

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSE OF VOTER APATHY AND ITS
IMPACT ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN MALAWI (2000-2010):
THE CASE STUDY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

BY

HARRIS STUARTS BURROUGHS POTANI

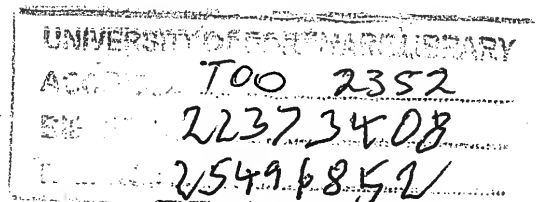
**MINI-DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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COMPLETED: MAY 2011

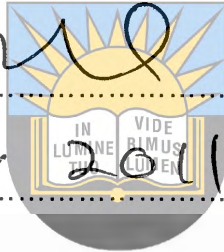


DECLARATION

I, Harris Stuarts Burroughes Potani, hereby declare that this mini-dissertation submitted to the University of Fort Hare for the Degree of Master of Public Administration has never been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, that this is my own work in design and execution and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Signed





Date

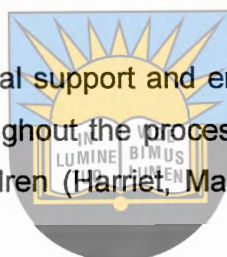
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to inquire into the causes of apathy and its impact on service delivery in Malawi, with regard to the conduct of Local Government Elections. The intention was to investigate reasons for very low voter turnout as well as why people of high calibre do not compete for office during local government elections. Finally, the target was to suggest strategies for increasing voter turnout and the election to office of well-enlightened and exposed individuals with analytical skills.

The study explored what notable scholars have written on the subject matter as a reference point for both causes of voter apathy and possible antidotes. For the field research, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the study explored the phenomena from election stakeholders. Focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews, self-administered questionnaires, documentary and observation by the research were the methods used. In this regard, the study went in-depth to understand the felt causes of voter apathy and possible ways of reversing the trend. Lack of knowledge and appreciation of local government, the behaviour of political parties through use of violence triggering campaigns, poor electoral administration, complex electoral procedures and the legal framework, are some of the causes of voter apathy found out in the study.



The logo of the University of Fort Hare, featuring a shield with a sunburst at the top, a book in the center, and the motto 'LUMINE BIVIVUS TUO LUMEN' at the bottom. The shield is set against a blue background with a white border.

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The study concluded that in order to have as many people as possible turnout for elections, the public should know more about local government, they should appreciate its role; the legal framework does not fully support the conduct of credible elections and therefore needs to be reviewed. Finally, consultation and effective communication with stakeholders were regarded as be vital during the electoral cycle. Where stakeholders provided input to the electoral process, it instilled a sense of encouragement and they participated fully, because they felt that their decisions were being implemented. It would be advisable for the Commission to take a leading role in implementing the recommendations advanced in this study in order to improve voter turnout for future elections.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| ACE project | Administration and Cost of Elections project |
| ADEPT | Association for Participatory Democracy |
| DA | Director of Administration |
| DEM | District Education Manager |
| ECE | Economic Commission for Europe |
| EMB | Electoral Management Body |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organization |
| FPTP | First Past The Post |
| IFES | International Foundation for Electoral Systems |
| International IDEA | International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| MEC | Malawi Electoral Commission |
| MESN | Malawi Electoral Support Network |
| MJCA | Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs |
| MPLCs | Multi-Party Liaison Committees |
| MPs | Members of Parliament |
| PDT | Participatory Democracy Theory |
| PR | Proportional Representation |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| USAID/OTI | United States Agency for International Development's Office of Transition Initiatives |

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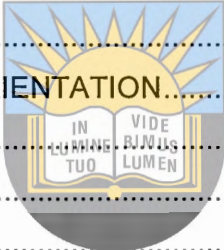
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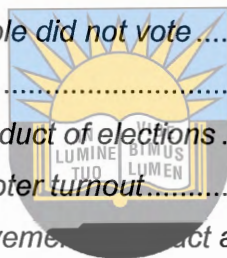
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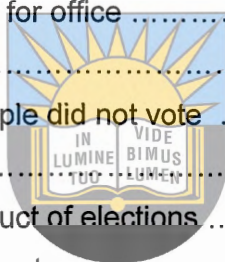
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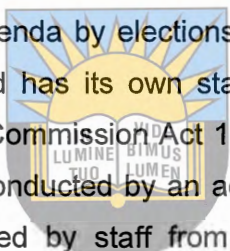
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

The Electoral Commission is established by section 75 of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994) to conduct presidential elections, parliamentary elections, local government elections and referenda by elections. It is an independent body with regard to election administration and has its own staff and conditions of service. Its activities are regulated by Electoral Commission Act 11 of 1998. Before the enactment of this Act in 1998, elections were conducted by an ad-hoc Electoral Commission and the secretariat function was rendered by staff from Parliament. Local Government Elections are conducted every five years, as provided under section 147(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, 1994.



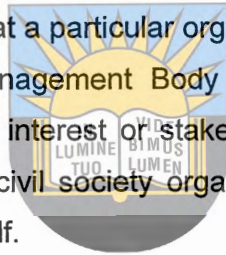
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The purpose of the research is to inquire into the causes of apathy and its impact on service delivery in Malawi, with regard to the conduct of Local Government Elections. The intention is to investigate reasons for the very low voter turnout and in addition, why people of high calibre do not compete for office during local government elections. Finally, the research aims to formulate strategies for increasing voter turnout and the election to office of well-enlightened and exposed individuals with analytical skills. The period under study is 2000 to 2010.

The Local Government Elections Act 24 of 1996 provides that the Electoral Commission should take measures to ensure elections are conducted in an environment of complete freedom and fairness and that the citizenry should be provided with adequate information using all effective means of information dissemination available. Local Government Elections do not take place in a vacuum. There are various stakeholders involved, some of whom include voters, candidates, political parties, civil society

organizations, development partners (donors), the media, traditional leaders, government and the Electoral Commission itself.

Stakeholders can be defined as those with a stake or an interest in an organization, including anyone, who may be impacted by or have an impact on the firm including employees, suppliers, customers, the local community, observers and the environment (Collins, Kearins & Roper, 2005). According to Freeman (1984:46), a stakeholder is any group or individual, who either has or is affected by the achievement of the organization's intentions. Such individuals and groups may have a multitude of interests, expectations, and demands as to what a particular organization must provide to society. In the context of the Electoral Management Body (EMB), stakeholders are those individuals and groups that have an interest or stake in its operations. These groups include political parties, the media, civil society organizations, development partners, voters, government and the EMB itself.



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The research examines the roles of stakeholders in the local government elections. It further relates the roles of the stakeholders to voter apathy; investigates the reasons for lack of interest to run for office on the part of the educated people in the councils; and finally suggests mechanisms to reverse the situation.

1.2 Problem Statement

An election is a formal and mental process, by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office as an element of a true democratic set up (Patel, 2002:136). Polling for the last Local Government Elections was conducted in November 2000 in 861 wards. During these elections, only 14% of the registered voters turned out (Local Government Elections Report, 2000) as opposed to 93% and 59%, who turned out during the 1999 and 2004 General Elections respectively (General Elections Reports, 1999 & 2004).

With this voter apathy, it can be argued that most of the leaders were not true representatives of the people. A critical element of a viable and meaningful democracy is the full participation of the majority in political processes (Dalton, 1988:35). In addition, it was noted that people with higher educational qualifications and other expertise did not run for office. Due to this, the people, who were given the mandate to formulate policy and decisions could not effectively steer the councils, due to lack of exposure, necessary analytical skills even lack of knowledge of their role as councillors. The result was contrary to the intention of the Local Government Act 42 of 1998, which calls for the empowerment of grassroots levels with the decision making process on issues that affect their daily lives.



1.3 Research Questions

In view of the challenging issues raised, the following research questions are posed:

- a. Why do most registered voters and potential leaders stay away from voting and contesting respectively during local government elections?
- b. To what extent does the low voter turnout and the leadership by people, who are of low calibre, affect public administration on service delivery? How can the situation be reversed?

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objectives of the research are two-fold:

- a. To investigate and analyse causes of voter apathy during the local government elections; and
- b. To formulate and suggest possible interventions so that future local government elections are characterized by high voter turnout and the participation of well-educated citizens, who would be able to articulate and understand issues evolving around communities.

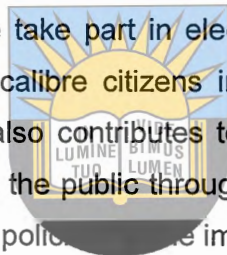
1.5 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the research is as follows:-

Lack of knowledge of the role of local councils, leads to voter apathy.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The research attempts to influence the effective conduct and management of future local government elections on the part of the Electoral Commission and its stakeholders so that as many people as possible take part in elections. In addition, it presumably influences the participation of high calibre citizens in the affairs of local councils in competing for office. The research also contributes to the body of knowledge in both public policy and decision making by the public through their participation in the choice of leaders, who would be formulating policies for the improvement of their welfare.



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1.7 Delimitation of the Study *Together in Excellence*

There are three administrative regions and 40 local government areas in Malawi. It would not be possible to cover the entire country. The study covers five local government areas, spread throughout the three regions of the country. These regions are identified according to cardinal directions as Northern Region, Central Region and Southern Region. The concentration therefore, is as follows: one in the north, two in the centre and two in the south.

The research is conducted 10 years after the last local government elections. Some of the respondents may not remember exactly what the situation was like to provide a fair response. Two other general elections have taken place in 2004 and 2009 and confusion cannot be ruled out among the respondents. Some selected respondents might not be willing to respond especially if they did not succeed or if they were a very staunch supporter of a losing party or candidate. Another limitation could be the fear of being reprimanded, if they consider their views sensitive. The next local government

elections are being planned for April 2011, following a constitutional amendment in February 2010 and this could be another potential challenge.

To overcome some of these challenges, the researcher took time to remind the respondents about the year 2000 local government elections and information gathering commenced after being convinced that they had remembered. The researcher, coming from the Electoral Commission, convinced the respondents to provide honest responses and assured them that the information provided would assist in the administration of future elections, which would work to their advantage. In addition, the researcher showed or read out a letter; containing objectives of the study and the oath of secrecy (see Appendices 1 & 2). The respondents were also assured of anonymity.



1.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher respected the confidentiality, anonymity and human dignity of the respondents. An introductory letter from the University of Fort Hare (see Appendix 1); describing the purpose and objectives of the study was presented to the respondents to address potential resistance. In addition, the researcher took an oath of secrecy, which was read out or shown, to the respondents as an assurance of liability in the unlikely event of disclosure.

1.9 Chapter Outline

1.9.1 Chapter One - Introduction and General Orientation

In this chapter, the background and rationale of the study is highlighted. It also presents the statement of the problem, the research objectives, the hypothesis, and the significance of the study. The chapter also includes factors that would affect the study and possible interventions of these delimitation factors and ethical considerations. It serves as a guide to the study.

1.9.2 Chapter Two - Literature review

The chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study in brief. It presents the literature on the matter as advanced by various recent authoritative scholars. Various comparative views are presented including different geographical perspectives.

1.9.3 Chapter Three - Research Design and Methodology

The research design and methodology followed in the study, is discussed in detail in this chapter. This includes the procedures in investigating the problem. It also gives an account of the practical details of the whole desk and field process.

1.9.4 Chapter Four - Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents a discussion of the data collected.

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1.9.5 Chapter Five - Conclusions and Recommendations

This is the final chapter of the research. It contains critical conclusions and recommendations drawn from the earlier chapters. It also presents issues for further research.

1.10 Conclusion

It is the democratic right of every eligible person to vote in an election as well as to contest for any political office in any sovereign state. It has been observed that in Malawi, few people turnout to vote during local government elections. Similarly, many people, who have expertise in various fields and live in the communities, do not contest for local government offices. It is for this reason that this chapter advanced the course of the research, which was structured and conducted.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review presented in this chapter, provides a platform where the researcher explores views from different authors and scholars on elections with respect to voter apathy. The main thrust of the literature review is to provide evidence of other relevant works conducted on voter apathy. Proponents of democracy have unanimously stated that a major characteristic of good governance is elections; hence, the participation of many eligible persons is vital. This entails that real participation of the citizenry in public affairs for the improvement of their well-being, should be exercised through the elected representatives, whom they entrust with responsibility to govern.

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The legal framework for the conduct of elections in Malawi will be briefly presented to provide an insight into the legal context, in which the study is discussed and so will the theoretical framework that underpins the study. In addition, contributing factors to low voter turnout or voter apathy in different parts of the world, as espoused by various scholars are deliberated. Finally, a debate of antidotes for voter apathy, as experienced elsewhere and as proposed by the various scholars, will follow.

2.2 Legal Framework

The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, 1994 in section 6 provides,

The authority to govern derives from the people of Malawi as expressed through universal and equal suffrage in elections held in accordance with the constitution in a manner as prescribed by an Act of Parliament.

Section 12 (iii) further states,

The authority to exercise the power of state is conditional upon the sustained trust of the people of Malawi and that trust can only be sustained through open, accountable and transparent Government and informed democratic choice.

The Electoral Commission, generally referred to as Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), which is established under section 75 of this Constitution, is mandated, under that same section, to conduct national and local elections. This includes by-elections and referenda.



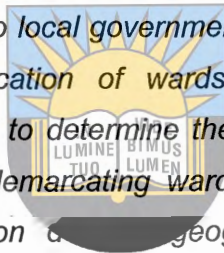
In addition to the Constitution, three paramount pieces of legislation, regulate the conduct of elections and provide the institutional framework of the MEC, these are:

- a. The Electoral Commission Act 11 of 1998;
- b. The Parliamentary and Presidential Elections Act 31 of 1993 as amended;
- c. The Local Government Elections Act 24 of 1998 as amended.

The Electoral Commission exercises its powers and functions pursuant to section 76 of the Constitution as read with section 8 of the Electoral Commission Act 11 of 1998. The quoted functions are:

- a. *To determine the number of constituencies for the purpose of elections impartially on the basis of ensuring that constituencies contain approximately equal number of voters eligible to register subject only to considerations of –*
 - i. *population density;*
 - ii. *ease of communication; and*
 - iii. *geographical features and existing administrative boundaries;*
- b. *To undertake or supervise the demarcation of boundaries of constituencies and review the existing boundaries at intervals of not*

- more than five years and alter them in accordance with the principles laid down in (a) above;
- c. To determine electoral petitions and complaints in relation to the conduct of any elections;
 - d. To ensure compliance with the provisions of the Constitution and any other Act of Parliament;
 - e. To perform such other functions as may be prescribed by the Constitution or an Act of Parliament;
 - f. Subject to the Local Government Elections Act 24 of 1996 and any other written law relating to local government elections, to undertake or supervise the demarcation of wards for purposes of local government elections and to determine the number of such wards; but so however that in demarcating wards the Commission shall have regard to population and geographical features, easy communication and the wishes of the people, and shall ensure that ward boundaries do not cross local authority boundaries;
 - g. To organize and direct registration of voters;
 - h. To devise and establish voters registers and ballot papers;
 - i. To print, distribute and take charge of ballot papers and voters registers;
 - j. To approve and procure ballot boxes;
 - k. To establish and operate polling stations;
 - l. To establish security conditions necessary for the conduct of every election in accordance with any written law governing elections;
 - m. To promote public awareness of electoral matters through the media and any other appropriate and effective means and to conduct civic and voter education on such matters;
 - n. To promote and conduct research into electoral matters and into any matter pertaining to its functions and to publish the results of such research;



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- o. *To perform the function conferred upon it by or under any written law; and*
- p. *To take measures and to do such other things as are necessary for conducting free and fair elections.*

For purposes of this study, all these functions except for (a) and (b) are applicable and relevant.

2.3 Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

Harris and Kolovos (2005:3) distinguish between voter apathy and voter alienation as the basis of low political motivation. It has been stated that voter apathy entails lack of interest or feeling of personal responsibility, a passivity and indifference for political affairs. Subsequently, it is the lack of a feeling of personal obligation to participate in politics. Voter alienation, on the other hand, is a protest vote or strong rejection of the political system and thus, political participation is negative towards the political world. Dean (1960:185) defines alienation or apathy as an act that people pursue goals, and use means in their pursuit, determined either by social consideration or entities, with which they do not feel intimately identified or by forces, which they may be unable to recognize at all. It also implies that choices are limited and the only option is to stand aloof. Voter apathy, therefore, can be defined as the lack of interest to take part in elections due to frustration or non-appreciation of the effect of the outcome of the elections.

Public participation is “a voluntary process whereby people, both individually or through organized groups, can exchange information, express opinions and articulate interests and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of the matter at hand” (Food & Agricultural Organization - FAO, Economic Commission for Europe - ECE, International Labour Organization - ILO, 2000 in Paletto, 2002:199). It is “consciousness-raising processes, through which people begin to understand their political roles and the need for legitimate conciliation and contribution” (Sewell and O’riordan, 1976 in Paletto, 2002:201). Jennings (2000:1) defines participation as the

involvement by the local people and, at times, additional stakeholders in the creation, content and conduct of a programme or policy initiatives designed to improve their well-being. Based on a conviction that citizens can be entrusted and empowered to shape their own future, participatory democracy encourages local decision-making and capacities to steer and define the nature of an intervention required.

The theory underpinning this study is, therefore, participatory democracy. Blahna and Yonts-Shepards in Paletto (2002:202), advocate Participatory Democracy Theory (PDT), in which “a broad range of interests are represented and participants are integrally involved throughout the planning processes, from initiation through decision implementation and monitoring”. Aragonés and Sanchez-Pages (2005:1 available at: <http://adres.ensae.fr/seminaire/roy/0506/14112005.pdf> accessed on: 2010/10/22) state that participatory democracy is a “process of collective decision making that combines elements from both direct and representative democracy”. The public have the power to choose through elections who to empower with authority to advance their wishes or communicate directly to those in authority through meetings. This is a bottom up approach and, therefore, a departure from the top down approach where ideas, policies and programmes are imposed on the people.

Chinsinga (2006:13) writes that elections are considered an important element of the process of democratization and democracy consolidation. In addition, elections are widely recognized as the only legitimate means of transfer and exercise of power and authority in modern democratic states. Hill (2006:209) confirms this view and states, “majority will is central to democratic rule, therefore, lamenters of low turnout often argue that the more completely the preferences of the majority are registered, the more democratic the system will be”. Bollen (1993:1209) emphasizes that it is, therefore, important to have a majority of people taking part in elections as voters in order to give the political office bearers the real mandate to lead. At the same time, those to lead should have required analytical and expert skills in order to steer the councils in the provision of social services to the community effectively. The local government elections in Malawi are characterized by apathy. The voter turnout was extremely low during the

last local government elections held in November 2000. Even the participation as contestants of people with vast technical expertise was almost non-existent. This situation was not limited to a specific geographical area but the entire country.

2.3.1 Proponents of PDT

Cunningham (2002:127) argues that participatory democracy should not just be seen as a critique to the authoritarian practices that were prevalent in the past. It should generate and justify the introduction and institutionalization of participatory processes in sectors or institutions where democratization is yet to be practiced. The institutions in question include the workplace, the family, schools, neighbourhood organizations, economic cooperatives, and local governments. Menser (2008:21) states that PDT is an appropriate avenue for the advancement of the genuine, felt needs and aspirations of the public and that it has gained popularity and acceptability in communities. Democracy is seen, not just as a forum for deliberations and choosing leaders, but also as a means for sharing new ideas and viewpoints which increases the knowledge of day-to-day issues revolving around communities. Canovan (1999:10) debates that where communities are involved in making decisions that affect them, including making policies and laws, there are fewer conflicts among them that would impede progress on any undertaking. The community is motivated and co-operates, because most of its views are taken into account.

