

LEARNING DEMOCRACY

A Resource Book

Editors

Matthew N. Chilambo

Odd Ragnar Hunnes



MONTFORT MEDIA

Learning Democracy – A Resource Book

November 2007

Any part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior permission of the publishers as long as the source is acknowledged.

Printed and Published by

Montfort Media

P.O. Box 280

Balaka

MALAWI

montfortmedia@malawi.net

ISBN: 978-99908-82-69-8

Illustrations in Preface and Chapter 4 &5

Geir Grav

Cover photo

Bjørn Gunnar Tafjord

Cover design

Peer R. Haugen

Layout

Davie Sapuwa

Contents

Open up for Democracy v

PART 1

Fundamentals on Learning and Democracy

- Chapter 1:** Learning Citizenship in Democracy 3
Chapter 2: So what is democracy about? 23

PART 2

How to go about it – Two Suggestions

- Chapter 3:** Survey on Democracy in the Classroom – a Didactic Approach 49
Chapter 4: Searching for Traces of Democracy in the Students' own Culture 69

PART 3

A Look back: Historical Background

- Chapter 5:** Democracy in Norway in a Historical Perspective 79
Chapter 6: Democratization Process in Malawi since Independence 97
Chapter 7: To legitimate Power or to be a prophetic Voice – a Choice for Churches 111

PART 4

Perspectives of Special Interest

- Chapter 8:** Christian Faith and Values of Democracy 133
Chapter 9: Promoting the Use of Mother Tongue in Education – a Case for Democracy 145
Chapter 10: Democracy and Gender Issues 163
Chapter 11: Participation in Democracy – a Challenge 171
Chapter 12: Entrepreneurship and Democracy 181
Chapter 13: Can Democracy be measured? 193

PART 5

In Schools

Chapter 14: Building Democracy by teaching Religion and Ethics	209
Chapter 15: Reconciling Democracy and Responsibility in Schools	223
Chapter 16: Possibilities and Challenges in initiating democratic Practices in Schools in Malawi	231

List of Contributors	241
-----------------------------	------------

Open up for Democracy

The intention

On May 7th 2005, the then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education in Malawi, Simeon Hau, was referred in the newspaper *The Daily Times* saying: 'When democracy was introduced in the country in 1994, students became unruly with newly acquired rights, among them freedom of expression and dressing.' The Education PS further observed that democracy and free primary education also contributed a lot towards high failure rates in both secondary and primary schools. Two days later we met with Dr. Hau and he confirmed the quotes in the newspaper but pointed out that he was not against democracy in Malawi. On the contrary, he wants democracy but has noted that the concept is often misunderstood by many people, students and pupils not excluded. Many seem to believe that democracy means freedom to do as they wish without considering how this affects other people. This has so far lead to a lot of problems. Dr. Hau therefore strongly supported the intention of this book, which is to promote a better and deeper understanding of the concept of democracy, acquire values and attitudes on which democracy

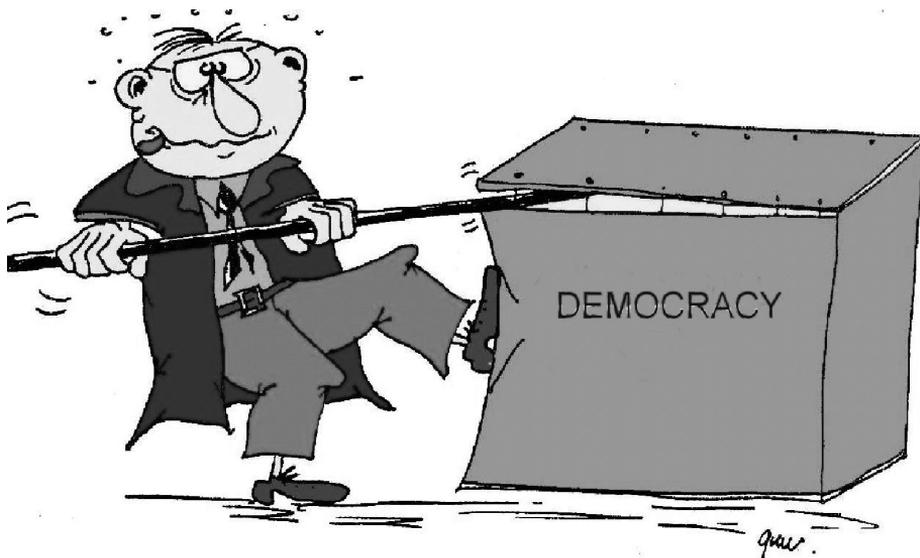


FIGURE 1: The paramount goal of this book is to open up for democracy!

builds and learn to implement a wider scale of democratic practices. Excluding nobody, this book is written especially with teacher trainers, teachers and students in mind, hoping to be a help in their work in conducting and participating in learning processes on democracy. The paramount goal is to open up for democracy.

A resource book

A resource book is not a book you necessarily read from start to end. It may be more beneficial to look for special topics to read and use these as a resource in your work as teacher or student. A resource book is a book to work with. Our goal has been to write a book which does not only present the subject matter as such. Included are also reflections on teaching and learning combined with a variety of methods for working with this material.

At the end of each chapter you will find a list of questions for reminding, reflection and discussion on the content of the chapter. In several instances suggestions for learning activities are also included. The main exceptions to this rule are the chapters in part two. The reason for this is obvious since these chapters are all about method, indicating step by step how the teacher and the students may work with two topics within the theme of democracy.

The lay out of the book leaves a relatively broad margin for personal comments because we hope that this will be your personal work book. We have also included short marginal texts along the main text of each chapter. The exception is once more the chapters in part two since they are of a quite different nature than the rest of the book. The marginal texts are included for three purposes:

1. They serve as pointers into the main text. This should make it easier to recover special elements that you know is 'somewhere' in the main text, but you do not know exactly where.
2. They may be helpful when you need to revisit the chapter before a test or for some other reason.
3. They may be used as texts for transparencies or computer projections by the teacher who is giving a presentation of a chapter (of course with wanted personal adjustments). We think that it may enhance the students' learning when they in this pointed out manner will recognize the connection between the teaching and the literature on the reading list.

The structure of the book

This book is organized in five parts. The first focuses on the fundamentals in learning democracy. Here come a view of learning and school's role in society along with a relatively short presentation of the concept of democracy. The idea is that the reading of this section will catalyze your benefit from the other chapters in the book.

The second part contains two chapters where activity based approaches to learning democracy are suggested. The first is about performing a survey on democracy in the classroom and the use of this exercise as tool both for planning and learning. The other is about inviting the students to go searching for practices and values in their own culture that may be connected with democracy somehow. If this can be done, the students will better understand what is meant by the phrase that democracy is government of the people.

The third part tells the history of democracy in Malawi and Norway where differences and similarities are pointed out. A special focus is set on the role of the Christian church in the development of democracy in both countries. This part offers ample opportunities to compare and contrast the two, and this is a much cherished approach in studies of societies.

Part four offers a variety of topics within the scope of democracy: Christian values, language, gender, participation, entrepreneurship and measuring democracy. The topics reflect to a large degree the special interests and subject areas of the participants in the project from which this book is an outcome: education, language, social sciences and theology. Acknowledging that the choice of topics in this way may seem to be a bit haphazard, we will claim that they are all both important and relevant. But different people would most probably have chosen somewhat differently.

The fifth part focuses on school, starting with a reflection on if and how religion may contribute in building democracy. Another challenge for school to face is reconciling the freedom and the responsibility that are so fundamental for a democracy to function well. The last chapter reflects on the possibilities and challenges in initiating democratic practices in schools in Malawi.

An outcome of a project

The book is an outcome of a partnership project 2005-2007 between Chancellor College, University of Malawi and Volda University College of Norway. The name of the project is **Capacity Building for Democracy in Teacher Training – Malawi and Norway**. The project was established within the 'Teacher Education

Programme South–North, which is funded by the Norwegian government (NORAD) and coordinated by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU). The main goal of this project is to heighten the awareness of democracy among students and teachers in teacher training since these are important groups for positive spread effects. The material result of the project is the present book, papers on democracy published in relevant journals and curriculum development on democracy in the teacher training within the participating institutions. All the chapters in the present book are written by participants in the project. Even though the authors have received feedback from their colleagues in the writing process, each chapter is the responsibility of the author.

