008). There was an abuse of human rights and citizens could not challenge any political and bureaucratic authority (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Hussein, 2004; Johnson, 2005).



In 1992, people protested against Banda's autocracy and supported the rise of political liberalisation and democracy in Malawi (Hussein, 2004; Patel and Tostensen, 2006). Later, Catholic bishops made an open demand to change a political system through a Pastoral Letter. In 1993, a referendum was held and Malawians voted for a multi-party democracy and a new constitution was adopted on 17 May 1995 (Hussein, 2004; Patel, 2008; Patel and Svåsand, 2007).

### 1.3 Democratic Government System

After adopting a democratic constitution, the so-called First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) was chosen as the electoral system for presidential and parliamentary elections (Hussein, 2004).

The President, who is also the Head of State and Government (HSG) is directly elected every five years and the constitution allows him or her to serve up to a maximum of 10 years or two consecutive terms. The government functions through the Executive, Judiciary and Legislature that operate within the Separation of Powers provided for in Chapter 1,7, 8, 9 of the Constitution. The Separation of Powers ensures institutional independence. The Constitution also provides for the President to assent to bills authorised by the National Assembly (Hussein, 2004). Chapter 8, Section 89 of the Constitution provides extensive powers to the President to preside over the Cabinet and the civil service, with powers to appoint and discharge ministers at will. The Cabinet is chosen within or outside parliament. The President can only be removed through impeachment procedures which normally require a two-thirds majority in Parliament (GoM, 2014; Kuwali, 2013; Patel and Tostensen, 2006).

The Executive includes the President and the Cabinet (Hussein, 2004; Patel, 2008). The Executive is crucial to the proposal and formulation of national policy. The extensive powers of the Executive arm undermine the values of the separation of powers, and render institutions, particularly parliament, subordinate (Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Hussein, 2004; Patel, 2008; Patel and Svåsand, 2006; Svåsand and Mpesi, 2012).

Parliament is made up of the President, Speaker and 193 MPs. The Constitution, Chapter 6, Section 66, provides for the parliamentary structure and its related powers. The chapter also empowers the Legislature to enact laws, represent and reflect the interest of all people of Malawi (GoM, 2004).



**1.4 Problem Statement**

Food insecurity has been a perennial problem for Malawi (FAO, 2019). The country relies significantly on rain-fed agriculture for national consumption and income. However, Malawi experiences persistent chronic food insecurity, hunger and famine. The reasons for food insecurity are many, including population growth and the reducing farm size, climate change and poor governance (Patel and Tostensen, 2006; Tostensen, 2017). The food insecurity and hunger have resulted in poor health, human underweight, low levels of energy, low productivity and consequently low income, especially among poor rural populations, who rely on subsistence farming for livelihoods (WHO, 2016). Over the years, the trend has resulted in a vicious cycle of food insecurity and hunger of the citizenry (Booth et al., 2006; Sahley et al., 2005; Tostensen,

2017). Furthermore, Malawi did not attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs End Line Report (2015) shows that Malawi only achieved four of the eight goals. Among the MDGs not achieved, is Goal 1: *Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger in all its forms* (UNDP, 2015). Considering this scenario, Malawi faces the Paradox of Agriculture-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI).

As a duty bearer and an institution of governance and democracy, the Parliament of Malawi is crucial in legal processes and policy-making. It further has a constitutional mandate to promote the people's welfare, particularly access to and the right to food. However, it appears that effective parliamentary legislation and representation towards the elimination of food insecurity in Malawi is lacking and most MPs neglect their constitutional obligations and instead serve political party ideology and self-interest. These political actors tend to change their stance when they win an election, and assume power and authority. Consequently, legislators violate the social contract promises made through the constitution, policies and programmes (Chinsinga, 2012; Hickey, 2006; Keefer, 2004; Okoth-Ogendo, 2015; Patel, 2008; Patel et al., 2007; Tostensen, 2017; World Bank, 2011). In most cases, the citizens do not receive the benefits of the pledges made by political actors as part of the social contract.

This study considers the role of parliament in the reduction of food insecurity. This is a gap in the empirical studies on food security in Malawi. Most studies focus on parliament and elections, party politics and its influence on national elections, and the relations between the Executive and parliament, overlooking the Legislature's role in relation to food security. To close this gap, this study assesses Parliament's role, as the country's primary political and public policy-making institution, in the elimination of food insecurity in rural Malawi.

The study presents an historical and grassroots perspective from 1998–2018 and it provides policy guidelines regarding legislative governance, citizens' empowerment, social accountability, and the political economy of food security. It is envisaged that the study would contribute to the discourse of legislative and participatory governance in Malawi.

### 1.5 Study Objectives

The main objective of the study is to investigate and assess the parliamentary contribution to the elimination of food insecurity in rural Malawi.

#### 1.5.1 Specific objectives

a) to examine the nature and trajectory of the food security policy in parliament;
b) to examine the effectiveness of food security legislation from the perspective of the grassroots society;
c) to examine the possible barriers that prevent MPs from executing their role regarding food insecurity;
d) to provide policy recommendations on how food security issues could be represented in parliament to stimulate policy changes and implementation.

#### 1.5.2 Research questions

a) How has the issue of food security been handled at the legislative level of governance in Malawi?
b) How effective, from the perspective of the rural citizens in society, has food policy legislation been in Malawi?
c) What are the possible barriers and challenges that prevent MPs from executing their functions regarding food security?
d) What recommendations and solutions are available in response to the research questions?



### 1.6 Chapter Outline

This research paper comprises seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the research subject. It highlights the study context, problem statement, states the objective of the study and the research questions. The second chapter provides the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Chapter three provides an empirical review of food security and politics, global and country contexts. Research design and methodology are explained in detail in chapter four. Chapter five provides the research findings from the legislators' and civil society perspective. Chapter six provides the research

findings from the citizens' perspective and responds to the research questions and objectives. Chapter seven provides a statement of results and a conclusion, policy options and recommendations. It also presents the implications of the study and areas for further study.

### 1.7 Conclusion

The chapter introduced the study, highlighting the study context, problem statement, the objective of the study and the research questions. The following chapter provides the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that explain food security in relation to legislative governance.

## CHAPTER 2

## THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical debate underpinning the discourse of the role of the legislature in the food security policy legislation aimed to reduce food insecurity. The researcher uses the Social Contract Theory (SCT), Political Economy Approach (PEA) and the Social Accountability (SA) framework to explain the interplay of politics and food security. The theories were chosen because of their relevance to the governance and accountability perspectives of the study. The theories are also relevant because the study is grounded in representational governance and theories of change. The researcher uses the problem statement, theories, objectives, literature review, variables, and findings to create the conceptual framework for the study. The framework is used as a tool to understand how covert and overt political factors in the legislature influence and affect food security policy (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The framework explains and connects research concepts of the study to show the inter-relations of state systems and policy governance. The researcher deliberately ensures that concepts in the framework are reflected throughout the study.



### 2.1 The Social Contract Theory

There are several versions of the Social Contract Theory (SCT). Its scholars include Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Perry and Villamizar-Duarte, 2016). The Locke version is relevant to the study because the theory is grounded in representational and participatory governance where people's willpower is key in the formation of the government (Okoth-Ogendo, 2015).

The theory suggests that the formation of government is key for governance of people because there is violence and injustice in people's natural environment (*state of nature*). Therefore, people surrender part of their natural rights to the higher authority in the form of government to govern them and obey its command. In reciprocity, the government guarantees protection of life, their rights, property, liberty and provision of public good and services (Ernst, 2001; Perry and

Villamizar-Duarte, 2016). The Social Contract is key in the discourse of many disciplines including the state, government, and its legitimacy, democratisation, representational democracy, participatory governance, the constitution, and the citizens' rights and social accountability.

### 2.1.1 Natural rights, power and freedoms

The SCT promotes the idea of natural rights, power and freedoms**.** It argues that all people are born with natural rights, power and freedoms but those rights are not protected because humans are naturally, self-seeking and socio-political (Ernst, 2001). The SCT further argues that citizens submit part of their natural rights and agency to the sovereign in search of livelihoods and protection from the state. However, the sovereign does not take all the rights because the principal rights remain with the people (Okoth-Ogendo, 2015). Locke therefore promoted the creation of government in pursuit of the protection of citizens' rights from the violence of their natural environment. With their natural rights, humans willingly surrender and agree to the social contract with political actors in return for protection and provision of rights, goods and services. This arrangement is the source of the government, as a duty bearer (Ernst, 2001; Perry and Villamizar-Duarte, 2016).

The SCT further argues that there is an implicit and explicit agreement in the form of a contract (constitution) between the state (duty bearer) and citizens (right holders) before a government is formed that allows the government to govern the citizens (Hickey and Bracking, 2005; Perry and Villamizar-Duarte, 2016). The Social Contract Theory regards the citizens as *the governed* (rights holders) and the political actors as *governors* (duty bearers*)* who have a constitutional mandate to govern and serve the *governed* as partners in this contract (Chatterjee, 2014). Locke further maintains that the *governed* are the basis of the power of the sovereign (political authority) and the *governed* can use their remaining rights and withdraw power if the government fails to serve the people (Hickey and Bracking, 2005; Klepper; 2019). The SCT is therefore a compact between the state and the citizens, with the social contract regarded as the source of social accountability.

### 2.1.2 The Constitution as the Social Contract

Locke argues that each government should ensure that a constitution has the will, ideas and consent of the people in order to govern (Okoth-Ogendo, 2015). For the state to govern, Locke identified

three branches of the state as pillars of the constitution that authorise it to govern on behalf of the citizens namely, Legislative, Executive and Judicative. Through the mandates in the constitution and policies, the state governs by acting on programmes and projects that achieve service delivery (Chwaszcza, 2013; Klepper, 2019; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017, 2020).

### 2.1.3 Limitations of the Social Contract Theory

This study identifies three notable limitations of the Social Contract Theory. Firstly, Okoth-Ogendo (2015) cites Hugo Grotus (1583–1684) who posited that political power derives from the people's will; however, Grotus differed on the basis of power relations. Grotus argues that once the citizens transfer their right of government to the ruler, citizens forfeit their rights to control the ruler. Therefore, Grotus argues that once it assumes power, the government becomes absolute and functions without accountability to its citizens. What Grotus argued applies to Thomas Hobbes version of the Social Contract where the sovereign or government has absolute powers to govern (Absolutism). In Absolutism, the sovereign has full authority and is not accountable to the citizens. The study has taken the John Locke strand of the Social Contract which argues that government has limited authority; which means that the government is not an ultimate authority over citizens and their natural rights, therefore, it is accountable to citizens.

Secondly, Shivji (2004) argues that although the constitution is a contract between the state and the citizens in many democracies, it becomes a problem for both parties to negotiate the contract because of power imbalances between the political actors and the citizens. Scholars maintain that there is less evidence that the *ruler* and the *ruled* negotiate the constitution as a contract; and when this happens, there are many trade-offs to those less powerful (Okoth-Ogendo, 2015, Shivji, 2004).

Thirdly, critics of the SCT argue that there is no formal contract between the *governors* (state actors) and the *governed* (citizens); it can therefore be violated. Locke argues that although the contract is abstract, there is still an implicit and explicit contract that citizens enter into when they agree to willingly participate in political activities such as voting, endorsement of candidates and manifestos that place political actors in positions of power (Perry and Villamizar-Duarte, 2016). This study agrees with Locke that although there is no formal contract, there is still a compact between the state actors or the governors and the citizens through political participation.

## 2.2 Political Economy Approach

There are many scholars who pursued the Political Economy Approach (PEA), including Francois Quesnay, Karl Marx and Adam Smith (Cohn, 2016). These scholars assert that society is made up of powerful classes of people that dominate the political and economic production activities (Cohn, 2016; Heywood, 2017). Today, the PEA is important in political thought because it helps to understand how national policy decisions are made regarding production, distribution, utilisation and reservations of national resources (Keefer, 2004). It also focuses on the centrality of politics and examines how political power is contested, secured and exercised**.**

The PEA also considers citizens and political actors, institutions, systems and structures and legal frameworks as key players of the state (Adam and Dercon, 2009; Cohn, 2016). Thus, the PEA helps to recognise that political and economic benefits motivate political actors, including legislators, policy-makers and international development agencies.

### 2.2.1 The political–economic nexus

The state is at the centre of all political and economic power. The political and economic processes are deeply related because the operations of the political institutions can expand or constrain economic activities in a nation (Adam and Dercon, 2009). Cohn (2016) defines an economy as the system of producing, distributing and utilising wealth and politics as the set of rules and institutions that govern social and economic interactions. Furthermore, political economy is the phenomenon whereby political choices, power, institutional structure and forms of governance influence economic choices (Adam and Dercon, 2009; Cohn, 2016; Torvik, 2009). There are two approaches to PEA – the political and economic approaches.



### 2.2.2 Political approach

The political approach focuses on the formations, operations and movements of political forces of the state and how political actors use power to make policy decisions and allocate national resources (Cohn, 2016; Frieden and Lake, 2002; Heywood, 2017; Hickey and Bracking, 2005; Maxwell, 1999; Torvik, 2009). It is in this dimension of PEA, where national policy agendas are made. In this approach, political actors use political power to produce and distribute public resources by asking the '5 Ws + H' questions: *What* policy? *Why* the policy? *Who* benefits from

the policy? *When* to implement the policy? *What* are the levels of power and influence in policy? *How* should the policy be made? (Refer to the Conceptual Framework in Figure 1). Adam and Dercon (2009), Hickey (2006), and Keefer (2004) argue that if politics is not objective in its policy decisions, it produces and reproduces poverty at different levels of society.

### 2.2.3 Economic approach

The economic approach is concerned with the socio-economic forces and how they affect politics (Adam and Dercon, 2009; Cohn, 2016). It deals with how scarce resources are produced and allocated for different uses among state actors, institutions, and citizens. It focuses on the hidden economic power of government that influences and manipulates economic decisions and activities. The government has the power to control and finance all sectors of an economy using scarce national resources. The economic dimension approach typically answers the central economic problem of scarce resource that make nations plan, prioritise and budget, and choose and distribute resources in an economy (Cohn, 2016; Frieden and Lake, 2002; Todaro and Smith, 2012; Torvik, 2009). A government's economic choices therefore affect national resources and the country's socio-economic activities.

### 2.2.4 Limitations of the Political Economy Approach

One of the critiques of the PEA is that power complexities and inequalities within the state and government may not favour the optimal distribution of national resources because political actors are mostly self-seeking (Frieden and Lake, 2002).

Another notable critique of the PEA is that it relies on a conducive political environment and political will. Unsworth (2009) and Whaites (2017) argue that in the absence of a politically smart environment, the PEA may not produce the desired results at various levels of governance and development. Therefore, the PEA is dependent on the political environment to thrive.

## 2.3 The Social Accountability Framework

Social accountability originates from the concept of participatory development in the 1980s. Social accountability is a process whereby the citizens as rights holders hold the state accountable. Sabates-Wheeler, et al. (2017; 2020) define duty bearers as actors who have a particular obligation

to promote human rights and serve their interests (Agarwal et al., 2009; Ayliffe et al., 2017; Malena and McNeil, 2010; Patel, 2008; Pawłowski and Dubrow, 2011). Social accountability recognises that every person is inherently born with rights and that the state should protect them. The rights holders are entitled to claim their rights, through holding the duty bearers accountable when their rights are violated. Social accountability is key in the discourse of human rights, representational democracy, participatory governance and society-state relations (Ayliffe et al., 2017; Mansuri and Rao, 2013).

### 2.3.1 The state as a duty bearer and citizens as rights holders

The state, as a duty bearer, its elected political actors and bureaucrats have the responsibility to provide the basic social rights to all people and ensure that citizens' entitlements are provided to them as provided by national legal frameworks (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017; 2020). Therefore, the state should demonstrate the political will to provide public goods and services and protect social rights.

The social accountability approach views citizens as the rightful owners of the state wealth and resources. Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2017; 2020) argue that for active citizenship to be effective, the citizens as rights holders should be active participants, rather than being passive recipients of state policies, programmes, goods and services. Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2017; 2020) conceptualise active citizens as social rights holders, exercising a form of agency as users and choosers of policy and as actors and shapers of policy. Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2017; 2020) assert that apart from inherent civil and political rights, citizens should further add social rights to strengthen their ability to demand services.

Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2017; 2020) further assert that citizens as rights holders have the agency, as an enabling force that encourages them to act and participate in political, social and economic decisions, as a fundamental right; as recipients of state services, they should always be actors and shapers of policies and programmes and not be passive beneficiaries of state activities.

### 2.3.2 Horizontal and vertical accountability

Horizontal accountability is characterised by the same hierarchical level within formal relationships, systems, institutions, structures, and agencies of the state (Hickey and King, 2016).

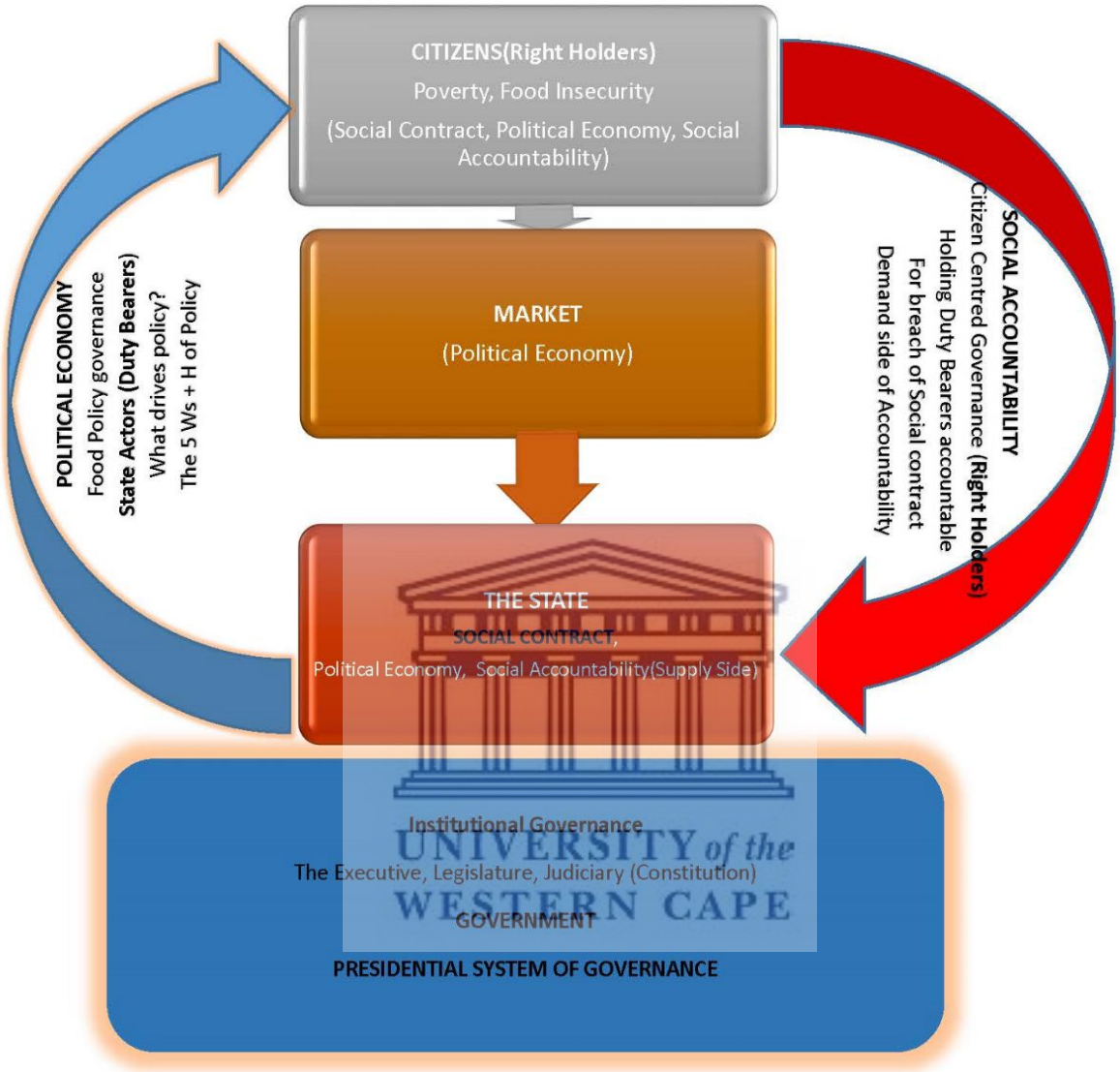
In this type of accountability, a state actor has the authority to demand explanations from another arm of the state. It focuses on internal oversight processes within the state (Hickey and King, 2016; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017, 2020). The state and its arms and agencies are the sources of this accountability.