Bachrach (1967:72) writes that participatory democracy equips individuals and empowers groups of people with authority for decision-making. It emphasizes the involvement of the human element, which is conducive to attain positive change for the betterment of the human kind. Morrell (1999:292) agrees that other participatory democratic theorists have argued that the citizenry would be changed and transformed completely if they are exposed to decision-making processes and forums. However, the structures in the institutions should provide mechanisms to ensure that the people are protected from being harassed, because of their contributions in discussions or political opinion. Pateman (1970:27) approves of this view and explains further that benefits of

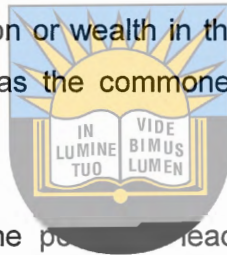
participatory democracy include education, encourages integration within the community and finally results in greater acceptance of collective decisions. Rousseau (1901:31) asserts that this acceptance of decisions is founded on rule of law, a principle of democracy, which is made possible through the participation of the citizen in the formulation of policies and creation of laws affecting them. The community feels that it is a master of its own, through implementing decisions of its own by being involved in the process.

Marsiglio (1956:52) totally supports the involvement of communities in political decision-making. In this way, citizens are provided with an avenue to communicate their views to leaders on one hand and to interact with other citizens, with whom they share and agree on one common goal, on the other hand. Marsiglio (1956:53) further argues that allowing citizens to elect leaders in polls is not in itself sufficient to state that they are participating in the affairs of the state. Voting does not guarantee that the best laws will be enacted by the people that are in positions of authority. Morrell (1999:300) stresses that it is only when citizens communicate with one another and express their views concerning the advantages and disadvantages of a proposed law or course of action that participatory democracy could be fully realized. Barber (1984:285) concurs that the nature of involvement should be likened to a referendum where all voters participate on a particular issue and not relying on elected representatives only. Participatory democracy calls for constant and direct consultation with the people so that the perceptions of the decision-making process are taken positively.

2.3.2 Criticisms levelled against PDT

All theorists of participatory democracy agree and consider democracy as a vehicle for uplifting the welfare of the people and making government responsive to the wishes of the people (Menser 2008:22). The criticisms arise as to what the process is exactly about. In this section, some critical views of the DPT will be presented as espoused by various scholars.

According to Mill in Robson (1977:780), citizens do not necessarily accept and implement decisions, because they have been part of the deciding group; it is efficiency in communication, which is also very important, whether it is formal or otherwise. Participation only assists the public to identify potentials in individuals, who are capable of leading them. Mill emphasizes, "Institutions for lectures and discussions and collective deliberations on questions of common interest as means for increasing the intellectual faculties of citizens", as being modes of communicating. With abundant and sufficient knowledge, the citizenry will co-operate in all affairs affecting their community. Pateman (1970:33) somehow agrees with Mill and states that superior members, especially those with higher education or wealth in the society, are naturally entrusted with the authority to govern, whereas the commoners, who are in the majority, are natural followers.



Marsiglio (1956:54) remarks that the political head should be entrusted to a few individuals, who should be representatives as opposed to an entire community. In addition, the author states that the cream of the society, those who have demonstrated great wisdom and intellect, should be given the role to deliberate and make laws on behalf of the rest. Mill in Himmelfarb (1963:20) shares the same view and alludes that the masses are willing to obey and love those whom they recognize as being wiser and better able to govern than they are. Morrell (1999:298) concurs and states that the masses would, therefore, be doing other equally important matters, whilst the elected or selected (representatives), who have expertise, would be articulating the policy and legislative matters.

Sanders (1997:349) alludes that participatory democracy is not as inclusive as its proponents argue. In all community groupings, the disadvantaged groups like women, children and the poor, would rarely have their voices heard. It is naturally true that some people are more gifted in articulating issues than others. The ideas of the few, who are influential, are unfortunately taken as consensus. Menser (2008:22) agrees that some members of the society are structurally disadvantaged by global capitalism and other cultural norms and as a result, their views cannot be considered by those well-to-do.

Mansbridge in Hauptmann (2001:403) debates that some of the most important political theorists associated with PDT of the late 20th Century failed to think enough about representativeness and the timeliness of decision-making process. It is not easy to reach consensus. Furthermore, a lot of time and resources are wasted. In the process, wishes of the elite or the most articulate reign supreme in order to make progress.

Overall, the bottom up approach is the essence of democracy. This is the observation of Rick Baron, United States Agency for International Development's Office of Transition Initiatives' (USAID/OTI) first Director, "if you are ever going to get to a system of the people, by the people, and for the people then you'd better engage the people as early as you can" (Jennings, 2000:2). A participatory democracy approach entails that administrative decisions will be more acceptable to the citizenry if they are made through a collaborative process and will have total support from the community and speed up the implementation in the case of a project, since the local populace is part and parcel of the decision (Moote, McClaren and Chickering, 1987:878).



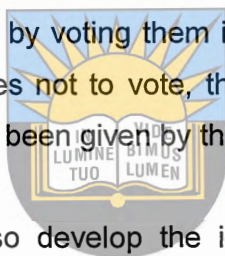
2.4 Factors that Contribute to Low Voter Turnout

This section presents some of the factors that lead to voter apathy as discussed by various scholars. These factors include:

- loss of political trust;
- socio-economic conditions;
- loss of trust, confidence and credibility in the electoral management body;
- unclear electoral procedures;
- inadequate of civic and voter education; and
- the participation by youths.

2.4.1 Loss of political trust

Heath and Taylor (1999:169) advance that many observers and commentators often regard low voter turnout wrongly as a loss of political trust, but this does not always have to be a sign of foreboding. Sometimes low voter turnout is an indication that the electorate is happy with the way things are, and does not feel any compelling need to make major changes. This view, however, would end up entrusting individuals, who do not have the mandate of the majority of the people, with the authority to govern. The essence of democratic elections is to entrust people with responsibilities or give people or groups of people mandate to rule by voting them into office. In the case where the populace feels contented and decides not to vote, the vote for the few will still count and, therefore, the mandate will have been given by the minority.

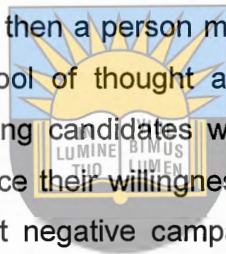


Pattie and Johnston (1998:278) also develop the idea that several factors have a substantial impact upon individual voter turnout decisions. The two authors further state that voter turnout is driven largely by political commitment and to some extent by the mobilizing efforts of the parties. Hill (2006:211) writes that there is a relationship between voting and policy consequences and the internal organization of the political party. The author indicates that voters are motivated to vote, because of the policies and programmes that a political party is promising. Any unexplained departure from the promises leads to loss of trust and causes voting abstention in future elections.

On the internal organization front, when there are conflicts that have materialized in the public domain, supporters tend to be demotivated and are left in a dilemma. They cannot go to vote, where there are serious disagreements, at the same time they cannot vote for an organization, whose policies they do not approve of and because of this, they decide to abstain. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Association for Participatory Democracy (ADEPT) confirm that this was evident in Moldova during the 2001 elections, when there were a lot of conflicts among the political parties and some of the political parties were personalized (IFES & ADEPT, 2004:7). Matlosa (2002:138) states that in Zimbabwe too, where there are political conflicts and

violence to the extent of leading to loss of lives, political participation is negatively affected, as observed in 1995 during the presidential elections, when there was a voter turnout of only 32 per cent.

The International IDEA states that political campaigns play a very critical role in elections. "A sense of efficacy is developed when an individual feels well-informed enough about politics to believe that they can influence the makeup or activities of decision-making bodies" (International IDEA, 2006:14). If the election appears to be meaningless or unnecessary, or if a person feels very remote to the political system, the sense of political value declines and then a person may not participate in the election. Geys (2006:648) confirms this school of thought and holds that for the voters to appreciate the policies, which aspiring candidates will implement, this information is made known during campaigns, hence their willingness or unwillingness to vote in the elections. The author advances that negative campaigning does not only affect the attacked candidate, but sometimes the whole election process. The public might have a very negative picture of politics in general and the elections in particular. Voters may easily decide to abstain. Downs (1957:138) writes that in addition to campaign, another factor that would influence voter behaviour is the performance of the party during the period in between the elections. The public makes a thorough assessment and analyses the campaign promises. Where the public is happy, the voter turnout will be high and where there is dissatisfaction, the voters will be driven away. People would like to get value for their vote; otherwise, they would not participate in the elections, since to them it does not make any difference. Thus, the voting decision is based on a comparative basis.



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2.4.2 Socio-economic conditions

Pattie and Johnston (1998:278) expound that voter turnout is driven by socio-economic conditions. It should be emphasized, therefore, that low voter turnout can be linked to and originated by many different factors and the problem might not only, or even necessarily, be connected to elections. In some cases, the problem is more closely

linked to the economic and social development of a country. The low voter turnout at elections, therefore, has to be considered within the larger discussion on factors or variables that build democratic culture and societies. People go to vote if the expected socio-economic benefits to be realized, as result of the voting process, outweigh those they would attain by not participating.

Geys (2006:641) identifies some socio-economic variables that have been associated with voter turnout as population size, population concentration, population stability, population homogeneity and previous voter turnout levels. It has been established that there is an inverse relationship between population size and voter turnout rates. Where there are more people, everyone thinks their vote would not make a difference, even if they do or not go to the polls. Hoffman-Martino, (1994:14) states that urbanization leads to a weakening of interpersonal bonds, primary social structures, consensus on norms, and is synonymous with individual tendencies and, therefore, no social pressure to vote. Geys (2006:643) confirms that in the urban community, and also where people, who do not share the same origins, but have lived together for longer periods of time, they come to know more about the area and its native inhabitants and they consider themselves as being in transit. This situation decreases the people's value of voting. According to Cohen (1982:259), social homogeneity is a prerequisite of community cohesion, which increases group solidarity and then social pressure becomes inevitable. Therefore, political participation in communities with a higher degree of solidarity or ethnic homogeneity experience increased voter turnout than those with a lower degree of solidarity.

Salamon and Van Evera (1973:1288) write that studies of political participation have concluded that there is a correlation between voter apathy and education as well as economic prowess. International IDEA (2006:13) confirms that in most jurisdictions there is evidence of a positive relationship between levels of education and voter turnout. Those with higher levels of education tend to be more likely to vote. It has also been proven that participation is lowest among the poor and the less educated. This happens even in the United States, which is an established democracy. Salamon and

Van Evera (1973:1304) conclude that the literate and educated are able to understand why some views are being advanced, while simultaneously questioning the wisdom of other policies.

In Moldova, however, voter apathy can be attributed to migration to neighbouring areas by the voting age as well as the economically active population searching for education and economic benefits. About a quarter of citizens, eligible to vote migrate out of the country in search for jobs and education (IFES & ADEPT 2004:15). For elections to be declared valid, a minimum voter turnout of 50% of registered voters for parliamentary elections is required by the laws governing elections in most countries (IFES & ADEPT 2004:18).



2.4.3 Loss of trust, confidence and credibility in the electoral management body

The management practices of the electoral process have an effect on voter turnout. Where there are serious concerns and issues related to the electoral administration the voter turnout is low (available at: <http://aceproject.org/> accessed on 2010/0510). The Administration and Cost of Elections project (ACE project) website presents that low voter turnout can be related to lack or loss of trust, confidence and credibility in the electoral process by the public in the electoral management body.

Chinsinga (2006:12) states that if an electoral management body does not improve and continues to perform incompetently in the administration of elections stakeholders lose confidence in it. In the final analysis, the voters view this as a deliberate act of rigging. The impression created is that their vote would not make a difference. That is even if they vote for a political party or candidate of their choice, the election management body will assist and rig for the one the body endorses. The voters, therefore, do not find any value in participating in the elections and they opt to stay away.

Kersting (2009:131) reports that in South Africa, in 2009 the electoral administration was under stress, because everybody was allowed to vote at any polling station in his or

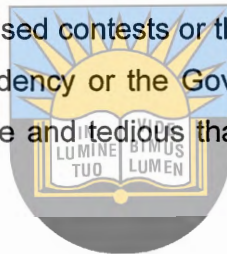
her province, which was not the case in earlier elections. This decision resulted in lack of ballot papers and ballot boxes in some polling stations. The news about the shortage of the polling materials discouraged voters, who were yet to go to the centres. Even those voters from other centres, who were not affected by the problem, did not go to the polling centres, because of this news of the shortage of materials. The voters were not sure that they would exercise their right to vote in the polling stations and to avoid wasting their precious time, they did not turnout.

Other factors related to low voter turnout due to loss of confidence, trust and credibility of the electoral body include problems and inconsistencies in the legal framework governing the elections. This could affect the implementation of electoral procedures. For example, in some jurisdictions it is very difficult to get documentation for purposes of participating elections or indeed for one to be registered as a voter. These cumbersome requirements tend to discourage people to participate as others feel like being bothered (Staino, 2007, available at <http://aapenproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/78797089> accessed on 29/10/09/20). The 2010 Parliamentary General Elections in the United Kingdom revealed that the legislation has problems. There is a provision in the laws that when the closing time clocks, the polling station should be closed. People are not allowed to vote, even those who are already in the queue. This meant that those voters present in queues at polling stations at the close of polls were not issued with ballot papers. Many voters failed to cast their votes when in fact the problem was with the slowness of polling staff in administering the elections, since most of the voters were in the queue in good time (Electoral Commission 2010:5).

Frequency of or length of time between elections has also been observed to contribute to voter apathy. When elections are held with great frequency, it leads to low voter turnout (International IDEA, 2006:12). According to Matlosa (2002:138), Zimbabwe holds many elections, at various periods for various levels and this was observed to be another cause of voter apathy due to voter fatigue. In 1995 only 32% of voters turned up in Presidential Elections as opposed to 50%, who had turned up in the year 2000 during Parliamentary Elections.

2.4.4 Unclear electoral procedures

Electoral procedures have an effect on voter turnout (available at: <http://aceproject.org/> accessed on 2010/05/10). The ACE project website presents that low voter turnout can be related to challenges to access and participate in the voting process, due to poor and unclear electoral procedures. Walker (1966:450) explains that both working politicians and social scientists have long been aware that voters, in multiple elections, once they enter the polling booth, do not always complete the process. Many voters make a choice only in the most widely advertised contests or those that they feel would have an impact, such as, those for the Presidency or the Governorship. Such voters as these consider the process so cumbersome and tedious that they abandon it before casting votes for the other offices.



White (1960:121) presents in one of the most unusual studies, that, voter behaviour in several Michigan referenda, it was concluded that there was voter apathy in those counties where voting machines were used rather than where traditional ballot papers were used. Voters found voting machines more confusing and difficult to operate and many decided to stay away. Price (1957:77) writes that a study conducted at the University of Michigan's Research Centre revealed that complex ballot papers are responsible for the increase in voter fatigue. The study further concluded that the voters with lower levels of education experience the greatest difficulty in completing the ballot and eventually abstain. Walker (1966:462) also asserts that complicated ballot papers contribute to the growth of feelings of political inadequacy in the electorate and have inhibited participation in recent elections.

Gratschew and Lemon (in International IDEA 2006:32) asserts that one of the primary goals for an electoral management body is to make sure that the entire electoral calendar and procedure is well-known and understood by all stakeholders. If the procedures are not clear, for example voting procedures, this will deter the public from turning out to vote. This awareness also includes important dates for activities like

registration period, nomination of candidates, and other activities or events to enable people to follow the process and not to be left out. Any lack of valuable information puts the voter off, who then loses interest in the electoral process, resulting in abstention. This role of providing information is delivered either by the electoral body itself, or with the assistance of other civil society organizations.

2.4.5 Inadequate civic and voter education

Civic and voter education is conducted by a number of stakeholders like the media, civil society organizations, electoral management bodies and traditional leaders. Political parties too, take a role in civic and voter education during campaign meetings. Gratschew and Lemon (in International IDEA 2006:32) observe that in 2006 in Sweden, lack of political engagement resulted in a very low degree of interest in learning how to vote. Where the language used is not the preferred one, it also contributes to lack of interest. The voter does not know whether the message has been encoded correctly or not. In the process, voters consider it safer not to participate than to be embarrassed. The language factor is confirmed by IFES and ADEPT (2004:15), where it is reported that in Moldova there are some sections, who were so frustrated because the language used was alien that they eventually did not participate in the 2001 elections.

2.4.6 Participation by the youth

According to responses posted on the ACE project Website on 2007/05/09 (available at: <http://aceproject.org/> accessed on 2010/05/10), in recent years voter apathy has increased and voter turnout has reached unacceptably low levels, both in emerging and established democracies. Notably the declining voter participation among the youth has become a major issue of concern. Barkan and Niemi (1987:583) state that participation increases steadily as youths grow up, until it reaches a peak in the middle years, and then gradually declines with old age. Kenya is one example the authors cite for such an experience during the 1963 elections, when the country attained self-rule. Milbrath and Goel (1977:114) agree with these findings on the political participation by the youth and

advance that there are also strong views that turnout is also low in peasant societies. During the early years, youths are adventurous and are sometimes used by those in various positions as agents; in turn, they later become activists and vie for positions. Naturally, one reaches a point of retirement for whatever undertaking and politics is no exception, hence, the reduced interest in the later years. Where the youth population is high among the voting population, low voter turnout appears to be in great levels.

As advanced by International IDEA (2006:15), some more recent studies have consistently shown that the younger members of a voting population are less likely to vote. Age is often used as a measure of social connectedness, based on the idea that experience comes with age. As youths, they focus and concentrate on and strive to establish themselves in terms of education, careers and occupation, and relationships. It is at a later stage that they focus on political participation. Franklin (2004:164) states that before maturity, youths are not concerned with most of the issues around them. As they grow older, they have a clearer understanding of the issues within and without the environment. However, some scholars have advanced that youths do not participate in elections, because political parties and leaders do not take on board their interests and concerns including representation.

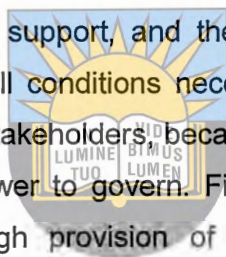
2.5 Antidotes for Voter Apathy

Bollen (1993:1209) writes that high voter turnout is a preferred and genuine indicator of democratic legitimacy in most political systems. This is true in countries where the public freely and legally make a choice among alternative political ideologies. A turnout of 60% and higher, is considered desirable. International IDEA, (2006:22) states that stakeholders in the elections play a critical part in voter turnout, due to their roles in the electoral process.

There are numerous stakeholders and they include political parties, who are the main stakeholders in an election. They sponsor candidates and compete for office. An EMB needs to take on board concerns and interests of political parties when designing and

implementing its policies and activities. Other critical stakeholders include the media and Civil Society Organizations. Both are responsible for informing the public and voters about electoral procedures and educating the public about democracy and elections. Civic education is delivered through mobilization campaigns, direct contact with the voters with motivational messages and information on democracy and important electoral events (available at: <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/pc/pcc/pcc07> accessed on 2010/06/04).