Our common challenge

The UN claims that the world is more democratic today than ever before, using the appearance of multiparty elections as indicator. Optimistic as this may sound, multiparty elections only reflect a minor part of the story. There is more to tell. Our common challenge is to be a part of this story: to deepen and strengthen the knowledge of and the commitment to the values and practices of democracy. Hopefully this book may be a help in this respect.

Zomba / Volda, November 2007

Matthew N. Chilambo / Odd Ragnar Hunnes

PART 1

Fundamentals on Learning and Democracy

CHAPTER 1

Learning Citizenship in Democracy

By Arngeir Berge¹

At the foundation of this book there is a certain view of learning, which is presented in this chapter. The chapter discusses different ways that we – teachers and teacher students – can relate to learning, school in society and teaching approaches. To find good approaches to teaching citizenship in democracy, we have to be conscious about how school relates to society, what kinds of learning are important to citizenship and how such learning occurs.

Learning citizenship in democracy is complex, as citizenship is a varied practice. Citizenship can be understood as membership in a political community; a membership that includes a package of rights and responsibilities for citizens (Davies 2003). The disposition for managing these rights and responsibilities is what defines citizens: A ‘citizen is a person furnished with knowledge of public affairs, instilled with attitudes of civic virtue and equipped with skills to participate in the political arena’ (Heater 1990: 336). School is trying to provide students with the knowledge, virtues and skills to practise citizenship in their adult lives. There is a distance between the preparatory state of schooling and the executive state of adult citizenship that may make it hard for students to see the value of what they are taught. To bridge this gap, we should remember that students are members of local communities – including school. If they receive and can exercise rights and responsibilities in these communities, they will gain valuable practice for the roles and responsibilities they encounter in their adult lives. To be able to teach citizenship effectively, it is a good start to look into what learning is and how it occurs.

*Citizenship
requires
learning a
variety of
things*

¹ In addition to the contributions from the project group, the author would like to acknowledge ideas and comments from Ann-Kristin Molde.

How we think about learning

First, what is *learning*? We can see learning around us all the time; people changing, picking up new facts, stating new views and doing things different ways. Learning happens everywhere; at home, at the work place and in school. School is in a particular position because it exists to encourage learning and to direct it.

*A general
definition of
learning*

Driscoll (2005: 1) defines learning as a 'persisting change in performance or performance potential that results from experience and interaction with the world.' A change in performance or performance potential means that people are able to perform actions that they could not do before the learning occurred. And more specifically, a change in performance *potential* means that people can have learnt, even if they have not had the chance to show it yet. The starting point for learning is experience and interaction with the world. Driscoll's definition is one that most learning theories agree with on a general basis. The various learning theories differ, however, when it comes to defining the specifics of learning:

- First, what is important to learn (the performance or performance potential): Is it knowledge, skills, attitudes?
- Then, what kind of experiences or interactions is important for people to learn these things?

*Teachers
relate to
learning
through
teaching*

From Driscoll's definition, we will now turn to our everyday understanding of learning. All teachers have a personal view of learning. That means, we have an idea about how people learn and we do what we can to make it happen. If you think people need information to learn, that is what you give them. If you think people need to work on their own to learn, you give them assignments. If you think people need to exchange views and meanings, you ask them to discuss. And if you think they need a little of all, you mix different approaches. The mixture of your teaching approaches reflects your very own view of learning.

Teaching can (as can learning) be more or less deliberate. In a deep sense, teachers teach all the time, being role models for students. The practice of teaching more specifically involves bringing about a variety of experiences or interactions to facilitate students' learning and give it direction. The selection of teaching approaches teachers hold to be important depends on their view of learning.

Not all teachers can easily articulate their view of learning or teaching. If you ask, some describe how they teach. That is, what they do. Teachers may in addition describe why they teach the way they do, based on how they have found the different strategies to affect their students' learning. They explain why they choose some teaching strategies and avoid others. And perhaps they talk about when, in which situations, they use their chosen teaching strategies. For example, exercises work best in some subjects and class discussions work best in others. So, the teachers may use a mixture of strategies, varying from subject to subject. These ways of explaining – how, why and when – are based on experience and closeness to practice.

Some teachers describe a view of learning based on *learning theories* like cognitivism or social constructivism. Learning theories have an analytical function; they try to explain how learning works. Cognitivism tells us about individuals' ability to perceive, process, store and represent information. Constructivism tells us about the role of self-perception, motivation and prior experiences in learning. Sociocultural theories tell us that the different social groups we are part of – classmates, friends, family – are important to how we make sense of the things that we learn.

Learning theories explain learning differently

Learning theories can tell us a lot, but because everything cannot be analysed all at once, they tend to focus on selected aspects of learning. Practitioners, however, cannot concentrate on only one aspect of learning, since reality is more complex. As a consequence of this complexity, there is no single learning theory that researchers agree explains all aspects of learning. So, there is a gap between theories and practice. As teachers, we must bridge this gap, drawing on different theories for different situations and aims. However, when we stand in a specific teaching situation, it can be hard to recognise how the different learning theories can be applied. The following model may help us in this respect.

Practice is more complex than theories are

A model for thinking about learning

The Danish educational researcher Knud Illeris has made a useful model by bringing together central points from major learning theories. The model is not a new learning theory in itself. However, it gives us a way of thinking about different learning theories in our daily practice. This is illustrated in figure 1.

A model for bridging theory and practice

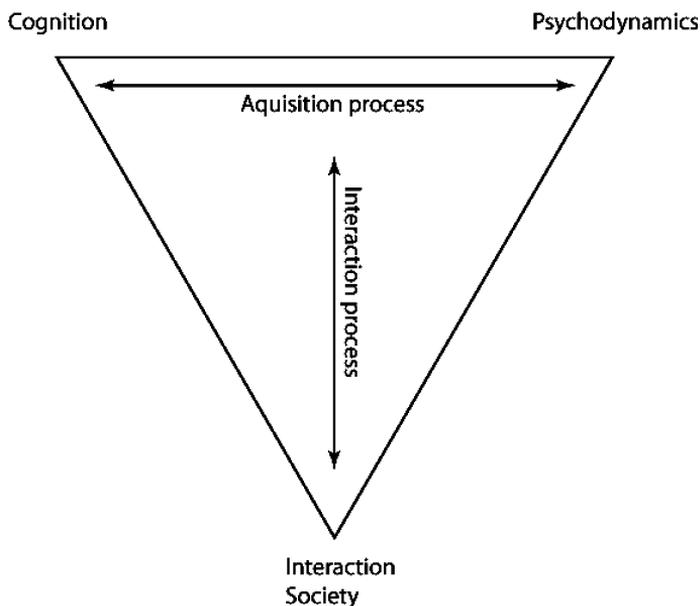


FIGURE 1: Three dimensions and two processes of learning (Illeris 2001: 196, author’s translation)

As we can see, the model consists of a triangle and two double arrows. The corners demonstrate three dimensions of learning, dimensions which are described in the major learning theories. The same learning theories also describe processes of learning, represented by the two double arrows.

Let us first look at the dimensions of learning:

Each dimension of learning represents a theoretical tradition

- *Cognition* represents activities like perception, thinking and remembering. In the model, motor skills are also included under this label. We recognise the cognitive dimension from cognitive learning theories formed by researchers like Piaget.
- *Psychodynamics* stands for emotion, motivation, will, hope and the like. We recognise this dimension from constructivist and psychoanalytical theories, expressed by for example Freud.
- *Interaction* and *society* involves the people around us, as well as the wider society. The importance of this dimension to learning is shown in sociocultural theories created by for instance Vygotsky and others in the Marxist pedagogical tradition.

Although the three dimensions are represented here by different learning theories, this does not mean that the mentioned learning theories are one-dimensional. Note that there are no borders in the triangle between the different dimensions. It is noticeable in the figure, however, how the learning theories have a different base in their description of learning. They emphasise certain parts as especially important.

Each theory is multi-dimensional

Let us then look at the processes of learning:

- The *acquisition process* happens *inside* the individual. It happens between the cognitive and the psychodynamic dimensions. When students are learning, they are working things into their understanding (cognitive dimension) and in doing this they are mobilising psychological energy (psychodynamic dimension).
- The *interaction process* happens *between* individuals or between individuals and society at large. Learners relate to here-and-now social contexts, like the classroom or social contexts across space or time, like the one existing between writer and reader through a book.

Learning processes are both inside and between individuals

Each arrow is double because it represents a two-way process. And the two processes themselves depend on each other. The major learning theories do not only acknowledge one process, but their description tends to emphasize one in particular.