Vertical accountability is a bottom-up form of accountability. Citizens and non-state actors (for example, civil society organisations) drive this form of accountability to directly hold state actors accountable (Hickey and King, 2016). Vertical accountability has also been proven to enhance citizen-state relations. Vertical accountability is exercised through many ways, including elections, formal engagement, peaceful demonstrations, and petitions (Hickey and King, 2016; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017, 2020).

### 2.3.3 Limitation of the Social Accountability Framework

Social accountability has been challenged on the premise that the complexities and realities of political and economic power and social inequalities such as income and education in a society may limit citizens to exercise this framework effectively (Ackerman, 2005; Hickey and King, 2016; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017, 2020).

**Figure 1: Conceptual framework of political analysis of the legislative role of food security policy in Malawi**




Source: Author's creation, May 2020

The *presidential system of governance* at the bottom of the framework is a source of government and all its structures and systems in Malawi (Executive, Judiciary, and Legislature). The framework reveals that through the *constitution*, these institutions initiate and influence public and social policy (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Hussein, 2004; Patel, 2008; Patel and Tostensen, 2006). It

shows that, as it was in colonial and one-party governance administrations, government still centralises and controls all domestic and foreign policies. The framework further reveals that governance is largely founded on a fragile political and legal framework that compromises not only the legislature but also other institutions of governance. This researcher argues that the system of governance and the fragility of the legal frameworks are the key sources of weak governance systems in Malawi.

*The State*: The state controls all political and economic powers. The framework therefore, suggests that political actors dominate governance institutions such as the legislature; consequently the institutions are weakened. Therefore, the *state* (as duty bearer), *citizens* (as rights holders) and the *market* are closely interconnected; a political decision in one dimension affects the whole nation. There is also an important interplay among *the social contract*, the *political economy* and the *social accountability* within the state governance (Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Hussein, 2004; Patel and Tostensen, 2006).

The *Social Contract:* Is sealed with the C*onstitution,* through government policies and programmes (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017; 2020). Okoth-Ogendo (2015) argues that because of irrationality and self-interest, government and its arms change when they assume power and exploit citizens.

*Political economy:* After assumption of power, *the government* has a mandate to govern. It is at this level of governance that various drivers of public policy are made. The government uses its political and economic powers to decide on *who* benefits with *what* resources, *where, when, why and how (5Ws and H)* the benefits will be allocated. At this level, government produces, mobilises and distributes the national resources (Cohn, 2016; Perry and Villamizar-Duarte, 2016).

*Social accountability:* If political actors do not work according to the will of the people and fulfil the social contract, citizens hold them accountable (Cammack, 2012; Hickey and King, 2016; Patel and Tostensen, 2006; Perry and Villamizar-Duarte, 2016) (as shown by the red arrow in the framework in Figure 1). The framework therefore suggests that political complexities pertaining to the political economy of institutions – particularly parliament – affect food security policy governance.

There is a strong relationship among the three theories used in this study. In Locke's perspective, when citizens as sources of governing power and right holders vote in an election and a government assumes office, a Social Contract is activated. Through powers transferred from the citizens, government as Duty bearer engages in Political Economy. It unpacks its manifesto and plans for implementation of promised projects to achieve service delivery. It starts to create and distribute national resources on behalf of citizens, as the governed. Government creates policies, programmes and projects according to its manifesto (Perry and Villamizar-Duarte, 2016 Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017; 2020). However, the government (governors) at Political Economy level, in most cases largely do not operate according to the promises of the Social Contract. It is in this regard, therefore that Citizens (the governed) feel neglected and resolve to engage Social Accountability to control the government by holding political actors accountable through various ways such as demonstrations, petitions and strikes.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The chapter presented the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that map the influence of political actors in shaping and influencing food security policy at legislative level. The following chapter presents the empirical findings on the perspectives of the Members of Parliament on the legislative contribution of food security policy in Malawi.

## CHAPTER 3

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW: FOOD SECURITY AND POLITICS – GLOBAL AND COUNTRY CONTEXTS

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of empirical studies on food security and politics in three sections. Firstly, it provides global and country contexts of food security. Secondly, it discusses the general role of parliament. Thirdly, it considers the specific role of parliament in addressing food security in Malawi. It also presents an overview of politics and governance in Malawi. The chapter also identifies research gaps in the empirical studies.

### 3.1 Food Security

#### 3.1.1 Definition of food security

Food security is the availability of food for all people to sustain a life. The World Bank defines food security as: "*Secure access by all people at all times to enough food for a healthy, active life*" (World Bank, 1986: 1). While there are several other definitions of food security, this study chose the World Bank definition, because it has a direct link to Goal 2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aims to end hunger and achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. The definition is also related to the six dimensions of food security namely, availability, access, utilisation, and stability, agency and sustainability. (FAO, 2016; HLPE, 2020). Initially, over the past 50 years, there were only four dimensions of food security, thus availability, access, utilisation and stability in the discourse of food security (Clapp, Moseley, Burlingame, and Termine 2021; HLPE, 2021). However, in the recent decades it has been observed that although the four dimensions of food security are key to the concept of food security; there have been rising challenges in ensuring food security, elimination of hunger and malnutrition because of inequalities in food systems characterised by uneven power dynamics and the worsening global climate and ecological systems (Clapp,et al., 2021; HLPE 2020). In response to this gap, the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) in 2020 recommended the inclusion of Agency and Sustainability to the management of food security and nutrition systems in 2020

(HLPE, 2020). The HLPE recommendation is based on the argument that the four dimensions of food security namely, availability, access, food utilisation and stability were not comprehensive and lacked essential elements required to transform the food security systems in order to achieve SDGs, 2030. HLPE (2020) further asserts that agency and sustainability are key in improving the principle of the right to food, food security and transforming food systems. Furthermore, HLPE (2020) says incorporating agency and sustainability in legal frameworks enhances the right to food at grassroots and policy levels of food security. Furthermore, the adding of agency and sustainability to the four pillars has enhanced the right to food and achievement of food security and nutrition at all levels (Clapp,et al., 2021). The addition, agency and sustainability are key to enhancing the effort towards Zero Hunger.

### 3.1.2 The Six Dimensions of food security

#### 3.1.2.1 Availability

This means the obtainability of food at any time. It refers to the 'supply-side' of food security. Availability of food is mostly characterised by the presence of food through domestic production, imports, food stocks, and net trade of food (FAO, 2016; HLPE,2020).

#### 3.1.2.2 Access



Access is the capacity to have physical, economic and social possession of food. Food access consists of three elements, namely physical, economic and socio-cultural. Access to food is directly related to income, markets and food price regulation because they determine the food availability, as income provides purchasing power while markets provide availability and supply (FAO, 2016; Timmer, 2012). The physical elements are concerned with the availability and production while economic access refers to the financial ability of people to purchase adequate food)

#### 3.1.2.3 Food utilisation

The FAO (2016) asserts that food utilisation is concerned with food consumption, usage, preparation and absorption of nutrients from that food.

### 3.1.2.4 Stability

Stability is about the level of consistency in access, availability and utilisation. Adverse weather conditions, political instability, and economic factors affect the stability of these three dimensions of food security (FAO, 2019). The FAO (2019) further asserts that for food security to be achieved, there must be a continued presence of these dimensions at household, national and international levels.

### 3.1.2.5 Agency

Agency is a critical element in development. Agency refers to capacity of a person to decide what to do and what goals to achieve (Clapp, et al., 2021; HLPE, 2020). Access to resources and empowerment are the key component to agency. The HLPE (2020) defines agency in food security as the individuals or groups capability to independently decide on what food to eat, produce, process, and distribute within food systems and their capability to engage in the process that shapes food systems, policies and governance. For example, the issue of women decisions in food security help achieve national commitment to uphold the right to food and other human rights levels of national food self-sufficiency.

### 3.1.2.6 Sustainability

Sustainability is the ability of food systems to provide food security and nutrition without compromising economic, social, and environmental sources that produce food and nutrition for the future (HLPE, 2020). Clapp et al. (2021) looks at sustainability as a long-term viability of ecological and social bases.

According to HLPE(2020) basically, the six dimensions of food security seek to ensure that: " all people should have food security at all times in both short and long term and should have physical and social economic access to ensure sufficient safe and nutritious food that meet their dietary needs and food likings to an active and health life." Sustainability emphasises the connections between ecosystems and livelihoods, society and Political Economy to maintain food systems and support food security into the distant future (Clapp, et al. 2021).

Clapp, et al.(2021) upholds the HLPEs addition of the two dimensions to food security to policy and analysis frameworks as it ensures that everyone on the planet is food secure not only for today

but for the distant future. Their addition to the dimensions of food security provides a means to achieving the right to food.

### 3.2 Types of Food Insecurity

#### 3.2.1 Chronic food insecurity

The FAO (2016) describes chronic food insecurity as a situation whereby households lack a minimum food requirement for a prolonged time and it results in lack of basic needs, tangible assets and insufficient access to productive and financial resources (FAO, 2019; Timmer, 2012). Chronic food insecurity affects households that persistently lack the capability either to buy enough food or to produce it.

#### 3.2.2 Transitory food insecurity

This is a short-term and sudden fall in the capability to produce or access enough food to maintain a required good nutritional status because of fluctuations in domestic food production, household income and food prices (FAO, 2019; Timmer, 2012).

#### 3.2.3 Seasonal food insecurity

Seasonal food insecurity occurs when there is a recurring pattern of inadequate availability and access to food because of seasonal changes such as weather, planting and cropping patterns, labour, pests and disease (FAO, 2019).



### 3.3 Food Security and the Right to Food,

Looking at the importance of food security to mankind, in 1948, states as duty bearers recognized the right to food through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which upheld the right to food as part of the decent standard of living (FAO, 2011, HLPE, 2020; AU, 2014). According to the FAO (2011), article 25 of the UDHR states that: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food”.

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 1966 adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) upholding the right to work, to form free trade unions, social

security, education, and health. Article 11 of the (ICESCR) upheld the right to food. It affirms the existence of the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger. At least 160 states ratified the ICESCR and incorporated it into their constitutions (FAO, 2013).

In 1981, African leaders adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. Through this charter, they also adopted the right to food to ensure food is given a priority as a fundamental human right in Africa (AU, 2014). In an effort to accelerate agricultural growth to improve livelihoods and achieve people's prosperity; the African Union (AU) in 2014 declared its commitment to eliminating hunger through the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods (AU, 2014).

Furthermore, with the aim of accelerating, the adherence of the right to food, countries through the UN-SDGs in 2015, pledged to eliminate hunger everywhere by 2030 through national, regional and international cooperation (UNDP, 2015). There have been several charters towards accelerating foods security and achieving the right to food at national, regional, continental and international levels.

However, although many countries have accepted and endorsed the right to food through its adoption into national constitutions, regional and International Corporation, not much has been done to legislate and enforce the right to food at national level (HLPE, 2020). Governments have made various pledges and commitments to legislate and enforce it. Some countries in Africa have implemented the Right to food while others have unclear or inadequate food systems and legislation. For example, South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia are among the Sub-Saharan African countries that guarantee the right to food in their constitutions (FAO, 2011). However, in many countries in Africa there are no adequate legal frameworks to enforce the right to food. South Africa, through its constitution and other pieces of legislation, is one of the countries that has managed to enforce right to food by strengthening the Social Protection Programmes through the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) that provide various grants such as the Child Support Grant (CSG) to ensure food security and right to food (Triegaardt and Patel, 2005; Swemmer, 2013).

The Malawian constitution provides for the Bill of Rights through the provision of social economic and cultural rights (Chirwa, 2005). Chirwa (2005) urgues that Chapter 3, Section 13 (b) of the

Malawian constitution only supports the Right to Food through ensuring food security but does not explicitly provide a clear implementation framework in most of the country's national policies. This means that it is unclear on how to implement and enforce the right to food

Malawi over the years has implemented several Social Protection Programmes in an effort to ensure the Right to Food. Programmes including the Fertilizer Input Subsidy Programmes (FISP), the Social Cash Transfer (SCT), School Feeding Programmes and Public Works Programmes (PWP) have been implemented over the years (Doward, Guenther and Sabates-Wheeler 2009). However, scholars have argued that these programmes are founded on weak institutional framework that affect their impact (Beierl and Dodlova, 2022; Chinsinga, 2007; Chirwa, 2005). In Malawi, weak and fragmented food security and nutrition legal and policy frameworks have resulted in policy inconsistences that has threatened progress of the right to food (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Tostensen, 2017; Chinsinga, HLPE, 2021,Chirwa,2005). Like Malawi, other countries in Southern Africa such as Mozambique, Zambia, Eswatini, has the right to food prescribed in their constitution. However, there has been unclear framework to implement them into laws that enforce it. The addition of agency and sustainability to the original four pillars of food security enhances the implementation and enforceability of the right to food by nations because they provide clear guidelines towards achieving zero hunger and the right to food (HLPE 2021, Clapp, et al., 2021). Although some countries have adopted and implemented the right to food, it is increasingly an issue of global concern, as institutions of governance – like parliaments – have not developed adequate legislation to address food as a right and enforce it. (HLPE, 2020; FAO et al., 2020; UNDP, 2015, 2016). It is required that institutions of governance like parliament initiate and pass laws that are enforceable to achieve the right to food.



### 3.4 Politics and Governance

#### 3.4.1 The generic role of parliament

World legislatures may differ in their procedural and administrative systems, but their roles are similar. They promote the rule of law and public policy-making processes and good governance. To fulfil their functions, most parliaments of the world have constitutional powers of representation, oversight and legislation (ROL) (IPU, 2015; Johnson, 2005; May, 2004; Patel and Tostensen, 2006; World Bank, 2011).

#### 3.4.1.1 Representation

Parliamentarians have a responsibility to serve the people according to their constitutional obligations. In most developing countries, MPs have diverse roles, such as functioning as community leaders and development agents (IPU, 2015; Johnson, 2005; UNESCO, 2013). However, Pawłowski and Dubrow (2011) and O'Callaghan (2006) argue that although representation is key in representing the views of the people in governance, there has been unequal representation in most parliaments arising from the complex nature of politics and its systems.

#### 3.4.1.2 Oversight

The role of parliament includes scrutinising and approving proposed bills; considering motions; making laws; approving the national budget; allocating financial resources; authorising national policies and plans; and ensuring checks and balances (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2010; IPU, 2015; Johnson, 2005; O'Callaghan, 2006; World Bank, 2011). It also monitors the performance of the Executive to ensure that it is responsible and accountable to the citizens it serves (IPU, 2015; UNESCO, 2013). It is this oversight function that ensures horizontal accountability in parliament.

#### 3.4.1.3 Legislation

In this function, parliament passes laws and legal frameworks that serve the people's interests. It adopts proposals of laws that govern the state. All these roles are exercised through the Chamber, Committee and Constituency (3Cs) levels (Patel and Tostensen, 2006). MPs as duty bearers also serve as agents of development and change (Chingaipe et al., 2016; IPU, 2015; Johnson, 2005; Patel, 2008; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017, 2020; UNESCO, 2013).

#### 3.4.1.4 Parliamentary Committees

Committees are established under the constitution and are instruments that scrutinise, evaluate and monitor the government's activities and enhance horizontal accountability. The committees also work within the ROL functions (Chingaipe et al., 2016; IPU, 2015). Chingaipe et al. (2016) argue that although committees have been key in achieving horizontal accountability, their work is largely inadequate and inefficient as there are political complexities that limit their optimal functioning.

### 3.5 Politics and Governance in Malawi

#### 3.5.1 The pre-colonial system

Chieftaincy rule characterised the pre-colonial system in Malawi from the 1000s to the 1800s. Before colonialism, Malawi was inhabited by the indigenous Chewa (proto-Chewa) in the 1100s who organised themselves into religious and social groups. During the 1300s, immigrants (Maravi-Kalonga) came to central Malawi from Uluba, Zaire and infiltrated into the indigenous proto-Chewa, known as the 'owners of the soil' (McCracken, 2012). The Maravi, known for their leadership and organisational skills, had a kinship-dominant ideology intended to establish control over the indigenous Chewa. There was conflict and tension between these groups (McCracken, 2012; Ross, 2009). Later, they compromised to ensure that the interests of both groups were served. The Chewa retained their prestige of being 'owners of the soil' while the Maravi with their decisive ruling abilities, became the 'rulers' and started building their political states and social structures in the 1480s. The chieftaincy system of governance continued until the colonial government was established in the 1800s.

#### 3.5.2 Colonial administration (1889–1964)

In 1870 the European settlers arrived in Nyasaland, colonised it and called it Malawi (Chirwa 2005; Phiri, 2004). From 1889, the British declared Nyasaland its protectorate. It was governed through the British Central African Order-in-Council, a constitutional framework embodied with the Westminster Model of Governance with a direct rule through the Governor General. The Governor General was both Head of State and Government on behalf of the British Monarch, a Presidential System of Governance. There was strict control and centralisation of government and state activities (Chirwa, 2005; Kanyongolo, 2012). The governor had arbitrary political and economic power. Arnold and Harris (2017) and Lovett (2012) define arbitrary power as political power that is unconstrained and unchallenged.

In 1907 the Legislative Council and other judicial functions were established; however, the separation of powers was lacking (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Chirwa, 2005; Kanyongolo, 2012; Patel, 2008; Patel and Tostensen, 2006; Pike, 1968). There were fewer checks and balances from other arms of government and African citizens could not hold the colonial government accountable. It

is important to note that the establishment of the Legislative Council did not reduce the powers of the Governor General to control the legislature; the council was subordinate to him and it enacted legislation only upon his instructions (Phiri, 2004).

In the quest for independence, Kamuzu Banda led riots in 1958. He formed the National African Congress (NAC). Later, he and other nationalists were detained and a State of Emergency was declared. The NAC was transformed to the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and Banda was released (Kanyongolo, 2012; Phiri, 2004). In 1960 the British Administration granted Malawi self-government and on 6 July 1964 Malawi attained independence, with the British Monarch as Head of Government and Kamuzu Banda as Prime Minister (Kanyongolo, 2012; Phiri, 2004). A constitution was negotiated and it included political pluralism and the Bill of Rights.