Another category of stakeholders includes development partners (donor community), who provide technical and financial support, and the Government as a stakeholder through funding and ensuring that all conditions necessary for credible elections are provided. Voters are also important stakeholders, because they determine the people or political party to entrust with the power to govern. Finally, the electoral management body itself is a stakeholder through provision of all logistical and management operations as well as the creation of a conducive environment for transparent, free, fair and credible elections, to enable unfettered participation of all eligible citizens without bias to any individual or group (available at: <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/pc/pcc/pcc07> accessed on 2010/06/04).



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The antidotes in question include:

- civic and voter education;
- change in electoral system;
- new methods of voting;
- compulsory voting;
- behaviour of political parties; and
- operating environment for elections.

2.5.1 Civic and voter education

As discussed under section 2.4.5, civic and voter education is an important responsibility for the EMB, political parties and civil society organizations. The principal

purpose is to bring awareness to the salient areas of the electoral process. For civic and voter education to be effective, there is need to conduct a research, prior to the election, in order to have an informed mind on the requirements for the various target groups. These requirements could be language, mode of delivery, and areas that require emphasis (Gratschew in International IDEA 2006:32). It is only after this survey that effective interventions or awareness programmes can be drawn to have as many people as possible participate in the elections.

International IDEA (2006:20) identifies several strategies that can be used to improve voter turnout through civic and voter education like information campaigns, advertising campaigns, grass-root movements, entertainment, inducements and school or mock elections. Of these, the school or mock campaigns tend to enlighten the audience more and the knowledge remains with the pupils. Since 2002, voter education is accommodated through the school curriculum in Moldova (IFES & ADEPT, 2004:14). This enables the young people to grow up with the full knowledge of democratic principles and practices. The curriculum includes concepts underpinning a democratic society, the respective roles and responsibilities of citizens, government, political and special interest groups, the mass media, and the business and non-profit sectors, as well as the significance of periodic and competitive elections.

The role of the media cannot be over-emphasized. Many people read newspapers, watch television and listen to the radio on a daily basis. Regular readers of newspapers, tend to inform others about what they have read, seen, or heard. This is a fastest and simplest way of communicating with the masses (International IDEA, 2006:22). In Ghana, to ensure that the use of the media, especially the radio is effective, the electoral management body buys airtime from all radio stations throughout the country, for a certain prime time. The result is that whatever local radio station people are tuned in to, they get the same message(s) (Electoral Commission of Ghana Website, available at: <http://www.ec.gov.gh/> accessed on 2010/09/27).

According to the International IDEA (2006:23) in any electoral event, there are people, who cannot be persuaded to vote through arguments of civic duty, civic education or the media. Voters, such as these, are potential abstainers, who consider participating in the elections if and only if they get direct benefit by voting. In Colombia, for example, a series of institutional-administrative incentives to vote have been put into place, like being given preference to access public services when proof of participation is presented. Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago (Electoral Commission of Trinidad & Tobago Website, available at: <http://www.ebctt.com/ourServices.php> accessed on 2010/10/02) sanctions are imposed to voters, who miss an election without a proper reason. The affected voters are struck off the civil registry, because they are assumed non-existent. Such incentives and potential sanctions as these when contained in the legal framework, ensure high voter turnout during elections of more than 90%.



2.5.2 Change in electoral system

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Some paradigms argue that a change in the electoral system could address apathy. Proportional representation is believed to increase voter turnout, as any party can achieve (or increase) its representation in the legislature proportionally to its share of the vote (Harris & Kolovos, 2005:9). This view is also advanced by Parker (2001:3), who observes that people would not be persuaded to turnout again if they cannot be convinced that their vote will count for something. It is only in a proportional representation where there is no loss of vote unlike in the First Past The Post (FPTP). Fauvelle-Aymar (2008:159), in agreement states that among the most important elements, is the electoral system, which address apathy. If the legal framework provides for proportional representation, many political parties mushroom. Downs (1957:144) writes that the emergence of many political parties is because of the motivation that a party can get at least some of its members elected by winning the support of only a small proportion of the citizens. Downs (1957:145) further states, "new parties continue to be formed until the distribution of voters is 'saturated' or until there is not enough ideological 'room' between existing parties to support others significantly different from them".

Thus, it is generally advanced that the proportional representation system leads to a higher voter turnout. Conversely, systems where there is a larger discrepancy between ballots and seat allocation limit voter turnout (Fauvelle-Aymar 2008:159). This is confirmed by International IDEA (2008:13) that almost all electoral systems, which are plurality or majority, proportional representation (PR), or mixed systems have yielded relatively high voter turnouts. The more responsive the electoral system is in representing the choices made by the electorate, the higher the voter turnout.

2.5.3 Compulsory voting

Another proposal to tackle low voter turnout is to make voting compulsory. Harris and Kolovos (2005:10) advance that in countries where compulsory voting is applied, the average voter turnout is as high as 89%. Franklin (1999:216) admits that such a law would increase voter turnout, but argues that low voter turnout was not the actual 'disease' but rather a 'symptom' of the character of the electoral process. An attempt to cure it would not necessarily lead to the cure of the actual disease, which causes it. The author also observes that low voter turnout reflected a lack of choices for the electorate and a breakdown of the connection between the voters' electoral choice and a change in policy.

Hill (2006:212) agrees with this view and states further that in addition compulsory voting is the cheapest solution to address voter apathy as compared to any other electoral reforms. Compulsory voting is the only institutional mechanism that can achieve high voter turnout during elections. This has been proven and experienced in jurisdictions where compulsory voting has been established and administered. In Australia and Belgium for example, the voter turnout is always above 95% and 93% respectively. Similarly, in the Netherlands, according to Irwin (1974: 293) for almost half a decade up to 1970, they used compulsory voting and during this time, its turnout consistently hovered above 90 per cent.

Franklin (1999:216) states further that the argument surrounding the issue of compulsory voting diverts and overshadows attention from other proposals, which may address the genuine shortcomings of the electoral process and not its appearance. The introduction of compulsory voting would compromise the importance of voter turnout as an indicator of the health of a democracy. The author concludes that it is important that other elements of good governance should also be practised by the governments, enjoyed by the citizenry and seen by observers. It is, therefore, fair that special emphasis should be placed on the role of politicians in persuading and educating the public on the importance of voting. The politicians should motivate and entice voters with appealing policies in their campaigns and other means of reaching out the public.

2.5.4 New methods of voting



Another observed antidote for voter apathy is the introduction of new methods of voting. Harris and Kolovos (2005:11) observe that new methods of voting (such as, postal and electronic voting) would only result in a slight increase in voter turnout as their application during the 2001 elections in the United Kingdom had shown. Worcester and Mortimore (2001:178) argue that there has been little evidence that postal voting has any significant impact in the increase of voter turnout. The impact of other efforts, such as, polls opening a week early, travelling to polling stations, polling stations in supermarkets and electronic voting seemed inconclusive. Other proposals included voting by telephone or by mobile phone, and via the internet. The Electoral Commission in the United Kingdom (2001:73) doubts whether the introduction of new methods of voting would result in a major increase in voter turnout if the electorate perceived the election as irrelevant to them. The most important issue is to motivate the electorate.

Funk (2008:4) asserts that new methods of voting have, to a certain degree, an effect on voter turnout. In Switzerland, where any citizen, who turns 18 is automatically enlisted as a voter, the voter turnout increased by 5% 1971 when postal voting was introduced. This enabled voters, who could not avail themselves to polling stations, to exercise their democratic right by post. ACE Website (available at:

<http://aceproject.org/main/english/po> accessed on 2010/10/03) Canada too, experienced an increase in voter turnout in the State of Ontario. Here, an electronic voting system was introduced by authorities in the elections in 2003, which allowed people to vote on the internet or by touch phone. The voter turnout during the 2003 elections increased from 30% to 50%. It should be mentioned that the new methods of voting, for example, the electronic voting, has been more effective in providing convenient channels mainly for regular voters than in engaging new ones.

2.5.5 Behaviour of political parties

Geys (2006:648) advances that political parties through responsive and positive campaigns, play a critical role in improving voter turnout. The campaign offers the electorate enough information on political party policies. The voters are enticed and want the preferred policies implemented, which high voter turnouts. Hill (2006:211) states political parties and politicians should facilitate the increase in voter turnout, by avoiding negative campaigns and scrupulously keeping their election promises. In addition, Geys (2006:649) explains that the increase in the number of political parties increases voter turnout. Thus, the voters have many choices to make out of the many contestants. In a 1988 study, conducted in New Haven in the United States, it was observed that positive political campaign activity improved voter turnout. This study revealed there was an increase of 10% in voter turnout from the sample.

Staino (2007) states that voter turnout can also improve through activities taken by the EMB during the post-election period. Consultations, which ideally take place during the 'post-election' period ('in-between' election period) allow for an open and continuous dialogue with relevant stakeholders (available at: <http://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/questions/replies/78797089> accessed on 2010/10/02). The stakeholders are allowed and even encouraged to help identify, propose and enact effective measures and remedies that would improve the conduct of future elections. This includes, where necessary, the review of laws that are viewed to be obstacles to the conduct of credible elections.

2.5.6 Institutional and operating environment for elections

It has been a general understanding and trend that the key to trusting and having confidence in the EMB, the electoral process and consequently the results, is transparency, independence, accountability and impartiality of the electoral process. Some electoral management bodies are perceived to be arms of the government. In such circumstances, the opposition loses trust and confidence, which might also scare away voters. To guard against this perception and to ensure utmost impartiality, in most countries these days, the constitutional frameworks guarantee independence of the EMB (Rwakoojo, 2005, available at: http://www.thecommonwealth.org/SharedASPFiles/UploadedFiles/ECCBA080-B988-48A4-90CE-44321E19C59_PaperbyMrRwakoojo_Uganda.pdf accessed on 2010/09/28). It is thus imperative that in the execution of its mandate, the EMB is seen to be fair, to listen and attend to all the political players and enforces the rules to ensure fair play.

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Electoral Commission in the United Kingdom (2010) appeals that some incentives could improve voter turnout like attending to people, who are already on the queue before at the closing time. Legislation should be introduced to amend the relevant laws for all elections in the UK to make it clear that any elector, who is entitled to vote at a polling station and who is in the queue to enter the polling station at the close of poll, will be allowed to vote. International IDEA (2006:21) confirms this notion and adds that holding elections on holidays or weekends makes participation more convenient. Therefore, jurisdictions should enact legislation that calls for the creation of holidays on the polling day in order to increase voter turnout. Hill (2006:210) adds that reducing the frequency and complexity of elections to address the problem of voter fatigue will entail high voter turnout.

2.6 Conclusion

The objective of the literature review has been to provide scholarly writings on the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Participatory democracy theory

underpins the study. It entails the involvement of communities or the citizenry in decision making on all issues that affect their lives. Proponents of the theory include Benjamin Barber, Margaret Canovan, Robert Dahl, Peter Bachrach and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These scholars have advanced that acceptability of laws, projects and policies by the communities have largely been due to the participation of the public in the process. The people identify themselves with whatever product comes out.

Some criticisms have, however, been levelled against the PDT. Some of the notable critics of the theory include Lynn Saunders, Ray Jennings, John Stuart Mill, and Jane Mansbridge. The critics have argued that the citizens need not always participate directly by themselves. Elected representatives, who have knowledge in other areas, should represent them. In addition, scholars opposing this theory state that co-operation and acceptance of decisions are still achieved through provision of sufficient and timely information on issues that affect them. It has been argued that sometimes over-consultation or over-involvement of the citizenry could be costly and time consuming.

The logo of the University of Fort Hare, featuring a shield with a sun, a book, and the motto 'LUMINE SIMUS TIBI LUMEN'.
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This study supports the PDT, which is a bottom up approach. The world today emphasizes democracy, where the public is empowered to decide on the day-to-day affairs. Days are gone when decisions and projects were imposed on communities. The imposition of projects and decisions suited autocracies and dictatorships. Power to the people is a common phenomenon these days. The real power to the people is demonstrated and realized in PDT. It enables all members of the community to make a meaningful contribution to decision making on issues that affect them.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research design and methodology simply gives a clear picture, overview and road map followed in conducting this study. It guides the necessary steps and procedures that were used in interacting with the respondents in the study. The researcher took into account issues relating to ethical considerations and was sensitive to the views and ideas of the participants during the survey. In this chapter, therefore, detailed methodological issues are presented as to how the data was collected.

3.2 Research Design

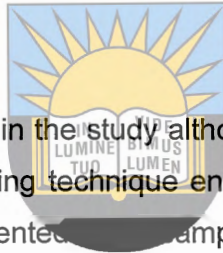
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Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this study. Quantitative research can be viewed as a form of measurements, variables, cause and effects syndrome, generalizations and replications, whereas qualitative research can be viewed as focusing on actors' meanings, description, process, flexibility and emergent theory and concept (Becker & Bryman 2004:89-93). This duo state that from the early 1960s to 1970s there had been a debate on these two types of research methods. Quantitative research was seen as superior to the qualitative one.

Mouton (2008:107) discusses different research designs and methodologies. Qualitative researchers are described as those that tend to keep field notes as they participated in the fieldwork - often in natural settings. The use of qualitative data, such as, interviews, documents, and participant observation, to understand and explain social phenomena, is identified with qualitative research.

This study entailed interacting with people, accumulating their individual and independent views and ideas on the conduct of elections. It became clear that the qualitative approach befitted this study, because voter apathy is an ongoing phenomenon. It involves people of different roles in the electoral process, age groups, literacy levels, professions and political philosophies, who were interacting all the time. However, to a lesser extent, there were specific numbers of respondents, established for the various categories, who were interacted with in the course of the study. The former has a qualitative research element, while the latter has a quantitative element.

3.3 Target Group and Sampling



Quota sampling technique was used in the study although there were also elements of stratified sampling. The quota sampling technique ensured that different categories of the franchise were adequately represented in the sample so that the level of accuracy in estimating parameters was increased. There was a thin line of difference between the two.

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Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2000:101) define stratified sampling technique as one that involved categorizing the population into homogeneous groups with each group containing similar characteristics. Bailey in (Cohen et al 2000:103) describes quota-sampling technique as the non-probability equivalence of stratified sampling. In addition, the scholars state that a quota, represented significant characteristics of the wider population, and unlike the stratified sampling, the quota represented these characteristics in the proportions, in which they could be found in the wider population.

The research target of the study included:

- Political parties (segregated by gender), who were principal stakeholders in elections through sponsoring candidates and conducting campaign meetings.
- Civil Society Organizations and the media who were involved in informing and mobilizing the public and motivating the citizenry to participate in elections.

- Traditional leaders regarded as the custodians of culture and beneficiaries of services provided in their areas of jurisdiction, who normally assist in mobilization of the electorate.
- Development partners, who provided technical and financial assistance to the electoral process.
- Voters, (categorized into either rural or urban based as well as either into youths – up to 30 years – or the elderly – those older than 30), who were directly responsible for choosing leaders through their votes.
- Professionals, who would otherwise have competed for office.
- Government district office staff, who provided agency work to the Electoral Commission; and finally
- Electoral Commission staff, central to the management of elections.

These were the roleplayers, who had a stake in elections and provided the much-needed responses to the study.



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3.4 Data Collection Methods *Together in Excellence*

Cohen et al (2000:242) discuss various methods of data collection, which include questionnaires, interviews, documentary surveys, and observation. Hussey and Hussey (1997:161) describe a questionnaire as a list of carefully structured questions with a view to solicit reliable responses from a chosen sample. The bulk of the information in this survey was gathered using questionnaires. Interviews and documentary surveys were also used to collect information. The researcher interacted with 64 participants in the survey. The survey lasted 5 weeks.

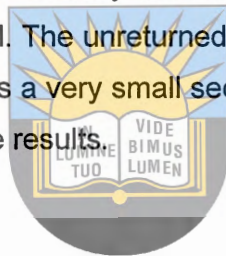
3.4.1 Questionnaires

Self-administered questionnaires, which comprised both open-ended and closed questions, were used in the study to glean data from:

- 16 individuals of both sexes belonging to different political parties;
- 5 professionals;

- 4 representatives of civil society organizations;
- 4 representatives of media organizations;
- 4 representatives of development partner institutions;
- 5 district level government staff; and
- 5 Electoral Commission personnel.

At the end of the survey, all 43, but two questionnaires distributed were duly completed and returned. The two unreturned questionnaires were those of two politicians, who kept on reassuring the researcher that they would complete the questionnaires. Later on, it was learnt that one had left the country in search of employment, whereas the other was reportedly ill and in hospital. The unreturned questionnaires did not affect the outcome of the survey, because it was a very small section of the sample, amounting to about 5%, which could not change the results.



3.4.2 Interviews

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The survey targeted five traditional leaders at the level of Traditional Authority (Chiefs) with interview questions on a one-to-one basis. Two Chiefs from the Southern Region, another two from the Centre Region and one Chief from the Northern Region were chosen as respondents. The researcher handled the interviews singlehandedly. The distribution was proportionate to voter population distribution based on the information in the voters' roll.

Focus group interviews were organized with eight elderly voters as well as eight youths to collect the required data. Two sessions of eight combined, gender-balanced voters from each category, were conducted. One session was held in a rural setting and the other in an urban setting. The researcher recruited two senior managers from the district council to assist with the recording of the responses, whilst the District Commissioners moderated the sessions.

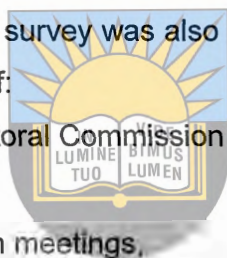
The interviews with the traditional leaders as well as the focus groups were successful, largely because the respondents were given adequate notice. In addition, the mode of

communication, through the District Commissioners' offices, cleared all doubts of a mockery event. The respondents realized the seriousness and importance of the matter. All planned interviews with the five traditional leaders were accomplished, and the 16 participants in the focus groups availed themselves for the interviews.

3.4.3 Documentary surveys

Documents, either historical or contemporary, provide vital information and some social researchers have depended successfully on documentary reviews in their studies (Taunyane, 2007:31). A documentary survey was also used to gather information in this study. The researcher read minutes of:

- consultative meetings the Electoral Commission held with its stakeholders,
- correspondence files,
- minutes of internal Commission meetings,
- election observer reports, and
- final election reports from civil society organizations.



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Civil society organizations

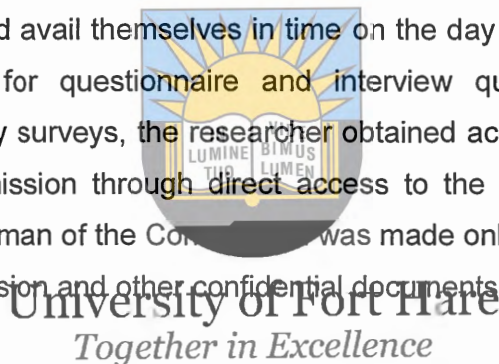
These documents containing detailed accounts and analyses of issues, which cropped up during a particular election, touched on all aspects of a credible election, and were seen as useful to the study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The legal mandate for elections lies with the Chairman of the Electoral Commission. In order to commence with the survey, the researcher firstly had to establish communication with said office bearer, to obtain permission. During the survey, the researcher explained to the respondents the reason behind the study and the need for honest answers in order to assist in future elections. They were also reminded to reflect on what happened ten years ago, to avoid confusion with two other general elections that took place after the November 2000 Local Government Elections. Respondents were also assured of anonymity to parry any fears that they might have had. In addition, the researcher showed them a letter from the University of Fort Hare (see Appendix 1)

and an oath of secrecy sworn to the confidentiality, safety and secure handling of the information collected (see Appendix 2).