The dimensions and processes represent central aspects found in major learning theories. However, none of the learning theories cover the full extent of dimensions and processes. The full complexity of learning can be difficult to keep in mind if only one single learning theory is focused. Therefore, the model is useful. Readers who are familiar with learning theories can organise their knowledge. And readers, who are less familiar with learning theories, can, when they later read about the individual theories, know how the theories can be related to each other.

We can use the model to organize our knowledge

Whether we are familiar with learning theories or not, it is important to have in mind how multifaceted and broad learning is in all its dimensions and processes. Our view of learning will influence our teaching methods and teaching objectives². If we concen-

² For Norwegian readers: Objective = aim, goal

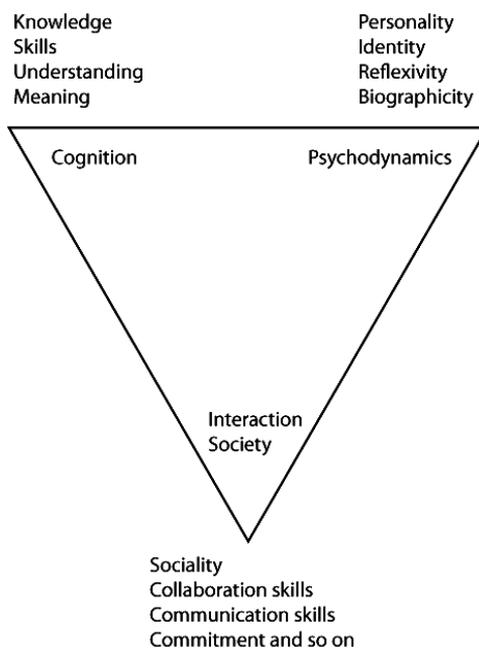


FIGURE 2: Dimensions in the objectives for learning (Illeris 2001: 200, author’s translation)³

trate on one dimension, the result will be narrow objectives and methods for teaching.

Look at figure 2, how some important objectives for learning are placed by the corners, near a particular dimension.

The model embraces a wide range of learning objectives

The different objectives for learning are associated with particular dimensions. This means that, if we would like students to gain knowledge and abilities associated with the cognitive dimension, we can draw on insights from cognitive theories. If we would like to share certain attitudes with students, we can look to the psychodynamic dimension and be informed by constructivist theories. And if collaboration skills associated with the interactional/societal dimension are our objective, we can draw on sociocultural theories.

As mentioned above, there are no borders between the dimensions. The three corners make a single triangle. In real life, the three dimensions are always present and cannot appear independently. For example, when people are in a social setting, they bring their

³ Three of the objectives in the figure may require a further comment. Skills: In his model, Illeris has an inclusive definition of cognition. Therefore, skills include motor skills (guided by the central nervous system) in addition to traditional cognitive skills such as problem solving and reasoning. Reflexivity: This involves the ability to see oneself from outside. Biographicity: This involves the ability to see oneself through a lifespan perspective and to interpret one’s own options and choices in this light.

knowledge and their attitudes. They talk about things they have heard and share opinions. Hence, the interactional/societal dimension depends on the two other dimensions. Similar observation can be done on the interdependence of the dimensions. Knowledge that we gain (cognitive dimension) will in some way relate to the interactional/societal dimension. Knowledge can for example be historical facts that describe events from the social sphere. Attitudes (psychodynamic dimension) will typically be towards someone's actions (interactional/societal dimension) or stance (cognitive dimension). The three dimensions can only be separated analytically by learning theories which describe some aspects of learning. In real life, however, the dimensions are not separate.

Learning dimensions can only be separated in theory, not in practice.

Reflecting on what is required of a citizen, we see that it includes knowledge, virtues and skills of participation. These objectives can each be related to one of the corners in the model in figure 2. To be able to educate citizens, teachers should have a broad view of learning. The whole triangle of dimensions is needed: the cognitive, the psychodynamic and the interactional/societal dimension. Our view of learning needs to take into account that students are multidimensional human beings that are filling multiple roles and responsibilities, both inside and outside school. The argument here is that to educate citizens we need various ways of teaching and thus a broad view of learning. To teach effectively, we can draw on learning theories that give us insight in different aspects of learning. Illeris' model can help us link the learning theories to the complex reality that we meet in schools.

A broad view of learning

School and society

As mentioned above, we are not necessarily conscious of our view of learning, although we probably have such a view. Now we will look at alternative views of school. Does our view of school influence our view of learning? We will look at three views of school and see how each may influence our view of learning and our objectives for teaching. The views are presented clear-cut and exaggerated to display contrast.

School for school's sake

School – an end in itself?

The first view, 'school for school's sake,' can be cut out like this: As a teacher you simply pass on what you have learnt in the school system yourself. You do not have to make an effort to think about school and society together; school is an island in society. Society is 'out there' and students will face it when they finish school. Society is to a large extent presented indirectly through the national curriculum.

This view is a minimum view of school's place in society, which may cause a routine-like school. For example, when you have finished teaching one year, you can start all over again the next year with the same teaching materials. When the curriculum changes, some teachers perhaps think it is unnecessary and do not see that the changes may come as a result of changing requirements in the wider society. As formal knowledge has grown large, the educational system could appear almost self-sustaining, looking 'out' at society.

Learning happens in school

How does such a view of school influence the view of learning and the objectives for teaching? The view of learning could become that learning is something that goes on in schools, whereas learning outside school is irrelevant. The objective for teaching turns to transmission of the formal, written-down knowledge that the educational system preserves. What may the students think in such a school? If school becomes school for school's sake and teachers take what they teach for granted, then why would not students do the same – and, at best, become passive receivers? Of course our educational system is much about keeping up tradition, defining what the young ones should know and teaching them that, be it second order equations or the number of members in parliament. But how can society advance if the aim is to keep things going in the same way as before?

School prepares to meet the needs of society

School for the sake of society

The second view, 'school for the sake of society,' is that school should supply society with the competence it needs. So, as a teacher you would want your teaching to be updated to meet new demands of society. When the national curriculum changes you quickly follow up in your teaching. You may even be ahead, by looking for new

demands of the society before the national curriculum has had time to include them.

How does such a view of school influence the view of learning and the objectives for teaching? The view of learning may be too controlled by the needs of society, if the objective is that people should adapt. If society has a strict course towards production and technological development, for example, the focus would be on knowledge and skills in which case attitudes and values may be in danger of being neglected.

The objective for teaching becomes producing the competence society needs; creating people who are perfectly adapted to the needs of society so that things run smoothly. But what if society moves in the wrong direction? In 1942, during World War II, hundreds of Norwegian teachers refused to teach according to directives given by the Germans. The teachers were arrested. Today they are heroes in Norwegian history and this indicates that school should not always go along with the demands of other institutions in society. It is good and fundamental that school introduces the students to the present society and its culture, but on some occasions school should be an agent of change (see Parry 2003).

*School in
opposition to
government*

School and society integrated

The third view is 'school and society integrated'. In the first view, school looks inward. In the second view, school looks outward. In the third view, school looks both inward and outward, taking an active role in society. School counts itself as a member of the greater community and is aware of the rights and responsibilities this membership implies. This community awareness is citizenship on a large scale.

*School as
part and
participant*

How does such a view of school influence the view of learning and the objectives for teaching? The word *citizen* is based on the Latin word *civitas*, which means 'people united in a city or community'. For a school with community awareness, it is natural to form a view of learning that is broad enough to equip students with the knowledge, virtues and skills to practise citizenship in communities of which they are part. The objective of teaching is that students may be educated both for their own good and for the good of society.

School's role in society from a liberation perspective

*Students can
be students,
suppliers and
citizens*

Three views of school have now been presented. They were cut out in a simplified manner – you will hardly find a teacher who announces ‘school for school’s sake’! Still, as teachers we will inevitably place ourselves somewhere in this landscape. And our position will influence our view of learning and our objectives for teaching. Additionally, our view of students may be influenced. In the first view of school, where school is for school’s own sake, students may be seen as mere students and their roles outside school can be neglected. A danger, then, is that their worth is measured according to their success as students. In the second view of school, students are to be suppliers to the societal machinery and a danger is that they are seen as a means to a ‘distant’ society. In the third view, students are seen as young citizens. This view may be seen as the broadest view of school, since it takes into account the whole society and students as part of society.

