Participatory Radio and the Public Sphere - The Case of Climate Change Communication in Malawi

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List of Abbreviations

DBU	Development Broadcasting Unit
CBA	Community Based Adaptation
DADO	District Agriculture Development Officer
IPC	Interpersonal Communications
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
NAP	National Adaptation Program
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PR	Participatory Radio
PSB	Public Service Broadcaster
PV	Participatory Video
RBA	Rights Based Approach
RLC	Radio Listening Clubs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation,

Abstract

Despite its impact on people's livelihood in Malawi, climate change communication has not been prioritised. Resources for climate change communication are directed towards improving the capacity of journalists and the media houses. As a result, the communication process remains top-down with the public being recipients of information. This has led to Community Based Initiatives failure because there is no or less strategic investment in effective communication (climatechange mediaparnership). Where communication has been bottom up, participatory video (PV) have been used for knowledge transferring amongst communities. This dissertation acknowledges the use of PV but argues that it is not sustainable in communicating climate change in Malawi. The paper argues that radio listening clubs are sustainable because they do not only empower communities with technical production skills, but they can provide a public space for community dialogue in climate change.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The impact of climate change is affecting more that 90% of subsistence farmers in Malawi who rely on rain for agriculture due to increased drought and floods ultimately triggering poverty (ActionAid, 2006). Despite various adaptation projects and programs being implemented by government and its development partners, farmers in Malawi are being subjected to continuous hunger and deeper cycles of poverty and vulnerability (Oxfam, 2009 and ActionAid, 2006). This is an indication that adaptation measures are either not being adopted by communities due to ignorance, inability to adapt due to financial or material resources or the mode of communication does not appeal to communities.

PANOS (2010) reports that even though public awareness of climate change may be rising worldwide, in many countries, public understanding of climate change, its causes and consequences remains low. Fahn (2008) attributes this to inadequate coverage of global warming by media houses whilst Wilson (2002) explains less public awareness is due to improper use of terminology that contributes to inaccuracy in reporting. Both PANOS and UNDP attribute journalist failure to correctly report on climate change to scientist's use of jargons due to their own failure to simplify the language of climate change to enable everyone understand their findings.

However, the focus of media and climate change should not be on journalist or media's failure to communicate climate change. This is evident on increasing media development programs, which focus on training journalist on climate change (PANOS, climate change media partnership, UNESCO). In other words, more resources are being channelled towards media houses or organization to train local reporters so they can better understand issues that will be an increasing part of their beat as the climate changes (Fahn, 2008). This ignores the fact that the most affected (subsistent farmers, children, women in rural areas) who are vulnerable to the impact of climate change, have less or no access to media. Therefore, there is need to consider vulnerable citizens in climate change communication as sources of climate change news as they perceive this to contribute to the on-going debate. Citizens according to UNESCO have information that can push for meaningful and responsible climate change related policies. However, this information can only be

accessed if citizens participate in the communication process by accessing and utilising the media.

There is growing realisation that, for adaptation measures to be effective, people living in climate-vulnerable regions need to be made central to the development processes. Development Communication Scholars such as Chidder (1968), Sarvaes and Gumucio-Dargon (2008), Fraser (1998), and Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), agree that communities tend to participate fully in project cycles when they are involved in all stages of development to which communication is included. Just like any other development program, Suarez, (2009) and Stringer, et al., (2010), stress on the importance of engaging communities vulnerable to climate change in communicating knowledge about adaptation.

Unfortunately, fewer efforts are being made to include citizens into climate change debates. The major challenge remains the utilization of proper communications strategies that are sustainable for communities involved. However, this requires space for citizens to share information, knowledge and experience on climate change and CBA measures. Through public spheres such as radio listening clubs (RLCs), communities can engage in discussing and exchanging ideas and information and feelings, about issues that affect all and have each one to explain face to face their position (McKee, 2005). This is participatory communication, a dialogical and horizontal approach to communication, which emphasizes on participatory and collective processes of change (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009). It is about visibility and voice in the mediated public sphere, hence allowing dialogue, through mass media or community based media such as traditional and interpersonal means, that can empower communities to identify problems and discover solutions to their development challenges (Prasad, 2009 and Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009).

In response to the need for community participation in climate change communication, participatory video (PV) seems to have become a popular participatory communication strategy being adapted by NGO's. Communities are being empowered with technical skills to use PV for knowledge transferring of adaptation programs (Baumhardt, et al., (2007), Plush (2007) and Chowdhury, et al., (2010)). Yet, radio despite being the most successful communication tool (Gumucio-Dargon, 2008), can be said to be neglected in climate change communication. This could be the missing link that can speed up the process of Community Based Adaptation (CBA) programs by those affected by climate change. Stringer et al., (2010) suggest that the missing element in this case is community input

which can only be facilitated when communication is participatory allowing the vulnerable to identify and discuss climate change risk and indigenous adaptation measures (its success and challenges) being undertaken in the public sphere.

Despite its effectiveness in social mobilisation and collective participation democracy and social development projects (UNDP, 2010), no study has been conducted to assess whether RLC could be an effective participatory communication strategy in climate change communication in Malawi. A RLC is a community-based group organized by community members and use radio programs to facilitate development discourse within their own community (DBU, 2000 and Wood, 2010). RLC are not just about empowering communities with radio broadcasting skills, they can also provide a public space to which communities conduct discussion and social dialogues on various developmental issues. This paper therefore, assesses RLCs and its role of providing public space for citizens to engage in dialogue on issues of climate change thereby reaching out a consensus or compromise about what should be done about them (McKee: 2005).

1.1 Study Objective

The general theme of this paper analyses participatory communication strategies in climate change communication in Malawi. Firstly through the case study of participatory video (PV) for CBA programs knowledge transferring in Salima. Secondly, through participatory radio, a case study of Takondwa RLC's role in people-centred climate change development initiative. This resulted from the public social dialogue's collective decision in climate change adaptation projects. It mostly focuses on RLCs because its process seem to be providing public space for citizens to engage in dialogue on issues of climate change thereby reaching out a consensus or compromise about what should be done about them (McKee, 2009).

This paper seeks to contribute to participatory communication theory through radio in promoting community participation in climate change adaptation programs aimed at reducing poverty. It discusses and argues that participatory video is not an appropriate tool in climate change communication because communities in Malawi cannot sustain it. Instead, it will argue that participatory radio, and in this case RLC, create public spheres to which citizens regardless of their status are free to share and contribute scientific and local knowledge through personal experiences on how they adapt to climate change and make communities resilient to future impacts.

1.2 Research questions

This paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How effective are radio listening clubs in providing public spheres for dialogue in climate change communication?
2. Are radio listening clubs sustainable in climate change communication?

1.3 Dissertation Organisation

Chapter one, of the dissertation gieves a background of the papers concept. It has discussed the role of media in climate change communication. The chapter also highlights the need for those that are affected by climate change to be involved in the communication process.

Chapter two reviews existing literature that relates to the study. This section focuses on media coverage of climate change and how it contributes to the public's perception of climate change. This leads into a discussion on public sphere in general and how it can contribute in climate change discussion and debates. This is because RLCs do offer space for communities to engage in discussion hence they can be viewed as public spheres. Chapter two also looks at the climate change participatory communication (participatory video and participatory radio - RLCs) case studies have worked in Malawi. The PV project successfully managed to horizontally transfer climate change adaptation ideas between villagers whilst the PR – RLC program mobilised community to demand adaptation programs that was community generated.