For the self-administered questionnaires, appointments were made to the potential respondents by telephone followed by letters (see Appendix 3) in order to ensure their availability and timely feedback on the questionnaires. Notifications for the focus group interviews were done two weeks in advance through District Commissioners to ensure the availability of respondents (see Appendices 4A and 4B). Concerning the Chiefs, the researcher contacted them directly by telephone. The advance communication enabled the respondents to plan and avail themselves in time on the day for the interviews (see Appendices 5A and 5B for questionnaire and interview questions respectively). Regarding the documentary surveys, the researcher obtained access to the documents within the Electoral Commission through direct access to the registry and library. A written request to the Chairman of the Commission was made only for classified records like minutes of the Commission and other confidential documents (see Appendix 6).



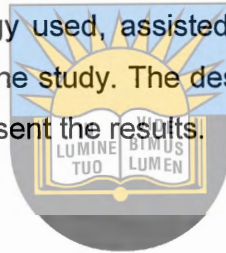
The survey took 5 weeks instead of the planned 6 weeks (one and half months), because it happened during elections and most of the respondents, who were election stakeholders were readily available. In addition, the procedures put in place facilitated co-operation of and timely interaction with the respondents. However, the researcher also followed up on the respondents, who had not returned the questionnaire, once every seven days by either telephone or in person. Details of follow-up dates with the respondents were recorded in a schedule (see Appendix 7).

3.6 Conclusion

The research design and methodology, which was applied, guided the researcher to pay special focus to the scientific fundamentals of the research. The instruments employed facilitated the collection of appropriate data for the study. The open-ended sections of the questionnaire went a long way in assisting respondents to express their views freely and advance suggestions in addressing shortcomings.

The focus group interviews provided an opportunity for the researcher to gain insight into practical situations that relate to the study. The respondents were able to debate, bring to light and clarify to the researcher, some of the important issues. The discussions revealed the richness of knowledge and passion, which people have on elections and on issues that affect their day-to-day life. Finally, the documentary survey assisted in validating some of the issues raised by the respondents, both through the questionnaires as well as the information gathered during the focus group interviews.

It was observed that the methodology used, assisted the researcher to be within the planned framework and structure of the study. The design and methodology also made it easy to sort out information and present the results.



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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation and an analysis of the findings gleaned from the data collected after the interaction with the respondents. As stated in Chapter Three, the study had elements of both quantitative and qualitative research. These data analyses methods provided an in-depth understanding of the results and the opinions of the various election stakeholders. It is important to mention three issues here, first that nowhere in the analysis were the respondents identified in order to protect their anonymity. Secondly, that 46 of the 48 questionnaires distributed were duly completed and collected representing 96% of the sample. Finally, both focus group interviews with the voters and the one-on-one interviews with the Traditional Authorities were successfully conducted as planned.

4.2 Quantitative Analysis

4.2.1 Knowledge about elections

Figure 4.1, on the following page depicts that 61% of the respondents knew about the Local Government Elections through the radio communication medium. The radio communication entailed jingles, announcements and news items. At that time, there were only three radio stations, which had national coverage. This figure clearly indicates that the radio is a powerful means of information dissemination in Malawi.

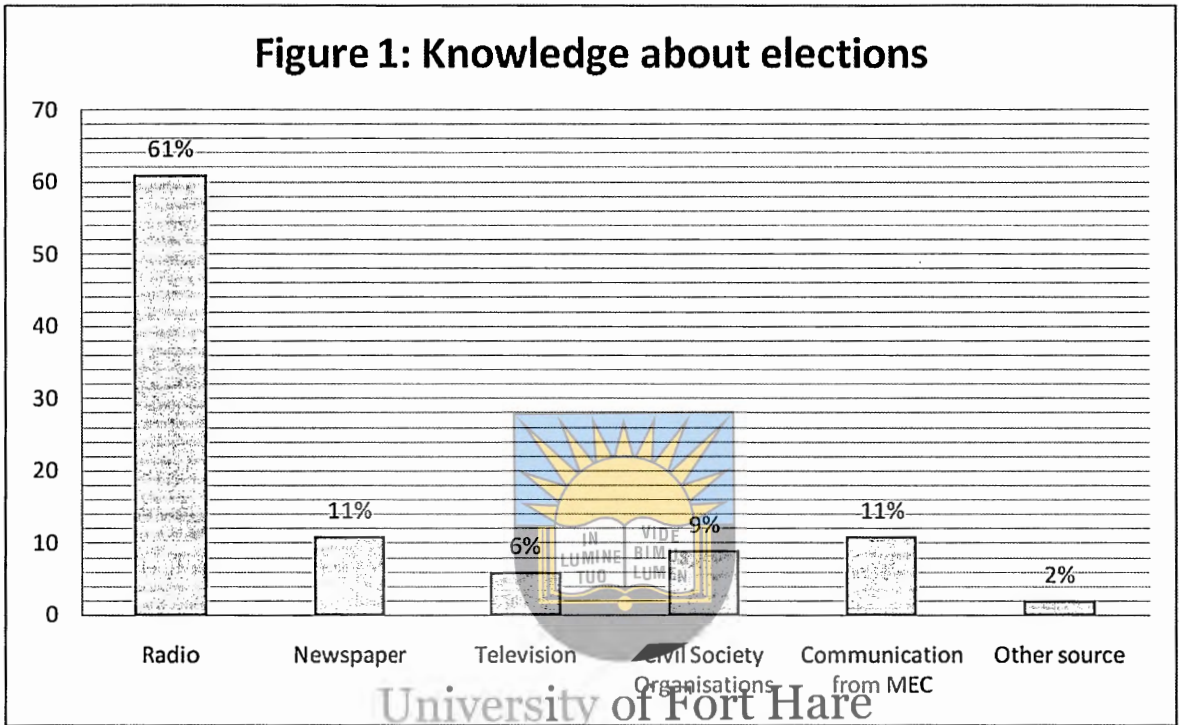


Figure 4.1: Knowledge about elections

4.2.2 Timing for elections

It was observed that the timing for the elections was not conducive to an acceptable level of voter turnout. The position is evidenced in Figure 4.2 on the following page. In this figure, 61% of the respondents had reservations with the timing, whereas 39% of the respondents had no problems. This demonstrates that the majority of the people did not participate in the elections due to wrong timing.

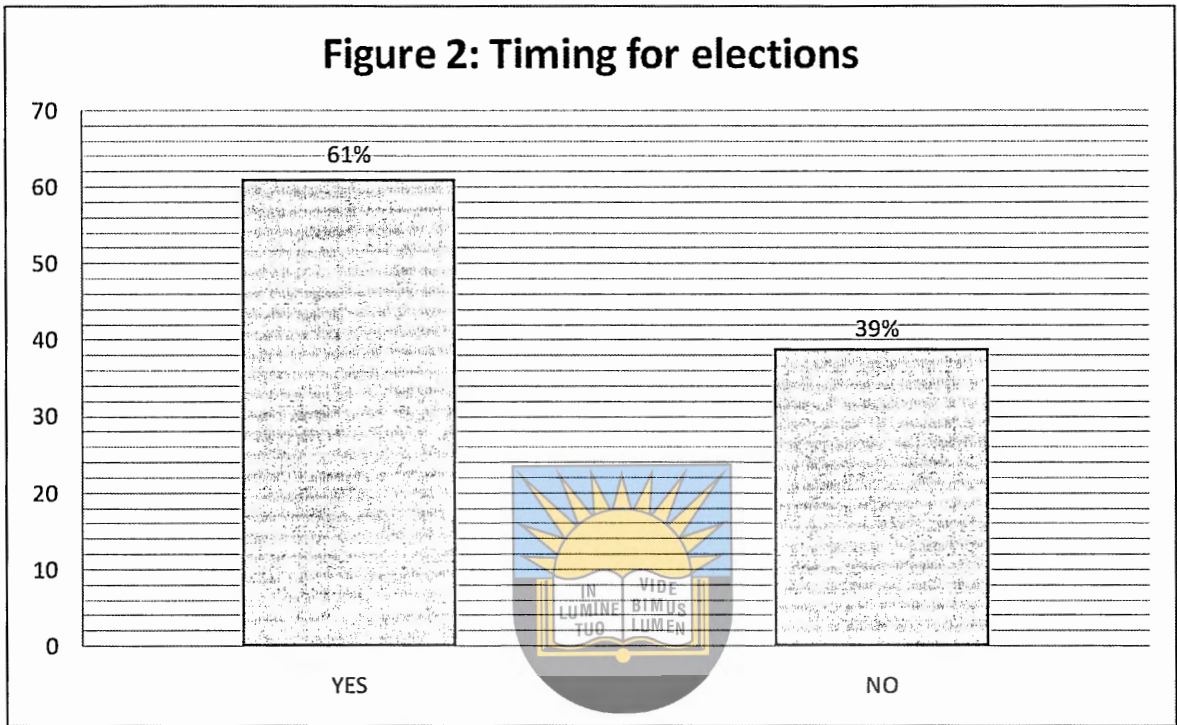


Figure 4.2: Timing for elections University of Fort Hare
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4.2.3 Understanding of low voter turnout

Figure 4.3 on the next page, elucidates the understanding of what low voter turnout entails. As observed, the respondents, representing 65%, stated that a voter turnout of less than 50% is considered low voter turnout. These respondents argued that leaders must be elected by the majority and, therefore, there is a need for at-least half of the registered voters to participate in the elections.

It was observed that the respondents, who stated that less than 40% turnout and less than 30% turnout combined, form 26% of the sample. They argued that normally in Malawi, unless there is a big wave of change, the voter turnout for local polls would not be that high. Local government elections are considered low profile elections, unlike the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections. In addition, people have limited understanding of the importance of District Councils. Another argument advanced by this category of

the sample, was that interest in the local government elections is generally low, because they occur in between Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. Political parties do not invest as much into the local elections; and disillusionment by the voters played a part, due to non-performance of Members of Parliament, who were just elected a year earlier.

The respondents, who defined low voter turnout as less than 60% argued that when less than 60% of the registered voters are unable or decide not to vote, the result of the election cannot be said to be a true representation of what society wants. The voting of the remaining 40% could have resulted in a very different electoral result. The respondents further argued that even the Republican Constitution provides that when voting on crucial issues in Parliament, two-thirds majority be emphasized. It is against this background that elections too, which usher leaders into these law and policy making bodies, should be elected in an election participated by not less than two-thirds majority.

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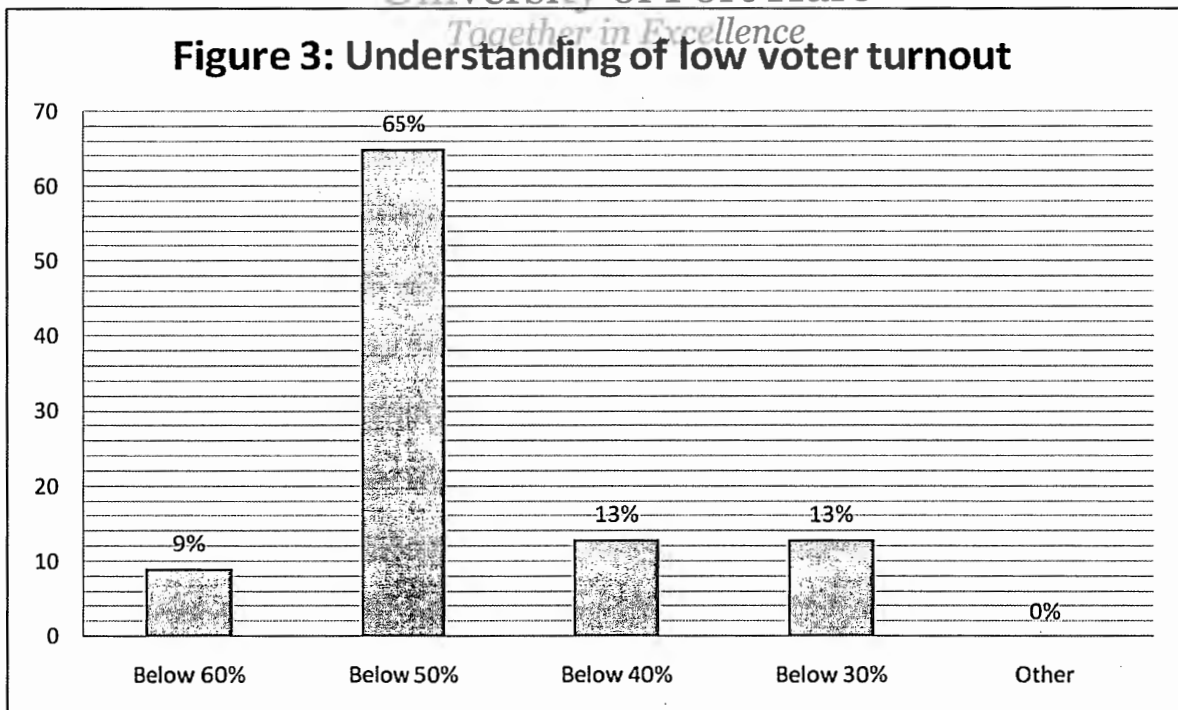


Figure 4.3: Understanding of low voter turnout

It is clear from the Figure 4.3, on the previous page that a voter turnout of less than half of the eligible voters would be considered low turnout or voter apathy. The majority of those eligible should participate in the elections to choose leaders.

4.2.4 Registration sample

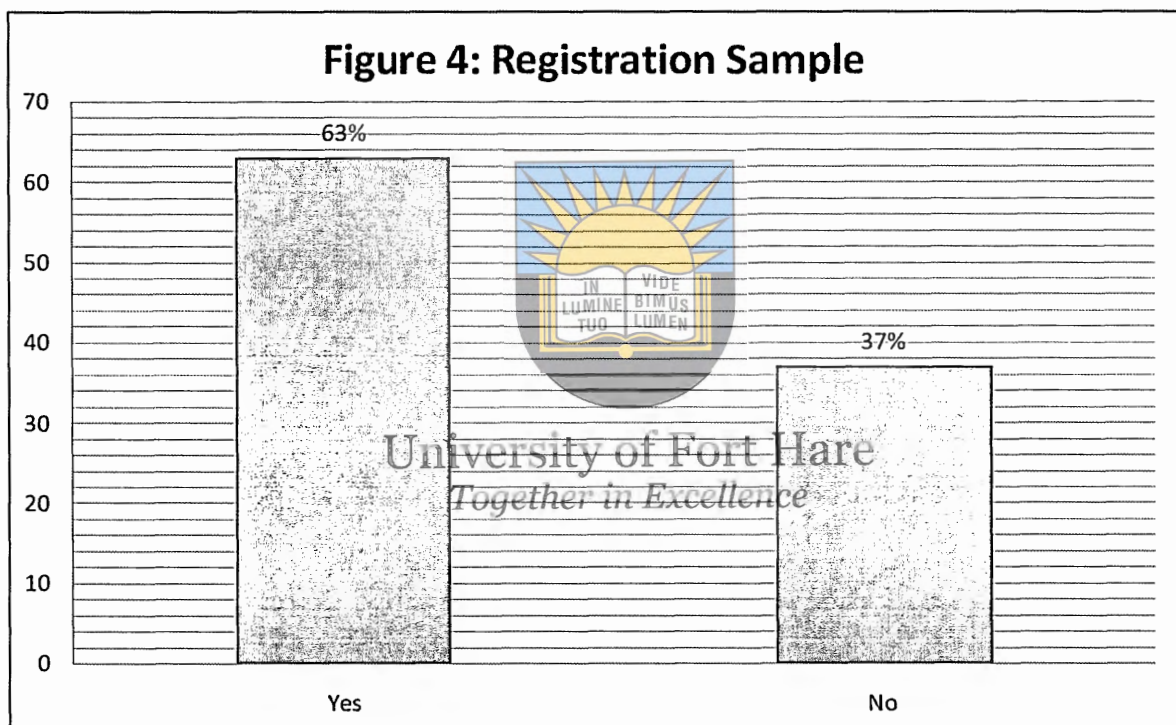


Figure 4.4: Registration sample

On the inquiry if the respondents registered as voters for the election, Figure 4.4 reveals that 63% answered in the affirmative and 37% answered in the negative. Since 1999, Malawi maintains a continuous voters' roll and in the year 2000, the public was asked to go to the centres to check the correctness of their details in the voters' roll or to register if they were not able to register in 1999 for various reasons. It is only those people, who are on the voters' roll that would vote on the polling day. The voters' roll was subsequently updated to make it current, relevant and accurate. Figure 4, therefore, shows that 63% of the respondents registered for the elections.

4.2.5 Reasons others gave for not registering as a voter

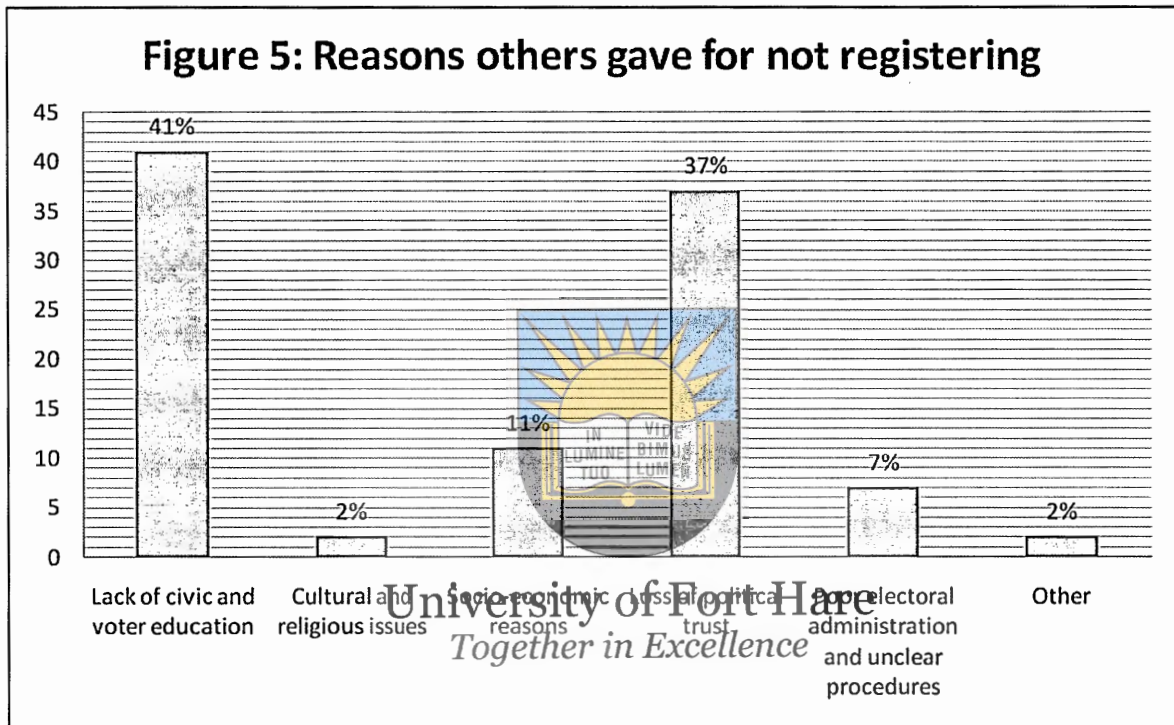


Figure 4.5: Reasons others gave for not registering as a voter

Figure 4.5 above indicates that many people did not vote reportedly due to lack of civic and voter education. The respondents representing 41% of the sample stated that people did not clearly understand the role of Councillors. Another group, 37% of the respondents argued that they had lost trust in the politicians. During the General Elections campaign meetings, the politicians made a lot of promises, which were not fulfilled. The respondents, therefore, considered it to be a waste of time as nothing, in their view, would change, whether they voted or stayed away.