*Education
can be
liberating*

Paulo Freire was an educator and theorist who worked with underprivileged people without schooling who in a sense fell ‘outside’ of society. Freire noticed that many lacked the knowledge and self-confidence to try to change the historical or societal causes of the situation they lived in. He worked for schooling with a distinct view of knowledge, namely that people should see that they possess important knowledge simply by being human. Knowledge stems from experience. Each person’s experiences are unique and should not be disqualified. People who see that they own unique and important knowledge gain self-confidence. According to Freire (1972), education can be an instrument for liberation. It can give students self-confidence, help them seek new knowledge, try it against their own experiences and claim their part in shaping society.

The privileged or those in power should not be alone in defining what knowledge is valid in society. In the foreword of a book by Freire (1972), Richard Shaull comments that education can take different directions: ‘There is no such thing as a *neutral* educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, *or* it becomes ‘the practice of freedom,’ the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how

to participate in the transformation of their world.' (Shaull in Freire 1972: 15, original emphases)

Shaull may be said to oversimplify through his statement of either–or. Still he points at something important and relevant to the question of democracy. School may make passive students by not being updated, by not relating to society ('school for school's sake'). School may also be 'school for the sake of society' and yet be conforming, which also makes passive students. Truly active students may best be nurtured when school and society are integrated. If we know the different views of school, we can become more conscious teachers and make school an arena where society is shaped.

Educating active or passive students

Suggested approaches for teaching citizenship

So far in this chapter, we have seen that educating citizens is influenced by the teacher's mindset. Having a broad view of learning and an integrated view of school and society is important in all school subjects. Many countries have a separate school subject for citizenship education called *civics*. Even if educating citizens is not limited to a single subject, the civics subject gives a special attention to this. We will now look at a model for teaching citizenship that can best be applied in the civics subject, but the model may also bring something to our mindsets in general.

A broad view of learning is relevant in all school subjects

The model concerns three approaches that teachers can have in citizenship education, characterized by Blyth (1984): education *about*, *through* and *for* citizenship. To illustrate these approaches, we will look at a specific case and how it would unfold for each of the three approaches. The case is the largest solidarity project for youth in Norway, Operasjon Dagsverk (OD). Each year one day in October students in many secondary schools work in companies and other work places and give the payment to projects within education in developing countries. Every year has a new project which concentrates on a specific topic. Back in 1998, for example, Malawi was one of the countries involved, when the project was improving educational opportunities for people with disabilities. Overall, OD is organised as an effort to increase understanding between people, practise responsibility and reduce social inequalities.

Operasjon Dagsverk (OD)

OD is administered by the national student association (Elevorganisasjonen), which prepares teachers and school commit-

tees at the local Norwegian schools for each year's project. OD includes a two week preparation period in advance of the work day in order to spread information and enthusiasm for the project. The project topic is integrated in relevant school subjects and some time is cleared for students to learn about the topic through group work, games and other creative initiatives. The administrators make information materials to help teachers and school committees involve students during these weeks. The information materials contain not only information about the current year's topic, but also general information about global questions such as poverty, international structures and historical events.

Education ABOUT citizenship

Learning facts about society and citizenship

The first of Blyth's approaches is: 'Education about citizenship: providing students with sufficient knowledge and understanding of national history and the structures and processes of government and political life.' (Blyth 1984 as quoted in Kerr 1999: 14 and Selwyn 2002: 8-9) 'Education *about* citizenship' is an approach for teaching content knowledge. We will now see an example of how teachers with a content-led approach may come to organize OD. The example is clear-cut and exaggerated to produce contrast to the examples accompanying the later approaches.

Focus on content

Teachers with a strict content focus will use the information materials to teach general information about global questions and perhaps specific project information. They may also welcome representatives from the national student association to talk to the students. However, teachers do not have to bother about mentioning the work day since student representatives ask students without employment to contact companies directly and company managers to offer jobs to students. If the teachers' content focus is extra strong, they may even think that the work day stands in the way of their teaching so that the students should rather attend their regular school subjects that day. This is the case in some schools which choose not to participate on the OD work day.

If we connect the example to Illeris' model, we notice that it concentrates on the cognitive dimension and not so much on the psychodynamic and interactional/societal dimensions. As presented earlier, knowledge and understanding are main objectives in a cognitive approach. However, having knowledge about something, for

example unequal opportunities, does not mean you will act upon it. Therefore, a strict content focus may not be sufficient. Human beings are multidimensional and what gets us going is usually not only the cognitive.

Content learning is essential, but may not be sufficient

With the views of school in mind it is apparent that a content-led approach can easily be combined with a 'school for school's sake' perspective; teachers do not have to involve the students in participation for the wider society. A strictly content-led approach could also be combined with a 'school for the sake of society' view, but then with the opinion that school prepares students for service in society after finishing school. The teachers in our example would not hold the view 'school and society integrated' because they did not show interest for the students' efforts on the work day.

We have now looked at the first approach, 'education *about* citizenship'. In a democracy it is important that people are informed – that they have a solid knowledge base. To make the institutions work, it is necessary to teach contents about citizenship and society. Content knowledge is essential but the example indicates that content learning may not be enough. Let us turn to the second approach in citizenship education.

Education THROUGH citizenship

The second approach is 'education *through* citizenship'. This approach teaches students to be active in society: 'Education through citizenship: students' learning by doing through active, participative experiences in the school or local community and beyond. This learning reinforces the knowledge component.' (Blyth 1984 as quoted in Kerr 1999: 14 and Selwyn 2002: 8)

Students active in society

While the first approach focuses on *content*, this second approach focuses on *processes*. Let us illustrate by the Operasjon Dagsverk case. On most schools OD is organised in a preparation period and a work day where students work in a company. In the previous treatment of the OD case, it was mentioned that some schools teach some of the contents of the preparation period, but do not encourage students to participate on the work day.

The current example is schools that do the opposite. They skip the preparation period and only participate on the work day. A reason for this could be that the teachers to a large extent value participation as a method for learning and that they do not want to 'inter-

Focus on taking part in various processes locally and globally

tere' by their own teaching. It is easy to see why some teachers find the participation on the work day useful. The students participate both locally and globally. Locally, they participate in working life and many get valuable insight into a profession. Globally, they participate by giving their payment to educational projects in developing countries. However, we should not take for granted that students see the usefulness of the participation themselves. Participation without knowledge will easily turn the work day into just a 'happening.'

May miss important learning dimensions and necessary background knowledge

Let us again look back at the dimensions in Illeris' model and relate them to our example where schools skipped the preparation period. To work in a company for a day requires both knowledge and motivation. However, when schools do not address the cognitive and psychodynamic dimensions, since the preparation period is skipped, the students may not gain knowledge about the reason for the work day or motivation for the OD project. It is mainly the interactional/societal dimension that is directly addressed by the teacher through letting the students participate. Some teaching objectives from this dimension could be that students should improve their sociality, collaboration skills and communication skills. The students probably will get better at this, but they will not develop their global sociality unless they get the opportunity to gain understanding and motivation for the OD project.

Related to the views of school, the example goes beyond 'school for school's sake' and into 'school for the sake of society.' This is because some of the teachers encourage the students' participation on the work day. The teachers value participation both on the school arena and on the community arena and see it as relevant learning. Even so, it is not fair to say that these teachers have the view 'school and society integrated.' They do not relate the work day participation to what happens in school and leave it to the students to see the bigger picture.

Process learning is essential, but may not be sufficient

We have now looked at the second approach, 'education through citizenship' and an example where this approach was used on its own. A democracy depends on participation and on people having participatory skills. However, having a lot of participation should not be an end in itself. The participation has to be guided. Students have to experience a meaning in their participation so that the participation is not reduced to 'something that we just have to do.' What can be done to ensure this?

Education FOR citizenship

The third approach in citizenship education is a conscious combination of the two first approaches: 'Education for citizenship: encompasses the 'about' and 'through' strands and involves equipping students with a set of tools (knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes, values and dispositions) which enable them to participate actively and sensibly in the roles and responsibilities they encounter in their adult lives.' (Blyth 1984 as quoted in Kerr 1999: 14 and Selwyn 2002: 9)

In 'education *for* citizenship' knowledge is linked to participation so that the *content* and the *processes* work together. Let us illustrate one last time with Operasjon Dagsverk. It was mentioned earlier that some schools only teach the contents of the preparation period (education *about* citizenship) and other schools only participate on the work day (education *through* citizenship). The current example is about schools that do both. Some combination between the two approaches is probably the most common and in that sense the two previous examples were oversimplified. This example is also to an extent simplified because it might make a successful combination of the approaches look easy.