### 3.5.3 Autocratic Banda regime (1964–1993)

After independence, there was a Cabinet crisis in Banda's government because of Banda's autocratic tendencies that showed arbitrary political power and ideological disparities with his cabinet (Chirwa, 2005; Phiri, 2004; Ross, 2009).

After the crisis in 1964, Banda abolished the office of the Governor General and established a one-party rule (Ross, 2009). A dominant MCP parliament passed legislation for Malawi to become a republic on 6 July, 1966. In 1971, Banda became Life President. Like the colonial government, Banda centralised political and economic activities, government institutions, structures and systems and developed a strict dominance and control of the legislature. The President had supreme powers over the legislature and its functions and public policies were made unilaterally without parliament's consent. Parliament, therefore, detached itself from being a representative of the people's will and became the rubber stamp of the executive arm of government. The separation of powers was also undermined (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Hussein, 2004; Patel, 2008). There was rampant violation of civil and political rights. Citizens were not allowed to express their views on governance or challenge political and bureaucratic authority (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Chirwa, 2005; Phiri, 2004).

### 3.5.4 Transitional democracy

The Catholic bishops openly challenged Banda and demanded a democratic dispensation through their Pastoral Letter of 9 March 1992. That was the first challenge of Banda's oppressive rule since assuming power in 1961. Citizens protested; later academics and other exiled politicians joined the protests and formed anti-government movements (Hussein, 2004). The public opinion to change the political system then became popular.

In 1993, a political referendum was held and citizens chose a multi-party democracy. Electoral laws and a Bill of Rights were also developed. The constitution was approved on 16 May 1995. The new constitution also provided for the electoral system known as the First-Past-the-Post that led to a democratic parliament (Chigawa, 2006; Chirwa, 2005; Hussein, 2004; Phiri, 2004). This also paved the way for the establishment of other state agencies of governance, including the judiciary and the Malawi Human Rights Commission (Banik and Chinsinga, 2016). It is pertinent to note that, the establishment of these institutions did not guarantee effective democratic governance, nor the efficiency of these institutions.

### 3.5.5 The Presidential System of Governance (PSG)

The Presidential System of Governance in Malawi originates from the colonial administration that governed Malawi from 1889 to 1964 and from Banda's autocratic rule from 1964 to 1994 (Dulani and Van Donge, 2005). The system gives extensive political and economic powers to the President to control and centralise all state and government authority, institutions, structures and systems including legislative and judicial institutions. This arrangement is the source of the Executive's dominance of governance. Its adoption has been a source of public policy, governance and legislation frameworks in Malawi's democratic politics and governance sector (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Chirwa, 2005; Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Hussein, 2004; Kanyongolo, 2012; Patel and Tostensen, 2006). It is evident that the colonial and autocratic regimes have a significant influence on the political governance systems and structure in Malawi and that the current democratic government has its foundation in these regimes.

### 3.5.6 The Constitution

The constitution is the source of all governing powers of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary and serves as an agreement that helps to achieve the social contract between the citizens and the state (Okoth-Ogendo, 2015). Malawi's Constitution promotes food security. Chapter 3, Section 13 (b) states that,

> … the state shall promote the welfare and development of the people of Malawi by progressively adopting and implementing policies and legislation aimed at achieving adequate nutrition for all in order to promote good health and self-sufficiency (GoM, 2004).

The state, through the constitution, enters into the social contract with citizens and guarantees the right to food. However, the government has been accused of non-compliance with the contract and the violation of the right to food because it does not provide a clear framework for the implementation of the right to food (Cammack, 2012; Joala et al., 2019; O'Neil et al., 2014; Sarelin, 2014).

The constitution contained the Recall Provision which was intended to ensure citizens social accountability to their members of parliament**.** However, the Recall Provision was repealed by parliament itself through Act 6 of 1995 (Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Maganga, 2009). The Recall Provision empowered citizens to exercise their rights to remove an MP from any reason, including poor performance in parliament**.** The removal of the Recall Provision in the constitution meant that citizens could not exercise their right to good representation; because the law restrains the recall of MPs as representatives from Parliament**. (**Chirwa, 2005; Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Maganga, 2009; Patel and Tostensen, 2006). Its removal restrains the citizens from exercising Social Accountability on their Members of Parliament. Social Accountability can improve public policy decision at legislative governance level and the provision of service delivery.



### 3.5.7 Parliament of Malawi

The powers, functions and structure of the Parliament of Malawi derive from Chapter 6 of the constitution. The chapter states that the legislature shall be responsible for the enactment of laws and shall ensure that its activities reflect the interests of all the people of Malawi (Chingaipe et al., 2016; GoM, 2004; Patel and Tostensen, 2006). Its functions include representation, oversight and

legislation (ROL). The Speaker is head of the National Assembly, including the elected Members of Parliament. Through the plenary and committees, the parliament also operates within the 3Cs – chamber, committee, and constituency (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Chirwa et al., 2011; Patel and Tostensen, 2006).

Although the source of legislative powers derives from the constitution, there are several factors that prevent the optimal functioning of the legislature. Some of the factors include: the Executive dominance; the Executive-legislature hostility; political ideology; lack of political will; collective action; and social accountability (Adams, 2001; Chingaipe et al., 2016; Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Hussein, 2004; Patel and Tostensen, 2006). These factors create a generally weak legislative system.

In many instances MPs neglect their roles, as most of them focus on serving a specific political ideology, toe party lines, and indulge in self-interest, rather than the public interest (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Patel, 2008). Political party ideology therefore influences MPs' conduct, leading to Hickey and Bracking's (2005) question: If elected representatives of the poor neglect them, who will then represent them?

#### 3.5.7.1 Executive–Legislative relations

The Executive control and dominance create hostility between the Executive and the Legislature (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Patel and Tostensen, 2006). Moreover, the oversight functions create feuding between the two arms, as the Executive does not like to be scrutinised (Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Hussein, 2004). In most cases, the Executive uses its political and financial power to limit the effectiveness of parliament by withholding funding to parliament. The lack of funding affects legislative, administrative and technical operations (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Hussein, 2004). Consequently, the Malawian Parliament does not perform efficiently and effectively.

#### 3.5.7.2 Parliament–constituency relations

Political representation is making citizens 'present' in public policy-making processes, where political actors act in their best interests (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Chinsinga, 2012; Dulani and van Donge, 2005; Hussein, 2004; Patel and Tostensen, 2006). However, the representational gap has

also been prominent at constituency level as MPs disappear from the citizens in the constituency soon after an election (Patel, 2008; Chingaipe et al., 2016). Although citizens expect the MPs' availability, they rarely see them. Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi (2006, cited in Patel, 2008) define the absence of the MPs in the constituency as a 'representational gap' that disconnects the MPs and their constituents (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Hussein, 2004; Patel, 2008). This tendency limits participatory bottom-up governance and vertical accountability.

#### 3.5.7.3 Political will and collective action

There has been lacking political will, collective action and, social accountability in the operations of the Legislature in Malawi (Chinsinga, 2018). Abazović and Mujkić (2015) define political will as committed support from key decision-makers with a common agenda to achieve a specific policy decision to resolve a particular problem. It influences collective action, which is a planned activity that is in the interest of many individuals, group or stakeholders that is rational (Fox, 2015; Keefer, 2004; O'Neil et al., 2014; Perry and Villamizar, 2016). The legislators' support of political ideologies in Malawi has largely affected political will and collective action (Chinsinga, 2018).

### 3.6 The Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI)

With 80% of smallholder farmers experiencing food insecurity, particularly during the lean period of January, February and March, the Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI) manifests itself in two ways (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Ellis and Manda, 2012; FAO, 2019; Makombe et al., 2010). Firstly, smallholder farmers are the buyers of the very food that they produce. Their households have inadequate food for consumption that worsens during lean periods. Secondly, the country that relies on agriculture for its economy and food for its people, experiences hunger, food shortages and persistent food insecurity (Lindsjö et al., 2020; Makombe et al., 2010).

There are several causes of the PAEbFI. Firstly, climate change has been the source of frequent adverse weather conditions detrimental to agricultural farming (Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Booth et al., 2006; Ellis and Manda, 2012; Makombe et al., 2010; Tostensen, 2017). Therefore, the country that is expected to have enough food, in most cases experience extensive food insecurity, arising from low production.

Secondly, limited farm resources and technology reduces production in many smallholder farmers, leading to low agricultural production. The situation forces farmers to buy food at higher cost with low income (Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Makombe et al., 2010).

Thirdly, population growth has led to a reduction of the size of farmland. Most smallholder farmers experience food insecurity due to small land areas and enlarged families (Chinsinga, 2018; Jayne et al., 2010; Makombe et al., 2010). The Malawian experience is similar to that of Sub-Saharan Africa (Jayne et al., 2010; 2014a; 2014b; 2015). The land–population nexus significantly relates to the Malthusian Theory on Population which stipulates that population growth is faster than food supply until famine, war or disease reduce the population. Malthus based his theory on the fact that land is constant and he also assumed that the means of production would remain the same. He therefore foresaw that food would be increasing arithmetically whereas the population would be growing exponentially. Basically, he maintained that food becomes insufficient since the population grows at a faster rate than food production (Devereux, 1997; Todaro and Smith, 2012). Malthus' argument is true for the Malawi smallholder farmers' food situation, as food in the larger households of smallholder farmers is insufficient as the family sizes are increasing.

Fourthly, inadequate markets prevent farmers from selling their produce for income. This results in low farmer income and weakened purchasing power (Makombe et al., 2010).

Fifthly, high food prices affect the smallholder farmers' food availability and access, as low production affects their food reserves and income to buy food (Makombe et al., 2010). Although maize is a staple food, its production and availability is highly politicized as it determines political legitimacy of the ruling party in Malawi. It is used in political campaigns and it features prominently in party manifestos (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Chinsinga, 2018; Svåsand and Mpesi, 2012; Tostensen, 2017). This practice signifies a weak system in food and agricultural policy at all levels of governance.

### 3.7 The Malawi Subsidy Programmes and Food Security Policy

#### 3.7.1 History of subsidies in Malawi

In the 1970s the government, under President Kamuzu Banda, provided subsidies to smallholder farmers, to increase maize production and promote household food security (Banik and Chasukwa,

2019; Chinsinga, 2012; Dorward et al., 2011; Levy, 2005; Mvula et al., 2003). Those subsidies were generally influenced by donor instructions since the 1980s and 1990s (Dorward and Chirwa, 2013a, 2013b; Levy, 2005).

Since the 1980s the government provided subsidies to ensure household national food security. As part of the agreement under the third Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the IMF and the World Bank imposed a Fertiliser Subsidy Removal Programme (FSRP). It was the country's first formal programme to reduce the subsidies, with the goal of improving the budget and reducing the deficit (Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Devereux and White, 2008). In 1989 the government agreed to a new subsidy programme under the International Development Agency (IDA), funded by the Agriculture Sector Adjustment Credit (ASAC) (Booth et al. 2006; Chinsinga, 2012).

During the 1990s the World Bank requested Malawi to completely eliminate the fertiliser subsidy, recommending that farmers should change from growing food crops to concentrate on growing cash crops for export and to use the foreign exchange income to import maize. The farmers' credit scheme was also stopped. As a result of this, the smallholder agricultural credit system started to collapse and led to maize price volatility (Booth et al., 2006; Chinsinga, 2012; Levy, 2005).

#### 3.7.1.1 The Starter Pack and Targeted Input Programmes

In 1994, with assistance from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID), Malawi implemented an agricultural subsidy called the Starter Pack Programme, to poor Malawian farmer households (Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Chinsinga, 2012; Levy; 2005). However, donors criticised the programme, arguing that it was unsustainable and affected the private sector. In 2000, it was replaced by a reduced Targeted Input Programme (TIP). The reduction of the programme during the low-rainfall period of 2001 and 2002 resulted in a food crisis (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Chinsinga 2012; Chirwa, 2005; Devereux, 2006; Levy, 2005; Lunduka et al., 2014).

#### 3.7.1.2 Farm Input Subsidy Programme

In 2004, the government reviewed the TIP, extending and renaming it the Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP). The FISP is a targeted food and agricultural subsidy programme that subsidises fertilisers and seeds to increase maize production by smallholder farmers (Babu and

Sanyal, 2018; Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Dorward et al., 2011; Levy, 2005; Lunduka et al., 2014). At its conception in 2005, the donors declined to support the programme, arguing that it was expensive and a waste of public and donor resources. However, the donors later supported it (Banik and Chasukwa, 2019).

Although the programme raised controversy, its objectives have not changed and it has been used to advance the political power of the ruling government. Most policies are political, reactive, incoherent and arise from political talk meant to increase the political strength of those in power (Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Chinsinga et al., 2013; Devereux, 2002b).

Furthermore, FISP is characterised by inclusion and exclusion errors as it only covers 10% of the population and the targeting percentage is not practically feasible (Chinsinga, 2012; Mkandawire, 2004). FISP has not benefitted the poorest smallholder farmers but increased production at national level (Booth et al., 2006; Chinsinga, 2012; Chirwa et al., 2011; Dorward et al., 2011; FAO, 2013; NSO, 2017; Tostensen, 2017).

### 3.7.2 The food security policy failure

Policy failure happens when the government does not optimally achieve the goals it set out in a policy (McConnell, 2015; Mueller, 2020; Stone, 2012). Political interests, corruption, and rent-seeking characterise food policy formulation and implementation in Malawi. In most cases, political pronouncements from presidents end up being policy (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Booth et al., 2006; Chinsinga, 2012, 2018; Devereux and Tiba, 2007; Devereux and White, 2008; Mueller, 2020; Sahley et al., 2005).



#### 3.7.2.1 Agriculture and Development Marketing Corporation

In 1971 the government established an agricultural marketing parastatal, known as the Agriculture and Development Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) to assist smallholder farmers in gaining access to agricultural inputs and to support them in accessing market outlets throughout the country for selling and buying agricultural produce at supported prices (Banik and Chasukwa, 2019). ADMARC facilitated the subsidies and the credit programmes and provided an agricultural produce market to the smallholder farmers (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; GoM, 2014). During the early 1990s, the deregulation of ADMARC created prominent food price

volatility and scarcity, weakening trade terms and creating a lack of smallholder farmer's credit, that caused smallholder agricultural production to decline**.** There was adverse market failure as inputs and maize prices rose, to the disadvantage of smallholder farmers, as it significantly reduced their access to food and increased their vulnerability (Booth et al., 2006; Chinsinga, 2018; Chirwa, 2005; Levy, 2005).

#### 3.7.2.2 Tobacco and the new cash crop policy

Tobacco is an important cash crop in Malawi and has largely shaped the country's socio- economic situation (Makoka et al., 2017; Smith and Lee, 2018). The tobacco's economic importance is three-fold. Firstly, it is the main cash crop and a foreign exchange earner. Secondly, it provides employment to at least 2 million people in the tobacco industry. Thirdly, it is a major source of income and consumption to rural households in Malawi. However, the government has not provided an alternative cash crop policy to replace tobacco since the World Health Organization (WHO) announced its anti-smoking lobby (Makoka et al., 2017).

#### 3.7.2.3 Mismanagement of the Strategic Grain Reserve and the famine of 2001

The National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) and the Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR) were established to regulate maize stocks to prevent changes in food production, food availability and to regulate food prices (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Levy, 2005). The IMF advised NFRA to sell part of the grain reserve to pay its debt (Banik and Chasukwa, 2019). However, later in the year, politicians manipulated the grain reserves and sold all the reserves. That impacted negatively on citizens and led to a food crisis in 2001. That was one of the key policy failures that caused the famine (Booth et al., 2006; Devereux, 2002a, 2002b).



### 3.8 Conclusion

The empirical review has revealed that the Legislature does not function optimally regarding policy affecting legislation of food and agriculture. The review further showed that there have been empirical studies done separately on parliament and food security. However, there is a glaring gap in the empirical literature on studies done exclusively on parliament and food security because many studies focus on politics, parliament, party politics and governance.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology. The chapter explains the justification for the research paradigm, the choice of research methods and how they were used. The chapter also introduces proportional piling (PP) as a technique within the focus group discussions (FGDs) that collect information from participants who have limited knowledge of figures.

## 4.1 Research Design

The study is grounded in the interpretive paradigm also known as *interpretivism*. The paradigm strives to understand phenomena through the meanings that people have in their own settings. It aims to probe meanings and perspectives of the people and stresses the importance of placing an analysis in the people's context (Babbie, 2015; Babbie and Mouton, 2011; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The interpretive paradigm has been selected to understand the roles played by both Members of Parliament as state actors (duty bearers) in ensuring food security and to understand the perspective of citizens (rights holders) perspective. The paradigm helps to understand how the dimension of politics and power, influence the economic affairs, such as food security policies. The study used a qualitative approach, comprising historical and constructivist phases. A historical document review (HDR) involved a review of parliamentary records, to find out what is documented about parliament. This was followed by a constructivist bottom-up phase where focus group discussions with citizens and in-depth interviews with MPs and non-government organisations (NGOs) were used. Purposive sampling was used to choose the MPs and Parliamentary Chairpersons for in-depth interviews and also for the respondents in the FGDs. The methods were selected because the study aimed to have a deeper understanding of legislative governance from the MPs' and citizens' experiences. The methods show how the political affairs in parliament impact on peoples' food and livelihood situations. Issues, themes, meanings and trends from the HDR informed the focus groups discussion and in-depths interviews. The data analysis used thematic analysis (TA) which included codes, concepts and themes that were

manually analysed to cross-check and understand the phenomena at grassroots level as regards parliamentary policy promises and governance contribution in the elimination of food insecurity in rural Malawi.