4.2.6 Reasons for not running for office

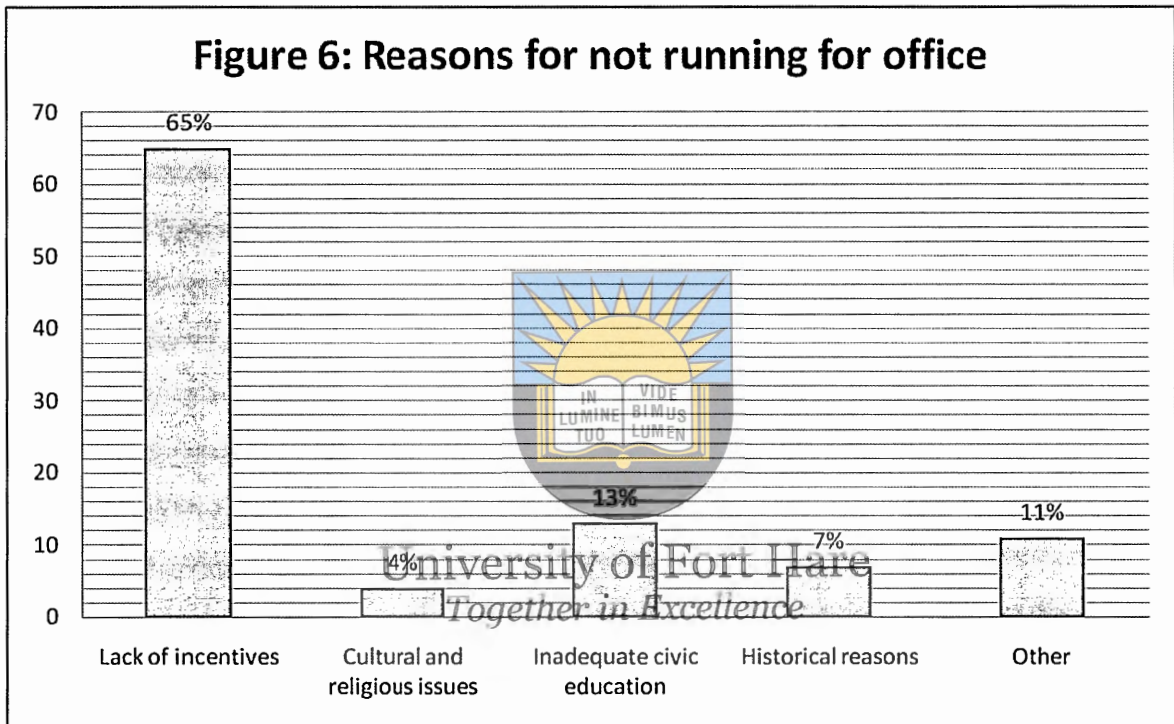


Figure 4.6: Reasons for not running for office

Lack of incentives discouraged qualifying, resourceful and industrious people from participating in the elections. In Figure 4.6 above, 65% of the respondents alluded to this fact. The would be Councillors compared the allowances, which Members of Parliament were getting, with the almost voluntary work they would be doing.

Respondents, representing 13% of the sample reported that inadequate civic education contributed to people not contesting for office. As observed earlier, the lack of information, which discouraged the public to participate as voters had also an effect on potential contestants. It is observed that 11% of the sample reported that lack of resources denied them a chance to represent the people. One needs finances for

mobility in order to reach out to the masses with policies that would entice voters to vote for them.

4.2.7 Voting sample

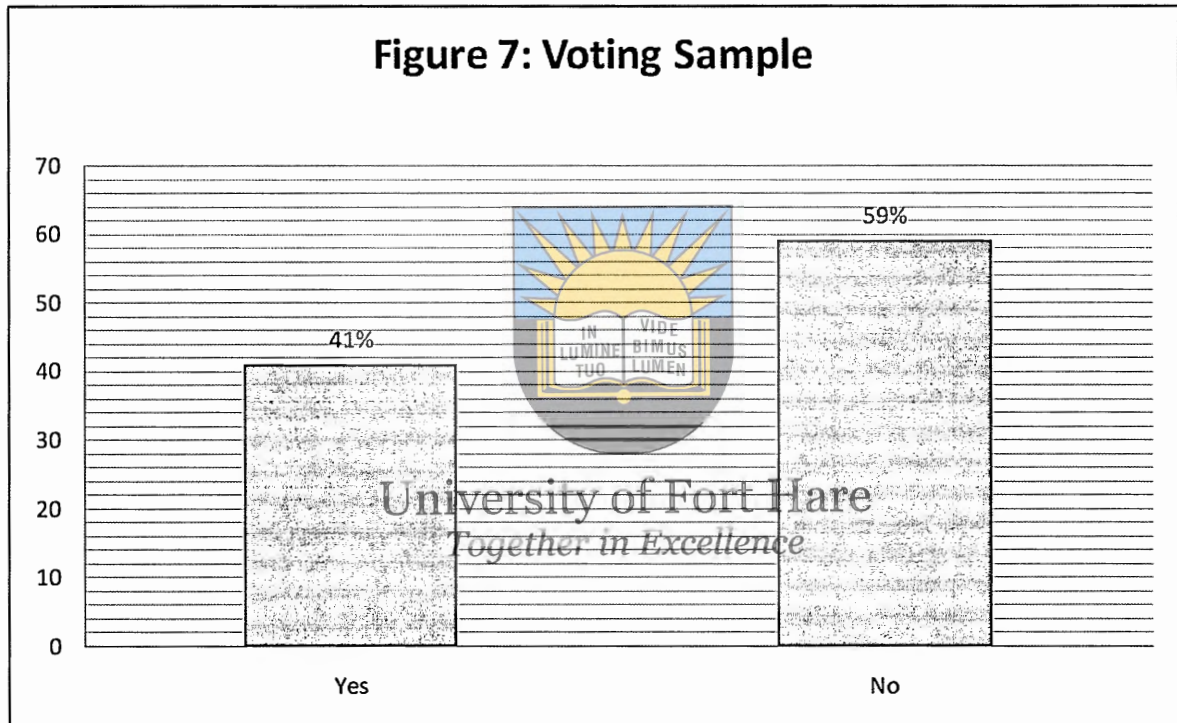


Figure 4.7: Voting sample

Figure 4.7 reflects how the sample voted. Under this question, 41% of the respondents answered in the affirmative. It shows that 59% of the respondents under this question answered in the negative. These respondents had registered as voters with a view to cast their votes on the polling day but they did not vote. These percentages can be interpreted that people stayed away from the voting process and that the decisions not to vote were made after they had already registered.

4.2.8 Reasons why some people did not vote

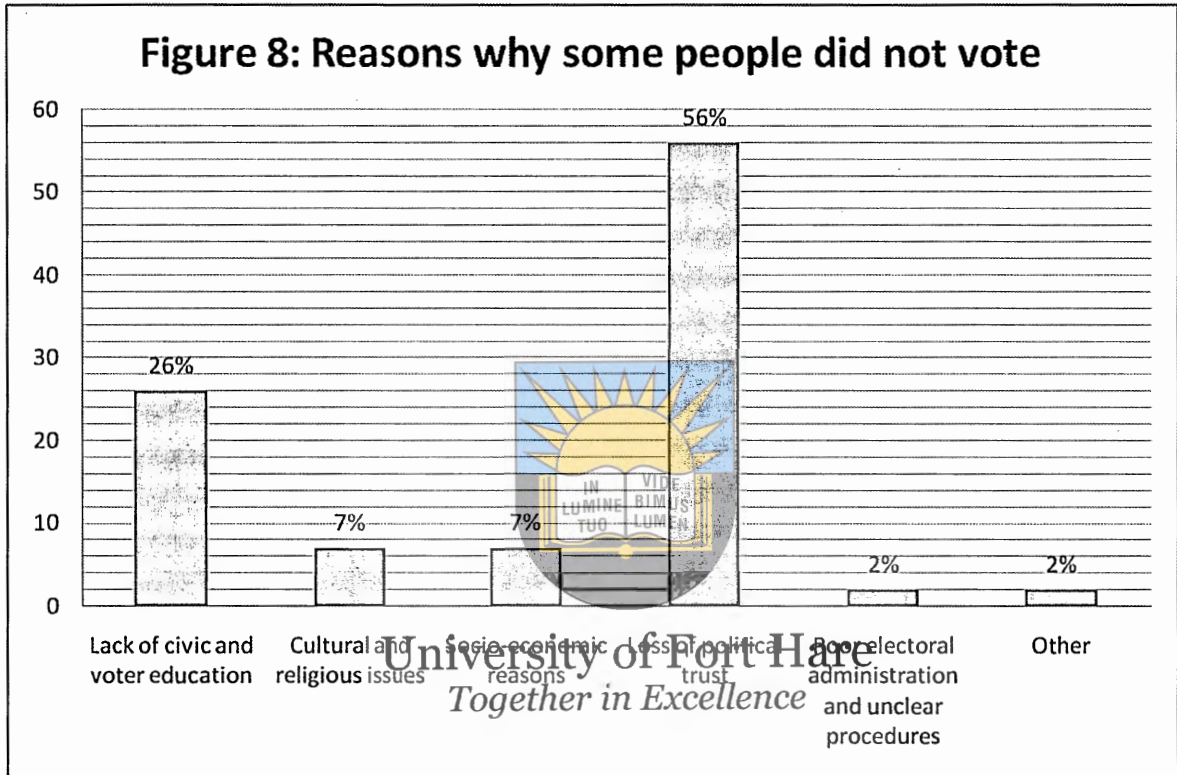


Figure 4.8: Reasons why some people did not vote

In response to the question as to why others as they learnt it did not vote, 56% of the respondents reported that it was due to loss of political trust followed by 26%, who faulted voter education. Another category indicated that polling was set on a working day and employers, especially those from the private sector, could not give them paid time off. The illustration complements the reflection plotted on Figure 4.7 above.

4.2.9 Challenges faced

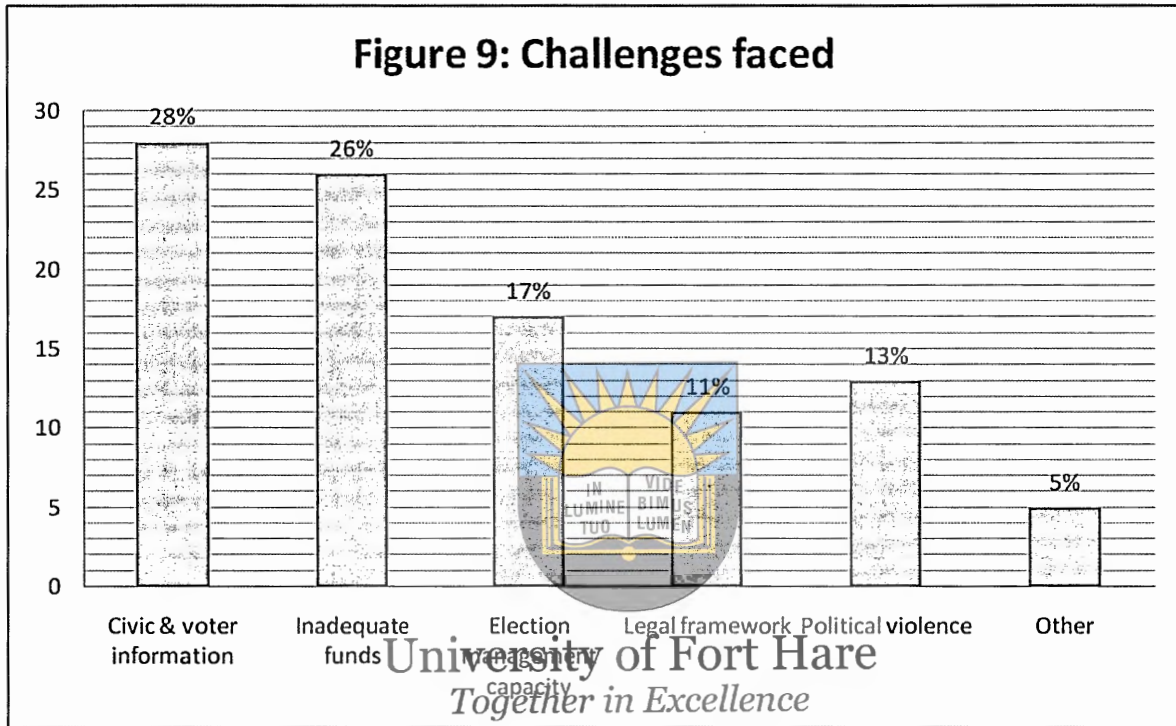


Figure 4.9: Challenges faced

Scrutinizing Figure 4.9, explicates that challenges faced during the elections indicate that civic education topped the list with 28%. This means the public was not fully aware on their expectation as well as the importance of the elections. In addition, it is revealed that there was not enough funding made available or sourced to conduct the elections both on the part of the Commission and the civil society organizations. This challenge represents 26% as reported by the respondents. Moreover, the inadequate funds were not provided on time, resulting in some activities hurriedly undertaken and in the process it compromised the quality of delivery. This state of affairs, resulted in some people distancing themselves from the election.

The findings also show lack of capacity in election management. With 17% of the respondents reporting thus, it posed a great challenge and this had a great linkage to

the legal framework, which represents 11% of the respondents. The Commission could not do or act on some issues due to lack of legal mandate. The effects of these two inter-related challenges gave rise to the 'other' category with 5% of respondents, for example, failure by the Commission to address the issue of biased coverage by the public media in favour of the ruling party; and rumours of rigging for the ruling party by the Commission.

4.2.10 Assessment of the conduct of elections

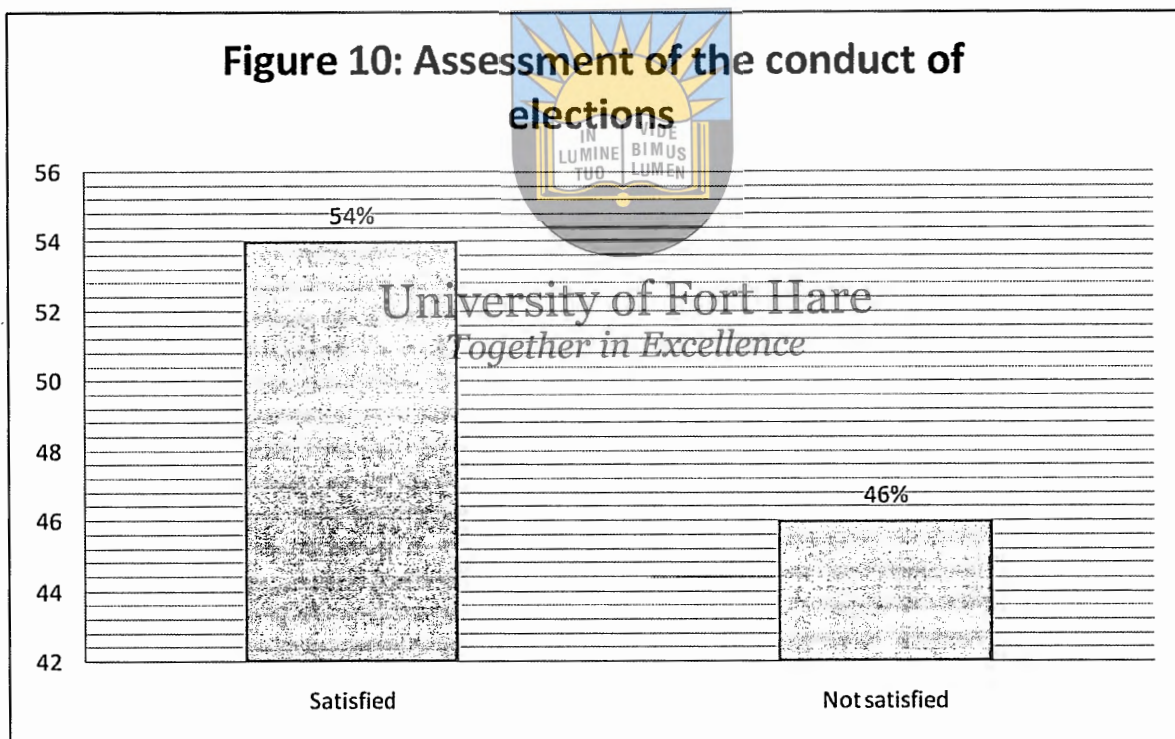


Figure 4.10: Assessment of the conduct of elections

Figure 4.10 illustrates an assessment of the general conduct of the elections. The findings show that 54% of the respondents were satisfied. The respondents advanced three main reasons for this position:

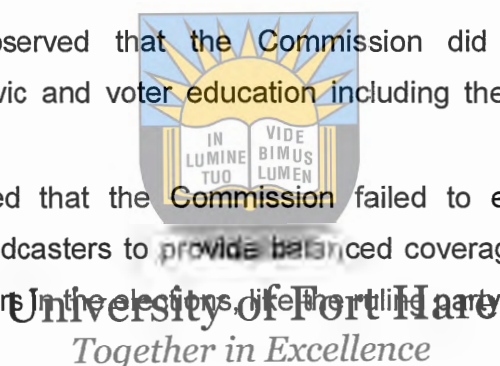
- Firstly, that on the polling day, people voted freely without intimidation.

- Secondly, that the voters' roll was accurate and no eligible voter was disenfranchised.
- Thirdly, that there were no logistical hitches. Voters were easily attended to in the queues and there was order in the polling stations.

It was also revealed that although there were incidents of violence, they were isolated and not serious.

For those who were not satisfied, which represented 46% of the respondents, they presented four main arguments.

- First, that they observed that the Commission did not make adequate arrangements for civic and voter education including the drive to entice more contestants.
- Second, they argued that the Commission failed to enforce the laws that mandate public broadcasters to provide balanced coverage and that this failure gave other key players in the elections, like the ruling party and its candidates, an unfair advantage.
- Third, that it had been reported that the Commission was not professional in administering the elections and was viewed as being a supporter of the ruling party.
- Fourth, they stated that the Commission did not have the capacity to count votes in time and accurately as observed by delays in releasing the results of the election, due to the process of trying to correct the errors.



4.2.11 Major reason for low voter turnout

Concerning the question to provide one major reason for low voter turnout, the respondents came up with three main reasons. Figure 4.11 on the next page, clarifies that inadequate civic and voter education topped the list with 26% claiming that it was responsible for voter apathy. The respondents argued that people no longer appreciated the role played by representatives, especially at the local council level.

People did not appreciate the value of a councillor. There was a need to emphasize the usefulness of local councils.