PV case study from Salima in Malawi comes in chapter three. This chapter critically discusses the process of PV project in Malawi. It argues that despite its claimed success in citizen's change of practice due to watching the film, PV is not a sustainable communications strategy for CBA adaptation programs in the country. It also discusses the existing power relations in PV and how this can hinder the progress of such initiatives. Oxfam states that the foundation of any initiative to address climate change centres on communities being aware of the issues, owning the process of adaptation and having the capacity to undertake and maintain adaptation. Local knowledge based on firsthand experience of climate change they argue, can be critical to the successful design of community adaptation and this must be tapped.

Participatory radio in Malawi has become the most accessible avenue to access information and knowledge for local people (Manyozo, 2007). RLC's participatory radio format makes a good comparison with PV. Therefore, chapter five discusses a case study on the role of Takondwa RLC in Nsanje Malawi, which gave communities a collective voice to demand appropriate Community Adaptation Programs, based on their needs. The main focus is on the process of social dialogue through RLC, which this paper argues, is public sphere as it allows multiplicity of voices through discussions.

Chapter five concludes the paper with arguments that RLC can bridge gap in climate change by allowing those affected to participate in the forum's dialogues. This can contribute to DevComm scholarships and practitioners search for effective means to communicate climate change issues and promote sustainably.

1.4 Study Limitations

The research was desk based with all data collected through on-line research, books and unpublished materials. The major limitation was access to current RLC information in Malawi since not much has been documented on it in comparison to PV.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The focus of climate change communication has been on the need to train media professionals in science communication to bridge the existing knowledge gap between scientist, policy makers and citizens. But how effective has the media been in bridging this gap? This chapter gives background of media and climate change. It argues that citizen engagement in climate change communication is essential for knowledge transfer. However, this requires participation in a public sphere to which lay voices are key in knowledge transferring through. This can promote horizontal synergy that remains untapped in climate change communication (Stringer, et al., 2010) in Malawi.

2.1 The Media and Climate Change

Much of the existing literature on the relationship between climate change and the media indicates that climate science and mass media first came together in coverage of climate change in the 1930s (Boykolf, 2007/2008). However, it is only in 1988 that issues of climate change generated media coverage on the scientific aspect with no social science research on the impact of warmer temperatures on communities (ibid*).*[1]

Coverage of climate change has been on disseminating scientific evidence without consideration of those who have been directly affected. Reid, et al, (2007) observe that little attention has been paid to communities' experiences of climate change and their efforts to cope with their changing environments. This ascertain that media agenda has been to amplify the voice of scientist and policy makers and less on the direct impact with communities resulting into inadequate media coverage of global warming (Fahn, 2008). As a result, there is limited scientific knowledge about climate change (Kelman, et al., 2009).

However, Mazur and Lee (1993) argue that increased coverage can turn public opinion in a negative direction, and possibly increase fear amongst citizens. Such action could result in negative perception of the media and its coverage of climate change. But Fahn (2008)

[1] In 1988 NASA scientist James Hansen's revealed to the U.S. Congress about the greenhouse effect which caused warmer temperatures due to burning of fossil fuels and not solely a result of natural variation. The statement served generated substantial media coverage, and became a spectacle that signified solidified scientific concern for anthropogenic climate change" (UNDP).

disagrees arguing that the public is aware of climate change but it is the acceptance and participation in Community Based Adaptation (CBA) programs that remains a challenge.

Nevertheless, this paper's discussion is based on Fahn's (2008) argument on public acceptance to participate in CBA programs. Citizen's understanding of climate change is important in setting the agenda for participatory dialogue, which results in conscientization as advocated for, by Freire in the 70s. Media coverage should thus direct public attention towards specific policy concerns thereby influencing agenda setting for social concerns and policy issues by raising an issue to salience that would trigger public debate (Corfee-Morlot, et al, 2007), in the public sphere. However, this cannot be achieved unless the dialogue in the public sphere is free with participants collectively reflecting on challenges, identifying the problems and suggesting solutions.

Those affected most by climate change for example in Malawi, are not given the chance to contribute their knowledge and be able to overcome impacts such as droughts and floods. And yet, those affected can have information and knowledge to share on what works, where and how (Reid, et al, 2007 and climate change media partnership).

For example, the famine in the Somalia where thousands are seeking refuge in Kenya due to failed rainfall in two years resulting into loss of livelihood. Perhaps if Somali communities were given early warning signs on the changing weather pattern and the impending famine that was to destroy their livelihood, the extent of the humanitarian crisis could not have reached this far. Early communication from locals on how weather patterns are changing could have also contributed to scientists and policy makers' knowledge on the situation. This could have reduced risk and saved lives of many in the horn on Africa. Communities could possibly have also suggested or contributed to adaptation measures that were to be effective in reducing risk associated with draught. Somalia's experience highlights the extension of the existing communication barriers between scientist and communities affected by global climate change. It also raises the need for more debates on participatory communication strategies that will see more citizens engaging in climate change discussion. This however, requires a functioning public sphere or forum for social dialogue.

2.2 Public Sphere and citizen engagement

A public sphere according to Habermas (1977) is a sphere of private people who join to form a public sphere. They engage in a debate over the general rules governing relations

in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere (ibid). This can also apply to climate change discussion as it can stems from private discussion and into a public domain. Media communications originate and disseminate into the public sphere before entering the private sphere of individual engagement (Boykolf, 2007) where various issues ranging from health, agriculture, education, women's rights all compete to gain public attention. In other words, there are many issues and problems represented in the public sphere through media coverage, and all deserves attention and action by citizens.

The concept of public sphere was developed to understand communication flows and to contribute to critical theory of democracy (Frazer, 2009) where citizen use the space to contribute their opinions. It is a vehicle that can marshal public opinion and hold public officials accountable by ensuring that the state expresses the will of the citizenry (ibid). This can only be achieved if the public are free to speak and contribute to issues without any hindrances.

This study focuses on public sphere not for democratic reasons, but with a view that they offer space for citizens to be free and to be treated equally and justly through contribution of personal opinions and ideas to form a general agreement (McKee, 2005). Its face-to-face nature if well coordinated provides multiplicity of voice as they contribute to climate change debates. According to Lester (2010) this is real time to symbolic or mediated public spheres usually facilitated by mass media. This implies that mass media can be turned into a public sphere to which issues of importance such as climate change can be discussed.

Interaction through public spheres has its own set backs. McKee (2005) states that public spheres can have disproportional representation of women as the space are regarded as a "masculine strong-minded rather than famine domain" (ibid, p. 36). This is because traditionally women are associated with domestic or private issues whilst men engage in public discussion and would dominate the discussion. This is a concern because if women are marginalized to speak due to traditional norms, then there will be continued gaps in communicating challenges resulting from climate change. A public sphere can therefore, turn into another manipulative form of abuse to which power identities takes precedence and issues of importance silenced due to struggles.

However, if well-coordinated and facilitated such as in RLCs, the public sphere can achieve its climate change communication role because discussion arising from them can contribute to climate change national debates.

Lester (2010) states that citizens can create real social change because of their potential to frame and shape climate change problems through public discussions. However, what is required is for ordinary voices in the public sphere to break through the media and be able to communicate with a wider audience. Therefore, citizen engagement in communicating climate change is imperative because it can address communication gaps that exits due to inequalities in the pattern of information flow making it difficult for organization reaching out to the affected to carry out adaptation projects.