In the latter schools, teachers and student representatives typically plan the preparation period together. Student representatives are allowed time to speak to the students and to take part during the organisation of the preparation period. The organizers see to it that the meaning behind the work day is discussed with the students. In the preparation period teachers draw lines from several school subjects to the current year's OD topic. The previously mentioned topic is now used as an example: increasing educational opportunities for people with disabilities. With this topic, lines can be drawn to language (information on sign language), history (historical life conditions for people with various disabilities), civics (universality of the right to education through the declaration of human rights) and so on. After the work day is finished teachers can still occasionally refer to the theme and the students' efforts. Students gain factual knowledge when teachers include the subject in this manner and additionally they see that the teachers really care. They are not using the subject primarily to fill up the curriculum. At the same time the students more easily see the value of participating and thereby enhance their participatory skills. The preparation period and the

Learning contents and processes and relating this to our roles in society

work day are not simply becoming procedures that students just go through. Instead the two reinforce each other and are connected into a greater whole. Teachers can help the students make this connection and also inspire and assist them in seeing why they are doing what they are doing, why OD is significant and the benefits of their own efforts.

OD gives an opportunity to address all three dimensions of learning

If we relate the ‘education *for* citizenship’ approach to the dimensions in Illeris’ model, we see that all three dimensions are addressed. The preparation period of OD supports the cognitive dimension, giving students knowledge and helping them link what they are doing to previous knowledge. The interactional/societal dimension is addressed by letting students work together (with for example group work or illustration games) during the preparation period and participate locally and globally on the work day. The psychodynamic dimension is addressed in that student representatives and the rest of the students are granted time and freedom for own initiatives during the preparation period and that both students and teachers can actively seek and discuss the motivation for participating in OD. In addition, OD as a whole gives an opportunity to address all dimensions repeatedly during the OD period. In this manner the combination of the dimensions reinforce the learning process and thereby makes it easier for students to connect what they learn into a meaningful whole.

OD is one way of experiencing ‘school and society integrated’

When the ‘education *for* citizenship’ approach is related to the views of school, it encourages students to participate ‘actively and sensibly’ in society. Actively means that they are determined to participate and sensibly means that participation is guided by independent judgement. The reason why students back in 1964 formed the OD organisation was that they felt responsibility for the global community. If each year’s OD is carried out with commitment, it continues to be ‘education for citizenship’ and can serve as an example of ‘school and society integrated’.

We have now looked at a content-led (‘about’) and a process-led (‘through’) approach in citizenship education. The civics subject gives opportunity to practise both. None of them can alone cover what is needed for students to learn citizenship. A mindful combination is required and ‘education *for* citizenship’ may offer such an approach.

Teaching citizenship from a liberation perspective

The 'education *for* citizenship' approach can be seen in the liberation perspective that was referred to earlier by Richard Shaull's quote on Paulo Freire's pedagogy. OD is in line with this: 'The goal of this year's project is for youth to receive education and knowledge that give them influence and authority over what concerns them and their future' says Tone Dalen, Head of communications in OD's partner organisation for this year, Utviklingsfondet (OD 08.03.2007).

Education gives understanding and influence

Freire said that the basic importance of education lays in the 'act of cognition not only of the content, but of the why of economic, social, political, ideological and historical facts ... under which we find ourselves placed.' (Freire 1994: 101 – 102) To have knowledge of 'the why' means to see causes of why things are like they are. A task for teachers is then to teach in a way that makes students see 'the reason-for, the 'why' of the object or the content' (ibid: 81). When students reach for 'the why' of their surroundings, they will see that much of their milieu is created by people and therefore can be changed by people. Those who live in a situation that can be changed by people should have their say in how it is going to be. Realizing this may be the starting point. Schools are also man-made settings and subject to change. Students therefore should have their share of influence. To remind of the quote by Shaull once again. Education can be a way to deal 'critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of our world.'

Understanding the 'why' and the 'what' can be empowering

As teachers, we should keep the following question 'hot': Why are we doing what we are doing? It is always possible that teaching approaches become mere procedures and that we do not spend enough time connecting them to a greater whole. We should not only leave it to students to make such connections. If teachers in the OD case regard the preparation period and the work day as simply methods, they could even make it difficult for students to draw connections to their role in the world. 'Education *for* citizenship' seeks to make these connections consciously clear.

To teach the 'why', we have to reach for the 'why' ourselves

Summary

*The models
can help in
practicing
conscious
teaching*

In this chapter, we have seen that we all reveal a view of learning in our teaching. The argument is that learning theories can make us *conscious* about different aspects of learning and a model has been presented that can help us link major learning theories to the complex reality that we meet in schools. If we are aware of the different views of school's role in society that were presented, we can become more conscious teachers and make school an arena where society is shaped. To instil citizenship is complex and is connected to a broad view of learning with various teaching approaches. Education *for* citizenship is in itself an approach that seeks to combine teaching approaches and to connect them to our lives as citizens. With this approach, we can never stop asking why we are teaching what we are teaching.

Questions

1. How would you describe your own view of learning?
2. During your own school time, did the teachers get across the 'why' of what was taught?
3. Is the 'why' of the content relevant in mathematics education?
4. How can each of the three learning dimensions be addressed in music education and mathematics education?
5. Are there activities that many students attend outside of school? Is there learning in these activities that can be drawn on or built on in school?
6. Do you recall initiatives that made obvious the integration of school and society during your time as pupil and student? Discuss with others which experiences they have.
7. Identify a non-governmental organization in your local community. What skills, attitudes and knowledge are needed to be an active member of this group?
8. Which opportunities are there in your local community to participate, or to make an initiative? See the following UNESCO (2005) web page on planning citizenship projects at the local community level:
http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/TLSF/theme_b/mod07/uncom07t04bod.htm

References

- Blyth, A. (1984): 'Industry education: Case studies from the North West' In I. Jamieson (ed), *We make kettles: Studying industry in the primary school*. London: Longman.
- Davies, I. (2003): 'Developing education for citizenship' In A. Lockyer, B. Crick & J. Annette (ed), *Education for democratic citizenship: issues of theory and practice*. pp. 161-174. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Driscoll, M. P. (2005): *Psychology of learning for instruction*. 3rd ed. International ed. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Freire, P. (1972): *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Foreword by Richard Shaull. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Herder and Herder.
- Freire, P. (1994): *Pedagogy of hope: reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Heater, D. (1990): *Citizenship: the civic ideal in world history, politics and education*. London: Longman.
- Illeris, K. (2001): 'Læring og lærerroller' In K. Illeris (ed), *Slipp elevene løs!: Artikler med søkelys på lærerrollen*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Kerr, D. (1999): 'Citizenship education in the curriculum: An international review' In *School Field*, 10 (nos. 3-4), pp. 5-31.
- Operasjon Dagsverk (OD) (08.03.2007): *Operasjon Dagsverk 2007 til Utviklingsfondet og Mellom-Amerika*. URL: <http://www.od.no/Artikler/1865.html> [Accessed 16.08.2007]
- Parry, G. (2003): 'Citizenship education: reproductive and remedial' In A. Lockyer, B. Crick & J. Annette (ed), *Education for democratic citizenship: issues of theory and practice*, pp. 30-46. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Selwyn, N. (2002): *Literature review in citizenship, technology and learning*. Bristol: NESTA Futurelab.
- UNESCO (2005): *Teaching and learning for a sustainable future: A multimedia teacher education programme*. Version 4.0. URL: <http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/index.htm> [Accessed 16.08.2007]

CHAPTER 2

So what is democracy about?

By Odd R. Hunnes

It is an indisputable fact that democracy, along with a handful of other concerns such as health, development and peace, has become one of the core and foremost preoccupations of the people of the world today. All over the world, millions of men and women are clamouring for it, ready to consent enormous sacrifices of sweat, tears and blood, up to and including death, to secure it. This is the measure of the value of democracy to civilized mankind.

Afrifa Githonga

The what and how in government

In general, governments exist to secure order, equality and freedom and supply certain public goods and services. The main purpose of order is to preserve life and property, if necessary by the use of force. Human Development Report (HDR) claims that ‘when order breaks down in a country, poor people usually suffer first and most’ (UNDP 2002: 6), indicating an important link between order and equality. Equality may be reached through redistribution of wealth and securing a minimum of human welfare, and the main question of debate is how to define equality and how to fund the provision of it. Both order and equality will most certainly reduce the individual freedom of the citizens. Therefore, striking a good balance between order, equality and freedom is a fundamental and continuous challenge for any government. Public goods and services may be physical infrastructure (clean water, sewage, roads and the like), health services and education and the relevant political

The substantive part of government

debate runs along the line of how much of which goods the government should provide for. That which is mentioned so far may be called the substantive part of government, or *what* the government tries to do (Janda et al 1993: 37).