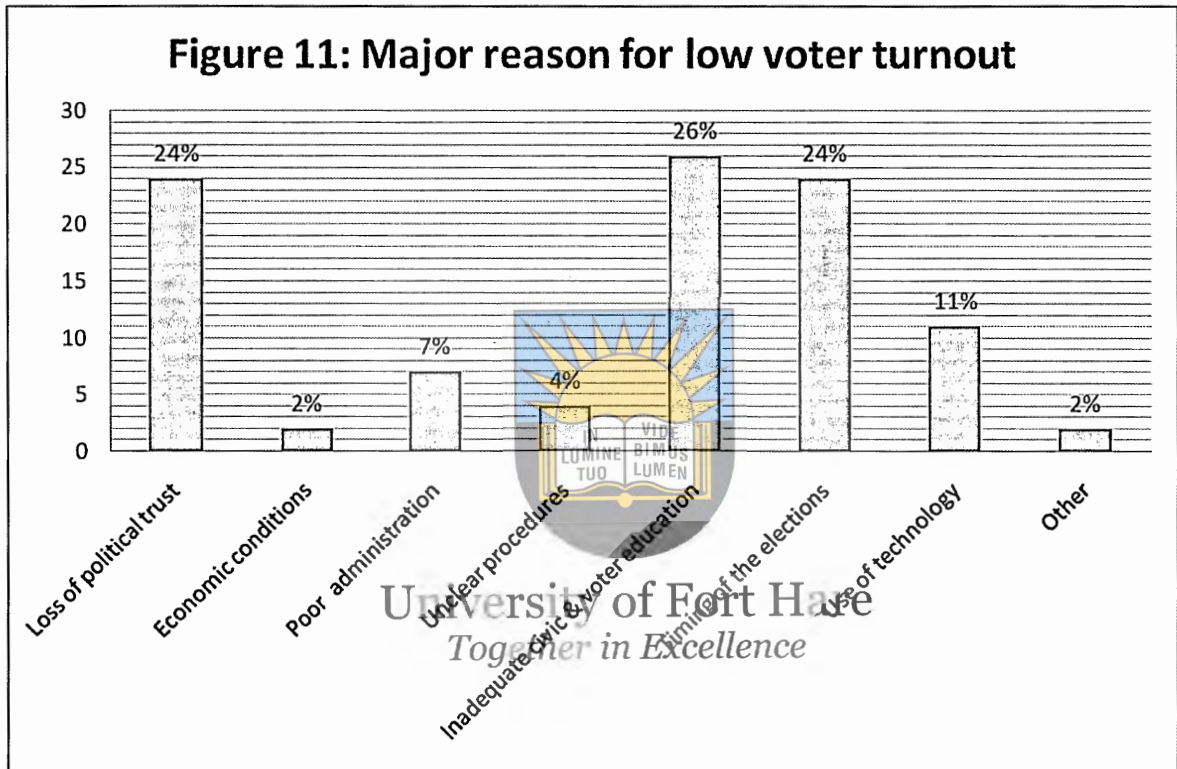


Figure 4.11: Major reason for low voter turnout

Another reason presented by 24% of the respondents was loss of political trust. The people realized they were being used by the politicians. Almost all campaign promises are not fulfilled and the political office bearers changed tune immediately they assumed office. The respondents argued that the elections benefitted the elected office bearers, who once in office, earned an income for their well-being and their relations and did almost nothing to improve the lives of the people they represented.

The last major reason, presented by yet another 24% of the respondents, was timing for the elections. The elections were held when the farming season was at its peak. People valued sustaining their livelihood, farming, more than the elections. In addition, this was rainy season and others were afraid of getting soaked in the rain and

unfortunately only one day was provided. During this time, the respondents added that memories of other political parties and their supporters were still fresh regarding the loss of the elections in the previous year, hence frustrations ruled supreme as they had not yet recovered from the realities of the loss and eventually stayed away.

4.2.12 Suggestions for improvement to attract acceptable participation

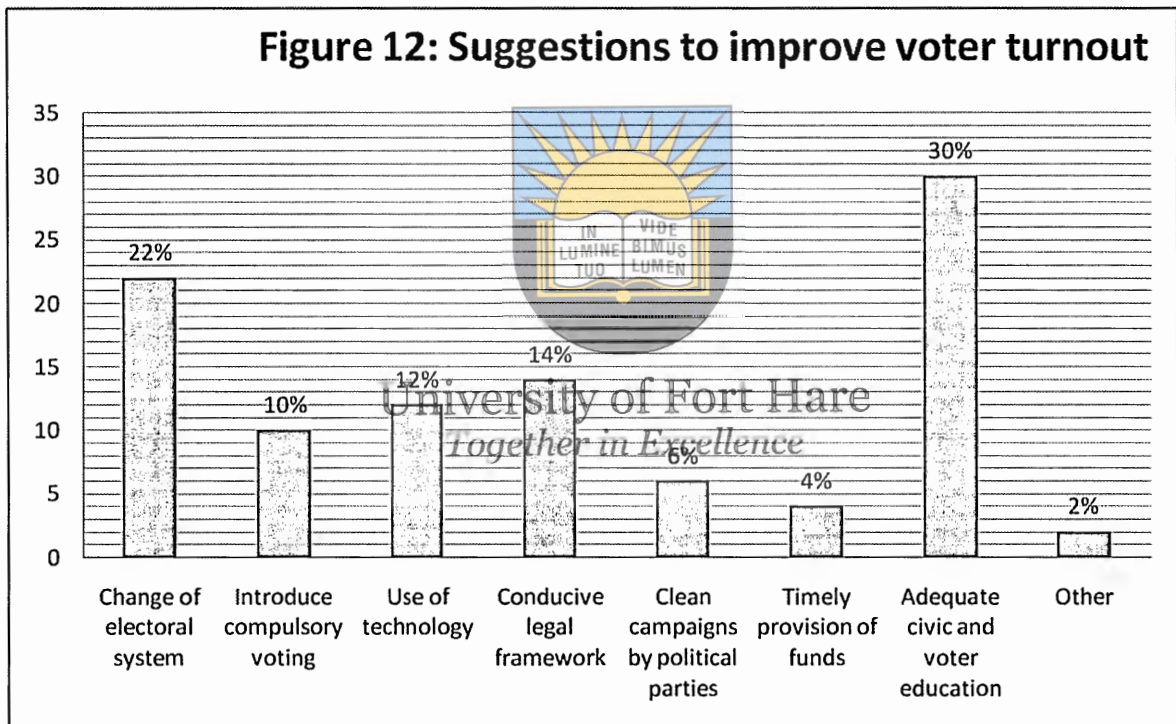


Figure 4.12: Suggestions for improvement to attract acceptable participation

Looking at the suggestions of what should be done to have as many voters as possible participate in local government elections, Figure 4.12 depicts that 30% of the respondents called for the adequate provision of civic and voter education. It is viewed that once the citizenry is aware of the roles and the duties of councils, over 60% of voters would turnout and qualified people would enlist as contestants. Strong mobilisation and advocacy by all key players namely, the Commission, political parties and the civil society organizations, would also turn matters around.

Another suggestion, put forward by 22% of the respondents, is a change in the electoral system. The respondents argued that a proportional representation system would encourage parties with smaller followings to be assured of seats proportionate to the votes amassed, since all valid votes would count.

Conducive legal framework was also regarded by 14% of the respondents as another area that would contribute to a high voter turnout. Voters and contestants would be assured of a level playing field and that issues of perceived favouritism on the part of the Commission would not arise. Once the law treated all participants equally there would be trust and confidence in the Commission and both voters and contestants would be forthcoming.



4.2.13 Most effective way to communicate with stakeholders on electoral matters

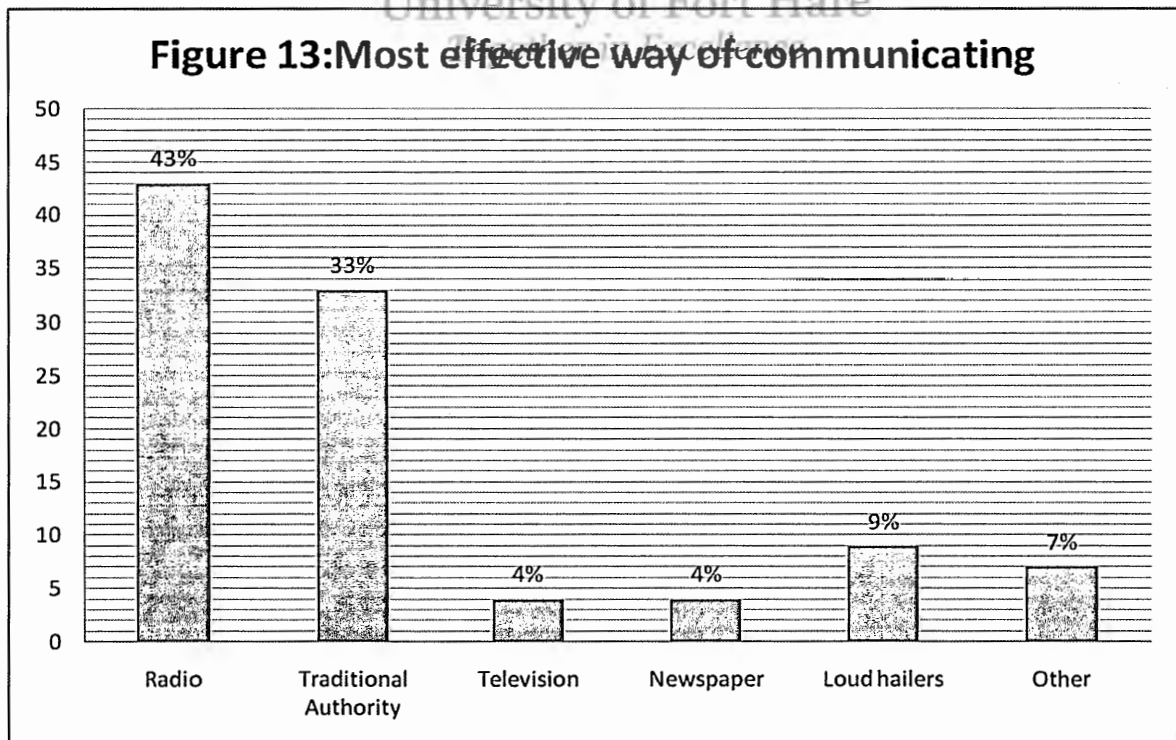
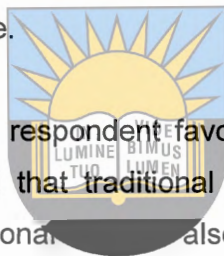


Figure 4.13: Most effective way to communicate with stakeholders on electoral matters

Communication is very important in every venture. Elections is not an exception. In the survey, 43% of the respondents stated that the most effective means of communication with all election stakeholders in Malawi is through the radio. It has been proved that the radio has a wide coverage and reaches out to the masses in a short time and is an inexpensive commodity. After the message has been aired people start discussing or even debating in their homes, in their village meetings, at work places, in public transport, et cetera and the interest grows in the minds of voters. Additionally, the public is curious for more information on the issues. With the high illiteracy levels in Malawi, this medium is preferred by the people.



Another medium, which 33% of the respondent favoured, is the traditional authority structure. The respondents argued that traditional leaders live and are always in contact with the people. The traditional also command natural respect and have a very strong influence on their subjects. With a very high population, which is rural based, the traditional leadership structure has a high target and impact and, therefore, well placed as a means of communicating with the masses.

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Loud hailers have been ranked third in communication effectiveness by 9% of the respondents. It has been argued that loud hailers attract attention of the masses, because people would want to hear what message is broadcast. This medium is effective both in a rural as well as in an urban setting.

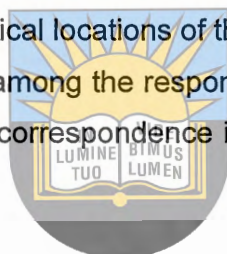
Television and newspapers are least preferred, as illustrated by the 4% of respondents. The mode is considered elitist, expensive and only available to the privileged few.

The 'other' category represents 7% of the respondents. In this category, faith-based organizations are considered to have a wide coverage. This could be equated to the traditional leadership structure. It has been argued that the attendance at places of worship guarantees maximum exposure to information. The respondents argued that a

combination of all these modes is the best, in as far as communication on electoral matters is concerned.

4.3 Qualitative Analysis

Having dealt with the quantitative analysis of the respondents under section 4.2, the focus will shift to the qualitative analysis of the survey by exploring the sources and even attempting to record the verbatim replies of the respondents as they reflected on the questions that were posed. The study targeted a cross-section of stakeholders in the elections in all the three geographical locations of the country. An attempt was made to take into account gender-balance among the respondents. Furthermore, the analysis includes a review of documents and correspondence in the office and the researcher's own observation.



4.3.1 Timing of the elections

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The respondents from both the questionnaire and the interview surveys, had concerns and two reasons were advanced.

- Firstly, the respondents stated that the month of November, falls within an agricultural season, and in Malawi, being a predominantly agricultural country, people are busy in the field. Any activity other than farming is secondary and elections must have been given low priority.
- Secondly, the respondents argued that coming from another major election, the 1999 General Elections, the people felt being over-involved in almost the same activity or event.

The respondents preferred the elections to be held between the months of May and September, when there are less farming activities. The researcher also observed that during the months of October to February people are busy in the field, unlike in May when they have completed agrarian work.

4.3.2 Registration of voters

There were three main reasons proffered by respondents from both the questionnaire and the interview surveys, for not registering for the elections. The respondents argued:

- They had just voted the previous year and felt tired of voting again. In addition, they stated that they did not appreciate the need for electing Councillors, who had not been in the councils for over eight years, and more especially that Members of Parliament (MPs) were in positions to bring about the much needed development.
- The other reason given was that during this period, the government had just distributed free farm inputs to the poorest of the poor. The people felt cheated when they were considered not to be in the beneficiary group and decided to boycott the elections, arguing that those that received the free inputs should participate in the elections.
- Another reason given is related to the two above. Here, the respondents from the interview surveys argued that the MPs had performed dismally, failed to change their lives for that whole year and worse still they did not fight for them to receive free farm inputs, but instead enriched themselves with hefty perks.

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4.3.3 Reasons for people not availing themselves to run for office

The respondents from both the questionnaire survey and the interviews provided varied reasons based on what they heard.

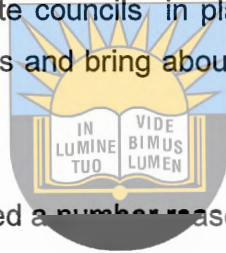
- It was reported that the potential persons, felt that the elections would be rigged by the ruling party and that it would, therefore, be a waste of time, energy and resources to participate when the election had already been decided.
- It was also learnt that the people blatantly said that the position was not financially rewarding, unlike the Parliamentary seats, which in their view, were

highly rewarding. These potential leaders feared that consequently they would be using personal resources to finance community development activities.

- The respondents further reported that the potential leaders argued that people contested the political positions as a career, to control public resources and not to deplete their wealth. This political career view was also confirmed in the report on Local Government Elections 2000 review meeting with stakeholders organized by the Commission in April 2001.
- Respondents from the interview survey reported that inadequate civic education contributed to people with appropriate qualities not contesting for office. The respondents argued that the potential contestants were not sure as to what their role would be in a multi-party dispensation.
- Lack of resources was also mentioned to have denied the potential citizens a chance to represent the people. The respondents from the interview survey argued that campaign meetings require finances and only those sponsored by political parties had access to funds from their masters. To stand as independent candidate meant that one had to finance the campaign at the expense of other household needs.
- Another reason advanced by respondents from the interview survey was that people were discouraged by the behaviour of political parties, who imposed candidates on the people. They argued that primary elections, which the political parties held, were usually pre-decided in favour of people, who were connected to the party hierarchy. The supporters were only asked to rubber stamp. In addition, campaign meetings were characterized by political bickering and mudslinging and not the presentation of proposed policies and this is also what the potential leaders disliked.
- The report on Local Government Elections 2000 review meeting with stakeholders states that people decided not to contest, because there was lack of commitment by ruling political leaders in implementing the decentralization process on the ground. Decentralization was being preached in government documents and meetings, but there was nothing on the practical side. Decisions on how to run the councils were still made by the central government.

4.3.4 Reasons for abstaining from voting

The researcher observed from the sample that not many people voted in the elections. The people, who voted argued that it was their civic responsibility and, therefore, they had to exercise that democratic right to choose leaders, who were to steer the councils. They also stated that they participated in the elections in order to have legally constituted councils. The respondents from the questionnaire survey said that they voted so that there could be legitimate councils in place, which would have the legal mandate to make policies and by-laws and bring about the much needed development at the local level.



The people, who did not vote presented a number reasons for not voting.

- One of the reasons from the interview survey was that they were not impressed with the quality of the contestants.
- A further reason advanced by the same group was that generally it was lack of interest in voting, due to voter fatigue coming from a General Election the previous year.
- Another reason the respondents from the questionnaire survey gave was that the contestants failed in their campaigns to articulate real development issues to motivate them to vote.

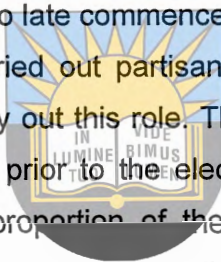
The respondents argued that they were not impressed with the quality of candidates and felt that voting or not would not make a difference.

4.3.5 Challenges faced during elections

On challenges faced during the elections, the respondents reported five areas. It should be pointed out that most of these challenges were addressed by various stakeholders during the course of the electoral cycle.

4.3.5.1 Lack of adequate civic and voter education

The Commission, civil society organization, the media and political parties carried out civic and voter education, but it was not adequate to motivate most of the voters. The respondents from the questionnaire surveys and the information from the documentary surveys stated that it was very clear that the public needed a lot of information to appreciate the importance of local government in their day-to-day lives. They argued that the inadequacy came about due to late commencement of the activities in this area. Apart from political parties, who carried out partisan civic education, the rest of the stakeholders needed finances to carry out this role. The researcher also observed that funding was made less than a year prior to the elections and the stakeholders only managed to reach out to a small proportion of the voter population with the right information. The rest of their activities were hurriedly done. Therefore, the quality of delivery was compromised.

The logo of the University of Fort Hare, featuring a sunburst design with the Latin motto 'IN VIDE LUMINE BIMUS' and the year '1916'.
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4.3.5.2 Lack of adequate funds

Related to this challenge was the inadequacy of funding. From the correspondence within the Commission the financiers, both Government and Development partners, argued that there was no need for more funds to be provided, since there was an election the previous year. The financiers were convinced that all the public needed was to be reminded of the local elections. The opposite was true. As it turned out, more resources were required for this particular election, as people needed more information than the General Elections. As reported during the Local Government Elections 2000 review meeting, the Commission too, needed more money than what was provided in order to effectively administer the elections in every ward and so did the civic and voter education providers, in order to reach every corner of the country with information and motivational activities. Efforts to lobby for more funds proved futile. The researcher, who

was in the management team of the Commission, observed that at the time the inadequate money was made available, it was too late to conduct credible elections effectively and efficiently, because the activities were compressed. The other stakeholders too, had to use what was available, just to be seen to have done something on their part.

4.3.5.3 Lack of media coverage

Media coverage was reported to have faced two challenges as alluded to by the questionnaire and the focus group interview surveys. One challenge was related to the coverage of contestants and another was to do with access to remote areas. On the coverage, the surveys determined there was an outcry from the contestants in that the public media was biased towards the ruling party and its candidates for positive news items on one hand. On the other hand, there was a blackout on the part of the opposition for positive news items, but the public media covered the opposition extensively on negative news items. Similarly, the two surveys established that the private media houses too, were biased towards their preferred political party and candidates. In the Local Government Elections 2000 report, media bias was regarded as a very challenging situation, because the Commission lacked the legal mandate to address it. As a way forward, the Commission, in consultation with the media houses, developed a media code of conduct, which regulated the conduct and behaviour in coverage of the elections with a view to level the playing field.