However, what is critical at this point is not only for citizens to discuss their own ideas of how to deal with problems. Modernized mitigation and adaptation knowledge should also be discussed and if possible, be integrated with local knowledge for sustainability. This can be achieved if public sphere are well facilitated, to create an atmosphere where lay voices of the marginalized ordinary people take a preceding role as source of information and not as victims of climate change.

The empowerment of individuals to participate in climate change communication process is based on human dignity and respect for other's culture's and diversity (Manyozo, 2007). This gives citizens the right to be heard and speak for themselves about their problems and to identify their needs through interpersonal dialogues in the public sphere. This is development communication, a method-driven and theory-based praxes that employ participatory foreground and backdrop communication tools in strengthening community decision making and structures with the aim of improving livelihoods and promoting social justice" (ibid, 83).

2.3 Development Communication.

Development Communication (DevCom) is the integration of strategic communication in development projects (Mefalopulos, 2008). Strategic communication in this case, is a powerful tool that can improve the chances of success of development projects as it strives for behaviour change not just information dissemination, education, or awareness raising.

DevCom is not a new phenomenon in the development discourse. Its relevance and inclusion in development programs came to be accepted in the 1950s and 1960s following

Daniel Lerner (1958) and Wilbur Schramm's (1964) studies.[2] Media's role was assumed to be disseminators of information to the population about programs, illustrating the advantages of these projects, and recommending that they be supported (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005). The ultimate goal of DevCom is social change, which serves as an umbrella term for a variety of communication initiatives and actions that set social transformation in motion (Waisbord, 2001).

Since the 1970s, DevComm has shifted from being a top-down, modernized way of communicating development to people's cantered to which participation has become important. As a result, DevCom has become an umbrella term for a wide range of communication programs and research (Waisbord, 2001) such as participatory video (PV) and participatory radio (PR). Both PV and PR fall under participatory communication, which has become a new paradigm in DevCom.

Malawi is vulnerable to the impact of climate through resulting impacts on food and water (Stringer et al., 2010) hence the need for proper communication strategies. Climate change communication in Malawi has focused on both PV and PR through RLCs. This makes Malawi an ideal case study in trying to assess the most appropriate communication medium in climate change communication.

2.4 Participatory communication

According to Servaes and Malikhao (2005), dialogical and access, participation and self-management are two major approaches to participatory communication. The dialogical concept in participatory communication is drawn from Paulo Freire's 'pedagogy of the oppressed' argument on the need to respect autonomous personhood of each human being as an important source of information. The second approach according to Servaes, et al., (2008.) is based on UNESCOs view that there must be a higher level of public involvement in production process, and also in the management and planning of communications systems.

The models of participatory communication are closely related to both the access and the human rights approach to development (Servaes, 2008). Hence the need for communities to know their rights and duties in climate change CBA programs.

[2] Daniel Learner an American scholar studied communication and development in the Middle East whilst Wilbur Schramm' study was on the role of media for national development. They both assumed that media was the key to transforming individuals and societies from traditional ways of living to a modern one.

Knowing their rights can therefore, enable them to participate and communicate climate change risk and adaptation with others. The right to communicate explains Buckley (2000), is a fundamental human right essential to the maintenance of a democratic society. But it also gives citizens power to identify their problems and the impacts in an open forum without hindrances. On the other hand, the notion of access suggest that when people become aware of their rights, they are empowered to confront and deal with the many reasons that continue to keep them in poverty (Servaes, 2008). Through participatory communication, Malawians can have access to duty bearers and through social dialogue, demand for projects, based on their collective needs assessed by the community. Participatory communication focuses on involving communities in the initial conceptualisation of adaptation programs to understand their role and the benefits of the program to individuals and their community.

The key principle of participatory communication is a free and open dialogue (Tufte and Mefalopulos et al., 2009). Dialogue in this case is the encounter between people who are denied the right to speak. In climate change, these are the people who contribute least to global warming but are affected most by its impact as they fail to adapt to new ideas due to lack of resources or information. Malawi's RLC borrow its concept from participatory communication to ensure the marginalised are included in public dialogues.

To be able to understand and participate in the climate change communication process, communities need functioning public spheres which are not enclosed but accessible to all who can constructively participate in the development process. Participatory video and participatory radio (in this case RLCs) are communication strategies that have been used in climate change communication in Malawi's CBA programs. The marginalised need to be supported through forums to voice out their concerns, engage in public debate and solve problems (Tufte and Mefalopulos et al., 2009). However, this should not be on information transfer only. It should also focus on knowledge and skills sharing in production and dissemination of information in a local context.

Even though participatory communication seems to have gained grounds in development work, it is never short of critiques. Kothari's (2001) 'power knowledge and social control's' study observes that participation is inseparable from power controls. Scientists

are often reluctant to accept local knowledge regarding it as subjective and lacking rigour, (Reid, et al., 2007). At the same time communities may have little confidence in scanty scientific information on adaptation technologies.

In such subtle power struggles, knowledge interface becomes critical as it bridges the gap between scientist and locals and this can be achieved when communications component is included in the project at the conception level of the project (Fraser, et al.,1998). At this point however, intermediaries or development practitioner becomes the focal point in trying to bring two differing parties together. This creates more power struggles as the intermediaries can be subjective due to the power they have to convince both parties.

Where power struggles have been resolved, the challenge becomes the transition that will see communities accepting to adapt the scientific technologies. Such transitions are critical and need community participation to understand the benefits that are attached to adaptation of scientific climate change measures to avoid rejection or delays

According to climate change media parnership, many government led CBAs initiatives fail because they do not invest in effective communication as priority, and the media is seen as a public outreach channel for promoting policymakers' own agenda. It is therefore important to strategise climate change communication by exploring various mediums that can be used for information generation and dissemination.

2.4.1 Participatory Video

Participatory Video (PV) is a deliberate and systematic process (Cadiz, 2005) which utilizes a set of techniques to involve a group or community in shaping and creating their own films (People and Participation, 2009) by telling their own stories. Nick, et al., (2006) views PV as a tool for positive social change because it can stimulate local innovation and empower the marginalized by encouraging individuals and communities through captured images of survival, experiences in the film, to take control of their destinies.

The origins of PV are in the work of Don Snowden during the 1960's that used media to enable a people-cantered community approach with a small fishing community on the Fogo Islands off the eastern coast of Canada. Since then, PV has been widely used as climate change communications strategy by NGOs worldwide. They align PV with the growing recognition among disaster risk reduction projects (Suarez, et al., 2009) that end

users of information need to be co-producers of knowledge. PV can give a voice and face to those who are normally not heard through community-to-community exchange programs of their films to spread ideas, encourage and inspire others Nick, et al., (2006). The flexibility nature of participation can also enhance the capacity of people to share local knowledge and innovations across distances and to stimulate locally led development by recognizing the knowledge that the marginalized, have created through their livelihood struggles for survival Patel, et al., (2002).

However, Chowdhury, et al., (2010) observes in their study "With or Without a Script? Comparing Two Styles of Participatory Video on Enhancing Local Seed Innovation System in Bangladesh," that flexibility in participation can results in power struggles amongst PV participant. They argue that PV as a process of communication can be a challenge as deciding on key messages, which should be in front or behind the camera can contribute to delays in video production. Flexibility can result in lack of unified and consistent common framework (Oppenneeer, 2009) which guides the process of communication to effectively come up with meaningful messages. This is because, community's decision on who should take lead can result into arguments to which those who are already weak in society such as women and girls, end up being silenced and forced into roles that are hidden. As a result, there is a possibility of leaving out critical information (Chowdhury, et al., 2010) because of disorganization resulting from such power struggles.