## 4.2 Research Methodology

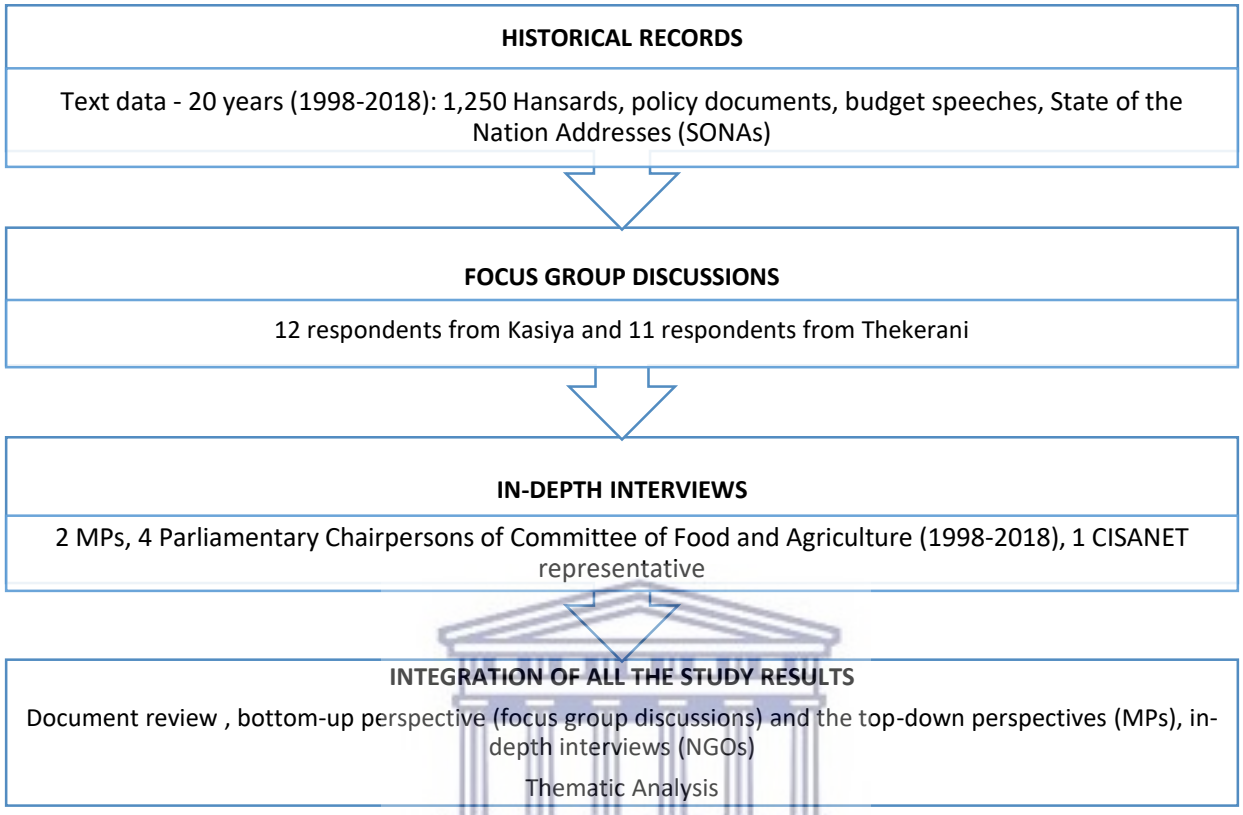
### 4.2.1 Research design

The study used the historical document review of historical parliamentary debates from 2008 to 2018, two focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews of MPs and one non-governmental organisation in agriculture and food security.

### 4.2.2 Data collection

Qualitative methods of data collection were used. In all the methods, purposive sampling was used. The purposive sampling is done based on the judgement of the researcher in line with the researcher's interest and objectives (Babbie and Mouton, 2011). In this research the Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees on Agriculture and Food Security who are responsible for the oversight of the agriculture and food security sector, the MPs, and the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) were all purposely selected because of their in-depth experiences in parliament and food security. A number of citizens of the working-age population were also purposely selected for their experiences in the area of food security. The research aimed at exploring their experiences in legislative governance and how it has contributed to their household food security. Figure 3 presents the research methodology framework of the study. The total sample of the study comprised 30 respondents – 6 MPs; 1 CISANET representative; 12 respondents from Focus Group Discussion 1; and 11 respondents from Focus Group Discussion 2.

**Figure 2: Research methodology and data collection framework**




Source: Author's compilation, 2020.



### 4.2.3 Research methods

#### 4.2.3.1 Historical documents review (HDR)

Figure 2 above shows the data collection plan. It shows that the study reviewed the textual data in the legislative historical records. Themes, trends and decisions of parliament in relation to food security in Malawi were identified to see what the drivers of food security policies are and how parliament handled such debates, their specifics and what were the motivation of implementing such policies. The researcher reviewed at least 1,000 parliamentary official reports (Hansards) and 250 other official documents (25 Hansards per month x 5 months' meeting time per year =125 Hansards x 10 years). The study examined 1,000 parliamentary reports spanning 10 years, from 1998 to 2018, skipping 2 years between years. This was purposefully done to reduce the labour and research time. In the Hansards, the study considered how deliberations are conducted in

parliament, the overt and covert factors, the nature of business in parliament and questions on notice to ministers for oral replies.

The other 250 documents that were reviewed included the Constitution of Malawi, the State of the Nation Addresses (SONAs), the annual budget speeches, and legislative policy, such as ministerial statements, constituency statements, bills, order papers, and private members' bills on food security, within the period of study. This was done because according to Standing Order (204) of the Parliament of Malawi, the Budget Speech of the President of Malawi informs the parliamentary debate (GoM, 2004). Therefore, the researcher examined speeches to analyse how the executive political power determines and influences parliamentary debate and policy on food security. Themes during the review included: what drives food security policy; who supports policy; political economy, social contracts; social accountability functions of parliament. These themes were identified to examine and achieve the objectives of this study.

#### 4.2.3.2 Focus group discussions

After the HDR, themes and trends from these historical documents were developed and informed the focus group discussion guide and the in-depth interviews respectively. A focus group discussion (FGD) enables people to relate their deeper experiences, perspectives and views that affect their lives (Liamputtong, 2011). A focus group discussion is a loosely structured interview conducted by a trained moderator to get the heterogeneous views of the people on issues that affect their lives. According to Liamputtong (2011) an FGD encourages people to express their experiences, interests, views and suggestions about the issues affecting their lives and does not discriminate against the illiterate as it encourages them to participate and provides an opportunity to those who are intimidated to be interviewed in a one-on-one session. FGDs are also suitable because there are high illiteracy rates in rural Malawi. Therefore, focus group discussions were ideal as they allowed the rural citizens to speak and not to write (Babbie and Mouton, 2011; Liamputtong, 2011).

Semi-structured questions were developed for the focus group discussions with the citizens at grassroots level in the rural areas of Thekerani in Thyolo South Constituency and Kasiya in Lilongwe (refer to Appendix A1: Interview Guide for FGDs). The two constituencies were selected because of their political and social demographics. Kasiya is in Lilongwe North West

constituency, dominated by opposition loyalists. Thekerani is in Thyolo South constituency, dominated by pro-government loyalists. The political binary opposition in the selection of the geographical areas of study was deliberate and was planned to achieve balanced and objective perspectives from the respondents from these two different areas. The questions probed people's experience and opinions regarding MPs' legislative responsibilities as duty bearers in the reduction of food insecurity in rural Malawi. The two focus groups had 12 and 11 respondents respectively. Participants were aged from 18 to 65 and they used the platform provided for the citizens to express their views and perspectives. The focus group discussions revealed the citizens' perspectives on parliament and food security.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2007), confidentiality of the respondents is essential in focus group discussions. Before the interview, the researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality. To achieve confidentiality, numbers were assigned and tagged to respondents of both focus groups. During the transcription process, the numbers were converted to codes to maintain confidentiality. Therefore, all the respondents were coded as participants – using the letter 'P', with the initial of the name of the area (K–Kasiya or T–Thekerani) and numbers allocated randomly to participants. Therefore, Kasiya participants were coded PK 1-12 and Thekerani participants were coded PT1-11 for the two focus groups. The FGD questions were divided into three segments: food security assessment; the role of parliament and government; and social accountability. Within the focus group discussion, the technique of proportional piling was used as a method of collecting information from rural people who could not provide information using figures. Proportional piling is a research technique used primarily in participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and rapid rural appraisal (RRA) to interact with and collect information from participants who are not numerate but who can use visuals and tangibles to tell their story (Catley et al., 2012; Watson, 1994). The researcher can decide to use any items that are available and relevant to the study and area such as beans, stones, sticks or any other item that is relevant to the participants.

Proportional piling was developed to assist researchers collect data that cannot be conveyed using figures from illiterate respondents (Catley et al., 2012). It helps to collect data that is uncompromised from respondent themselves. In this study, participants used beverage cans to draw lines to mark trends in annual maize harvests and trends of harvests over 20 years. During the data analysis, the researcher translated the proportional piling results obtained from participants

into narrations, graphs of trends and times series to explain food production trends. The focus group discussions and the proportional piling achieved the bottom-up perspectives of the rural citizens in the study.

#### 4.2.3.3 In-depth interviews

The study conducted seven in-depth, face-to-face interviews. These are sessions of question-and-answer to understand a phenomenon (Babbie and Mouton, 2011). The interviews were conducted with three categories of respondents: two former MPs of the constituencies; four former Chairpersons of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Food Security; and one civil society representative. The four Chairpersons were the MPs who were leaders in these parliamentary committees over a period of 20 years. In the Parliament of Malawi, MPs and Chairpersons of the Committees serve a 5-year term; hence, four Chairpersons were chosen for each term of 5 years. Those participants were purposively selected to give a deeper and more meaningful perspective of how parliament had handled food security over a period of 20 years. In-depth interviews provide insights from the respondents' view (Babbie, 2015; Babbie and Mouton, 2011). To maintain confidentiality, the two former constituency MPs were coded and allocated numbers – MP1 and MP2 respectively – and the same applied to MPs who were Chairpersons – MPC3 to MPC6. The Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) representative was coded CISANET 1 and was also interviewed for their perspective of parliament. The study selection of CISANET was based on the argument that CISANET is a grouping of civil society organizations in agriculture and food security in Malawi; interviewing it achieved a representation of various NGOs in the study. It was established in 2001 to facilitate the engagement of the civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the agriculture and food security sector with government over policy issues affecting the sector. CISANET's membership comprises local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in agriculture, food security and farmer organizations. Therefore, interviewing the head of CISANET was important to achieve a representative voice on NGOs and not necessarily one person.

The interviews achieved a top-bottom perspective of the study (refer to Appendices A2–A4 for Interview Guides for MPs, Chairpersons, and CISANET).

### 4.3 Data Analysis

After the data collection, the data was transcribed by the researcher, who familiarised herself with the data by re-reading, and making sense of it. The data was also tagged according to the speakers and respondents during the discussions.

#### 4.3.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) originates from inductive reasoning (IR). An inductive approach to data analysis is a bottom-up approach determined by what is in the data. Babbie and Mouton (2011) define thematic analysis as a method of systematically identifying, organising and offering insights into patterns of meaning and themes across a qualitative data set. TA is usually used to analyse textual data, such as interview transcripts (Babbie and Mouton, 2011). In TA, the researcher examines the data closely to identify common themes in the form of a topic, ideas, and repeated patterns of meaning in the study (Babbie and Mouton, 2011). TA allows a researcher to perceive and make sense of collective meanings and experiences from data and familiarise, identify and connect them according to his prior maps of themes before data collection (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). A theme is wording or a sentence that capture important elements of the study, such as focus, scope and purpose, objectives, problems, and findings in relation to the research question (Babbie and Mouton, 2007).



In this study, the researcher identified, generated and constructed themes in relation to the research variables. Themes were generated from the notes of the document review, and transcripts from the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews. The themes were generated and constructed manually to answer the research questions. In the study, the researcher reviewed, defined and named the codes and themes in relation to the study variables, key words, research problem, objectives, literature review, theoretical and conceptual framework in order to address the research questions and make a proper analysis. The researcher also used thematic analysis to discuss the study results and determine recommendations and implications.

## 4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research design and methodology. The following chapter presents the study findings, based on the perspectives of the six Members of Parliament and the civil society representative, on the legislative contribution to reducing food insecurity in rural Malawi.

# CHAPTER 5

# RESEARCH FINDINGS: PERSPECTIVES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND CISANET ON FOOD SECURITY POLICY GOVERNANCE IN MALAWI

## 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the historical document review, and the in-depth interviews from MPs and the CISANET representative. It discusses the findings on how MPs have handled the issue of food security at the legislative level of governance in Malawi. The chapter further identifies barriers and challenges that prevent MPs from executing their functions on food security. It also reveals that parliament as a legal and policy-making institution operates within a complex political system arising from a Presidential System of Governance (PSG). Consequently, these undercurrents impede parliament's effective and efficient oversight and implementation of food security policy and legislation. The findings revealed that with dominant constitutional powers, the Executive uses its political and economic power to control parliament for its political-economic benefits. The study further found that although parliament was established by the Constitution of Malawi, the same constitution renders parliament subordinate, consequently limiting parliament's optimal functioning. The study further found out that political and economic benefits motivate political actors and that they are at the centre of resource mobilisation and allocation. This finding confirms the key argument of the Political Economy Approach (PEA) that Political actors are self-interested and in some cases neglect duty for their political and economic benefits



## 5.1 Parliament and Executive Relations

### 5.1.1 A dominant and controlling Executive and a submissive Legislature

The results from the historical document review and the MPs' interviews revealed that there is a power imbalance between the Executive and the Legislature. The Executive also has a largely unchecked power. The review showed that Chapter 8, Sec (78) of the Constitution of Malawi allows the President of Malawi to be the Head of the State and Government and Civil Service, thus making Malawi subject to a Presidential System of Governance (GoM, 2004). Further, Section 89 provides extensive powers to the president. Although the executive is the key entity in governance,

the review showed a prevalence of Executive's dominance. As a result, the executive controls the legislature and other key governance institutions such as the Judiciary. This tendency compromises the separation of powers. The executive through ministers proposes Government Bills (GB) according to government ideology and interests. (GOM.2004; PoM, 2013). Section 66(2) (c) of the constitution provides for Private Members Bill (PMB) on any matter of national importance. The review shows that government as well as opposition largely do not introduce adequate bills on food security. The review shows that in Malawi, since 1994, 10 PMBs have been proposed in Parliament and only two have been passed into law. These include *PMB No.2 of 2016: Anatomy (Amendment) Bill* and *PMB No.1 of 2018 National Childrens Commission Bill* (GOM, 2020). The review further shows that among the PMB, there was nothing concerning food security in Parliament in order to prompt government to action. This shows that MPs introduces insufficient bills including those on food security. The reasons for low PBMs include executive dominance, difference in ideology and lack of adequate expertise and financing to formulate Private Bills. Lack of bills affect legislative business. Political Economy Approach (PEA) argues that political actors use political and economic power to produce and distribute national resources. In most cases resource distribution is done to gain benefits (Cohn 2016 and Freiden and Lake, 2002, Heywood, 2017). Low funding to parliament means ineffective Representation, Oversight and Legislation that restrict monitoring of the executive in implementation of public policy. Low MPs legislative skills benefit the executive as it weakens the functions of the legislature.



Another executive dominance is that there is no clear distinction between the Office of the President and the Government Secretariat or cabinet. The Chief Secretary of Government also heads the Executive and the Secretariat of the Office of the President. This structure therefore exercises dominant control of parliament (GoM, 2004; Patel, 2008). Although, Chapter 7, 8, 9 encourages separation of powers and recognises the legislature as an independent institution, the executive limits the function of Parliament as highlighted in Chapter 8 of the constitution.

The review further showed that the functions of parliament are affected through MPs who are also ministers. The Hansard records showed that it was virtually impossible for MPs who are appointed as ministers to scrutinise and criticise the same government that they are serving, which weakens the oversight function and horizontal accountability. According to MPC5:

> Some ministers who are also MPs just look; even when issues of food security are going wrong, because they can't criticise their own government.

Ministers are key state actors and delegates of the president with executive mandates to champion the government policy that has both political and economic impact. It is at the level of cabinet where Political Economy is highly exercised because the president and ministers, as governors manage national resources on behalf of citizens as the governed. At cabinet level, Political and Economic powers of political actors are exercised to ensure that national resources are mobilised and distributed to achieve service delivery. A strong opposition can help to provide checks and balances to the executive that is dominant in the process of making political and economic decisions at legislative level. Patel (2008) and Chingaipe, et al. (2016) argue that the doubling of ministers as MPs can work when there is strong oversight and effective separation of powers (Parliament of Malawi, 2017a; Patel, 2008). This study agrees that an effective parliament can be achieved with independent committed MPs and a strong opposition, separation of powers, and institutional independence.

The review of documents also showed that there is significant executive control over the legislative business in parliament for the benefit of executive. Hansards showed that parliamentary business is controlled, from before parliament meets, to the President's presentation of the SONA and the national budget. The SONA is an important event in the national political programme of the executive and parliament. It informs the citizens of government operation in the previous year and highlights plans and projects for the year ahead. The SONA is a key tool for implementation of the Social Contract and the Political Economy as it narrates government policies and how it will mobilise and distribute national resources. The review showed that the SONA sets the agenda; it mostly presents the ideology as conceptualised by the Executive, the proposed government policy, and highlights of the national budget. This arrangement confirms that the State President and his cabinet are the key proposers of policy. Thereafter, parliament debates these policies – made by the Executive or elsewhere in the political system, such as the party executive (Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; GoM, 2004; Johnson, 2005). The SONA and the budget speeches dominate the parliamentary debates and less time is allocated for more scrutiny of the SONA and budget speeches in the house:

> Mr Speaker Sir, we have little time to scrutinize the budget; we end up passing the wrong things … if parliament can be extended for us to finish the business accordingly (Parliament of Malawi, 2011).

Findings show that the national budget is a state political economic tool that is used to distribute national resources. The Budget is at the centre of the state political economic activities aimed to achieve manifesto, programmes, projects, pledges and service delivery. It is the national budget that create, mobilise, and reserve national resources. The national budget shapes political and economics interactions. Parliament through its Oversight function authorises the executive to spend through the budget. Budget Scrutiny is an important activity in national economic planning and implementation of national resources. Political Economy Approach explains how political actors allocate and benefits from the budget. Looking at the importance of the national budget; it requires adequate time for scrutiny for fair distribution of national resources that drive the economy. Lack of financial autonomy limits time for budget scrutiny to the benefit of the executive because some votes may be passed superficially which benefits the political actors and affect fair distribution of resources at national level. The study proposes a financial autonomy for the legislature.

The documentation review also showed that apart from the Questions to the Executive, Private Members' Bills and General Business in the House, the rest of the parliamentary business emanates from the Executive. The Executive's strict control of legislative business originates from the colonial and autocratic regimes, both of which strictly controlled the Legislature (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Patel, 2008). This research study proposes a review of Chapter 9 Section 78 of the Constitution of Malawi to reduce presidential powers in order to strengthen the institutional capacity of the legislature.

The review of the documents further revealed that food security policy proposals are highly politicised through SONA (Babu and Sanyal, 2018).The review shows that it is parliamentary practice and procedure that the SONA precedes the budget presentation. SONA persuades the legislature to support the executive political economic proposals and decisions. Political Economy argues that political actors are motivated by political and economic benefits. It is the SONA that reveals the interests of the executive as it highlights the executive ideology, plans and their

implementation of that ideology and persuades MPs to support it. For example, both the Farm Input Loan Programme (FILP) and the Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) were first announced by President Mutharika and President Joyce Banda respectively, from political podiums and were later formalised as food policies through SONA in parliament. These practices had been highlighted by researchers (see for example, Chinsinga, 2018; Sahley et al., 2005; Tostensen, 2017) who assert that policy on food is largely formulated to serve political interests. Devereux and Tiba (2007) argue that the Controlling Institution Hypothesis (CIH) is one of the causes of famine in Africa, where political actors use their political and economic power to influence decisions, for their political gains. This study agrees with Devereux and Tiba (2007) that the concept of Controlling Institution Hypothesis exists and it affects the management of social and public policy.