On the problem of access to remote areas, most media houses did not have the capacity to cover news items in the remote parts, therefore, only those contestants in urban or close to urban areas enjoyed coverage. The Commission then recruited stringers in each district to cover contestants, who were sending the news items to media houses for publishing (Local Government Elections 2000 Report, 2001:51).

4.3.5.4 Conflicts among contestants

Another challenge was conflict among contestants as emerged from the documentary survey. Conflicts in a democracy are inevitable. In elections, the positive conflicts are a healthy part of the game especially where contestants challenge each other with best policies and programmes. However, when the conflicts degenerate into violence, there is a need to address it so that voters are not scared away. Towards the end of the elections, the Commission established conflict resolution committees in each district council, called Multi-Party Liaison Committees (MPLCs). The committees comprised the contestants, traditional leaders and civil servants, whose normal mandates and responsibilities would assist in the roles played by the committee. It was the view of the Commission that the people should be empowered to manage or resolve any conflict at that local level by themselves. This committee proved to be useful because the last part of the electoral cycle was peaceful as people disciplined themselves whenever signs of wrongdoing were uncovered. The conflicts were mapped in the Local Government Elections 2000 Report, 2001:73). *Together in Excellence*

4.3.5.5 Bad weather

The researcher observed that weather provided its share of the challenges during the elections. The elections were held during the rainy season and the rural areas were very difficult to access due to bad roads. The Commission used other modes of transport like helicopters and boats to commute polling materials and staff to polling stations. The rains and threats of rains also jeopardized chances of people going to the polling stations on polling day. Local Government Elections 2000 Report (2001:66) states that the Commission made appeals to people through the radio to go to the polls and assured the voters that they would not be turned away as long as they would be in the queue by the official closing time. Another appeal was also sent to organizations to release their staff in order to enable them to exercise their democratic right to vote for leaders of their choice.

4.3.6 Efforts to improve voter participation in future elections

In order to conduct improved future elections so that as many people as possible participate as voters and contestants, the survey advanced quite a number of suggestions. The suggestions have been apportioned to various stakeholders with regard to their role in elections namely the Commission, political parties or contestants, civil society organizations, Government and development partners. The survey called on the Commission to address five areas. The areas concerned are civic and voter education, stakeholder consultations, professionalism, simple registration and polling procedures, and adherence to schedules.



4.3.6.1 Civic and voter education

The questionnaire and interview surveys emphasized the need for continuous civic education encouraging that it should be stepped up with a component on voter education at least a year prior to the polling day. Local Government Elections 2000 review meeting recommended that at least three months prior to the commencement of election activities, every civic education provider should extensively talk on and disseminate one theme: the benefits of Local Government. The meeting agreed that this is one way of preparing the public to follow issues with an informed mind.

4.3.6.2 Stakeholder consultations

Stakeholder consultation was also viewed by both the questionnaire and interview surveys as a key element to the successful conduct of elections. They argued that in order to create a favourable environment for elections, stakeholders must be given the opportunity to provide their input to the process. The interview survey stated that even where they would not provide any input as long as they have been consulted on proposed courses of action their co-operation is automatically solicited. In any venture,

it is of paramount importance to engage those, who are directly affected for smooth operation.

4.3.6.3 Professionalism by the Commission

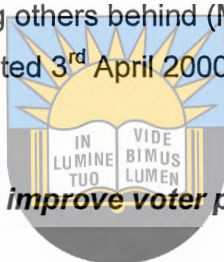
Both the questionnaire and interview surveys unanimously agreed that professionalism by the Commission should rank high. The questionnaire survey explicated that contestants would have confidence in a Commission that is seen to be professional in the conduct of day-to-day operations. The interview surveys stressed that the partisanship perceptions that were sometimes observed in the Commission have a negative effect on participation. Contestants and voters were discouraged, because they felt their participation would not count due to perceived potential rigging fears. Both the questionnaire and the interview surveys emphasized the need for transparency by the Commission in both electoral and financial matters. They argued that where there is professionalism there is transparency. Players should have nothing to hide, because all they do should be fair and within the mandate approved by the public.

4.3.6.4 Registration and polling

Another issue the study suggested for improvement was the registration and polling procedures. The questionnaire, interview and documentary surveys claimed that for one to register as a voter, the requirements sought were not easily accomplished by an average Malawian and that this could discourage people to turn up for registration. The surveys also contended that the transfer process for one to vote at a different place other than where they were registered was not properly handled. Local Government Elections 2000 review meeting called on the Commission to involve stakeholders in proffering user-friendly procedures.

4.3.6.5 Adherence to schedules

The surveys advanced that sticking to prepared and communicated schedules ensures that all players are participating at the same pace. The surveys called on the Commission to adhere to the election timetable that it circulates. The questionnaire surveys went further to state that the schedules should not be rigid and that any genuinely planned change should be properly communicated to all players in time to make appropriate adjustments. Timely communication for any changes to the election calendar is necessary to avoid leaving others behind (Malawi Electoral Support Network – MESN - letter to the Commission dated 3rd April 2000).



4.3.7 Stakeholders' responsibilities improve voter participation in future elections

4.3.7.1 Political parties

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For the political parties, the survey highlighted three main areas that could improve voter turnout:

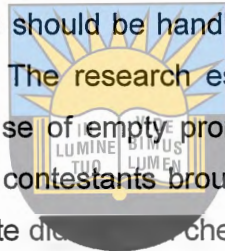
- **Clean campaign**

The research found that campaign programmes by political parties and candidates have a great effect on voter turnout. Respondents from the interview survey were of the conviction that where there is intimidation and mudslinging, voters would shy away from the activity. People were encouraged to participate where clean campaigns were run, where issues, policies and manifestoes were presented for the voters to make informed choices. Correspondence in the Commission revealed reported cases where other contestants created no go zones for their opponents. They made it difficult for opponents to access voters in the areas by restricting their opponents, either physically through violence or through traditional leaders, who did so by refusing them to conduct a meeting in

their areas of jurisdiction. Local Government Elections 2000 review meeting recommended the need for contestants to be given equal opportunity to access voters and a law that should penalize those, who do not abide by this.

- **Building political trust**

In addition, the questionnaire and interview surveys also reported that imposition of candidates demoralized voters, if they were forced to vote for a person that they did not approve of, they simply stayed away. They stressed that those, who lead the masses should be genuinely chosen by the people. The interview survey proposed that the Commission should be handling primary elections for political parties to safeguard fairness. The research established that people have lost trust in political parties, because of empty promises. The researcher observed that it would be appreciated if contestants brought out achievable issues during campaigns so that the electorate did not get cheated.



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- **Service to the people** *Together in Excellence*

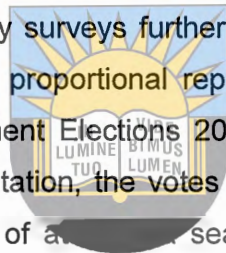
Accordingly, it was reported by the questionnaire survey that elected office bearers had a tendency to serve their masters on issues of national importance at the expense of the constituents they represented. The interview survey proposed that there should be signing of contracts between political office bearers and the electorate so that where performance is not satisfactory the voters should have the power to replace the representative.

4.3.7.2 Government role

Another stakeholder, the government, according to the research, has a big role to create a favourable environment to enable as many people as possible to participate in elections through:

- **Legal framework for credible elections**

In terms of the legal framework, a major point that the research stressed was the independence of the Commission. Both the questionnaire and the interview surveys debated that the Commission should be independent in law, fact and action. Another suggestion advanced by the research was on timing for elections. All surveys proposed that the local government elections should be held simultaneously with the General Elections so that people voted for the councillors at the same time they were voting for President and MPs. This suggestion, the researcher observed, called for the law to provide for tripartite elections. The questionnaire and documentary surveys further stated that the electoral system should change from FPTP to proportional representation. This view was also shared by the Local Government Elections 2000 review meeting, who argued that in a proportional representation, the votes were not wasted and contesting political parties were assured of a seat once they amassed a certain number of votes. This would encourage participation by small political parties as well as voters.



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The research called on the government to introduce incentives to voters by declaring public holidays on the polling day. The interview survey proposed that each person should be provided one-day paid holiday during the registration drive and a national public holiday on the polling day. Another suggestion was similar to the simplification of procedures discussed under the Commission above (section 4.3.6.4). Both the questionnaire and the interview surveys further suggested that the legal framework should provide for other forms of voting like electronic, in order to speed up the counting process; and to allow for voting through other means like internet or telephone. The respondents were convinced that these measures would decongest the polling stations on the polling day, since the voters, who have those facilities would vote from their offices, homes or at a convenient location close to them, within the prescribed voting time.

- **Financing arrangements for the Commission**

In terms of provision of funds, the questionnaire survey called on the government and development partners to provide adequate funds for elections and in time for the implementation of quality elections. The survey, however, suggested that the provision of funds should be followed by special audits on a quarterly basis to ensure that the funds are being used for the intended electoral processes. The questionnaire surveys further argued that regular audits would also provide an opportunity to assess if the funds were adequate and where necessary apply for more or adjust programmes based on the available resources in consultation with stakeholders. The researcher also observed that in this way, electoral activities would not be compromised and a favourable atmosphere for participating in the elections would be created.



4.4 Conclusion

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The findings in the study revealed there were a number of inter-related issues, which caused low voter turnout in the Local Government Elections 2000. It was evident that the various roles stakeholders play, had an impact on the turnout. Similarly, the drive to improve the turnout of voters lay with the same stakeholders.

Lack of knowledge about local government contributed more to the low turnout than any other reason. The people were participating blindly, without a very clear picture of the benefits of the councils. People did not follow and participate in the elections with any understanding as to how imperative their vote was as well as the importance of local councils. Political parties, candidates, civil society organizations as well as the Commission failed to embrace this role effectively. The radio, which had the widest coverage proved useful in reaching the masses within a shorter time and at a lower cost than the other modes of communication.

The behaviour of political parties contributed in a significant degree to the low voter turnout. People were frustrated due to imposition of figures as candidates, which

resulted in poor quality of candidates. These candidates failed to live up to civilized campaigns, but resorted to empty campaign promises and use of inflammatory language during meetings. Because of these frustrations, people, who are experts in various fields, who would have taken part in the contest, opted not to participate as contestants; and many eligible voters stayed away from voting. As observed, people, who registered as voters were far more than those, who turned out to vote on the polling day.

Complex procedures discouraged people from participating in the elections. The registration and voting procedures were not clearly disseminated to the public. The transferring procedure was even worse and people, who had relocated opted to stay away. Similarly, communication on other matters was not properly structured and this resulted in the public blaming the Commission for issues even those that did not affect the electoral process, just because of communication gaps. Poor communication contributed to the loss of trust and confidence in the Commission and gave room for suspecting it to be a partisan body and voters were eventually discouraged from turning out to participate in the elections.

The legal framework contributed to the poor turnout as well. The independence of the Commission was doubted by many stakeholders. There were widespread rumours that the Commission would rig the elections in favour of the ruling party. This was triggered, because in the view of the public, the Commission was not doing anything to level the playing field, especially about the use and conduct of the public media. Another aspect was that the legal framework; by separating the local elections from the major elections by just a year, discouraged voters, who felt they were being over-involved with almost the same activity over and over again.

Funds for the elections were not adequately provided and were accessed very late. Money played an important part in the electoral process. The inadequacy and the delayed funding resulted in poor delivery of services. The voters were not given value for money and they regarded the election as unimportant.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The research dealt with the inquiry into the causes of voter apathy and its impact on service delivery in Malawi for a period of 10 years from 2000 to 2010, the case study of local government elections. Poor participation in decision-making by the public directly or indirectly is a great concern and threat to democracy. It is important that the majority of the people should participate in the making of policies and decisions on issues that affect them. One important avenue is through elections. Local government elections are even more important than national elections because matters of service delivery improvement are dealt with by councillors within the local environment. Where there is voter apathy, poor quality of candidates, the result will be the election of undeserving leaders, who would not ably steer councils, and the outcome will be poor service delivery.

Whilst reflecting on the objectives, the research sought to assess the roles played by various stakeholders in the electoral process. It became very clear that the stakeholders, who included political parties and candidates, voters, civil society organizations, the media fraternity, development partners, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, government, district staff and the Commission itself, collectively have a contribution to the voter apathy. Similarly, all these stakeholders are vital to the improvement of voter turnout in Local government elections. In some cases, their perceived roles in reversing the voter apathy trend are complementary, whereas in others they are mutually exclusive.

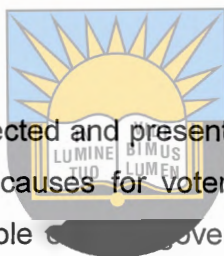
The first objective of investigating and analysing the causes of voter apathy during local government elections was successfully achieved. The respondents revealed a number

of causes and reasons for low voter turnout. The study also elucidated possible interventions to redress voter apathy with the purpose in mind to maximize high voter turnout. It evident from the findings that the hypothesis postulated is empirically tested and confirmed that *lack of knowledge of the role of local councils led to voter apathy in local government elections*. The respondents ranked lack of civic and voter education as a major cause for low voter turnout. Similarly, the respondents ranked civic and voter education as the main avenue to achieving high voter turnout.

Chapter One of this research presented the introduction and general orientation, which introduced the reader to the concept of the study under review. It included the statement of the problem; the objectives of the study; a presentation of the hypothesis of the study; delimitation of the study and finally the ethical considerations in relation to the study.

Chapter Two dealt with the detailed and extensive literature review of the study. The literature review, which was a presentation of evidence from authoritative scholars, who undertook some work on voter apathy, first entailed espousing the concepts and theoretical frameworks in order to prove beyond reasonable doubt the arguments advanced in the area under focus. Participatory democracy theory underpinned the study, which entailed the involvement of the citizenry in decision making on all issues that affected their daily life. Scholarly proponents for the theory on one hand advanced that communities accepted policies, laws and projects because they felt part of the decision-making apparatus. In addition, the citizens identified themselves with the output and outcome. On the other hand, scholarly writers against the theory argued that citizens did not always need to participate directly, but should rather do so indirectly through representatives, who had expertise and knowledge in contemporary issues. They maintained that over-consultation is time consuming and costly. The chapter also incorporated a review of causes for voter apathy, which included loss of trust for the political parties as well as the electoral management body, socio-economic conditions, inadequate civic and voter education and unclear electoral procedures confirmed by the empirical evidence of this study.

Chapter Three presented the research methodology. It constituted a discussion on how the process of data collection was conducted. The instruments used in the study were self-administered questionnaires with both open- and close-ended questions, focus group interviews, documentary surveys and observation. All respondents were notified, either in writing or by telephone, but in some cases, it was necessary to use both communication media to establish contact. They received detailed information on what was expected of them in order to get the right feedback. The chapter also provided highlights of successes and challenges faced in the course of the data collection. In brief, this chapter explicated an account of the practical details of the whole desk and field processes.



Chapter Four analysed the data collected and presented meanings and interpretations. The findings revealed a number of causes for voter apathy, which included lack of knowledge and appreciation of the role of government, imposition of candidates and the use of foul language by political parties during campaign meetings as well as unfavourable legal framework.

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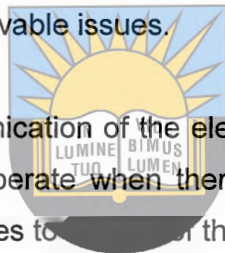
5.2 Recommendations

Based on the critical issues raised in the study, the following recommendations are drawn:

- a. Civic education, which is very crucial to the conduct of elections, requires necessary attention if the citizenry are to be aware of the need and importance of local government elections and to participate meaningfully. The Commission and its stakeholders involved in civic education need to conduct the exercise on a continuous and intensified basis with a dose of voter education at least three months before elections. Stakeholders ought to be brought together by the Commission to formulate the delivery plan and content for thematic areas. To deliver this service effectively, there is a need to use all modes of communication

like meetings, distribution of leaflets, posters and drama. The radio, which has the widest coverage, should also be used intensively and extensively with various messages in order to reach out the masses within a short time.

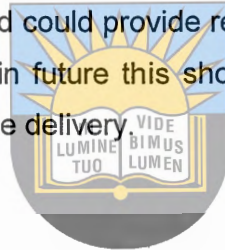
- b. During campaign meetings, voters can be discouraged by the behaviour of political parties, especially if intimidating candidates use foul and inflammatory language. The development of a code of ethics, with enforceable and punitive measures to violators, by the Commission in consultation with stakeholders, will ensure that a democratic process is followed, when identifying candidates and to ensure clean campaigns, which address achievable issues.
- c. Consultation and timely communication of the electoral calendar is very important in elections. Stakeholders co-operate when there is some level of consultation, because they consider themselves to be part of the decision making process. Even where challenges are faced, they assist in identifying solutions. The Commission needs to regularly consult, communicate, and consistently inform stakeholders on updates fortnightly through the radio, newspapers, and meetings. The frequency should increase weekly during major processes, in order to keep all relevant stakeholders abreast with issues that are affecting them.
- d. Inadequate and inconsistent electoral laws, which do not create a favourable environment for a level playing field and user-friendly procedures, are a threat to democracy. There is need for reviewing of the existing electoral legislation by incorporating views of stakeholders through a workshop on the electoral laws and procedures, which should also include the participation of other electoral management bodies in the region and international institutions that deal with elections.
- e. Conducting local government elections separate from general elections leads to voter fatigue. There is a need to amend the electoral laws to hold the local government elections in conjunction with the General Elections as tripartite



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elections to avoid over-involving people with almost the same activity over and over again. The initiation and presentation of the proposed and relevant sections by the Commission to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MJCA) so that they are accordingly amended by Parliament, will go a long way in contributing to high voter turnout in local government elections.

The study refrained from placing a major focus on investigating in detail the poor participation by people, who are well exposed and have vast experience and expertise in various fields as contestants. These are people, who are either retired and are at home or are in active employment and could provide relevant advice in Council affairs if elected as leaders. It is hoped that in future this should be thoroughly explored as it relates to efficient and effective service delivery.



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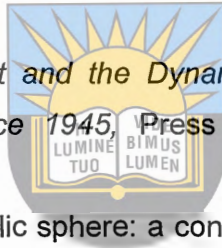
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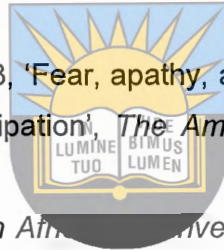


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APPENDIX 1 - INTRODUCTORY LETTER

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Date 11th October 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

I write to request you to provide information to Mr Harris Potani, a student at the University of Fort Hare in the Faculty of Management and Commerce, School of Public Management and Development. He is currently studying for a Masters Degree in Public Administration. He is researching on the causes of voter apathy and its impact on service delivery. The main focus is on Local Government Elections.

The findings of his study will be used for academic purposes and your honest responses will greatly assist in the study and will be treated confidentially. He has also sworn an affidavit to confirm the accuracy and confidentiality of the information providers.

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I look forward to your being of assistance.

Yours faithfully

Prof. E. Ijeoma, PhD

**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

APPENDIX 2 - OATH OF SECRECY

I, Harris Potani, a Master of Public Administration student at the University of Fort Hare, do solemnly swear that all the data and information collected and held by me for the research will be treated with utmost secrecy and confidentiality. All respondents will be anonymous. Nowhere in the thesis will an individual be singled out.

I make this declaration and understand that any breach of confidentiality will be a breach of Oaths, Affirmations and Declaration Act.