The cost of setting up, training, screening of PV films to a wider audience and maintenance of PV is high hence; continuation of production can be a challenge to citizens. This can result in failure to sustain the communication process for continued participation in CBA. Such challenges in PV's future in its role as a medium for knowledge transferring makes PV inefficient and a fallacy as an appropriate participatory strategy in climate change communication.

2.4.2 Participatory Radio Broadcasting (PRB)

Participatory radio broadcasting refers to radio programming generated in consultation or with the participation of selected segments of audience (Manyozo, 2007). Its end goal is to support social change and sustainable development initiatives by empowering communities to collectively identify problems and possible solutions on the spot through a dialogical process (ibid). The concept of PRB emphasizes the need for citizens' active involvement

in contributing new ideas in development based on their needs. Its approach allows for citizens to contribute content for broadcasting giving them an identity, which can create a sense of ownership amongst community members. This according to Jamias (1991) enables program content to have a community identity, which can result in sustainability of communication programs.

Communities in Malawi mobilise themselves into groups to create participatory radio forums. Such forums are interactive and communities decide on program content. These forums are normally small listening and discussion groups, which meet specifically for radio programming generated form discussions (Rogers, et al., 1977). These can also be public spheres to which issues of climate change can be discussed and a general consensus made based on community dialogue. Such dialogues are critical in DevComm as they can encourage communities to critically think and assess challenges and constructively contribute in development. However, this requires facilitation, which will ensure that empowerment of the disadvantaged, is reinforced, by giving them the opportunity communicate through radio. PRB if well facilitated promotes dialogue, which can provide opportunities for holistic and horizontal flow of knowledge amongst citizens (Manyozo, 2007). Radio listening clubs in Malawi are PRB. They empower communities with knowledge and skills in programming hence citizens contribute program content, which is broadcasted on national radio.

Despite its convincing concept of citizen engagement, participation in communication is not enough by itself. Even though it empowers communities to take lead in the communication process, the challenge lies with its inability to solve problems that need immediate attention. The delays can originate from the conscientization process itself, which is time consuming. Participation require adherence to dialogical process in problem identification and in defining the right path to appropriate solution and this can result in failure to achieve goals on time.

However, for climate change, PRB is ideal. The dialogue in public sphere and in this case RLCs is critical as citizens do not only identify and find solution to their problems. Through the dialogues, citizens can evaluate current adaptation project in detail and collectively decide on whether to continue or withdraw them depending on their needs.

This dissertation therefore, borrows its framework from Participatory Communication Theory, which has fundamental principles of free and open dialogue, voice, and Action-

Reflection-Action as some of the key principles in communication (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009).

However, the process of knowledge transferring (as in the case of PV to be discussed in chapter 3), can also be linked to the Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory. This does not mean that the paper diverts from participation to modernization to which Bandura's theory is linked. The social learning theory is referred to in this paper (in especially in chapter three) because there is a possibility that knowledge transfer can be through participatory films or during social dialogues in participatory radio, people can learn by observing others' behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviours.

2.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the relationship between climate change and the media by focusing on the existing gap in climate change communication. The chapter looks at public spheres as forums, which should be explored in trying to answer and bridge the gap between those that are affected with climate change and scientist or policy makers. It argues that by participating in climate change communication, citizens are involved in participatory communication, one of the strategies in development communication.

This study focus will therefore, try to argue that radio listening clubs can be effective public forums in communicating climate change risks, adaptation and mitigation because they are participatory in nature and they engage citizens in problem identification, collectively seek solutions and implement strategies based on general consensus.

Chapter 3: Discussion and analysis 1: Participatory Video Case Study: Farmers become filmmakers: climate change adaptation in Malawi.

Malawi is already experiencing increased climatic variability and more extreme events. The worst impacts being poor crop yields and total crop failure due to drought and floods, and loss of life due to the consequent famine (Baumhardt, et al., 2009). Changing rainfall patterns, frequent floods and droughts continue to have a huge impact on people's livelihood.

The major concern of climate change in Malawi is the effect it has on agricultural production that is most detrimental to food-insecurity (Pauw, 2010). Agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy which accounts for 30% of GDP and 90% of export revenues (trading economics). 80% of the population relies on agriculture as its source of income (ibid). Droughts and floods in Malawi result into GDP losses of almost 1% every year representing US$12.5 million per annum (Pauw, et al., 2010). This worsen the country's high levels of income poverty raising it to an average of 1.3 percent with 17.0 percentage points increase during severe drought (ibid). Low yields result into rising food prices and both nonfarm and urban become vulnerable, especially poor households that spend a large proportion of their income on food.

This chapter discusses participatory video (PV) project, the first pilot Community Based Adaptation (CBA) communications project set up in collaboration with Red Cross Malawi and the country's Meteorological Service. Despite gaining grounds among NGO's such as ActionAid, Care International and Red Cross on climate change communication in Malawi, this participatory communication strategy raises a lot of doubts on PV's sustainability in Malawi.

3.1 Farmers become Film Makers: A participatory video project on climate change adaptation in Mphunga.

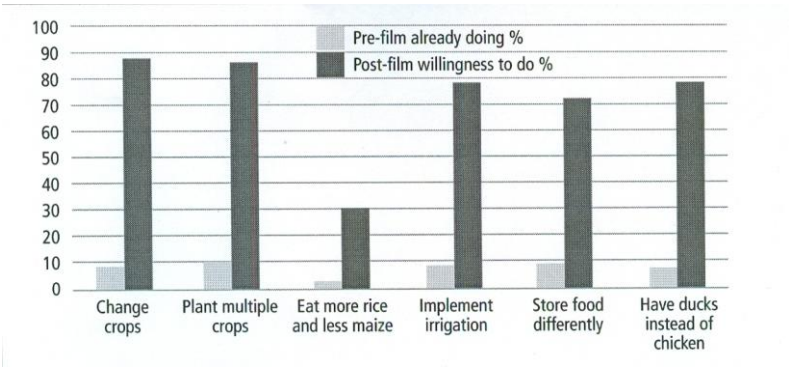
Participatory communication as discussed in chapter two is aimed at empowering citizens with knowledge and skills in the communication process. Baumhardt, et al., (2009) PV project's main assumption was that audio-visual communications could play a stronger role in community-based climate change adaptation by helping to transfer local adaptation

experiences between vulnerable communities and to bridge existing gaps between the scientific and the real world.

For 18 months, 20 Mphunga villagers were trained through series of workshops to identify climate change. The villagers also had video production training in creating story boards, shooting, interviewing and directing. Through circle discussion, facilitated by Red Cross and Meteorological officers, the Mphunga villagers shared their views and examples of local and scientific adaptation measures they used to minimize climate change related catastrophes. Through the discussion, the community identified and analysed six topical issued based on their analysis, which were turned into messages for filming. The trained village smallholder farmers in Mphunga succeeded in documenting their climate change tales, which were shared with other neighbouring villages.

When empowered with communication skills, grassroots communities, which have no idea on conducting interviews, or video shooting, can demonstrate powers to document climate change on their own with a local perspective, language, and approach that is effective in disseminating community-based adaptation. Graph one below, proves that when citizens are engaged in communication process, they do not only become media literate, but agents of change through their testimonies and explanation of their own understanding of issues. Mphunga farmers in this case, analyzed through circle discussions that they did not understand climate change and their adaption measures were wrong (Baumhardt et al., p 4). By testifying their shortfalls and benefits of adapting new technologies can turn them into peer agents of change.