### 5.1.2. Lack of legislative autonomy

Another finding of the study is that there is a lack of parliamentary independence. The documentation review and interviews showed that parliament cannot meet without the consultation and endorsement of the President. The Constitution of Malawi Chapter 6 Section (59)1-4) and the Malawi Parliament Standing Orders (SOs) require that Office of the Speaker should consult with the Head of State and Government and seek his consent for parliament to meet. Standing Orders are rules of procedure that govern the parliamentary deliberations in the house (Parliament of Malawi, 2013). They are made under section 56(1) of the Constitution of Malawi (GoM, 2017). Apart from the Questions on Notice to Ministers and the Private Members' Motion, the Executive develops the agenda for parliamentary meetings – a confirmation of executive domination and control. The President of Malawi, in consultation with the Speaker, may also summon an extraordinary meeting of the National Assembly or prorogue a session. Summoning and proroguing of a parliamentary session has been used for political manipulation to accrue political and economic benefits. For example, former President Mutharika delayed calling a parliamentary meeting in 2004, after he had won elections with his new party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) because he did not have enough MPs to strengthen his power in parliament. He prorogued a parliamentary session to allow him to gather political strength through parliamentary numerical strength. He later opened parliament with a theme, 'Keeping our heads above the waters' to justify

his late call for parliament to meet and his strength to govern (Parliament of Malawi, 2004). According to a former MP:

> Currently, parliament cannot convene without consulting the President and certainly, if the President does not want parliament to meet, it cannot meet. It would really become independent if parliament is able to decide on its own meeting calendar. That would be the critical legislative reform towards attainment of legislative independence (MP2).

Such constitutional arrangements may delay some parliamentary decisions on bills and motions on food security. Delayed bills can affect resources from being utilised for the common good, For example, lack of bills on food security affect citizens in the rural areas. Political Economy Approach (PEA) explains how political actors control each and every sector of the economy (Adam and Dercon, 2009; Cohn, 2016; Torvik, 2009).The arrangement in Chapter 6 section 59(1-4) where the Speaker is required to consult the president before convening or proroguing parliament explains how the executive control the legislature to maintain the power relations that mostly benefit the executive. A clear calendar could reduce executive control of legislature as it would allow the Parliament convening Parliament using a fixed calendar. This could be achieved through developing a clear-fixed parliamentary calendar in the constitution.

MPs' interviews revealed that parliament also lacks financial independence, as the Executive controls parliamentary budgets and finances. The lack of financial autonomy is a key component that limits the functions of parliament at both plenary and committee levels. It is important to note that when the political atmosphere is not conducive to government, the Executive delays parliamentary funding to limit the plenary and committee meetings. In some cases, parliament may not meet, even if there were issues of public interest such as food insecurity. Political Economy is concerned with who benefits from national resources in society. PEA is the interface of politics, economy, laws and how political systems affect economic system (Adam and Dercon, 2009; Cohn, 2016; Torvik, 2009). By the executive not allowing Parliament financial autonomy, government controls Parliament for its benefits because the legislature fails to operate effectively and efficiently. Political Economy is interested with fair distribution on national resources for the common good., however one of the limitations of the PEA is that power imbalances and inequalities within state institutions affect optimal distribution of resources for the benefit of other

actors within the state (Cohn,2016; Freidien and Late,2002;Torvick2009). When Parliament is weakened, the executive benefits because it receives less scrutiny for its policies.

The MPs who were Committee Chairpersons of Agriculture and Food Security indicated that the lack of funding to parliament causes delays and reduces time for the scrutiny of government bills and proposed policy:

> The parliament's Legal Affairs Committee has been struggling to get legislative independence reforms done since 2004 for effective delivery of parliament's duties ... the house has been demanding financial independence from the executive; we have not succeeded until today (MPC5).

> If parliament has no money, how does it meet? How does it oversee the Executive in committees? Committees have in some cases failed to meet because of the lack of funding. It is a tool to weaken the strength of the legislature … even when our people are hungry, how do we meet to address food insecurity? …we even fail to present Private Motions (MPC3).

By not letting parliament independence and control of its finances, the executive limits the operations of Parliaments. In Political Economy, state arms and agencies are at the centre of all political and economic powers and mostly they scrutinise who, when and how state resources benefits other groups of society (Adam and Dercon, 2009; Cohn, 2016; Torvik, 2009). The limiting of finance for Parliament benefits the executive because there is limited oversight of the executive. When legislative scrutiny is limited; executive flourishes as it controls resources for its political and economic gains. For example weak scrutiny of resource allocation can mean low resource allocation that can affect institutions, consequently resulting into a generalised weak institution that affect service delivery.

This finding is similar to those of Patel (2008) and Chingaipe et al. (2016) who found that the lack of financial autonomy affects the core and administrative functions of parliament. For example, in some cases, Private Members' Motions are affected as there are no technical experts to draft the bills because of the lack of human capacity. The lack of committee meetings affect the oversight, which affects horizontal accountability, as there is insufficient time for the committee work (Patel,

2008; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017, 2020). The element of horizontal accountability provides sound corporate governance within government institutions and the absence of it weakens the governance systems (Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Patel and Tostensen, 2006). The parliament–executive hostility therefore affects parliamentary functioning, particularly regarding food security. This research study recommends parliamentary reform that grants financial autonomy to parliament in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

### 5.1.3 Abuse of the Standing Orders

The review of documents showed that all MPs – from both the ruling party and the opposition – abuse the Standing Order governing Waiver Provision.[1] They use this as a tool to delay or to hasten the debating time when there is a crucial matter to be tabled in parliament or to delay a matter that is already under debate. Both government and opposition MPs use this tactic. For example, in some cases the Opposition MPs use it to protect their Private Members' Day or to prevent 'undesirable' government bills from passing. The Hansards excerpts showed how MPs use the standing orders and the waiver provision to advance their interests in the house:

> I stand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that today being Private Members' Day, I beg that the Order Paper[2] be varied so that we move to Private Members' Business (a) Item (I). I beg to move, Mr Speaker, Sir (Parliament of Malawi, 2007a).

> The abuse of standing orders is also used to delay committees' debates (MPC5).



This is an indication that MPs support political party ideologies and their interests in the business of parliament.

### 5.1.4 The Opposition and Private Members' Motion

The study further revealed that a strong opposition is key to the oversight function that reinforces horizontal accountability. Through the Private Members' Motion, the Opposition is able to represent people-centred motions and provide meaningful checks and balances. However, the

[1] A provision in the rules of the Parliament of Malawi (Standing Orders) that allows a member or MP to defer an item on the day's agenda for discussion on a later occasion.
[2] Order Paper is the proposed daily agenda of parliamentary discussion.

Executive frequently prevent the Opposition from tabling Private Members' Motions that help eliminate food insecurity. The Hansard excerpts showed how the government often controls and prevents Opposition MPs from using their Private Members' Day – a dedicated day for opposition parties. This excerpt shows an Opposition member reasoning with the Speaker to prioritise the debate on shortage of maize and maize price volatility on the Order Paper:

> Honourable Speaker, Sir. I am standing here on a Point of Order.[3] This being a house of records, I know you have made a ruling and I seriously respect your position, but I feel what we are doing here is defeating the whole purpose of a Private Members' Day. In this house, we listen to government ideas which we all partake in for four days in a row. Today … we have issues on the Order Paper from Private Members to which everybody will benefit…food security is important. Why are we allowing this to happen? Thank you (Parliament of Malawi, 2016).

Later, the Opposition managed to present the Private Members' Motion of food security:

> … that concerned the current critical food shortages prevailing in all parts of Malawi and that despite the assurances by government on the availability of maize, and noting the numerous reports from all the 193 constituencies in the country through Members of Parliament … majority of whom are women, are finding it increasingly difficult to afford a bag of maize currently being sold at K12, 500 (Parliament of Malawi, 2016).



The suppression of the Opposition of parliament is another element akin to colonial and one-party regimes that prevented opposing views.

Considering these scenarios, the political system affects the parliamentary representation of food security policy. During interviews, MPs indicated the key challenges of parliament regarding food security policy representation. These challenges were listed from most to least common and were picked from the historical document review as follows:

[3] Point of Order is a request to stop a member speaking on the floor to clarify the matter or attend to another matter.

**Key challenges of the Malawi Legislature**

Most Common: Executive Dominance

Most Common: Serving Political Ideology

Medium: Inadequate Funding

Medium: Administration and MPs Capacity:

Least Common: MPs Capacity

### 5.2 Weak Institutional Governance

The study's findings revealed that weak institutional governance is another significant barrier to effective and efficient legislative governance of food security. The document review showed a prevalence of the Executive dominance and control of the Legislature, and a generalised weakness in the Legislature. The Executive dominance also limits the separation of powers within the governance system. Patel and Tostensen (2006) assert that the weak nature of parliament comes from the constitutional framework that portrays parliament as a subordinate. The researcher agrees with these scholarly assertions that the operations of the Legislature are laid on the weak institutional governance foundations, structures and systems, as discussed in the Conceptual Framework in Chapter 2, Figure1. Dulani and Van Donge's (2005) studies also found that the centralised control of government and the Legislature was transferred from the colonial and one-party regimes to the democratic government causing endless legislative governance gaps. This study therefore concludes that the Executive dominance limits parliamentary effectiveness and recommends a review of the country's constitution to reduce the Executive dominance and implement legislative reforms that could help to strengthen the Legislature and promote its independence.



### 5.3 The Paradox of Representation (PoR)

The historical document review, focus group discussions, and the interviews with MPs all revealed that parliamentary representation is far from effective and efficient because its functions are compromised by political interests. The study's findings showed that there are complex political

barriers to parliament's effective representation of not only regarding food security policy but also other relevant policies. Although the constitution mandates, MPs as duty bearers to represent people, the study revealed a disconnect between the constituents and the MPs, as a paradox. Therefore, the Paradox of Representation is one of the key findings of the study. The study therefore revealed the prevalence of the paradox of representation (PoR), which exists when the MPs do not represent the people effectively and efficiently because of economic and political interests (Patel, 2008; Pawłowski and Dubrow, 2011; Schwartz, 1995). This finding is similar to those of Patel (2008) and Dulani and Van Donge (2005), that there are undercurrents that underpin the conduct of MPs and their representation. The findings further revealed that the paradox of representation is as a result of complex political and economic barriers and challenges in governance spaces. The interviews with the MPs and the CISANET representative identified four complexities and barriers as dimensions of this paradox, as presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Four Dimensions of the Paradox of Representation**

| Dimension | Indicators |
|---|---|
| **Political ideology: Serving public interest or self-interest** | ● Party and self-interest prioritised over public interest<br>● Compromised ROL functions at all levels of Parliament – Chamber, Constituency, Committee (3Cs)<br>● Lacking political will and collective action<br>● Duty bearers' lack of commitment to the social contract |
| **Representational gap** | ● Compromised ROL functions<br>● Disconnect between MPs and constituency<br>● Constituency disengagement |
| **Complacency and negligence** | ● Party and self-interest prioritised over public interest |
| **MPs' education** | ● Compromised quality of debate<br>● Political manipulation |

Looking at Table 1: The study concludes that the Paradox of Representation is a common problem in legislative governance. Although, the constitution in Chapter 6 establishes parliament and its Representation, Oversight and Legislation functions, MPs neglect their roles particularly representational role and instead serve party interest because it has many political and economic

benefits to them. The finding of the existence of the POR in this study is similar to Okoth-Ogendo(2015) argument that although, MPs commit to serve the people through manifestos at the Social Contract level, at Political Economic level they alter priorities and later change to serve their interests. One of the limitations of PEA is that it depends on the political environment and the political will to be effective (Unswoth, 2009; Whaties 2019) When MPs win an election, they disengage and lose political will and interest for collective action to serve public interest. They neglect the Social Contract and support projects that benefits them than the citizens. They serve more of party interest than citizens resulting in the Paradox of Representation.

### 5.3.1 Political ideology: Serving public interest or self-interest?

Although there is a narrative that parliament represents people's aspirations, this study challenges this narrative, as the study revealed that MPs largely serve political ideology and self-interest, rather than public interest. Following political ideology, serving party and self-interest are among the complexities and barriers to optimal representation. Responding to the question of what barriers MPs face that affect the legislative function on food security, all six MPs indicated that political ideology guides their conduct in parliamentary practice and procedure. To enforce adherence to ideology, political party Whips[4] are assigned this task. As a result, MPs support party principles in parliament regardless of the issue on the floor and consequently neglect public interest, as confirmed by these respondents:



> Whips ensure adherence to ideology and numerical strength, in parliament and committees (MPC2).

> We are not free, whether you are an MP from opposition or ruling party, we are controlled by all forces; our parties and their principles – they affect our work (MP2).

MPs also admitted to lacking public interest and political will:

> Largely, we lack public interest as political actors (MPC3).

[4] A 'Whip' is a political party manager in parliament, who enforces political party ideology and political numerical strength in parliament.

> As MPs we are failing to balance between our party allegiance and constituents' interests. As a result, the constituency feels neglected and consequently, we lose the next election (MP1).

> Most of us have taken the MP's role with less commitment but with more political-economic benefits for ourselves. We support issues that have the same interest as ours, our parties and leaders, and not food issues (MP2).

These representational barriers affect the representational democracy and violates the right to food as a social contract.

The study also revealed variations in political ideology and showed that parliament is diverse in political ideas. As a result, MPs largely do not support a common goal, and lack collective action. These variations in ideology affect how parties respond to food security in the house, as expressed by these respondents:

> Parliament is a mixed bag and it does not speak with one voice because of difference in ideology (MPC4).

> We speak with different voices aimed at achieving different interests ... if all MPs were committed to their work and truly serve the people's interests and aspirations by striving to put all systems in place, we can correct the problem of food insecurity (MP2).



> Sometimes it is difficult to push the agenda on the floor of the parliament as there are different ideologies meant to achieve different political interests (MP1).

> We know what we do but sometimes party politics binds us up; adherence to ideology is what we call politics (MPC6).

The statements from MP suggest a critical representation gap arising from MPs following political ideology, toeing party lines and self-interest. This is in support of the Political Economy Approach that political actors are interested with political and economic benefits. (Cohn, 2016; Heywood 2017). The findings confirm that serving political ideology has more benefits in power contestation and maintaining the status quo. Largely, Political Economy influences how a government manages its political ideology and economic activities in a nation (Cohn, 2016; Heywood 2017). By

supporting political ideology and neglect public interest MPs, widen the representational gap. The study has shown that political economic interests of MP together with self-interests make them support party ideology instead of national interest; because supporting party ideology has more political and economic benefits than public interest. In doing this, MPs violate their public commitment to the social contract that their parties agreed to in the constitution and other national programmes and projects. This study argues that political ideology is a key barrier to the effective functioning of parliament. Although political ideology is the driver of political power and the basis of government, it is important that political ideologies be conceived in the interests of the citizens. The study recommends the development of a strong legal framework and a code of conduct for MPs as a regulator for their accountability.

### 5.3.2 Representation gap

The findings further revealed that serving political ideology and self-interest creates a representation gap as MPs create a political and social disconnect and disengagement from their constituents. The study confirms that the gap exists at all levels of parliament, namely Chamber, Constituency and Committee (3Cs).

Firstly, representation at plenary level affects debates because the Executive pushes an agenda and passes bills that may not be of public interest, as confirmed by these respondents:



> We have a silo mentality where we just think without considering the people we represent … we just serve parties (MPC4).

> We serve party beliefs and principles (MPC5).

Although the constituents vote and expect the legislators to represent their interests, the findings showed that MPs prioritise serving their party and self-interest rather than the public interest. This is a clear violation of the representation function of parliament, as MPs as duty bearers no longer honour their public commitment to duty.

Secondly, the MPs' interviews confirmed a significant lack of representation at constituency level. Most legislators do not engage their constituents or discuss issues of national interest when they win an election. MPs admitted that they generally do not consult or give feedback to the people,

but in parliamentary debates they publicly state that they have consulted the citizens. This MP spoke candidly:

> In most cases we do not go to the constituency, and meet people. I for one, I don't go because when I go there, I am asked to solve issues that government has neglected. They will ask me for food, fees, funeral expenses and money. We are being pressurised to solve socio-economic problems that have been created by the government's laxity (MP2).

This statement by an MP reflects the lack of commitment of a duty bearer to representation and adherence to the social contract. The social contract states that in pursuit of governance, citizens surrender their natural rights and freedoms to a higher authority in return for state protection of these natural rights and provision of goods and services (Chwaszcza, 2013; Ernst, 2001; Klepper, 2019; Pawłowski and Dubrow, 2011; Sabates-Wheeler, 2017, 2020). In this case, citizens vote for MPs to govern them but when MPs as duty bearers disconnect from their constituents, they violate their own functions and the people's right to be represented. Okoth-Ogendo (2015) argues that one of the limitations of the Social Contract Theory is that governments change their stance when they are in power and neglect their promises and duty. This study agrees with Okoth-Ogendo's (2015) argument and proposes the regulation of MPs' conduct to ensure responsibility and accountability.

Thirdly, MPs complained of lack of time to visit their constituencies as a reason for their disconnect. These respondents blamed the parliamentary secretariat for allocating inadequate time for constituency engagement:



> There is no proper time allocated to MPs for their constituencies. The parliamentary calendar does not provide for proper time for MPs and their constituents and we have to hustle between them (MP2).

> The parliamentary secretariat should give us time to see our people; this is where our power is (MPC4).

The lack of the allocation of adequate constituency time could be attributed to executive control of the parliamentary calendar. Time for constituency engagement is important, as that is where citizen–MP relations and vertical accountability are improved. The interviews revealed that the lack of specific time for constituency engagement worsens the paradox of representation (PoR).

The parliamentary secretariat should consider its calendar and constituency offices to strengthen the MP-citizen relations and enhance representation and vertical accountability.

It is important to further note that the Parliament of Malawi repealed the Recall Provision by Act No.6 of 1995. Although a decade has passed after the repeal, the public continues its demands for the reinstatement of the Recall Provision as a way of holding their MPs accountable. The repeal of the Recall Provision in the constitution in 1995 affected citizens' ability to exercise Social Accountability which meant it removed people ability to exercise their right to good representation in the right to food; because currently the law restrains the recall of citizens' representatives from Parliament. This could strengthen vertical accountability (Chirwa, 2005; GoM, 2010; Maganga, 2009; Patel, 2008). The study concludes that there is a deep link among political ideology, representation gap and the paradox of representation.

### 5.3.3 Complacency and negligence of MPs

The MPs admitted their complacency and observed that their irresponsible and ineffective conduct is largely the result of the lack of principled and decisive politicians that Malawi has experienced over the years. MPs attributed this state of affairs to the autocratic presidential regime of governance where power and authority were heaped on the presidency and government activities were centralised. MPs indicated that their lack of accountability as duty bearers originates from the laxity of their system and leaders who are also unaccountable (Patel, 2008; Tostensen, 2017). This is borne out by this respondent:



> The complacency, negligent and irresponsible culture of political leaders is coming from the governance style that we have had, where the President made all policy decisions and if one called for accountability, one was deemed to be challenging authority and [being] rebellious ... Therefore, the political leaders and MPs are socialised to not taking responsibility (MPC4).

### 5.3.4 MPs' educational qualifications

The respondents also cited the MPs' level of formal education as affecting representation in parliament. They argued that the level of entry to contest a seat as an MP, is a barrier to the quality of debate as it affects the reasoning and conduct of MPs in the legislative arena. Respondents

maintained that MPs with low levels of formal education are easily manipulated by other political events because of weak reasoning capacity. This was a rather unexpected finding of the study, based on the inputs from the following respondents:

> The problem is the criteria we set to choose our MPs – that system has to change, because it affects representation, as some MPs do not understand issues. Because they are not well-educated, they just oppose another MP who is talking sense (MPC3).