*The
procedural
part of
government*

The procedural (or formal) part of government focuses on *how* government tries to do what it wants to do. To conclude on such matters (both what to do and how to do it), decisions have to be made. The main activity in government, therefore, is decision making. And democracy offers a set of normative principles for how government, actually any ruling body, ought to make decisions (ibid: 37). The aim of this chapter is to give an overview over democratic principles and the values and the culture that go with it.

Some central aspects on democracy

*Democracy is
a relatively
new concept*

Starting with the philosophers and practices of the city states of ancient Greece and reinforced by the assumption that ‘all men are created equal’, it has been a long and difficult process to reach universal suffrage and citizens’ participation in decision making in societies. Shutt (2001) observes that in this perspective it is fair to say that the Western world has been pioneering the establishment of common citizenship and he continues to write: ‘Seen from the perspective of human history, ... the idea of popular democracy based on mass enfranchisement is still relatively new’ (ibid: 146).

*Government
by, of and for
the people*

Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg address defined democracy as government of, by and for the people, a definition that has been cited often since. *Of* the people should indicate that the government is not alien to the peoples’ way of life; it is in accordance with the values, attitudes and ways of the people. This is commonly expressed in the country’s constitution. *By* the people may mean the rule of law, as the law is accepted by the ruled ones. Rule of law should be combined with the people’s possibility to decide who should make decisions and also influence the decisions that are made. Participation is a key concept in this connection. *For* the people means that the people are the ones who should benefit from the government’s decisions, be it in material, spiritual, psychological, social or in other ways. (Githonga 1995: 11)

The procedural part of government in a democracy is usually described in the constitution of the country and in additional laws,

rules and regulations. A fundamental aspect of 'rule of law' is that there are procedures and regulations concerning how decisions should be made, who should be given power to act on behalf of government and how this power should be handed over to others. Rule of law also implies that the content of the laws, rules and regulations is generally known and the government as well as the citizens is obliged to live by them. Therefore an important part of developing democracy in a country is to write the needed or wanted changes into 'the law' of that society and to follow this up through unbiased enforcement.

Rule of law

In addition to the laws internal to a country, there are international conventions and declarations that have a substantial influence on governance and the way of life in most countries. A well known example is the UN's Declaration of Human Rights (DHR), which most countries have ratified. The mere existence of DHR is a continuous reminder to legislation and performance by government world wide. It is also very effectively used as a tool for human rights organizations to pressure governments to follow suit.

International conventions

The underlying value of democracy may be said to be human dignity. Human dignity implies that a person deserves respect by self and others. This respect is mainly shown through the intention of meeting the set of psychological, spiritual, social and material needs every human being has. Parts of these needs imply ability to influence own destiny through having a say in how decisions should be made as well as the material content of the decisions. The Human Development Report underlines the importance of this by claiming that the freedom to express one's views and participate in decision making are just as important for human development as being able to read or enjoy good health (UNDP 2002). Masolo states that democracy is 'an attitude because it is a way of doing things that is dependent upon how we regard ourselves, our abilities and those of others' (1987: 24). Consequently, on the individual level, democracy is also a matter of identity, a matter of who we are. Therefore, respecting democracy when this suits our own ends and disregarding it when it seems to be to own disadvantage, is a violation to own identity and to the idea of democracy. Democracy should not be treated like a suit that one may chose to put on or take off, it should be regarded more like one's skin in which one lives day in, day out, 24 – 7. On the society level, democracy is also a matter of culture and even the social 'climate' (Pateman 1970).

The underlying value: human dignity

A transition is not enough, a transformation is needed

In his paper 'We Want Change': Transition or Transformation? Chirwa (1998) maintains that countries need to realize a *transformation* to democracy and not limit the process of democratization to a *transition*. While transition only shows on the surface, for instance through established procedures and institutions, a transformation goes deeper and is characterized by a change in culture with the ideas, values, attitudes and practices that are associated with this culture. A transformation therefore is about a social process and a political practice which are founded on a moral imperative.

Democracy – holds the government accountable

Human Development Report 2002 presents some important features for democracy as a mode of government. It states that political and civil freedoms allowing citizens to think, speak and act as participants in decision making are obvious assets of democracy compared to other systems. Transparency makes it possible for the citizens to hold government accountable and this may help protect people from economic and political catastrophes such as famines and descents into chaos. Even so, in its review on the literature on democracy and economic growth, the report points out that there are few consistent patterns to be found world wide. Empirical studies are largely inconclusive. However, there seem to be some robust findings. One of them is that at all income levels, fertility rates are significantly lower in democracies. This may be interpreted as a sign of optimism and improved human welfare (Mamdani 1974, Hesselberg & Engh 1998). Secondly there seems to be certain relationships between economic performance and democratic governance. It is reported that 'while the economic performance of dictatorships varies from terrible to excellent, democracies tend to cluster in the middle. The fastest growing countries have typically been dictatorships, but no democracy has ever performed as badly as the worst dictatorships The same is true for poverty reduction Thus democracy appears to prevent the worst outcomes, even if it does not guarantee the best ones' (UNDP 2002: 56). A third point is that 'middle-income countries have been more likely than poor or rich countries to move from dictatorships to democracies' (ibid: 56). And finally it is reported that there 'is also evidence that reversions to authoritarianism are likely in economic downturns, but it is not clear ... whether bad economic performance causes democracies to fall or whether democracies about to fall exhibit bad performance' (ibid: 56). Democracies seem to contribute to political

Democracy – shows economic performance 'in the middle'

stability since they provide open space for political opposition and handovers of power. In its overview the HDR 2002 illustrates this argument by pointing to the time period between 1950 and 1990. In this period riots and demonstrations were more common in democracies, but more destabilizing in dictatorships. Moreover, wars were more frequent in non-democratic regimes and had much higher economic costs compared to democracies. Finally the report maintains that democratic governance can trigger 'a virtuous cycle of development' since political freedom empowers people to take responsibility and influence decisions through discussions. Consequently, the report presents the following strategy for human development: 'For politics and political institutions to promote human development and safeguard the freedom and dignity of all people, democracy must widen and deepen' (UNDP 2002: 1).

*Democracy –
is associated
with political
stability*

Kamwendo (1998) points out that since language touches on the soul and identity of any society it is also an important aspect of the process of democratization of a country. Here the use of the vernacular as the language of instruction in schools and language of information and debate in politics is very much in focus. In March 1996 the Malawi government directed that the vernacular should be used as language of instruction in the first four years of primary school. So far, these directions have not been implemented due to a wide variety of opposing views on the subject combined with the lack of necessary recourses⁴. Nevertheless, the relationship between language and democracy is a fundamental one and needs to be further elaborated upon, politically as well as academically.

*Democracy –
is inter-
twined with
language*

A lot of work has been put into the effort of developing a yardstick for democracy, illustrating that the nature of democracy is such that it is difficult to measure⁵. What seems to come out of such exercises is twofold. First, it is not so much a question of absolutes, whether a society or country is democratic or not, but rather a question of to which degree the society / country may be said to be democratic. Second, the way democracy is measured reflects how it is defined.

*Democracy
– is not easy
to measure*

⁴ See chapter 9: 'Promoting the Use of Mother Tongue in Education – a Case for Democracy'

⁵ See chapter 13: 'Can Democracy be measured?'

Dimensions and foundations of democracy

In his paper ‘The meaning and foundations of democracy’ Afrifa Githonga (1995) presents democracy by pointing out three dimensions and three foundations of democracy. The three dimensions are the abstract, the practical and the concrete dimension of democracy, while the foundations are the infrastructure, the technostucture and the superstructure of democracy. This part of the present chapter draws heavily on Githonga’s paper in structure, points made and wording used.

*The abstract dimension:
People’s vision*

The abstract dimension exists in the imagination of men and women. It is an intellectual creation, a mental model of what is possible within given frameworks. In its abstract dimension democracy is therefore a vision, a dream. A democratic system is one which has its roots in the people’s culture (ideas, values, attitudes and practice) and therefore is not foreign to people’s ideals. It is rather created in the particular people’s image, thus being representative of the people that is being governed and their vision of their society.