Figure 1. Comparison of farmers' perception on of different livelihoods adaptation measures, before and after watching Mphunga participatory video film.



Source: Baumhardt et al., 2008

According to Baumhardt et al., (2009) before the project, communities in Mphunga village had knowledge of adaptation measures set by government under the National Adaptation Program (NAP). These findings agree with Fahn (2004) quoted in chapter two, who insist that the public is aware of climate change but it is the acceptance and participation in CBA programs that remains a challenge. However, very few farmers in Salima did adopt the new measures as indicated in the above graph.

Interestingly, the findings suggest that it is the Mphunga PV film that increased awareness and promoted horizontal knowledge transferring for livelihood sustainability. From the above graph, it can be claimed that PV can initiate positive results and it can act as a catalyst for change on climate change adaptations issues important to communities (Plush, 2007). The same figure attest to the fact that peer communication can be effective in comparison to top-down methods of communication in CBA program.

The graph also indicates that community perception of adaptation measures to change crops before viewing the video was below 10% as compared to almost 90% after watching the video. Baumhardt, et al, (2009) claims through his findings that, communities accepted real life experience from fellow farmers outside their villages, as they tend to relate with them. In this case it is peers knowledge and experience through PV communication that managed to change farmer's perception towards CBA programs.

The results also indicate that by observing others through PV film, the behaviour, attitude and outcomes of those watching will possibly changed. This is what Bandura (1977) defines as social learning theory as discussed in chapter three. Bandura states that social learning happens where there is interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. In this case, the screening room on its own created the environment, where different behaviours from farmers result in knowledge sharing but it is reasoning and perceptions that lead to acceptance of new ideas. Their assumed change in practice was because they learnt of the benefits though interaction and observation of fellow villagers.

It is however, difficult to prove that the acceptance and change in practice was because of evidence-based messages that were generated from fellow villagers as suggested by Baumhardt. Change is said to be gradual and to suggest that a one off view of the film could change people's mindset can be questioned. It is possible that the high acceptance in adapting new ideas was out of pressure. In the first instance, none of he 20 villagers involved in the production was available during filming in other villages to explain the

process or content of the video to fellow farmers. Red Cross Field Coordinator took up the responsibility. This can instil fear due to the superiority nature of outsiders whose views and ideas can be regarded as true as opposed to local people.

The exclusion of village filmmakers and use of Red Cross Field Coordinator in screening of the film is another weakness of Mphunga PV project. It makes visible power struggles that exist between the haves and have-nots in the development process. Kothari points out that when development practitioners become intermediaries or translators, power can be articulated through participatory approaches. Their interpretation could be biased as they seek to prove that PV is effective in climate change communication. If communities are to be empowered in communicating climate change, they should not only be given the role of content generators through their ideas but they should also be given the responsibility to explain to their peers their understanding of climate change. If participatory video is, people-centered advocacy efforts that effectively link climate change concerns to development issues as suggested by Plush (2007), then communities should be included by leading in the process.

The second doubt is in the authenticity of such findings was in the process of written evaluation before and after filming. For those who could not read and write, a Red Cross Field Coordinator and the villagers' liaison had to interpret the questions in vernacular language and assisted them in responding to the questionnaires. Even though the intention was to have everyone participate in the evaluation, the whole process can be said to have been unreasonable.

Looking at the three stages in the evaluation, one can easily point out existing power disparity between farmers and Red Cross staff. The process failed to challenge the apparent power relations by allowing Red Cross members and literate villagers to dominate the screening. According to Kothari (2001), participative methods of enquiry simplify the nature of power hence they can be in danger of encouraging reassertion of power and social control by individuals (p. 142). The research does not indicate that the process allowed any discussion and dialogues between farmers before and after screening hence it is possible that farmers decisions were illogical aimed at pleasing the authority.

Another problem was on the type of questions. It is indicated in the document "for each answer, villagers had the option to say no" (Baumhardt, et al., 2009: 134). Such closed ended questions do not offer opportunity for personal expression and should not have been

used in the process because participatory communication emphasizes the "…basic right of all people to be heard, to speak for themselves and not represented…" (McPhail, 2009, p. 27). Farmers should have been allowed to either discuss the film or have open-ended questionnaires to express their views and their own understanding of climate change. It is through such interaction with one another that the voice of the affected, their fears and local knowledge should be encouraged in a public sphere to contribute to climate change debate. Nevertheless, villagers in Mphunga told their story and documented their own challenges and successful adaptation measures. This managed to bridge the gap that exists between policy makers (who initiated the CBA program), and locals.

Although the process has been critiqued, it can be claimed from the graph that the film raised awareness of climate change issues in Salima. This is a direct impact of DevComm, which advocates for community engagement in the communication process. Communities in this case are not recipients of advocacy messages but generators through documentation of their experiences. According to Bandura (1977) that most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action.

It can also be argued that people tend to change behaviour and adapt to new ways of living when they are exposed to messages from those who they associate with through the same socio-economic strata, leading to adaption of new climate change projects Gandhi, et al., (2009). This is evidence of community-to-community knowledge transferring to which communities themselves become content generators, producers and disseminators.

The whole process can be assessed as being top-down or vertical in nature to which the film was shown to the farmers with expectation of immediate change in practice by adapting new ideas as shown in the film. If power issues were addressed by creating space for villagers to speak and be heard, the aims of participatory communications could have been achieved.

Despite the criticism outlined above, PV succeeded in knowledge transferring and awareness raising, and putting control in participants' hands and improvement of technological skills. However, sustainability of PV in Malawi can be a challenge as discussed in the next section.

3.2 Sustainability of Participatory Video in Malawi

Videos are powerful tools because of its use of audio and visual impact. Sustainability of PV communication for climate change knowledge transfer in Malawi can be questioned because of its lack reach to a wider audience, technological limitations and community capacity to manage and sustain such an initiative.

The purpose of DevComm especially participatory communication is to engage communities in the communication process thereby defeating the top-down vertical approach to development that assumes that the audience is passive. The effectiveness of such an initiative depends on mass dissemination of information reaching out to a vast community thereby promoting knowledge transferring for behavior change to which communities adapt and practice new technologies.

The Mphunga Community case study, despite the success in empowering communities in the PV communication process, failed to film the video to a wider audience but a few villages within Salima. The project used a laptop to show farmers in other villages how others are adapting new technologies to protect them from risk. With climate change affecting many in Malawi, communication strategies for CBA projects should aim at reaching a wider audience. This can speed up the process of change or integration of scientific technologies into community. The failure to reach out to many and encourage citizen engagement and participation in CBA projects defeats the objective of participatory process in communication, which is to "extend the fruits of development in a sustainable way to all the citizens of the developing world" (Stiglitz, 2002. p. 179 cited in Dasgupta). When strategizing on a communications program, it is important to consider reach and sustainability as adaption of innovations requires constant reminders to act as a motivation on the benefits that are gained from new interventions (Gandhi, 2007).

Another limiting factor on the use of PV is technology. This is the availability of all equipment associated with video production such as video sets, editing equipment, microphones and electricity. For communities to participate in climate change communication, they need not only to access information but also to be able understand and create communications (Ofcom 2006). Therefore, lack of equipment to create messages and disseminate information would be a barrier to communication hence increasing or maintaining the existing climate change information gap since 2008,

screening of the Mphunga Village film has not been repeated. This raises the question of sustainability of such projects in climate change communication.