> The Malawi School Certificate of Education is low for someone to understand complex issues in society … let alone in parliament. In addition to an already prominent difference in ideology, we also speak on different knowledge levels (MPC4).

> As CISANET, we help to build capacity so that MPs develop knowledge, skills and abilities to debate meaningfully (CISANET1).

The MPs' formal educational qualifications have been a controversy in Malawi's political and governance spaces. This study agrees that formal educational qualifications have to be raised to allow quality representation in parliament.

### 5.4 The Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI)

The MPs confirmed that there is chronic food insecurity and the Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI) in their constituencies. MPs indicated that the weak nature of parliament has contributed to the prevalence of the paradox because it has failed miserably to hold government accountable on various national food security issues. These MPs acknowledged their role in this sad state of affairs:

> This paradox is a reflection of weak legislative governance systems. As parliament we have failed to hold our government accountable to ensure food security for our people (MPC4).

> Malawi's food insecurity is created by us as leaders, for political interests (MPC3).

All the MPs admitted that because of supporting political ideology and tolerating executive dominance, they are part of creating the paradox. They further agreed that food in general, and

maize in particular, had been a political issue used to maintain the power of political actors. This MP was forthright regarding this thorny issue:

> We do not serve the people with commitment; policies are made to gratify agendas of political elites. I have observed that we don't have sound leadership at legislative and executive levels … food is life, but it has been used to keep people in power (MP2).

However, the document review showed that some MPs, particularly from the Opposition, represent the people and have been raising concerns in many parliamentary meetings about the mismanagement of programmes to improve food security. The following Hansards excerpt is an example of a speech by the Leader of the Opposition, complaining about one such programme:

> Mr Speaker, Sir, I knew and believe that most people here know that subsidised fertiliser was not meant for us, but I was very surprised and disappointed to hear stories about lorries carrying loads of fertiliser belonging to very important people to the market, shops … correct this … (Parliament of Malawi, 2007b).

This shows that MPs raise issues of food security, although the government does not take their concerns into consideration.

The CISANET representative argued that the paradox is prevalent because the submissive legislature has largely failed to hold government accountable:



Parliament has largely failed to hold government to account on the lasting solutions to food insecurity because it lacks political commitment to serving public interest … if MPs could lobby government on proper food governance, they can help to reduce food insecurity (CISANET1).

Political Economy Approach argues that the state is at the centre of all political and economic power. Adam and Dercon (2009) recognises that political actors are interested with benefits that a policy brings for their power sustenance. Malawi being an agriculture dependent economy; it is expected to invest effectively in agriculture to achieve food security and grow its economy and human development, through policies that improve agriculture sector and promote food security. However, the Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI) has been persistent over the years. This study suggests that it is because of political interests that the paradox has been

existing over the years. Looking at the citizens responses; the PAEbFI reveals policy and market failure arising from misallocation and unfair management of national resources. Various scholars have found out that in Malawi food in general and maize in particular has been used to maintain political power and that issues of food security has been top on political agenda and platforms (Babu and Sanyal, 2018; Banik and Chasukwa, 2019; Chinsinga, 2019**;** Tostensen, 2017, Devereux, 2002b. This study argues that the paradox is an indicator of elements of Political Economy that asserts that political actors are self-interest and political and economic benefits inspire public policy. For example the mismanagement of ADMARC and the Strategic Grain Reserves and the occurrence of the famine of 2001, mismanagement the fertiliser subsidy programme all indicate policy and market failure arising from political decisions that led to misallocation and mismanagement of public resources at the expense of citizens. This confirms that the paradox is as a result of political economic activities that favour political actors. This study argues that parliamentarians as duty bearers have indeed largely failed to carry out their constitutional obligations to hold government accountable on issues of national food security. This failure is a gross violation of the right to food, access and availability provided for in the constitution and through government food programmes, projects and manifestos. By not fulfilling their constitutional mandate, MPs have also violated their duty to fulfil the Social Contract and ensure the right of all Malawians to access food and related resources.

Considering these findings, it is clear that the ineffective functioning of parliament affects food security representation at parliamentary level because of complex internal and external political factors in governance spaces, including political power. The findings have confirmed the massive failure in food security policy at legislative level. This study recommends that the Government of Malawi reviews its dominant political systems to promote institutional governance, particularly legislative governance. It remains the government's primary responsibility and duty to improve food policy and agricultural governance, particularly at legislative level.



### 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews with the MPs (duty bearers) and the CISANET representative, regarding how parliament has handled food security policy legislation. The chapter also highlighted the barriers and challenges that prevent MPs from optimally

executing their ROL functions on food security. The chapter further revealed that parliament operates within political complexities that impede effective food security policy and legislation. The chapter further showed that although parliament has been established by the Constitution of Malawi (GoM, 2004; Patel, 2008) there are political undercurrents that limit its effectiveness and efficiency. The next chapter presents the findings of the inputs from the grassroots, based on the perspective of the rural citizens of Malawi.

## CHAPTER 6

## RESEARCH FINDINGS: RURAL CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVES ON FOOD SECURITY POLICY GOVERNANCE IN MALAWI

### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter reports on two focus group discussions carried out in the two research areas of Kasiya and Thekerani. It presents the citizens' perspectives of the legislature on food security policy and its legislation in Malawi. It further shows how effective, from the perspective of citizens, food policy legislation has been at the legislative level of governance. Firstly, the chapter confirms that Malawian rural households live in chronic food insecurity and that the Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI) exists and is prominent in rural areas. Secondly, the chapter confirms the existence of the Paradox of Representation (PoR) where there is a representational gap and disconnect between MPs as duty bearers and citizens as rights holders. Thirdly, the chapter reveals the presence of a fragmented but yet maturing social accountability. Fourthly, the study confirms connectedness of the Social Contract, Political Economy and Social Accountability .It confirms that Political actors neglect the Social contract once in power ignore service delivery at political economy level as they largely serve their interest more than that of the citizens. The chapter is divided into three segments; food security assessment; role of parliament and government; and rights and social accountability. These are the key themes that were developed for the focus group discussions in relation to the study themes in order to achieve the study objectives.



### A. Food Security Assessment

### 6.1 The Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI)

Respondents in the two focus group discussions confirmed that there is extensive chronic food insecurity in their households and faulted parliament and government for not preventing it and assisting them with food when they lack food. Respondents were asked to do a proportional piling to measure the levels and trends of food production and insecurity. The proportional piling showed disparities in food production. The respondents in both groups identified similar reasons for food insecurity in their households (see Table 2 below).

**Table 2: Reasons for food insecurity in Kasiya and Thekerani revealed by proportional piling**

| | Reasons for household food insecurity |
|---|---|
| a) | No income-generating activity apart from farming and casual work (*ganyu*) |
| b) | At least 75% of households produce inadequate food – insufficient to eat and sell for income |
| c) | Most households have no cash, with low income and insignificant purchasing power |
| d) | All household heads are concerned that their food will be depleted before they get money to buy more food or before the next harvest season |
| e) | Food is expensive; food prices are unrealistically high; as a result, they buy less food |
| f) | Households cannot afford to eat balanced meals and depend on low-cost food with little nutrients |
| g) | Adults (father or mother, household head) have to reduce the size of meals or skip meals because there is not enough food or money for more food and reserve some food for the children |

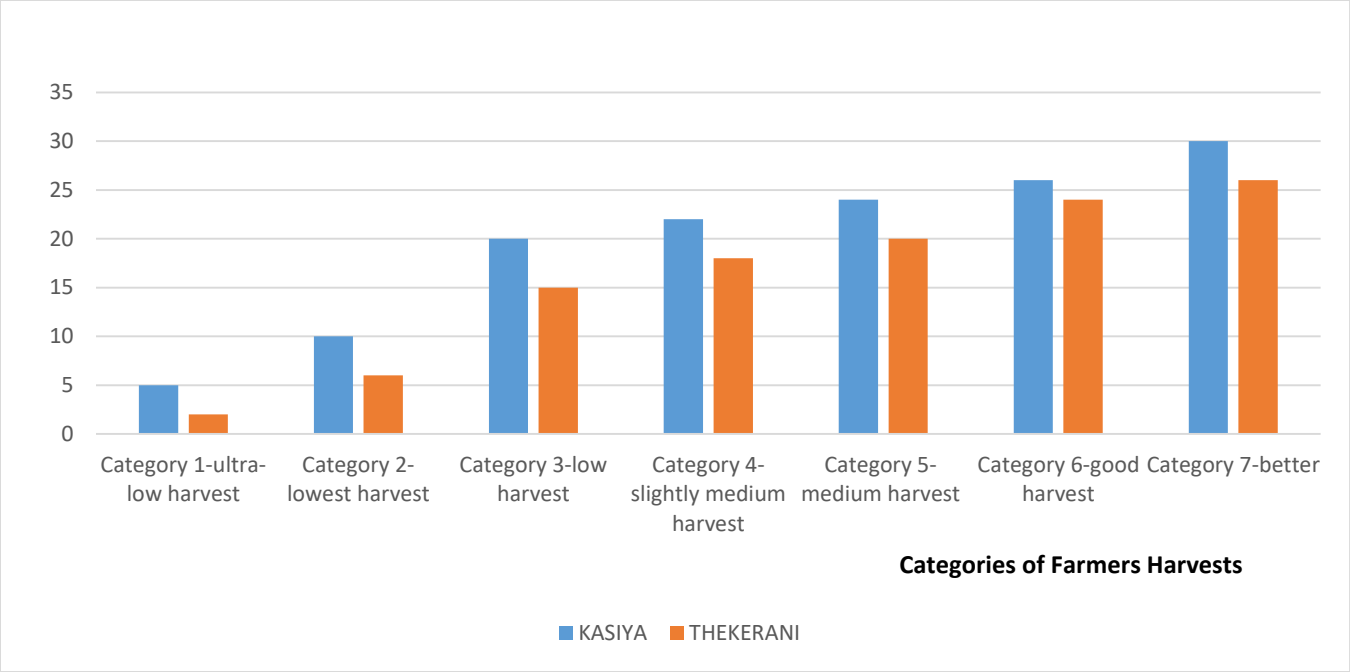
Source: Data obtained from fieldwork conducted in Kasiya and Thekerani, 23 February 2019 and 30 August 2019

The evidence in Table 2 is a reflection that there is a legislative representation gap in food and agriculture governance. Respondents pointed out that the dire food situation captured in Table 2 indicates that they are being neglected by all government leaders, including parliament. Respondents emphasised and believed that their lack of food is a reflection of poor governance at legislative and government levels, as articulated by this respondent:

> We lack enough meals … sometimes we eat at funerals (laughter), yes! This means we are being neglected and oppressed by the current governance and our legislative leaders (PK9).

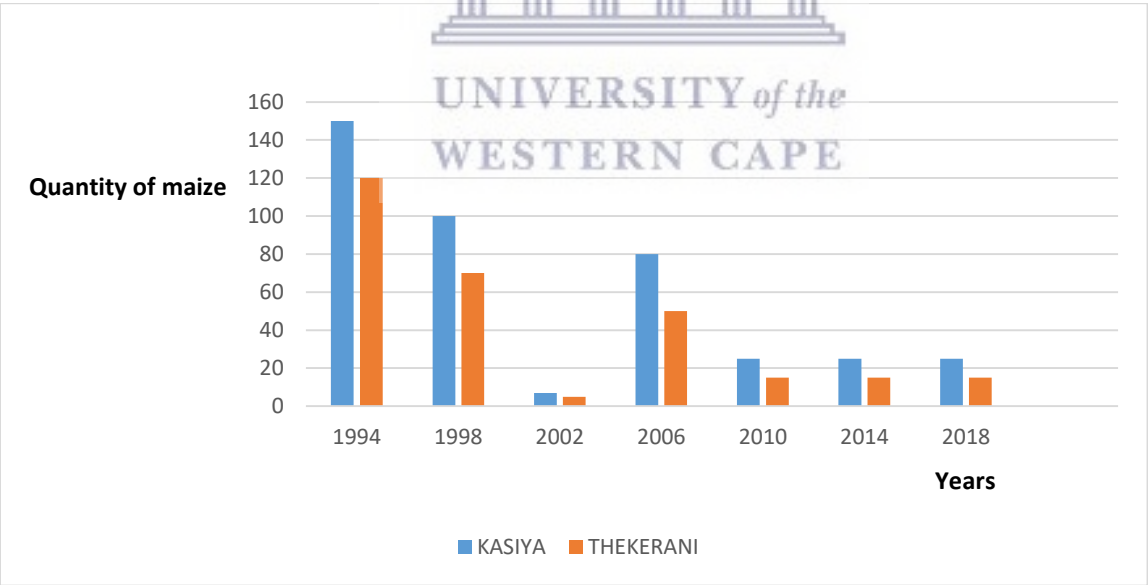
This confirms that political actor neglect duty to serve the peoples interests

**Figure 3: Result of proportional piling – household harvest trends in Kasiya and Thekerani**




Source: Author's compilation, based on fieldwork data, Kasiya and Thekerani – 23 February 2019 and 30 August 2019.

**Figure 4: Time series of proportional piling of trends of maize harvesting in Kasiya and Thekerani over 20 years**




Source: Author's compilation, based on fieldwork data, Kasiya and Thekerani – 23 February 2019 and 30 August 2019

Figure 4 shows the results of a proportional piling of individual household granaries depicting household food banks in Kasiya and Thekerani, while Figure 5 presents a time series of proportional piling, depicting trends in harvest in the same areas from 1998 to 2018. The graphical illustrations show trends of how rural citizens in Kasiya and Thekerani have been harvesting over the past 20 years.

In relation to the decline in food harvests, respondents blamed the negligence of MPs and government. Respondents in both groups indicated that there was surplus food due to good harvests in the 1990s and there were food sufficiency and food security (*mwanaalirenji).* However, as one respondent lamented:

> But now, government and MPs are neglecting us … we lack food … (PK2).

The increase in harvests during the 1990s is attributed to the Universal Starter Pack subsidy initially funded by the Malawi government and later supported by the Department for International Development (DfID) and other donors. This programme made the Malawi government popular as citizens had food sufficiency and food security. But it was not popular with the donors, as they initially asked the Malawi government to abolish subsidies through the Fertiliser Subsidy Removal Programme (FSRP) that was imposed on Malawi in the late 1980s.

Figure 4 shows a reduced harvest in 2001 and a famine in 2002, when between 47,000 and 85,000 people died of hunger-related illnesses. There were several factors that caused the 2001 famine (Devereux, 2002a, 2002b, 2009; Devereux and White, 2008). The government, including parliament and donors as duty bearers did not only neglect their duty but also exploited the poor and violated their right to food. The right to food means the provision of adequate food to all citizens at all times. Clearly, there was no government and parliament protection of the right to food for all Malawians. In this case, instead of the state as the primary duty bearer, exercising its core functions to prevent famine and provide food relief to citizens, it used its political and economic power for self-benefit while citizens were exploited and some died of hunger. This policy decision created a generalised policy and market failure. The state and parliament disregarded their constitutional role as duty bearers. The failure of government and parliament to prevent the famine and how it responded to it, point to the distinctive negligence of the state as duty bearer. Government indulged in plunder and unfair distribution of national resources while citizens experienced hunger. This conduct of political actors confirms the argument of the Political

Economy Approach that Political actors are influenced by political and economic interests and benefits in the process of governing.

The weak legislature failed dismally to hold the dominant Executive accountable on the mismanagement of the strategic grain reserves (SGR). It is important to note that ministers who were involved in this shameful handling of affairs, were also MPs in parliament and therefore were party to the Executive's suppression of the effective discussion of this issue in parliament (Booth et al., 2006).

The common view among the respondents in both groups of this study, was that government and MPs have not done enough to prevent the paradox and that they should provide relief and livelihood coping strategies when farmer households produce low yields and face food insecurity. Participants expressed these sentiments thus:

> The MPs' lack of commitment has made us to lack food … the government should be coming in to assist, not just help a chosen few, like chiefs … (PK1).
>
> Government and its MPs should be able to prevent hunger and take us out of hunger when it strikes at its children, not only a few people … (PK3).
>
> MPs should care about us … (PT8).



The Constitution of Malawi mandates food security as a right, but the findings of this study indicate that most of the rural households are food insecure. With insights from respondents in both groups, the researcher identified and developed four dimensions of the paradox.

**Table 3: Dimensions and indicators of the PAEbFI – citizens' perspectives**

| Dimension | Indicators |
|---|---|
| **Low input and low production** | ● Low farm inputs – seeds, fertiliser, farm equipment<br>● Lack of farm loans<br>● Low food production |
| **Lack of markets, market systems and price volatility** | ● Low price of produce<br>● Low income<br>● Weak purchasing power<br>● Low food reserve<br>● High food price |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Low income and low purchasing power** | • Generalised household food insecurity<br>• Lack of assets, education fees, medical care<br>• Lack of income to buy fertiliser and farm inputs |
| **Smallholder farmer who lacks food and income to buy food** | • No or low food reserves<br>• Generalised household food insecurity |

Respondents in both focus group discussions pointed out that the experience of their chronic food insecurity and the paradox is as a result of lack of proper legislative representation and commitment in food policies and reduction of hunger. According to this respondent,

> MPs do not listen to our problems; we would be food secure if they did … the problem is they lack commitment to help us (PK 5).

These dimensions and indicators of the PAEbFI suggests that government and the legislators have neglected effective food security policy. Although there has been subsidies, low productivity; arising from low inputs is a common problem in most rural farmers. What rural citizens are saying in this study suggests Government misallocation of agriculture resources over the years. Furthermore the existence of Lack of markets, market systems and price volatility shows government failure in regulating the food systems. This is a clear indication of unfair political economic activities meant to enrich the political actors.



Respondents also indicated that parliament has not helped to solve land problems and now they are harvesting less:

> Parliament has not handled the issue of land well (PK8).

> Parliament has not helped us in solving food insecurity. We have small land, larger families and less food (PT6).

> Our land is about bands and not fertile! (laughter) (PT5).

This land–farmer experience in Kasiya and Thekerani is similar to that of many areas in rural Malawi and that of Sub-Saharan Africa (Jayne et al., 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Makombe et al., 2010). The land-population growth situation in Malawi relates to the argument of the Malthusian Theory

of Population which states that population growth increases faster than food supply because land is constant. He argues that food becomes insufficient as the family size grows. Population growth reduces agricultural output because of reduced land (Devereux, 1997). This study maintains that parliament needs to lobby government to revise the issue of land through the Land Act to resolve this problem.

**B. The Role of Government and Parliament**

**6.2 Policy and Market Failures**

The findings of this study revealed that parliament does not effectively hold government accountable in many policy areas of food security including the Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP), the Agriculture and Development Marketing Corporation (ADMARC), agricultural produce, and marketing and regulation of tobacco.

Respondents of the FGDs commonly complained about FISP and how they have not been assisted despite reporting the challenges of the programmes to the MPs and other community leaders. Both groups indicated that they do not produce enough because they lack fertiliser; as a result, they harvest less. Dorward et al. (2011) found that the FISP programme has largely benefitted the 'unintended' people such as private business traders, and politicians and has been captured by the village elites including chiefs, local leaders and excludes the poor, needy households who remain trapped in continuous food security vulnerability. The programme has been criticised for exhibiting many problems, including exclusion and inclusion targeting errors, leaving out the needy poor people and including the better-offs (Chinsinga, 2012; Dorward et al., 2011; Mkandawire, 2005).