*The practical dimension:
How to organize decision making*

The practical dimension exists in the ways and means of men and women, in short: how things are done. This dimension of democracy is about how the vision, the ideas and ideals are transformed into reality. It is mainly the question of how to organize decision making. Janda et al (1993: 37) point to three basic questions that need to be addressed in this connection:

1. Who should participate in decision making?
2. How much should each participant’s preferences count in voting?
3. How many voters are needed to reach a decision?

One person – one vote

The fundamental principle in this context should be political equity, which means equal rights and equal responsibilities for citizens. This principle is often illustrated by the slogan ‘one person, one vote’.

The separation of powers is fundamental

It is obvious that decision making must be organized, or structured. There should be some kind of division of labour, division of responsibilities and division of rights. This is what is commonly called the ‘separation of powers’ in government, where checks and balances are built into the structures, securing a balance of power

between the different branches and different institutions of government. A deep wisdom is expressed in the phrase that ‘no person should be accuser, judge and executioner all in one.’ The separation of powers also leads to the matter of sharing out work for greater operational efficiency, creating institutions which have their specialized tasks within government. And traditionally the assembly of the representatives of the people has the supreme authority and all the other institutions of government are subordinate to it.

The concrete dimension exists in the experience of men and women and concerns to what degree they find the government delivering good, fair and just services in their everyday life. Lip service to principles and procedures is not good enough. The success of a democracy is measured by what it delivers of order, equality, freedom and public goods and services in the manner and magnitude the people needs and wishes. ‘The proof of the pudding is in the eating’ and the proof of democracy shows through the ability to deliver good benefits to ‘the people.’ In this context a statement by Masolo (1987: 25) should be noted: ‘what is to be considered as good rests with those that are governed.’

*The concrete dimension:
Does the government deliver good, fair and just services?*

The first foundation of democracy mentioned by Githonga is *the infrastructure of democracy* which is about making people governable. In this connection he stresses the economy. The system of production, distribution and consumption of material goods and services must cater for the so-called basic human needs in order to make people willing and able to be governed according to democratic principles. In addition come the cultural aspects that also contribute to shape people’s motivation and ability for governance.

*Infrastructure of democracy:
Making people governable*

The technostructure of democracy concerns principles of democracy in practical terms. The following set of principles, or characteristics of a sound democracy, is compiled mainly on the basis of HDR (UNDP 2002: 51) and Chidam’modzi (1999: 95):

- People’s human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, allowing them to live with dignity, which means that citizens are treated as rational, morally sensitive and active people.
- Consent of the governed is the basis of the government’s authority.
- Relations between citizens and government are characterized by freedom and responsibility.

*Techno-structure:
Characteristics of a sound democracy*

- People have a say in decisions that affect their lives for example through free and fair elections at regular intervals and consultations on specific issues.
- People can hold decision makers accountable based on an ample access to relevant information.
- The government maintains impartial systems of justice and rule by law.
- Inclusive and fair procedures, institutions and practices govern social interactions.
- Women are equal partners with men in private and public spheres of life and decision making.
- People are free from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, religion, gender or any other attribute.
- There is tolerance of dissident or opposing views and peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- Economic and social policies are responsive to people's needs and aspirations.
- Economic and social policies aim at eradicating poverty and expanding the choices that all people have in their lives.
- The needs of future generations are reflected in current policies.

Surely this list could be made longer, but making it shorter may be a better idea. Githonga seems to suggest that the principles of the technostructure of democracy may be summed up as openness, simplicity and clarity (Githonga 1995: 20):

*Summed
up as
– openness
– simplicity
– clarity*

1. The system should be open.
2. The operational mechanisms should be simple.
3. The institutional role structure should be clear.

*Super-
structure:
Is govern-
ment run in
accordance
with human
dignity?*

The superstructure of democracy is to be found in the values, beliefs, attitudes and practices of the people. 'And since the people must govern together, collectively, there is no way they can do so without a minimum of respect for one another, without according each other the right to human dignity...' (ibid: 22).

Dilemmas

Having described the dimensions and foundations of democracy, it is important to look at some of the dilemmas that become evident once the ideas and ideals are transformed into practical action.

Plato observed that democracy cannot guarantee good governance because it depends on the whims of the masses and according to him the masses are the least knowledgeable. Thus democracy may encourage opportunistic leadership, prioritizing issues and making decisions that are popular with voters rather than necessary for the people. Also, because of its emphasis on liberty, every individual may feel free to do as s/he likes, disregarding possible negative consequences of one's actions. 'In short, democratic ideals are capable of shooting democracy in the foot' (Chidam'odzi 1999: 95).

*Democratic
ideals –
capable of
shooting
democracy in
the foot*

Obviously there is a need for a minimum of knowledge, moral and personal integrity among the participants in decision making. However, to find out if or when people have this minimum competence seems to be an impossible task. Thus democracy actually comes out as a tremendous social and political experiment depending on people's decision making competence. There are three mechanisms that may help to safeguard against negative effects of this experiment. First is the hope and belief that people rise to match the responsibilities that come with the freedom and the rights of democracy. Second is the institutional separation of powers in the government with the checks and balances that come with it. Third is the continuous capacity building in democracy aimed at every society and every citizen. In this connection the education system and the media are important tools for information and communication.

*A
tremendous
social and
political
experiment*

Legitimacy of a government is very much depending on the degree of human welfare the citizens experience. Therefore, Janda et al (1993: 44) point out that 'Governments must have means for determining what the people want, as well as some means for translating those wants into acceptable decisions. In other words, democratic government requires institutional mechanisms– established procedures and organizations – to translate public opinion into government policy to be responsive.' In theory, this may best be done through direct rule. But in most societies the complexity and multitude of cases that have to be decided upon, makes it impractical if not impossible for citizens to participate to a full extent. The usual solution to this problem is for the citizens to elect some persons to act on their behalf. The major dilemma in this connection is to find persons who are really representative of the citizens in all the kinds of cases that need acting upon. This dilemma grows larger as we take into account that representatives through time build their

*Legitimacy
and repre-
sentation*

own capacity in decision making: they become to a lesser or larger degree professional decision makers, in other words: professional politicians. These are able to devote more time to politics and have access to more information than the people they are elected to represent. Naturally it is very difficult to determine what kind of conclusions the 'average citizen' (if such a being existed) would arrive at providing s/he had access to the same amount of time and information as their representative(s) enjoy. To complicate matters, in a representative democracy, the citizens get a substantial portion of their information from their elected politicians, usually delivered through the media. This of course makes the citizens prone to manipulation by their representative(s). Transparency, ample access to information and possibilities for two way communication between represented and representative seem to be important measures to balance this dilemma.

*A double role:
Representative
and leader*

To complicate matters even more, the politicians are often expected to be representatives of 'the average citizen' and visionary and communicative leaders at the same time. With the responsibility of being visionary comes the need to assess matters in a long time perspective. This may implicate the need to abstain from enjoying short term benefits to the favour of possible or probable long term benefits. In the discussion of the relationship between represented and representatives it is also relevant to point at the danger of the representatives using their position to patronage the citizens. Shutt (2001: 158) claims that 'One of the most corrupting features of contemporary Western democracy is the enormous power of patronage typically placed in the hands of high officials'. The feature of hand outs at political rallies is an often mentioned example of how such corruptive patronage shows in the African context.

The case in question is the relationship between the representative and the represented. In essence, politics is about power and the representatives are elected to exercise some kind of power. The crucial point is that this power is supposed to be exercised on behalf of the citizens and to their fair benefit rather than to the politician's own benefit. Therefore Shutt points out that it is important to nominate and elect politicians who are motivated by public service rather than personal ambition and acquisitiveness (ibid: 159). Society needs politicians who identify with the view that holding office is more a duty than a privilege. This need is clearly illustrated

by the fact that the term 'politician' in the Malawian language Chichewa actually means 'someone who plays tricks on people.'

It is a common notion that in a group of decision makers, the majority generally should have its way. This is what usually is named 'majority rule.' However, there are some reasons for holding a consequent majority rule back, and below the following are touched upon: minority rights, low voter turn-out, efficient administration and judiciary and decisions that have long term consequences.