The cost of PV also limits the number of participants into the process (People and Participation, 2009) thereby defeating the concept of public access, participation and self-management of communication system. The cost of training communities in camera work, interviewing and editing is high and the equipment required for the productions are normally high and fragile. As a result, PV process takes time to be implemented hence Ockwell's (2009) argument that grassroots participation is not effective in responding to urgent climate change issues.

Despite the challenges, PV seems to be gaining grounds in disaster risk reduction projects because of its visual and audio combination. What is important is to bring climate change issues in the public sphere and trigger knowledge transferring and debates. This then calls for exploration of sustainable alternative means of participatory communication to bridge climate change information gap. Radio can be an alternative to which information gathered on climate change can be disseminated and reach most communities at once.

The next chapter explores and discusses Participatory Radio Listening Clubs (RLC) as a possible alternative for climate change communication in Malawi.

Chapter 4: Discussion and analysis 2: Participatory Radio Case Study: Takondwa Radio Listening Clubs

This chapter builds up from chapter two and three. It presents the main argument of the study. It discusses participatory radio listening clubs and their role in development with specific focus on Takondwa Radio Listening Club (RLC). Throughout the discussion, the paper will try to highlight that RLCs are not just communication empowerment strategies but they are also public spheres through which communication about public issues takes place (Mackie, 2005). RLCs can be viewed as public spheres because of their multiplicity of publics in patterned ways that are face-to-face in orientation (Breese, 2011).

According to Boykolf (2007/2008), the mass media is largely unexplored in its role in the future of climate adaptation due to media or journalist failure to communicate scientific information related to climate change. Alternative media, as discussed in chapter three have become popular in climate change communication especially with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). NGO's and scholars have suggested, tested and recommend the use of participatory methodologies such as participatory games and video in climate change related communications strategies. This chapter therefore agrees with Boykolf (2007/2008), that the mass media especially radio described by Manyozo (2009) as being pervasive, local, extensive, flexible, available, readily understood, personal, portable, speedy, and efficient is perhaps underexplored.

4.1 Participatory Radio for Development in Malawi

The choice of radio in this dissertation is due to its popularity as a communication tool and it plays a key role in informing Malawians (Farm Radio International). Out of every 1000 Malawians, 499 own radio, four own TV, mobile phones and personal computers are owned by five people (ibid). This indicates that radio is the most popular mode of communication in Malawi making it an appropriate communication tools that is easily accessible and affordable to the majority of population. As a result, radio can address the gap in media exposure that are barriers to development (Prasad, 2009). Its accessibility makes it a reliable and accessible medium of communication in developing countries(Ilboudo, 2006) but it continues to be largely unexplored in its role in the future of climate adaptation communication. Radio is the mass-medium of choice for more than two thirds

of Africans, both rural and urban because it is cheap, does not rely on power at all times, its portable and does not require literacy (Myers: 2011).

In Malawi, the use of radio for development goes back to postcolonial era when it was used to foster economic growth through Malawi Broadcasting Service's agriculture farmers listening groups in 1966. Manyozo, (2005) states that radio forums were a "successful communication strategy aimed at increasing farmers' knowledge gain and contact between agriculture service providers and farmers" (ibid, p.3). Interestingly, radio was not participatory as communities were engaged with it as passive listeners receiving agriculture information from experts without them contributing their knowledge. Farmers' voices were only heard as they gave structured interview responses on their success. The interviews were not between farmers but MBC producer asking structured question to fit in with government's agricultural development agenda. The media thus set the agenda as to what farmers should listen to, discuss and contribute in the discussion. Nevertheless, there was increased food and cash crop production (Mackie, 1971 cited in Manyozo) as the radio-programming format followed the modernization theory. Radio as a mass medium, was used to deliver hypodermic messages that farmers were forced to adapt for economic growth through agriculture.

Following the passing of the Communications Act in 1998, the media was democratised Malawi saw mushrooming of private radio stations. MBC launched a second channel (MBC Radio II) providing alternative programmes. Under the new Act, the Malawi Broadcasting Station changed to Malawi Broadcasting Corporation becoming a public broadcaster which opened up to citizens. This allowed the public to participate by contributing their views and opinions through the Development Broadcasting Unit (DBU) RLCs and phone in programs among others. The democratisation of MBC can be said to have contributed to DevComm in Malawi as it took into consideration the importance of lay voices in national development through radio.

But for lay voices to be heard in the public domain, there is need for a medium through which ordinary citizens are allowed to debate matters of public interest and make decision on how problems should be resolved (McKee, 2009). In this sense, "power for making decisions" is supposed to be shifted away from those in authority towards the people (ibid, p. 8).

With floods and drought impacting communities in both rural and urban areas, UNESCO and UNEP emphasise for such engagement to enable citizens to facilitate appropriation of knowledge transfer in climate change. When properly facilitated, RLCs as part of radio for development, can offer a public space where community members share information, ideas and debate on issues and form opinions on the way forward to tackle problems faced by society. This is because; the concept of RLCs allows citizens to express their views and opinions hence forming part of discussion and dialogue for any development initiative.

4.2 The Concept of Radio Listening Clubs

RLCs operate under Rights Based Approach (RBA) to development guidelines to which communities are referred to as rights holders demanding their rights from duty bearers (Mdala, 2011). According to OHCHR (2002), the RBA are instrument aimed at empowering people to be active participants in development projects. The approach claims to follow principles that put targeted persons at the centre of the development process giving them the opportunity to participate in the development processes and to claim the benefits of the process (ibid).

RLCs also ensure that facilitator adheres to the production process by following MBC/DBU guidelines in discussion amongst participants and dialogue with duty bearers. The guidelines are key to ensuring that RLC field programs are systematic and follow same procedures. However, existence of the guidelines can in a way limit participation as discussions or social dialogue are timed by the facilitator resulting into the possibility of interrupting a member during the process. According to the guidelines, decisions made by the RLCs have to be collective with evidence on participatory discussion and dialogue with duty bearers as communities speak out on challenges, and challenge politicians who exploit and misuse their office. Communities through the RLC should also demand development programs they can sustain (Kamchedzera, et al., 2007),

Nevertheless, the concept of RLCs seems to be working (as discussed in chapter three) since communities upon realization on the right to development, continue to use the forum for problem identification and recognition of right duty bearer(s) as they invite them to visit the community for dialogue which can lead to achieving peoples development needs. The dialogue is led by the DBU facilitators from the community, where a plan of action is agreed upon on by the peoples. A recent example on how communities demand development related to their needs is Takondwa RLC in Nsanje, Malawi.

4.3 Takondwa RLC a Model in Climate Change Adaptation Programs

Takondwa Radio Listening Club is in Nsanje district, the south of Malawi an area prone to floods and draughts. Every year, floods displaced families, livestock and crops are damaged and the roads become impassable (ActionAid, 2011 and UNDP, 2010). In 2007-2008 an estimated 35,576 households were affected by the floods and 9,824 hectares of crop fields were damaged (UNDP, 2008). Malawi government has for years under the National Adaptation Program, pleaded with communities in the area to move to upland areas as a means of reducing risk associated with climate change. However, ActionAid (2006) and Stringer, et al., (2010) state that there was no or less involvement of communities in the overall planning and management strategy and the program was developed with no participation of community user.

By relocating to upland areas, communities would have been required to build houses, and open new farming fields which can be costly. PANOS states that such moves are challenging because floods and drought destroy people's livelihood hence financial burdens wear them out. Okwell, et al., (2005) also observes that people are normally unwilling to take up any action imposed by government because they find it "too difficult or costly, or as they consider it a waste of time…" (ibid, p. 4).