Several participants shared these concerns:

> MPs have not helped us to address food insecurity in FISP. The FISP has left out the poor but you will find that households that have a granary full of maize, are benefitting from it (PT5).

> Our chiefs use our names in order to have access to more fertiliser coupons (PK7).

Respondents reiterated that they had on several occasions informed the MPs through the village chiefs and leaders that FISP is not helping them, but they do not listen:

> There is a need for our leaders to be committed about the rural poor when coming up with their policies. They don't listen to anyone; so even if the rural masses present their problems, they are not assisted (PK6).

The existence of the Paradox of Agrobased Economy but Food Ensure (PAEbFI) confirms that policy and market failure has existed over the years. It also confirms that the state as a duty bearer and a governor uses Political Economic power to serve their interest and benefit from subsidies. This conduct of political actors is a clear manifestation of unequal and inadequate distribution of national resources. By allocating inadequate national resources towards agriculture and food security, it suggests that political actors benefit from the project of subsidies. Doward et al (2011) argues that the subsidies have benefitted politicians and private traders through business deals that provide both economic and political benefits to the politicians than the farmer. These citizens responses are similar to those of MPs in Chapter 5 Section; where they admitted that they do not work with collective action to serve the people because of different political ideologies.

The citizens' accounts resonate with Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2017; 2020) who assert that social accountability requires citizens to use their agency to be users and choosers of policy and not passive users of public policy. In this case, the citizens show that they have agency but their political leaders are not accountable. The complacency of MPs, as duty bearers, is a demonstration of their lack of public commitment to duty of representation and a violation of citizens' right to food.



Respondents also complained of the lack of representation by parliament, because this institution has largely failed to mandate government to provide markets for their produce – such as maize and tobacco – which provides income and food:

> In the past, we used to have ADMARC markets; they were well organised. We have asked them to bring back ADMARC but government does not provide us [with markets] (PK7).

> Parliament has failed to lobby government to introduce better markets for our produce and our request for [the reintroduction of] ADMARC (PK4).

The responses from citizens show that people have agency and manage to cultivate and harvest for income and for food. However low price and lack of market to sustain their income and food security remains a problem. The issue of ADMARC is another reflection of food policy failure

and negligence of duty. Its deregulation in 1990 (Booth et al., 2006; Chinsinga, 2018) and its continued mismanagement confirms the assertion of Political Economy Approach that politicians are self-interested and focuses on political and economic benefits. The market and policy failure of ADMARC in most instances benefited the politicians at the expense of ordinary citizen. As a governor who has powers to distribute national resources, government has the responsibility provide services to the people as the Social Contract and Political Economy suggest (Okoth-Ogendo, 2015). This study therefore recommends that the legislature as an arm of government; governing on behalf of citizens should reconsider revamping ADMARC to facilitate easy access to food and income.

### 6.3 The Paradox of Representation (PoR)

Responding to the questions of MPs' visibility and engagement with the citizens in the area of food security, citizens said that MPs' presence in the constituency is erratic with minimal engagement, creating a general sense of disconnect. Patel (2008) found that MPs have a habit of disconnecting from their constituents. This happens at all levels of representation – Chamber, Committee and Constituency levels (3Cs). Parliament as an arm of government has the responsibility to ensure it represents the citizens in food security to fulfil the Social Contract. However, there is limited representation and the Paradox of Representation exists (Okoth-Ogendo, 2015). This study therefore developed three key dimensions of the Paradox of Representation and their indicators, based on the citizens' perspectives, are shown in Table 4 below.



**Table 4: Dimensions and indicators of the Paradox of Representation**

| Dimension | Indicators |
|---|---|
| **Political ideology: Disconnect and disengagement** | ● Not available in the constituency<br>● Disconnect and disengagement from constituents<br>● Party and self-interest practiced over public interest constituency<br>● Lack of public commitment to social contract |
| **Representational gap** | ● Compromised ROL functions<br>● Disconnect between constituents and MPs<br>● Disengagement from constituents |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Complacency and negligence** | ● Party and self-interest practiced over public interest |

### 6.3.1 Political Ideology: Disconnect and disengagement

The respondents declared that there is prominent disconnect and disengagement as the MPs do not visit their constituencies and engage them after they have been elected. The citizens in both FGDs further indicated that both MPs and the Legislature do not represent their interests fairly. These respondents spoke with candour:

> They have not helped us – we lack fertiliser and food in times of need (PK 4).
>
> We only see them during campaigning. We never see them again. The next time they are coming, they come in black cars to feed those who helped them with campaigning. They forget the real voters … we don't vote for them again (PT2).
>
> We vote for people who don't solve our problems (PK5).

These sentiments of citizens are similar to what Okoth-Ogendo (2015) argued, that once the MPs and their party have been voted into office and assume power, they disregard the social contract. Political Economy Approach (PEA) focuses on the centrality of politics and how political power is contested, secured and exercised. The study findings therefore prove this argument. These findings show that Political ideology influences the conduct of legislators that support party politics than people's interests and collective action. It also explains how political actors, including legislators, policy-makers benefit from supporting party ideology. Therefore, the study confirms that political ideology results in a representation gap.

### 6.3.2 Representational gap

Respondents identified the elements of the representational gap that they observed regarding the MPs' conduct at constituency and plenary levels.

**Constituency level**

- MPs disengage as soon as they have won an election.
- MPs no longer visit constituencies and only engage close to the following elections.

**Plenary and committee level**

- MPs support those parliamentary issues that have a close alignment between their own interests and the interests of citizens.

The findings from citizens have proved that representational gap arises because MPs focus on getting political and economic benefits more than representing the aspirations and interest of the public. In Chapter 5, Sections 5.3; 5.3.1,5.3.2, 5.4 from MPs and findings from Citizens in this Chapter strongly agree and confirm the existence of the Paradox of Representation. The sentiments from both groups of MPs and Citizens confirm the argument of Political Economy Approach (PEA) that MPs are interested in political and economic benefits. These sentiment from MPs and citizens challenge the study that MPs are representatives of the people. Furthermore, these findings in both groups confirm that Political actors in this case the legislators are interested in economic and political benefits in their duties. Dimensions and indicators of the Paradox in Table 4 are critical indicators that effective representation in legislative governance is largely lacking. It is also an indicator that citizens lack effective representation regardless of MPs function of representation. In 5.3 to 5.4 MPs mentioned adherence to ideology, lack of political will and lack of commitment to public interest, as causes of the paradox of representation. Similarly, citizen in this chapter complains of MPs disconnect and disengagement from the constituents. These indicators confirms Okoth-Ogendo (2015) argument on the limitations of the Social Contract which says that once the political actors, assume power the government becomes absolute and functions without accountability. Therefore at Political Economic level; political actors who are MPs, support party ideology and make policy decisions that support their interests. They disengage causing a representational gap as MPs largely no longer represents the interest of the citizens. This confirms that political actors are self- interested and change when they assume power and; use their Political economic power to exploit citizens.

Respondents indicated that MPs have a tendency to support programmes and projects that increase their own political and economic power benefits. Political Economy is concerned with who, what why and how in development process. (Adam and Dercon, 2009; Cohn, 2016; Heywood, 2017).

The ultimate role of Political representation is to improve peoples lives. This study finds that MPs are self-interested in their representation roles. The findings from citizens show that practically, MPs are only available during the contestation of power because they seek benefits. However, when they win they disengage and neglect representation and serve self-interest. Furthermore, MPs support projects that give economic and political benefits, such as subsidies, Constituency Development Fund (CDF) among others. This study suggests that there is an urgent need to enhance the demand side accountability to empower citizens to hold their MPs accountable when they do not represent them accordingly, as mandated by the constitution. This can only be done through in-depth civic education of rights, social accountability and legislative governance.

Respondents from both Kasiya and Thekerani pointed out that MPs do not consult them on their interests when preparing for parliamentary meetings, neither are they debriefed on the outcomes of parliamentary meetings:

> The MPs just debate on issues without having practical information on what affects rural farmers (PK10).
>
> They do not engage us (PK7).
>
> It is not possible to meet them. We even send a message there, but we don't get a response … there are a few people who know where the MP is living (PK 9).
>
> We have not met the MP for [a] long [time]. Fear will not help us. What we need is just to be brave enough and go straight to meet the MP (PT1).

These responses show that there is no engagement between the MP as duty bearer and citizens as the rights holders. In historical colonial and authoritative regimes, dissenting views were regarded as being seditious. Currently, most citizens are still afraid to challenge governmental authority, as they lack knowledge of human rights, social and political accountability. This study recommends the introduction of intensive civic education on rights and accountability.

Furthermore, citizens showed a keen interest in learning more about legislative governance and how they can engage with their MPs on their welfare, even suggesting the establishment of a constituency office:

> There is need for the MP to have an office in the constituency so that whenever we have issues, we can do so at the office (PT10).

> If an office can be established here, we can read and know about parliament and meet our MPs; it can help us (PK8).

It stands to reason that the enhancement of citizens–MP relations can improve legislative governance. This study agrees with the citizens' suggestions that the parliamentary secretariat should consider investing in constituency offices as a hub for legislative information and engagement. The offices can serve as a platform where both vertical and horizontal accountability can be enhanced.

### 6.3.3 MPs' complacency and negligence

The respondents in both groups indicated that most MPs are indifferent towards the people's interests in Malawi. Respondents felt that the complacency of MPs has its roots in the earlier presidential regime of governance where all political power was vested in the President – the *ngwazi*.[5] This respondent lamented:

> Today, we have irresponsible MPs and political leaders who do not care for people's matters (PK6).



## C. Rights and Social Accountability

### 6.3.4 Social accountability and rights

Respondents expressed their lack of knowledge about parliament, their natural rights, power, freedoms and entitlements, and the system of governance. They indicated that they were largely ignorant about bureaucratic and political power, and that those powers are not arbitrary. The respondents were not aware that ordinary citizens, as users and makers of policy, can lobby their MPs to propose legislation that deals with their concerns and aspirations (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017). While respondents knew that voting can remove an MP, they were not necessarily aware of the full range of their rights, as evidenced by the following responses:

[5] *Ngwazi* was the title given to the first Malawian authoritarian president who ruled Malawi dictatorially.

> We are filled with fear to claim our rights and also, we don't understand our rights (PK2).
>
> When MPs don't come to help us, there is nothing we can do. We just persevere until the next election … and we vote them out (PK5).
>
> There is a need for civic education (PK6).
>
> It will be important to have an organisation that could be looking into issues on whether the MP is performing or not. I believe this can be of great help. We are ignorant of many governance issues (PK9).

Respondents clearly know that voting is the only way of removing an MP from office. This is evidence of a maturing democracy in Malawi. However, social accountability is still fragmented in Malawi because most citizens still lack in-depth information on rights and legislative governance. As a result, citizens lack the confidence to hold the duty bearers accountable when they violate citizens' rights. Again, the citizens' timidity originates from colonial and authoritative regimes where the expression of views was suppressed and regarded as a form of dissent. Consequently, citizens were not socialised to challenge political or bureaucratic authority, hold government accountable or defend their rights (Chingaipe et al., 2016; Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Patel, 2008). This study therefore concludes that the political history contributes to the slow maturing of social accountability and it affects the flourishing of horizontal and vertical accountability among government institutions, structures and systems.



Recently in Malawi there has been evidence of increased social accountability, especially vertical accountability, through peaceful demonstrations against electoral injustice. This is another example of a maturing democracy. This study welcomes these small victories for citizens, which are timely for government and NGOs to be responsive and engage in social accountability because there is good citizen mobilisation and high momentum ideal for social accountability (Sarelin, 2014). This is also a timely driver that has the potential to invest in citizens' engagement and improve MP–citizen relations. Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2017; 2020) and Hickey and King (2016) assert that citizens ought to be supported and empowered to take up their roles as actors and shapers of public policy and not remain passive users of public policy. Investing in civic education to cultivate the vertical accountability, therefore, is key to bringing awareness to the citizens for them

to realise that they are rights holders and their MPs as duty bearers can be held accountable if they neglect their duty and violate citizens' rights, including the right to food.

Although the democratic constitution brought with it freedom of expression, the government did not fully adopt it and there was a distinct lack of a clear strategy to embrace it (Cammack, 2012; Chirwa, 2005; Hussein, 2004). As a result, citizens lack information about their rights and governance. This study recommends that Malawi should strive to promote knowledge of rights for its citizens by holding intensive civic education and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns on their rights and train them how to claim them. Constituency Offices (COs) established to enhance citizens' access to information, can help them demand the good governance they deserve.

### 6.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the citizens' perspectives of the legislature on food security policy in Malawi. It further showed, from the perspective of the citizens, how effective food security policy legislation has been towards the elimination of food insecurity in rural Malawi. The next chapter presents a discussion of both the citizens' and MPs' perspectives. It also provides a conclusion, considers research implications, puts forward recommendations, and proposes areas for further study.

# CHAPTER 7

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 7.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the main findings in chapters five and six of the study. The study considered the legislative contribution to the elimination of food insecurity. The chapter links the empirical evidence to the findings of the study. The main objective of the study was to assess the parliamentary contribution to the elimination of food insecurity in rural Malawi. The key question was, how the issue of food security has been handled at the legislative level of governance in Malawi. The main argument of the study was that Malawi, being an agro-based economy, faces extensive perennial hunger and food insecurity and therefore the country has been experiencing the Paradox of an Agriculture-based Economy and yet Food Insecure (PAEbFI) over the years. The Constitution of Malawi, Chapter 4, and Section (2) explicitly guarantees the right to food (GoM, 2004). As a duty bearer and a legal and policy-making institution, the Parliament of Malawi has a constitutional mandate to protect the right to food by representing the people's welfare. However, it appears that effective parliamentary legislation and representation in the discourse of reducing food insecurity is largely lacking with most legislators serving political ideologies and self-interests after winning an election. This conduct leads to the MPs' neglect of their constitutional obligation of serving the public interest and blatantly violates the social contract with the citizens. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and conducted an historical document review (HDR) of parliamentary debates from 2008 to 2018, two focus group discussions (FGDs) of 11 and 12 respondents each. A proportional piling method was used within the FGD, and in-depth interviews were conducted with six MPs in agriculture and food security, and a representative from a civil society organisation, totalling to a sample size of 30 respondents.



## 7.1 Statement of Results

The findings of the study revealed that parliament's representation of the country's food security policy is compromised by the dynamics of political power and economic interests, arising from conspicuously weak institutional governance that spread across all levels of governance in Malawi. The findings have shown that the political complexities compromise legislative representation of

food security policy in Malawi and that parliament as a legal and policy-making institution operates within the complexities of the Presidential System of Governance, just as it was during the rule of colonial and autocratic regimes. The extensive powers of the President allow the incumbent to use the Executive arm to exercise his political dominance and control of political and economic activities largely without being accountable. These complexities impede effective legislation on food security policy as the Executive pre-determines, controls and dominates most food security policy processes, including the functioning of the Legislature.

The findings also confirmed the existence of the Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI) and that the Malawian food security situation does not fit perfectly into an agro-based economy because there is still chronic food insecurity with low subsistence production of food for both consumption and income.

The study's findings also revealed that the Paradox of Representation (PoR) exists in legislative governance. It is important to note that although the constitution established parliament and its functions, political and economic undercurrents arising from political ideologies and self-interests limit and undermine parliamentary functions regarding food security policy. The study therefore confirms the representational gaps exist in plenary, committees and constituencies.

Most importantly, the study acknowledges that there is a significant relationship between the Paradox of Representation (PoR) and the Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure (PAEbFI) because of a largely ineffective and inefficient parliament, as duty bearers serve political interests rather than the public interests. The study affirms that the Paradox of Representation influences the Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure. The study therefore asserts that the Paradox of Representation and the Paradox of Agrobased Economy but Food Insecure are a deeply interrelated phenomenon. The existence of the PoR confirms that although parliament is constitutionally renowned to be a legal and policy-making body, representative of the people's interests, it does not effectively represent the people. The study refutes the well-known narrative that parliament fully represents the people's interests and maintains that representation is largely a lip service.

The study findings also reveal an important connectedness among the Social Contract Theory, the Political Economy Approach and the Social Accountability Approach in the legislative

governance. That is when MPs get elected through the Social Contract they are empowered to manage the economic and political affairs of the state, when they are not managing the resources in the right manner they are held accountable through Social accountability.

The study's findings also revealed that although social accountability has recently become vibrant and is maturing in Malawi, horizontal and vertical accountability are still poorly developed, as the government and parliament are not very responsive to it.

The study therefore confirms that the extensive presidential powers remain a source of political influence and dominance that does not require the Executive to be accountable to parliament. Parliament as a duty bearer and a representation of the people, largely fails to fulfil its functions in service of the people, particularly on the provision of food as a human right. This failure is a violation of both the constitution and the human right to food. This violation is therefore a breach of the social contract between the government and the citizens of Malawi.



**7.2 Conclusion**

The research findings confirmed that although food security is a human right, as provided in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, it is highly politicised and tops the agenda of political discourse. In conclusion, the study highlights some of the key findings on the legislative contribution to food security policy in Malawi.

Firstly, there is weak institutional governance emanating from political and economic power that arises from the presidential system of government. This system gives extensive powers to the President and has affected institutions and food governance policy systems and structures. One key aspect of this, is that, there is Executive control and dominance over the Legislature; therefore, the latter struggles to function effectively. The study concludes that weak institutional governance is the key barrier to the Legislature's effective and efficient food security policy governance.

Secondly, the Paradox of Agro-Based Economy but Food Insecure exists in Malawi. The paradox happens as a result of the extensive and weak institutional governance that affects food security policy, including at the legislative level.

Thirdly, the Paradox of Representation is the common problem in legislative governance. The findings showed that the paradox arises from self-interested political actors who serve and support party ideology and interests more than the citizens of Malawi. The legislators largely violate the duty of representation and provision of the right to food regardless of which political party they represent. In most cases, legislators violate the social contract and reproduce a representational gap that disconnects them from their constituencies. Furthermore, the Executive dominance and control of the Legislature largely worsens the Paradox of Representation.

Fourthly, the Paradox of Representation (PoR) and the Paradox of Agro- Based Economy but Food Insecure PAEbFI are deeply-related phenomenon. Legislators and political actors from the Executive in Malawi significantly violate citizens' human right to food and access to food provided in the Constitution of Malawi. Political actors have neglected their commitment to the social contract and therefore a paradox has been created over the years.

Fifthly, social accountability is slowly maturing in both bottom and up levels of governance in Malawi. The situation has also weakened the legislative oversight of the Executive, as well as citizens' claims to their rights particularly right to food.

Sixthly, just as local political actors such as the Executive and legislators influence and manipulate domestic food security policies, international political actors in the form of international development actors (IDAs) also influence domestic policy on food security. In most cases, IDAs significantly initiate, impose and direct most national food security policy regarding fertiliser, subsidies, social protection, agricultural production and marketing. Their influence has not been people-centred and in most cases, together with domestic government, they collaborate and violate human rights and generally breach the national social contracts.

Seventhly, there is a strong connectedness among the Social Contract, Political Economy Approach and Social Accountability in the legislative governance processes. They need a holistic approach to these theories in order to achieve effective governance not only at legislative level but all levels of governance.