Signed: _____

University of Fort Hare
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Date : _____

Before: _____

Commissioner for Oaths

APPENDIX 3 - NOTIFICATION LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

C/o Malawi Electoral Commission
P/Bag 113
Blantyre
MALAWI
19th November 2010

.....
.....
.....
.....



Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON VOTER APATHY

I would like you to assist in providing information by completing a questionnaire that I will bring to you soon. This communication confirms our telephone conversation ofNovember 2010. I have attached a copy of the introductory letter from the University of Fort Hare, which I referred to in the said conversation for more information. My study centres on the November 2000 Local Government Elections. The role you play in elections is of paramount importance, hence your being identified to contribute to the study. I will also explain to you on the day I will hand in the questionnaire any issues that the telephone and this written communication have not exhausted. As agreed on the phone, I will call you in advance to confirm your availability before coming to your place.

My contact phone numbers are 0888 328 343 or 0995 604 557 and my e-mail address is hsbpotani@yahoo.co.uk.

I look forward to meeting you soon and your assistance in providing the much needed information.

Yours faithfully

H.S.B. Potani

APPENDIX 4A - NOTIFICATION LETTER TO DC - BLANTYRE

C/o Malawi Electoral Commission

P/Bag 113

Blantyre

MALAWI

19th November 2010

The District Commissioner

Blantyre District Council

P/Bag 97

Blantyre

MALAWI

Dear Sir



REQUEST TO ORGANIZE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

I wish to confirm our telephone conversation of this morning 19th November 2010. I would like you to assist me in organizing voters for a focus group interview on 2nd December 2010 at 0900 hours. Please refer to the attached introductory letter from the University of Fort Hare, which is self-explanatory.

My study is centred on the November 2000 Local Government Elections and would wish to interview four youth voters of or below the age of 30 and also four elderly voters of the ages above 30 years. I would appreciate if you ensured that in each category, the gender is balanced. These voters should come from the rural areas and you should choose a venue preferably a nearest Primary School. I would also like to have the District Education Manager (DEM) and your Director of Administration (DA) or any two senior managers within the council to assist me with some roles during the interviews.

I will meet their transport costs and will provide refreshments during the sessions. I will also meet the expenses that you will incur in the course of organizing this event. The session will last not more than two hours. I would be grateful if you gave me the name

and contact details of the officer that you will assign this responsibility including the two senior managers so that I touch base with them and finalize other modalities.

In case you need some clarifications, you may contact me on phone numbers 0888 328 343 or 0995 604 557 or e-mail hsbpotani@yahoo.co.uk .

I look forward to your assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully

H.S.B. Potani



University of Fort Hare
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APPENDIX 4B - NOTIFICATION LETTER TO DC - LILONGWE

C/o Malawi Electoral Commission
P/Bag 113
Blantyre
MALAWI
19th November 2010

The District Commissioner
Lilongwe District Council
P.O. Box 93
Lilongwe
MALAWI



Dear Sir

University of Fort Hare

REQUEST TO ORGANIZE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

I wish to confirm our telephone conversation of this morning 19th November 2010. I would like you to assist me in organizing voters for a focus group interview on 3rd December 2010 at 1000 hours. Please refer to the attached letter from the University of Fort Hare, which is self-explanatory.

My study is centred on the November 2000 Local Government Elections and would wish to interview four youth voters of or below the age of 30 and also four elderly voters of the ages above 30 years. I would appreciate if you ensured that in each category, the gender is balanced. These voters should come from the urban area and you should choose a venue preferably a nearest Primary School or within your office complex. I would also like to have the District Education Manager (DEM) and your Director of Administration (DA) or any two senior managers within the council to assist me with some roles during the interviews.

I will meet their transport costs and will provide refreshments during the sessions. I will also meet the expenses that you will incur in the course of organizing this event. The session will last not more than two hours. I would be grateful if you gave me the name

and contact details of the officer that you will assign this responsibility including the two senior managers so that we touch base with them and finalize other modalities.

In case you need some clarifications, you may contact me on phone numbers 0888 328 343 or 0995 604 557 or e-mail hsbpotani@yahoo.co.uk .

I look forward to your assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully

H.S.B. Potani



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APPENDIX 5A - SELF ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE

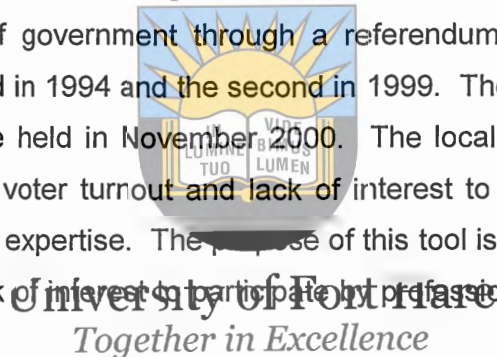
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON SERVICE DELIVERY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Questionnaire Guide for political party members, professionals, Civil Society Organizations, Media organizations, Development partner institutions, District level government staff and Electoral Commission personnel

General

Overview

Elections in Malawi have been happening since the early 1960s. In 1993 Malawi voted for a multi-party system of government through a referendum. The first multi-party General Elections were held in 1994 and the second in 1999. The first multi-party Local Government Elections were held in November 2000. The local government elections were characterized by low voter turnout and lack of interest to participate by people, who have various skills and expertise. The purpose of this tool is to find out reasons for the low turnout and the lack of interest to participate by professionals and how this can be resolved.



Respondents

This questionnaire has been prepared for the participation of political party members, who are the main stakeholders by sponsoring candidates in an election; professionals, who would contest for office; and other stakeholders, who play a crucial role in elections namely, civil society organizations, media organizations, development partner institutions, district level government staff and Electoral Commission personnel.

Guidelines

Please note that the information gathered during this research will be handled in a responsible manner, within the confines of research ethics.

Process

The researcher will administer the questionnaire, based on the direct engagement with the respondents.

Communication

The researcher will engage the respondents in both English and Chichewa. However, all responses will be captured in English.

Disclaimer

The questionnaire has been prepared for a research project undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a Master's Degree in Public Administration at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa by Harris Potani.

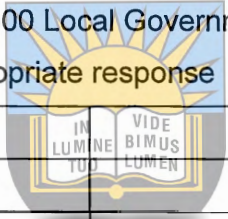
Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Occupation.....

Organization.....

1 How did you know about the 2000 Local Government Elections?

Tick in the box for one appropriate response



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| | |
|--|--|
| a. Through the radio | |
| b. Through newspaper | |
| c. Through television | |
| d. Through civil society organization in my area | |
| e. Through meeting/communication from Electoral Commission | |
| f. Any other source(s). Please specify | |

2 Did you have any issues with the timing for the elections?

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|-----|--|
| YES | |
| NO | |

If YES what was wrong with the timing and state the preferred time of the year

.....

.....

.....

3 Low voter turnout is:-

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| a. Below 60 per cent | |
| b. Below 50 per cent | |
| c. Below 40 per cent | |
| d. Below 30 per cent | |
| e. Other Specify | |

Please give reason(s) for your choice

.....

.....

.....

4 Did you register as a voter during the 2000 Local Government Elections?

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|-----|--|
| YES | |
| NO | |

If NO give reason(s) for not registering

.....

.....

5 What reason did some people give for not registering?

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|---|--|
| a. Lack of civic and voter information | |
| b. Loss of political trust | |
| c. Socio- economic conditions | |
| d. Cultural and religious issues | |
| e. Poor electoral administration and unclear procedures | |
| f. Other (specify) | |

6. What reason(s) did people who did not run for office during the election give for not contesting?

.....

.....

.....

7 Did you vote in the election?

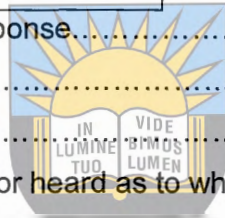
Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|-----|--|
| YES | |
| NO | |

Give reason(s) for your response.....

.....

.....



8 Please give reasons you think or heard as to why some people did not vote

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|---|--|
| a. Lack of civic and voter information | |
| b. Loss of political trust | |
| c. Socio- economic conditions | |
| d. Cultural and religious issues | |
| e. Poor electoral administration and unclear procedures | |
| f. Other (specify) | |

9 Please give reasons you think or heard why some people did not run for office

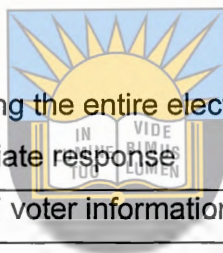
Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| a. Lack of incentives | |
| b. Cultural and religious issues | |
| c. Inadequate civic education | |
| d. Historical reasons | |
| e. Other (specify) | |

10 What role did you play during the elections?

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|--|--|
| a. Planning and administering elections | |
| b. Providing civic and voter education | |
| c. Providing resources | |
| d. Attending or addressing campaign meetings | |
| e. Mobilizing subjects | |
| f. Other (specify) | |



11 What were the challenges during the entire electoral process?

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|---|--|
| a. Lack of adequate civic and voter information | |
| b. Lack of adequate funds | |
| c. Lack of capacity in election management | |
| d. Unfavourable legal framework | |
| e. Political violence | |
| f. Other (specify) | |

12 Where challenges were faced what role did you play to resolve them?

.....

.....

.....

13 Were you satisfied with the general conduct of the elections by the Electoral Commission?

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|---------------|--|
| SATISFIED | |
| NOT SATISFIED | |

Expatiate your response if not satisfied:

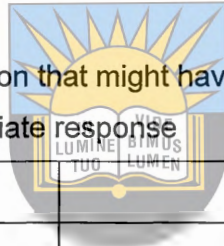
.....

.....

.....

14 What other major general reason that might have led to low voter turnout

Tick in the box for one appropriate response



| | |
|---|--|
| a. Loss of political trust | |
| b. Economic conditions | |
| c. Social issues | |
| d. Poor electoral administration | |
| e. Unclear electoral procedures | |
| f. Lack of adequate civic and voter education | |
| g. Timing of the elections | |
| h. Use of technology | |
| i. Other (specify) | |

Please state why do you say so?

.....

.....

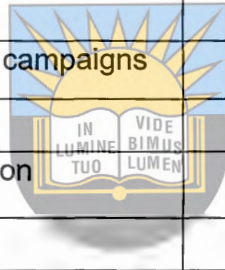
.....

.....

15 What should be done in order to have as many people as possible to participate in local government elections as voters and contestants?

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|--|--|
| a. Change electoral system | |
| b. Introduce compulsory voting | |
| c. Use technology like voting and registering through cell-phone or internet | |
| d. Legal framework to provide conducive environment for a fair game | |
| e. Political parties to conduct clean campaigns | |
| f. Timely provision of funds | |
| g. Adequate civic and voter education | |
| h. Other (specify) | |



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16 What is the most effective way of communicating with all stakeholders on election matters?

Tick in the box for one appropriate response

| | |
|---|--|
| a. Through the radio | |
| b. Through traditional authority structures | |
| c. Through the television | |
| d. Through newspapers | |
| e. Through leaflets and flyers | |
| f. Through loud hailers | |
| g. Other (specify) | |

Please provide reason(s) for your choice

.....

17 In your opinion what should be done to improve the participation of eligible persons as voters and contestants in future elections

.....
.....
.....

18 Generally comment on any other issue that is critical and also any solution that you think would improve the conduct of future elections

.....
.....

Thank you very much for providing the valued responses. Let me re-assure you that your responses will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.



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APPENDIX 5B - FOCUS GROUP AND ONE-ON-ONE QUESTIONS

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON SERVICE DELIVERY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Interview Guide for traditional leaders, selected youth formations and elderlies

General

Overview

Elections in Malawi have been happening since the early 1960s. In 1993 Malawi voted for a multi-party system of government through a referendum. The first multi-party General Elections were held in 1994 and the second in 1999. The first multi-party Local Government Elections were held in November 2000. The local government elections were characterized by low voter turnout and lack of interest to participate by people, who have various skills and expertise. The purpose of this tool is to find out reasons for the low turnout and the lack of interest to participate by professionals.

Respondents

This interview guide has been prepared for the participation of traditional leaders who are custodians of culture and their subjects become the voters and contestants; selected youth formation and elderlies, who cast the votes in an election.

Guidelines

Please note that the information gathered during this research will be handled in a responsible manner, within the confines of research ethics.

Process

The researcher will administer the interview guide based on direct engagement with the respondents and as focus groups.

Communication

The researcher will engage the respondents in both English and Chichewa. However, all responses will be captured in English.

Disclaimer

The interview guide has been prepared for a research project undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a Master's Degree in Public Administration at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa by Harris Potani.

- 1 How did you know about the 2000 Local Government Elections?
- 2 Did you have any issues with the timing for the elections? If that is the case, what was wrong with the timing and state the preferred time of the year and why do you say so?
- 3 What do you understand by voter low turnout? When would you say there is low voter turnout?
- 4 Did you register as a voter during the 2000 Local Government Elections? If not why?
- 5 What reason did some people or some of your subjects give for not registering?
- 6 Some of your subjects or acquaintances, who would have otherwise run for office did not contest. What reasons did they give for not taking part in the elections?
- 7 Did you vote in the election? Explain why you voted or did not vote?
- 8 What role did you play during the elections?
- 9 What were the challenges during the electoral process?
- 10 Where challenges were faced what role did you play to resolve them?
- 11 Were you satisfied with the general conduct of the elections by the Electoral Commission? Explain.
- 12 What other major general reason that might have led to low voter turnout? Please state how this is a major reason.
- 13 What should be done in order to have as many people as possible participate in local government elections as voters and contestants?
- 14 What is the most effective way of communicating with all stakeholders on election matters? Why do you think this is the best?
- 15 In your opinion what should be done to improve the participation of eligible persons as voters and contestants in future elections
- 16 Generally comment on any issue that is critical and also any possible solution you think could improve the conduct of future elections

Thank you very much for providing the valued responses. Let me re-assure you that your responses will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

APPENDIX 6 - PERMISSION TO ACCESS OFFICIAL RECORDS

MEMORANDUM TO CHAIRPERSON

FROM : DEPUTY CHIEF ELECTIONS OFFICER (OPERATIONS)

DATE : 22 NOVEMBER 2010

SUBJECT : ACCESS TO DOCUMENTATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

My Lady,

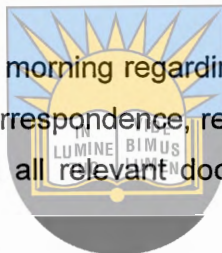
Further to the discussion we had this morning regarding my thesis, I wish to seek your authority to use official records like correspondence, reports, minutes of meetings of the Commission and its committees and all relevant documents for the November 2000 Local Government Elections.

I am aware, My Lady, that some of the documents are confidential and will treat them as such. As stated in the said discussion, the review of documents will take less than two weeks. The data and information gathered will be used for academic purposes (my thesis) only as confirmed.

I look forward to your approval to proceed.

(SIGNED)

H.S.B. POTANI



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APPENDIX 7 - RESPONDENTS FOLLOW UP SCHEDULE

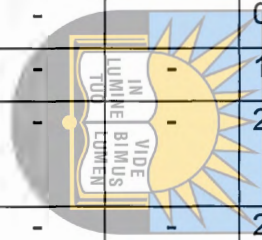
POTENTIAL RESPONDENTS

| SR NO. | RESPONDENT ID/CATEGORY | DATE PRES. | FOLLOW UP DATES | | | | | DATE RECVD |
|--------|------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|
| | | | Wk 1 | Wk 2 | Wk 3 | Wk 4 | Wk 5 | |
| 1 | CSO 1 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | 221210 | - | - | 231210 |
| 2 | CSO 2 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | 221210 | 291210 | - | 301210 |
| 3 | CSO 3 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | 231210 | 301210 | - | 301210 |
| 4 | CSO 4 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | 221210 | 291210 | 050111 | 050111 |
| 5 | Development Partner 1 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 031210 |
| 6 | Development Partner 2 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 031210 |
| 7 | Development Partner 3 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 061210 |
| 8 | Development Partner 4 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 021210 |
| 9 | District Staff 1 | 221110 | 291110 | - | - | - | - | 031210 |
| 10 | District Staff 2 | 221110 | 291110 | 061210 | 131210 | 201210 | - | 221210 |
| 11 | District Staff 3 | 231110 | 301110 | 071210 | 141210 | 211210 | 281210 | 301210 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 12 | District Staff 4 | 241110 | - | - | - | - | - | 241110 |
| 13 | District Staff 5 | 241110 | - | - | - | - | - | 241110 |
| 14 | MEC Staff 1 | 221110 | 291110 | - | - | - | - | 291110 |
| 15 | MEC Staff 2 | 221110 | - | - | - | - | - | 221210 |
| 16 | MEC Staff 3 | 221110 | 291110 | - | - | - | - | 301110 |
| 17 | MEC Staff 4 | 221110 | - | - | - | - | - | 221110 |
| 18 | MEC Staff 5 | 251110 | - | - | - | - | - | 251110 |
| 19 | Media 1 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 061210 |
| 20 | Media 2 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 021210 |
| 21 | Media 3 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | - | - | - | 171210 |
| 22 | Media 4 | 011210 | 081210 | - | - | - | - | 101210 |
| 23 | Politician 1 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | 221210 | 291210 | 050111 | - |
| 24 | Politician 2 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | - | - | - | 171210 |
| 25 | Politician 3 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | 221210 | 291210 | - | 301210 |
| 26 | Politician 4 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 011210 |
| 27 | Politician 5 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 061210 |
| 28 | Politician 6 | 011210 | 101210 | 171210 | - | - | 040111 | - |
| 29 | Politician 7 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | - | - | - | 181210 |
| 30 | Politician 8 | 011210 | 081210 | - | - | - | - | 081210 |
| 31 | Politician 9 | 011210 | 081210 | - | - | - | - | 091210 |
| 32 | Politician 10 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | 221210 | - | - | 221210 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|--------|
| 33 | Politician 11 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 031210 |
| 34 | Politician 12 | 011210 | 081210 | - | - | - | - | 081210 |
| 35 | Politician 13 | 011210 | - | - | - | - | - | 021210 |
| 36 | Politician 14 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | 221210 | - | - | 231210 |
| 37 | Politician 15 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | - | - | - | 201210 |
| 38 | Politician 16 | 011210 | 081210 | 151210 | 221210 | 291210 | - | 281210 |
| 39 | Professionals 1 | 221110 | - | - | - | - | - | 221110 |
| 40 | Professionals 2 | 251110 | - | - | - | - | - | 251110 |
| 41 | Professionals 3 | 301110 | 061210 | 131210 | - | - | - | 131210 |
| 42 | Professionals 4 | 031210 | - | - | - | - | - | 031210 |
| 43 | Professionals 5 | 081210 | 151210 | - | - | - | - | 151210 |
| 44 | Traditional Leader 1 | 221110 | - | - | - | - | - | 221110 |
| 45 | Traditional Leader 2 | 261110 | - | - | - | - | - | 231110 |
| 46 | Traditional Leader 3 | 021210 | - | - | - | - | - | 021210 |
| 47 | Traditional Leader 4 | 031210 | - | - | - | - | - | 031210 |
| 48 | Traditional Leader 5 | 151210 | - | - | - | - | - | 151210 |

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Legend

- CSO - Civil Society Organization
- DATE PRES - Date presented/delivered questionnaire to respondent
- DATE RECVD - Date received questionnaire from respondent
- MEC - Malawi Electoral Commission
- SR NO. - Serial number
- WK - Week



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