Community's refusal to move to government designated areas can be an indication that communication was top-down and the voice of the affected was not considered. ActionAid (2006) and Stringer, et al., (2010) argue that such actions reflect on the existing lack of inter-sectoral coordination, that can possibly affects implementation of climate-related activities. This as observed above, can hinder community participation in transformation of climate change adaptation programs hence the need to follow communication models that are inclusive and not top-down. This will assist the public to understand and get involved in the adaptation programs since everyone has the right to communicate. Authorities in Malawi should have taken into consideration, affected people's capabilities by giving them an opportunity to shape their own destiny through contact and dialogue.

Takondwa RLC members having been trained on governance and human rights, with special focus on the right to development and radio production, used radio as a medium to demand climate change adaptation programs as per their need.

The public space created by Takondwa RLC gave citizen the opportunity to discuss and collectively they identified food as the main priority in adapting to climate change and what they needed was a functioning irrigation scheme. The club then led the community in a successful social dialogue with the Nsanje District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO) for establishment of an irrigation scheme in the area. In response, the DADO offered financial resources, technical expertise and equipment. The finances were used to reward members of the community (in cash for work program to support them) who dug two additional irrigation canals. The community was also provided with seven treadle pumps, high breed maize seed, chemicals and extension services based on their needs.

Takondwa RLC's case study is possibly a good example of a successful people-centred development initiative resulting form citizen engagement in public discussion. This according to Mefalopulos (2002) can ensure project sustainability and building of ownership from bottom-up through which primary stakeholders influence and share control of their development initiatives, decision and resources (Chambers, et al., 2007). Its success depends on facilitation of the RLC as a public space to allow lay voices to speak.

Sustainable development demands that people participate in the debates and decisions that affect their lives and they should be able to receive information, but also to make their voices heard (PANOS, 2006). The voice of the people heard through public discussions and dialogue matters in DevComm strategies. Pettit, et al., (2009) points out that it is a right in itself, rather than a means to an end to speak and be heard in decisions affecting one's life. Therefore, participatory communication in climate change through RLCs can bring out voices of the marginalised in society as they speak and are heard by authorities, on their development needs through contact and dialogue with duty bearers.

It is obvious that the concerns of communities around Takondwa RLC in adapting to climate change was not to move to a different area as viewed by authorities but construction of irrigation schemes in their current environment to improve food productivity and security. What they possibly required was space to collectively discuss their challenges and decided on the type of adaptation program that will fit in with their local adaptation strategies.

The success of Takondwa RLC presents a reasonable argument that RLCs can be effective public forums in communicating climate change risks, adaptation and mitigation. They are

participatory in nature and offer space for participatory dialogue in problem identification, to collectively seek solutions and implement strategies based on consensus. However, just like another participatory project, RLC is critiqued due to its structure and operation process.

4.4 Power and Control in RLC

Just as abuses can occur from the top in a top-down approach, so can abuses occur from in a bottom-up approach. Participatory RLC approach has been questioned due to several factors. Firstly, Chirwa, et al., (2000), claims that there is gender imbalance in RLC structures and process. In the current 73 MBC/DBU radio listening clubs, the representation is 75% women against 25% men (Mdala, 2011). However, despite the unequal representation, men dominate and take lead in dialogues with duty bearers. Men are selected to take lead because of their rhetoric nature or their popularity in their community. As Manyozo (2007) observed, speakers are consciously chosen with preference being given to those considered good speakers resulting into "bias and manipulation" (ibid, p. 25). Such persons can maintain power and render useless the voice of women.

An interesting study conducted by Chirwa, et al (2000), gives a clear indication that allocation of speaking time between men and women in fourteen RLCs is imbalanced. Women had an average allocation of three minutes whilst men had seven. It is clear that despite having three men and nine women in a 12-member club, men dominate the discussion and dialogues. Yet it is claimed that women who are the most affected by climate change (OXFAM, 2009 and ActionAid, 2006). Women therefore, should be in the forefront in communicating their challenges and fears in relation to climate change and its impact on their daily lives. It is also interesting to note that in some clubs, only a few committee members speak with others the being spectators only clapping hands and ululating on points raised by those in authority or appointed to speak on their behalf. Such actions can be hegemonic as power to speak and voice out opinions is unequally distributed. The most affected must actively engage in shaping their own futures by exercising their right to speak and be heard.

RLCs communication process can thus be questioned especially when those who are affected or marginalised shy away from voicing out their fears, challenges or contributing to development dialogue. Foucault (1977, 1980) cited in Kothari argues that individuals

who think are free, in this case women, by being in majority, are in fact in the grip of more insidious forms of power control. This he states, operates through direct forms of repression but often through less visible strategies of normalisation. Participation if not properly coordinated, can therefore encourage reassertion of control and power by dominant individuals and groups (Kothari). Social norms in this case are women's acceptance that men should be the ones to speak as it is culturally embedded in their society. Therefore, even though participation is aimed at challenging existing power by giving a voice to the voiceless, unfair distribution of talking time defies the whole concept of participation.

Participation through RLCs can be very subversive, as it involves radical redistribution of power especially with economically, socially or politically marginalised communities (Manyozo, 2005) and any attempts to block them defeats its purpose. However, if well facilitated, participation in public spheres such as RLC can be achieved. Issues of silent ratification of power should not be ignored, as it can be a possible hindrance to public participation in a forum.

Secondly, RLC despite being a locally formulated group of citizens, continues to operate under orders from Development Broadcasting Unit (DBU) guidelines. The structuring of programs, decision of length and strict guidelines on how the dialogue and discussions are conducted, cast doubt on citizen's freedom in participatory communication. No matter how active RLC members are in deliberating issue, their conformity to the guidelines of time limits determines whether MBC will accept to broadcast their voice. This can be referred to gate keeping as the DBU edits field content to fit in with its own agenda. The DBU according to Manyozo (2005, 2007), does not necessarily share its power on production of RLCs programs with communities, probably because of the nature of project guidelines. Manyozo's statement can imply that DBU's interest is not content but context based hence defeating the purpose of participatory radio which aims at getting more of the ordinary citizens voices on air. However, gate keeping can be of great importance where there is evidence of non-participation or non-informative dialogue especially exclusion of the voice of those affected most by climate change.

Despite gate-keeping indirectly being implemented by MBC/DBU, the radio listening clubs offer an opportunity for people to tell their stories through the national radio hence challenging the dominant and hegemonic media superstructures by enabling citizens to

respond to the imbalance of power and resources. Of course this is achievable after community generated programs succeed in passing the gatekeepers.

Thirdly, the whole purpose of broadcasting community discussion and dialogue on national radio is for other communities in similar situations to listen and mobilise themselves to take action in development. This is why climate change adaptation programs strategies need to focus on communication praxes that are achievable and sustainable for a long lasting impact. However, the process should not only discuss infrastructure development. There is need for RLCs to go beyond prioritising development and also focus on policy issues. For example, policies on natural resource management and deforestation are key in tackling climate change. It is only when communities understand their role in policy formulation that climate change can be tackled. RLCs can provide a conducive space for communities to learn about their rights and responsibilities in ensuring that such policies are adhered to.