If only MPs recognise their roles as duty bearers and uphold social contracts to promote food security policies for the greater good of a greater number of people, then Malawi can have abundant food for its people and cease to be a Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure. Although politics is the basis of political ideology for governments, promotion of the social contract and social accountability is essential. It is important that political actors and duty bearers should start to rethink and perceive politics as a driver of human development and themselves its agents and realise that they are mandated to serve the public interest.

The study, therefore, has assessed the parliamentary contribution to the reduction of food insecurity in rural Malawi. The study has also provided policy suggestions in food security policy and legislative governance that may work to reduce extreme hunger and food insecurity.

### 7.3 Recommendations of the Study

#### 7.3.1 Constitutional review and rethinking parliamentary strategic plans

a) Weak institutional governance is the main problem affecting legislative governance in Malawi. There is a need to reduce presidential and executive powers and instead promote institutions' capacity; particularly, the Legislature to enhance representation in food security policy. To achieve the reduction of presidential and executive powers, the study proposes a constitutional review that the Doctrine of Separation of Powers in Chapters 1 section 7, 8, 9 that empowers parliament and other governance agencies that work with parliament, such as the judiciary. The review can promote the rule of law that enhances people-centred governance. The reduction of presidential powers will lessen the Executive's dominance and manipulation of parliament and enable MPs and the Executive to be liable to accountability.

b) The study also recommends that the government should resume the constitutional provision that the President should answer questions on state affairs in parliament. The question-answer session in parliament will be an important governance tool that will ensure the President to be accountable. It can also enhance social accountability that promotes both horizontal and vertical accountability. (*Although 2020 was not in the time frame of the study, please note that since the assumption of a new government in Malawi in 2020, the*

*government resumed this and the President and the Vice President answer questions in parliament*).

c) The constitutional review that looks into promoting legislative independence could also help to achieve parliamentary financial autonomy and build capacity for MPs and staff.

d) An MP recall provision should be reconsidered in the review of the constitution and be included as a way of protecting the social contract, enhancing vertical accountability and citizens' power to claim their rights and demand good governance (GoM, 2004). If reinstated, it may help protect the social contract because it could compel the MPs to be responsible and accountable, as duty bearers. A strong legal framework and a code of conduct for MPs as a regulator for their responsibility could also help to ensure representation and accountability.

e) The study further suggests the introduction of Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs) to create access to legislative governance information for citizens. The offices can enhance vertical accountability (the demand side) as it can help citizens to understand the constitution, human rights and the right to food and governance issues, the social contract and social accountability. The PCOs can serve as IEC tools that enhance the flow of knowledge in governance and ensure that citizens know that political and bureaucratic powers are not arbitrary and duty bearers can be held accountable (Arnold and Harris, 2017). The offices can also act as a channel to enhance horizontal accountability where parliament can engage constituents and enhance bottom-up governance.

f) The parliamentary secretariat should consider developing a comprehensive Parliamentary Training Programmes (PTPs) aimed to build capacity for Members of Parliament for their complex roles. PTPs provide support that enhance MPs' knowledge, abilities and skills (KAS) that they require in performing parliamentary functions (Coghill et al., 2012; World Bank 2011). It can help parliamentarians to acquire custom-made skills on legislative governance, including MPs' default mandates, social contract and social accountability.

### 7.3.2 Political will and good governance

Political will and good governance have shown to have helped many nations to develop from low-income countries to developed countries (Dulani and Van Donge, 2005; Hickey and Bracking, 2005). Political actors in Malawi should prioritise public interest and implement policies that support food security. One of the reasons that has created the Paradox of Agro-based but Food Insecure in Malawi is the lack of holistic food security policy approaches. Political will and good governance can enhance sound food security policy that enhances food security.

### 7.3.3 Promotion of social accountability and civic education

Social accountability has been fragmented but maturing in Malawi. The study proposes that the strengthening and implementation of the Access to Information Act can promote vertical and horizontal accountability. Strong civil rights groups, free media, civic education campaigns to inform, educate and communicate with citizens on governance systems, are key to achieve social accountability. Civic education campaigns on parliament, roles of duty bearers, and citizens' roles, claims and rights, in an effort to achieve awareness of people's rights and legislative governance are also important.

### 7.3.4 Increase government investment in social protection

Firstly, parliament should lobby the Executive to consider increasing investment in social protection to reduce food vulnerability and shocks that have been created by food security policy failure. Raising government expenditure through social protection programmes including social grants, social cash transfers and a public works programme to create jobs and income can ensure immediate food relief, availability and access to vulnerable rural farmers (Devereux and Maxwell, 2000; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017; 2020). Although there are existing social cash transfer programmes in Malawi, they are largely short-term and highly targeted. The prevailing extensive food insecurity and poverty in rural Malawi should compel the government to increase its safety-net programmes to the vulnerable (Chinsinga, 2012; Devereux and Maxwell, 2000; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2017; 2020). The study agrees that social protection programmes create an instant consumption of food. It also encourages social inclusion for citizens to participate in the political, social, and economic development process of the nation.

Secondly, the government should also consider implementing a universal farm inputs programme in Malawi because 85% of rural subsistence smallholder farmers live in poverty (IMF, 2017). This is because targeting is not feasible to reduce poverty and create food security when most of the country's population is poor. Mkandawire (2004) asserts that targeted subsidies largely have not worked in Malawi because most of the population is poor. Universal subsidies could be achieved by government improving its austerity measures and increasing the government's financial base through stern macro-economic policies such as government investment, and the reduction of corruption and rent-seeking.

### 7.3.5 Enhance policies that increase agricultural productivity and marketing infrastructure

Low food production has been one of the dimensions of the Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure. Policies that promote sustainable agriculture by embracing science and technology that increase agricultural production, are essential (Chinsinga, 2012; 2018). Policies that improve farming technologies such as farm input machines, modern seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, irrigation, veterinary services, and food processing can increase production for both consumption and export. Parliament and the executive should also consider regulating and improving the market, creating more markets and market systems to benefit farmers.

## 7.4 Research Implications

### 7.4.1 Policy implication



The study can help to develop policy in many areas, including the area of politics and legislative governance and food security.

### 7.4.2 Methodology

The proportional piling technique within the focus group discussion in this study could be adopted as a formal method of collecting data from rural people who cannot provide data using figures. Therefore, it can be used as one of the methods used in Interpretive Paradigm-Qualitative Research.

### 7.4.3 Parliamentary training for MPs

This study can be used to develop Parliamentary Training Programmes (PTPs) that build capacity for Members of Parliament. Coghill et al. (2012) assert that PTPs help MPs acquire knowledge, abilities and skills (KAS) for their work. Government and other governance institutions can initiate and facilitate the training using academic and legislative practitioners to build capacity. Through the parliamentary careers project, many countries have undergone PTP including Australia, Bangladesh, South Africa, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mauritius, and Zambia (Coghill et al., 2012).

### 7.4.4 Academic and professional training

The study can help to teach students in various postgraduate courses, including programmes of politics and governance, public and social policy, development studies, political science, and legislative governance.

### 7.4.5 Constitution Amendment

Constitutional amendment could significantly change the political and policy management in legislative governance in Malawi because; it could strengthen institution independence, and legal frameworks that enhance institutions of governance such as Parliament and other judicial and rights agencies that work to improve the right to food. Review of various chapters and sections of the constitution could significantly improve performance of Representation, Oversight, and Legislative (ROL) functions of Parliament as follows:



**Amendment to Improve Representation Function**

Findings in both Chapter 5 and 6 of the study show a prevalence of the Paradox of Representation which confirms that there is a representation gap. Although Social Accountability has improved in Malawi over the years; citizens are still restrained to directly hold their MPs accountable for lack of adequate representation due to disengagement. Reintroducing the Recall Provision through Constitutional review can enhance representation and citizen Social Accountability. Reviewing the Constitution, Chapter 6, Section 64 could significantly provide an opportunity for citizens to exercise direct and indirect Social Accountability that will enable citizens to hold their MPs accountable. The amendment could increase performance in representation and reduce the Paradox of Representation (PoR). Looking at the connectedness of the Social Contract, Political Economy

and Social Accountability illustrated in Chapter 2 of the study, the suggested amendment will enhance these theories and improve legislative governance.

A Constitutional Review in Chapter 6 to add Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs) could improve citizens' access to the MPs which could enhance representation. The study suggests that the review could include that the offices be apolitical and that parliament should own the offices to avoid abuse of the offices by parties. These Constitutional offices could also act as Parliamentary Information Centre's that will provide citizens access to information, education and communication (IEC). Access to IEC will enhance citizens' parliamentary information for their informed decisions and it can enhance citizens' social and political participation. The study further suggests that Parliament could include this amendment in its Standing Orders and MPs Code of Conduct to ensure that Constituency Offices are managed fairly. The CO could also increase Constituency Time (CT) for MPs that could improve Citizen-MP engagement and enhance performance in Representation. A Strict Code of Conduct could enhance performance, integrity, transparency, and accountability of MPs in their constituency.

**Amendment to Improve Oversight Function**

The findings in Chapter 5 and 6 show that Parliament of Malawi is not autonomous and receives funding from the executive. Lack of autonomy limits parliamentary work in plenary and committee operations that consequently affect legislative governance. The Executive is key in running the affairs of government and although, Chapters 6, 8 and 9 encourage Separation of Powers and recognizes the legislature as an independent institution from executive; still the executive limits the functions of Parliament as highlighted in Chapter 8 of the constitution. Reviewing the doctrine of Separation of powers in Chapter 1, 7, 8 and 9 could empower and build strong governance institutions particularly Parliament. This amendment could lead an autonomous parliament that will lead to effective ROL functions.

**Amendment to Improve the Legislation Functions**

Findings in Chapter 5 and 6 show that there is executive dominance over the legislature. As a result, parliament is limited in managing its sitting calendar. The study suggests review of Chapter 8, section 78 to reduce executive dominance over the legislature and together with Chapter 6 Section 59(1) (a-b) to make parliament autonomy to enhance governance. Reviewing the

constitution will provide for a fixed sitting times for plenary, committee and constituency time. The review will improve legislative function as it will create more time of scrutinizing bills that become laws. For example, it will increase sitting time, technical support and build capacity for drafting of Private Members motions. A pronounced calendar will provide an opportunity for parliament to scrutinize proposed legal framework and laws for better governance. Increasing debate time improves efficiency and effectiveness of plenary, committee and deliberations at all levels of parliament business**.**

### 7.5 Areas for Further Study

The study recommends further studies in the following areas:

a) Institutional governance as key to economic and human development.
b) The role of social accountability in the reduction of food insecurity in Malawi.
c) The relation between the Paradox of Representation and the Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure.
d) Exploring the Paradox of Representation in African Parliaments.
e) The Paradox of Agro-based Economy but Food Insecure.
f) The social contract – the institutions and actors.
g) Social accountability – a path to good governance.
h) The social contract and social protection programmes in Malawi.
i) The institutions and actors in the development of social protection policies.
j) The Executive and Legislature relations in a democracy.
k) The role of parliamentary constituency offices in the promotion of citizens' rights, power and freedom, and representation governance.
l) The political economy of parliaments.
m) Investigation into the international development actors in the formulation of food security and social protection policies.
n) Parliamentary training programmes as a gateway to parliamentary efficiency.

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**APPENDICES: LIST OF INTERVIEW GUIDES**

**A1. Interview Guide: Focus Group Discussion 1 and 2**

**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR RURAL CITIZENS IN KASIYA – LILONGWE NORTH WEST AND THEKERANI – THYOLO SOUTH CONSTITUENCIES**

**Research Objectives 1 and 2:**

1. To examine the nature and trajectory of food security policy in parliament
2. To examine the effectiveness of food security legislation from the perspective of grassroots society

**Research Questions 1 and 2**

1. How has the issue of food security been handled at the legislative level of governance in Malawi?
2. How effective from the perspective of the citizens at grassroots level in society has food policy legislation been represented in rural Malawi?



1. **Food security assessment**

1. Are people in Thekerani food secure? If not, why?
2. How many are food insecure and why is it like that (it is the issue of land, elderly and weak, women and children, disease (*to apply Proportion Piling*)
3. What do people do to earn a living?
4. Do the people have food at household level? How do you get this food?
5. What is the people's source of income in Kasiya?
6. Is the income that people earn enough to buy food? If not, why?
7. If the income you earn per month is not enough, how do you get top-up money for survival?
8. Do you buy food?
9. Do families produce their own food? If not, why?
10. Do families produce enough food?
11. In this community, do you produce your own food?

12. How does the community rate the production of food over the years? Has production improved or worsened? If yes, why? If no, why?
13. If you rely on farming, when there is drought, how do you survive?
14. Have you ever relied on a relation, or organisation to assist you when you run out of food? If not, why?
15. Are you food secure, today? Who do you compare it with 2 years ago, 5 years ago and 10 years ago? If yes, why? If not, why?

**2. The role of government and parliament**

1. Does the community know its MP?
2. What do you know about parliament?
3. How often do you see your MP in the community?
4. Do you have an issue that has been fixed or influenced by an MP in the community?
5. Does the MP consult the people when going to parliament?
6. What issues does the MP consult the community on?
7. Does your MP perform according to the interest of the community?
8. How do you want an MP to help people in food security?
9. How should parliament help people in food security?
10. Does your Member of Parliament engage the community in parliamentary decisions?
11. Does the MP debrief the people on what they have agreed in parliament?
12. If the community has a social problem, does the community go to him for help?
13. Do you know of any policies or programme that government and parliament have done on food security? If yes, please mention them.
14. Have these policies helped you in any way?
15. What would you want parliament to do to ensure that the community is food secure?
16. Do you receive any help from government when problems such as drought affect your farming produce?
17. Would you like government to help you with anything? How?

**3. Rights and accountability**

As Malawians, do you have the right to food?

1. Government has a responsibility to ensure everyone has food; in your own experience, could you say that this has been happening?
2. If not, what have you done as citizens to claim your rights to food?
3. What else can you do to claim your rights?
4. Did you to vote? Are you going to vote? If yes, explain why. If no, explain why.
5. Did you vote in last election? If not, why not?

**A2. Interview Guide: Members of Parliament for MPs 1-2**

**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FOR THYOLO SOUTH AND LILONGWE NORTH WEST**

**Research Objectives 1 and 2**

1. To examine the nature and trajectory of food security policy in parliament
2. To examine the possible barriers that prevent MPs from executing their role towards food insecurity

**Research Questions**

3. How has the issue of food security been handled at the legislative level of governance in Malawi?
4. What are the possible barriers and challenges that prevent MPs from executing their functions on food security?

**Interview Guide to Members of Parliament**

1. What is the general trend of the food situation in Malawi?
2. What are parliament and government doing to ensure food security?
3. What is the state of food security in your constituency?
4. How does parliament handle the issue of food security?
5. Does parliament regard food security as a basic need?
6. Does parliament regard food security as a human right?
7. Since the right to food is a constitutional issue, what is the role of parliament in eliminating food insecurity and ensuring the right to food?
8. What is your role as an MP in eliminating food insecurity in Malawi?
9. What are the problems that Parliament faces when handling the parliamentary agenda, particularly on food security?
10. What are the issues of concern in ensuring that rural food insecurity is eliminated?
11. What is your assessment of Malawi's ability to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2 and 3? (Thus, *End Poverty in all its forms and everywhere; End Hunger achieve food security, and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Ensure healthy lives, and promote well-being for all at all ages*).
12. What are the barriers and challenges that MPs and parliament face that prevent the execution of the legislative role and functions in ensuring food security?

13. As a Member of Parliament, how do you explain the Paradox of Malawi being an agriculture-based economy and at the same time experiencing persistent food insecurity?
14. What are your actionable suggestions that you could give for Malawi to attain food security at rural level?
15. Have any of the constituents approached you to help them in areas of food security? If yes, how did you help and how did you see this as an MP?

**A3. Interview Guide: Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees – MPCs 3-6**

**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHAIRPERSONS OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

**Research Objectives 1 and 2:**

3. To examine the nature and trajectory of food security policy in parliament
4. To examine the possible barriers that prevent MPs from executing their role towards food insecurity

**Research Questions**

5. How has the issue of food security been handled at the legislative level in Malawi?
6. What are the possible barriers and challenges that prevent MPs from executing their functions on food security?

**Interview Guide to MPs – Chairpersons of Committees**

1. What is the role of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture in achieving food security?
2. What has been the state of food security in your constituency during your term as MP?
3. How does parliament handle the issue of food security?
4. How does parliament regard food security as a basic need?
5. As a Chairperson of Agriculture, what is your assessment of the FISP?
6. How does parliament regard food security as a human right and as a constitutional right?
7. What are the issues of concern in ensuring that rural food insecurity is eliminated?
8. What is your assessment of Malawi's ability to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2 and 3? (Thus, *End Poverty in all its forms and everywhere; End Hunger achieve food security, and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Ensure healthy lives, and promote well-being for all at all ages*).
9. What are the barriers and challenges that MPs and parliament face that prevent the execution of the legislative role and functions of parliament in the elimination of food security?
10. As a Chairperson of a Committee, how do you explain the paradox of Malawi being an agriculture-based economy and at the same time experiencing persistent food insecurity?
11. As a Chairperson of a Committee, what do you think could be the actionable suggestions that you could give to attain food security at rural level?

12. What are the problems that parliament face when handling a parliamentary agenda, particularly on food security?
13. Do you think Malawi could have another food crisis like in 2000/2001? If yes, why? If no, why?
14. What are government and parliament doing about the World Food Day?

**A4. Interview Guide: Civil Society Representative**

**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE – CISANET**

**Research Objectives 1, 2, 3**

5. To examine the nature and trajectory of food security policy in parliament
6. To examine the effectiveness of food security such as food legislation from the perspective of the civil society
7. To examine the perspective of civil society on possible barriers that prevent the legislature from executing their role towards food insecurity.

**Research Questions**

7. How has the issue of food security been handled at the legislative level of governance in Malawi?
8. How effective, from the perspective of civil society, has food policy legislation been in Malawi?
9. What are the possible barriers and challenges that prevent MPs from executing their functions on food security?

**Interview Guide to CISANET**

1. What is the role of civil society in food security in Malawi?
2. What is the role of CISANET in the right to food?
3. What are the CISANET activities and regulations that hold government accountable?
4. As CISANET, do you think Malawi could have another food crisis like in 2000/2001? If yes, why? If no, why?
5. What is the state of food security in rural Malawi?
6. From the CISANET perspective, how does parliament handle the issue of food security?
7. Does parliament regard food security as a human right?
8. From the CISANET perspective, what are the problems that parliament face when handling a parliamentary agenda, particularly on food security?
9. What are the issues of concern to CISANET in ensuring that rural food insecurity is eliminated in Malawi?

10. What is your assessment of Malawi's ability to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2 and 3? (*Thus, End Poverty in all its forms and everywhere; End Hunger achieve food security, and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Ensure healthy lives, and promote well-being for all at all ages*).
11. What is CISANET's assessment of the parliamentary handling of issues of food security?
12. As a CISANET representative, how do you explain the paradox of Malawi being an agriculture-based economy and at the same time experiencing persistent food insecurity?
13. What does CISANET think as suggestions that you could give to attain food security at rural level?
14. What are government and parliament doing about World Food Day?
15. What is CISANET doing about World Food Day?