ActionAid (2006) in their research on climate change and smallholder farmers in Malawi found that lack of inter-sectoral coordination affects implementation of climate-related activities. They argue that the absence of an overall planning and management strategy, developed with the participation of community users, can hampers successful adaptation. For example, smallholder farmers in Salima Malawi are aware of the factors that contribute to climate change, but are not empowered to speak out to the tobacco estates, and also lack government support in terms of enforcing the laws that protect their forests (ibid, p. 5). The farmers constantly demand for authorities to enforce tree planting and deforestation laws on development activities in Salima to protect soil degradation. Collective citizen voices as that of Takondwa that can enforce such laws especially through RLCs as public sphere to which citizens can interact exchange knowledge and give feedback on climate change debates.

The role of radio (and through RLC) should be considered as being key in climate change knowledge transfer as argued in chapter two. Without radio in Malawi, scientific knowledge cannot be relayed to the lay public to promote political debate and understanding about global warming (Corfee-Morlot, et al., 2007). Policy issues raised during social dialogue in the public sphere need such a forum in order to reach out to policy makers. RLCs provide such a forums to which citizens listen to specific radio programs and discuss issues that are of relevance to them.

Takondwa RLCs can thus be viewed as public spheres, which offered space for communities to conduct developmental social dialogues with officials. It is a case study, which has demonstrated that if properly facilitated, RLCs does not only empower citizens with radio production skill, but also assist them in conducting meaningful dialogues with duty bearers. This enables them to demand development as needed by communities.

The very ability to collectively decide on a CBA program confirm Fraser, et al., (1998) and Gumucio-Dargon, (2008) notion that success of development projects are determined by communications and people's involvement. They state that no initiative should be taken that does not originate from community needs and negotiations should start from the point where government's interest and community interest overlap through dialogue (ibid) to ensures that communities can contribute towards climate change risk and mitigation measures for National Adaptation Programs.

To state that development or even adaption of new CBA measures can only be achieved with participation can be wrong. Looking at the history of radio for development in Malawi as stated earlier in the chapter, in can be argued that the modernisation paradigm can also yield the same goals. However, the case of Takondwa RLC and the gate keeping process at MBC indicate that participation in RLCs will always be associated with the earlier top-down approaches to development communication. However, it is community interaction through RLC that strengthens the notion of participatory communication as an alternative DevComm strategy that empowers communities to take lead in the communication process.

As an alternative medium RLC through social dialogue can offer a variety of socially mediated pathways that build on scientific knowledge to develop and expand social understanding about climate change (Corfee-Morlot, 2007). Through them, stakeholders can possibly work together with citizens to influence policy debates in the public sphere and through mass communication.

4.5 RLC versus PV

Despite its delay in implementation, PV has an advantage of moving images over RLCs and as observed in chapter three, this had positive changes in people's perception towards Community Based Adaptation projects in Mphunga, Salima. But since climate change has to move into the public sphere as a public policy issue (Corfee-Marlot, et al., 2007), it is important to consider if at all PV offers space for communities to have a dialogue in this

respect. As observed with Mphunga project in chapter three, PV is limited to a few participants and much of its time is spent on training them on video production skills. Mphunga PV focused much on community's access to knowledge and skills building and was not dialogical. It did not offer public space for dialogue.

Takondwa RLC on the other hand gave room for community discussions as free and open dialogues are the core principle of participatory communication (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009) as it gives people the voice to question inequalities or injustice in development.

If more people participate in the public forums such as RLCs, it can be guaranteed that the discussion on climate change will go beyond the space as members continue to debate over issues in their private sphere. This can stimulates grass-roots action through emotional and rational engagement with climate change and environmental citizenship hence placing the issue as important in society. Continuous public discussion amongst the public on climate change can speed up transition from traditional to new interventions through constant reminder for them to adapt new ideas.

However, critics of participatory paradigm in development argue that participation just like the modernisation theory is a western concept as it pushes for certain goals and actions by "coercing people to adopt certain attitudes" (Waisbord, 2001, p. 21), as a solution to their problems. Such criticism cannot be ignored since participation does not consider the cultural or traditional aspects of communities that are deeply rooted. In trying to address them, participation can reinforce existing power struggles in a subtle way as discussed in chapter three.

Nevertheless, it is important to consider the value of citizen voice in climate change communication. Freire's concern according to Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) was a shift in power to which the marginalised are given a voice, time and space to articulate their concerns, define their problems, to formulate solutions, and to act on them. Participation can stimulates critical thinking, in understanding the process of development during social dialogues. This can provide communities with skills, and sense of ownership, which can go beyond the project's lifespan (Waisbord, 2001). RLCs are structured around participation as it takes into consideration visibility and voice of the community through its forums.

Critics of participatory paradigm also argue that participatory approaches underplay the role of mass media by focusing on interpersonal communication (IPC). In chapter three, the Mphunga participatory video project findings indicated that smallholder farmers came to appreciate CBA programs from peer learning or communication. This means that IPC, which is in a way social interaction, does have an impact in climate change communication and it cannot be ignored. Social interaction as observed in both case studies, is critical in knowledge transferring.

It is true that IPC cannot stand on their own. Its effectiveness depends on combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches (Ockwell, et al., 2009) so that the unprecedented challenge of climate change can be effectively addressed. However, RLCs in Malawi as discussed, do not operate in isolation. As a participatory strategy it involves utilisation of multiple communication tools and media to achieve behaviour change in order to improve quality of life hence (McPhail, 2007). Apart from conducting public dialogues, 80% of field programs recorded by villagers are broadcasted to the nation through the Public Service Broadcaster (PSB). This can reach out to many thereby increasing a possible wider debate on issues of climate change. Therefore, RLC programs are not confined to particular communities or groups of people. To state that participation pays little attention to the use of mass media in this case is true for PV in Malawi and not for RLCs.

The next chapter concludes the discussion of this paper. It tries to justify that RLCs are essential public spheres to which communities can transfer knowledge and information about climate change and collectively decide on how to mitigate and make their communities resilient to its effects.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to contribute to climate change communication debate by focusing on participatory communication. Its discussion was centred on how citizen engagement through public spheres can promote social dialogue leading to adaption and sustainability of CBAs programs. Chapter three and four presented case studies, which outlined the status of climate, change communication in Malawi. These participatory communication strategies are both strong due to their achievements community based adaptation programs. Both RLCs and PV strongly use the participatory communication framework as they ensure that the marginalised are allowed to speak and be heard regardless of their status. This according to Melkote (2009) should be at the heart of participatory strategies that lead to empowerment.

However, it is the RLC clubs that can be seen to be effective as it shows evidence of participation at community level and with duty bearers. Unlike the Mphunga PV project, which had limited number of participants, Takondwa RLC allowed multiplicity of voices especially through community dialogue and with duty bearers. Climate change was brought into the public sphere for discussion in order to bring about the required adaptation project to the community.

The goal of communication should be conscientization, which calls for free dialogue that prioritises grassroots participation as a central principle in a dialogue (Waisbord, 2001). It should not only focus on empowering communities with technical skills. Citizens should be allowed to critically discuss climate change in their own language and open forum. They should be able to understand their role in policy formulation through such dialogues and contribute to national development on how natural resources should be managed to make their communities resilient to climate changes. The focus of climate change communication should also concentrate on mediums that can offer space for public dialogues and promote horizontal communication. Radio listening clubs have such qualities of empowering communities with technical media skills but at the same time empowering them through the dialogical process. This leads the public in shaping its own destiny through collective decision on the preferred climate change adaptation projects which they can sustain. There is need therefore for more studies to be conducted to explore the effectiveness of radio listening clubs in climate change communication.

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