*The main principle:
Majority rule*

There are some rights that everybody is entitled to, sometimes referred to as minority rights, and these rights should not be run over by a majority vote. Most people will agree that minority rights are for instance freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion. We know these as fundamental human rights. Opinion may differ on what else belongs to the category of minority rights. The following example may illustrate this. In Malawian context 'freedom of dress' is often mentioned as an example among civil liberties (for instance Chirwa 1998) demonstrating a reaction to the strict dress code that was imposed on civil society by the Banda regime (1961-1994). This raises the question if freedom of dress should be classified as a minority right. Opinion may also differ when it comes to what extent minority rights may be executed in a society. Does freedom of expression imply the right to express anything on one's mind, including insulting or throwing dubious suspicion on somebody else? Such questions are as important as they are difficult to answer on a general basis.

*Majority rule
and minority rights*

Majority rule also faces a dilemma in instances when there is little voter turn-out in an election. What is the legitimacy of decisions made by a majority established through a low turn-out of voters? It is difficult to make general statements on this question. It has to be dealt with in each case individually. Even so, it underlines every citizen's responsibility to exercise one's right to vote.

*Majority rule
and low voter
turn-out*

In any government there are a vast number of decisions that need to be made. The principle of separation of powers in government implies that there are some types of decisions that should be withdrawn from the political scene. Examples may be decisions within the judicial and administrative parts of government. Impartiality and efficiency are the major gains in this respect.

*Majority rule
and efficient
administration
and
judiciary*

Most constitutions have regulations that imply that 50% of the votes are not enough to change it. Often 2/3 of the votes are needed. In some cases a change also needs to be backed by a sufficient

*Majority rule
and decisions
with
long term
consequences*

majority of the votes in two consecutive national assemblies. This is for instance the case for the constitution of Norway. Similar rules may be written into the constitution of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), businesses and the like. The motive behind this is that constitutions should be relatively stable and not subject to changes based on the whims of people or short time pressure groups. Similar restrictions on majority rule may be put on different types of decisions that have long lasting consequences in any country, municipality or organization that is run according to democratic principles.

*Civil society
offers
supplemen-
tary access
to decision
making
processes*

Parallel with the model of majority rule runs the pluralist model which interprets government by the people as a system operating through competing interest groups. Political parties and trade unions have traditionally been the main instruments for people's participation in politics. But during the last few decades, NGOs and other organizations in civil society have increased their influence in this respect. Membership in different types of organizations may vary from time to time, reflecting different trends in society. It is therefore important to have a wide variety of vehicles for people's participation in decision making, offering opportunities for different people to influence decisions they find important. So best possible access to decision making processes and influential organizations for all, is an important ideal in a democracy. Still, in the real world, we know that people have uneven access to interest groups and uneven resources to participate in them. In addition, the influence such a group may have, depends heavily on the resources it has at its disposal. A problem in point is how people with money or other important resources may secure for themselves undue influence on the agenda as well as the content of concrete political decisions. Shutt (2001) claims that in order to enhance the quality of democracy in the Western world and elsewhere, restricting the influence of money interests is the one most important action to take. Alongside restrictions, he writes that transparency concerning the funding of political parties and political activities is absolutely necessary.

*Digital
democracy:
ICT has
potential of
further
developing
democracy*

The development of the information and communication technologies (ICT) raises the question of how this may influence and promote democratic practices. ICT has the potential of working against all kinds of hierarchies through delivering information and organizing discussions and debates across large distances socially as

well as geographically. This electronic or digital democracy may lead to more direct democracy compared to what we have seen so far. And schemes where citizens may use their home computers to cast their votes in elections may come. There is little doubt that these channels in the future will play an ever increasing role in government and it will be interesting to see how this will affect democratic theory and practice.

Democracy and school

John Dewey states that democracy is devoted to education and this is so because 'a government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who obey their governors are educated' (1966: 87). Clearly, to have a genuine democracy, citizens must have a minimum of general understanding of society combined with more specific knowledge of the matters to be decided upon and on how to make decisions. This kind of knowledge does not come by itself, it needs to be taught. The teaching may take place in different institutions in society, for instance in homes, religious and social groups and schools. In the following schools will be focused.

Democracy is devoted to education

It goes without saying that schools need to give the students a good cognitive understanding of the term democracy. The students need to grapple with the concept, looking at it from different angles, familiarizing themselves with the obvious strengths of democracy as well as the many dilemmas. Strange as it may seem, this is probably the easier part of the necessary democracy learning, mainly because it concerns learning *about* democracy⁶. It is mainly a theoretical approach to the concept which certainly must be taken seriously. Even so, the most important, difficult and time consuming part is the learning *for* democracy. This learning for democracy has several important aspects that need to be addressed.

The easier part: Learning about democracy

One aspect is the wide variety that constitutes the value base of democracy. This needs not only to be understood intellectually, but also to be learned in such a way that these values become part of the students' own values, part of their identity. The main goal is for the learners to internalize the values, beliefs, attitudes and practices of

The difficult part: Learning for democracy

⁶ See chapter 1: 'Learning Citizenship in Democracy'

human dignity, to make human dignity an important part of the learners' personal and fundamental values. If the teacher limits this teaching to talking, explaining and reading about these values, s/he will fail. These values have to show in the teacher's own attitudes and practices. This means for instance treating the students not like objects, but with respect, care and love. It also means to help students build their self respect so that they dare trust their own judgment, to voice their opinions, respect other people's opinion and yield to the better argument. In these ways the teacher may create a relaxed and secure atmosphere conducive to learning about and for democracy as well as other subjects.

*Students
need to
participate in
decision
making*

Another aspect is the practice of democratic procedures in the schools. MacJessie-Mbewe (1999: 29) states that 'Teachers, students, school administrators, and other participants in the educational system must understand what constitutes democracy and how it can be applied in educational institutions'. Understanding is not enough since teachers and administrators need to find ways to practise democracy in their own institution. The teachers need to introduce their students to participation in decision making concerning activities in school. This may be about teaching methods and activities in the classroom. It may be about deciding on codes of conduct, rules and regulations for the everyday life in the school itself. It is definitely about creating situations where the students are consulted, starting with decisions of limited consequences for the younger students and escalating as the students' maturity develop. Examples may be democratic decision making about a field trip and the running of a mini company⁷.

*The
technicalities
of democracy
must also be
learned*

Democratic attitudes and procedures are important for the everyday life in the school itself and at the same time they point beyond school. MacJessie-Mbewe writes that 'Our students should learn, while still in school, the democratic behaviour of being able to negotiate, by listening to and valuing the views of others, so that they fit easily into the larger democratic society in which they will live after school' (ibid: 25). Therefore it is also an important challenge for schools to motivate students to participate in elections and other democratic procedures for decision making and problem solving. The students should also learn how decisions are made through voting, how to administer a debate in such a way that

⁷ See chapter 12: Entrepreneurship and Democracy

everybody who is entitled to speak, is allowed to do so and more of that kind. In short the schools should not neglect to teach their students the technicalities of democracy.

Teaching democracy and developing a democratic culture is a long process, a deep commitment to the principles of democracy must be adopted. It is not sufficient for the students to learn to know the *word* democracy they need to know the *concept*. It is a question of developing democracy as a habit and a common understanding and sense of common responsibility: a spirit of commonness (Midgaard & Rasch 2004: 39). This takes time and patience to foster. The school is in a unique position to make a positive difference in this respect.

To foster democracy takes time and effort

Is democracy a Western concept?

In his paper 'The Democratic myth in the African Traditional Societies' Simiyu claims that in African history there is no clear cut democratic tradition, but rather 'various mixtures of rudimentary democratic institutions and despotism' (1995: 51). On the not-so democratic side he characterizes African societies in general as hierarchical, with social structures where upward mobility is very much restricted and an age-set system that favours the older age-groups. These are societies where the rights of the individual usually are subordinate to the needs of the fellowship, for instance in questions of peace and equilibrium. This is very much different from the democratic ideals of individual human rights, self determination and the right for citizens to decide how they shall be ruled and who shall rule them.

Simiyu: some non-democratic elements in African culture

Among a few examples of rudiments of democratic features Simiyu mentions that the sense of equality among age-mates is very strong and that the army sometimes offers a possible road for upward social mobility. Even so, he maintains that 'In Black Africa, whether the political system was that of the highly centralized states or of the amorphous non-centralized communities, it did not belong to a democratic tradition. There were rudiments of democratic principles and practices, especially in the non-centralized communities, but it would be dangerous to equate those practices with advanced forms of democracy' (ibid: 68).

– and some democratic elements

The late Tanzanian statesman, Julius Nyerere, on the other hand,

*Nyerere:
There is a
traditional
African
democracy*

seems to find more than rudiments of democracy in African culture. He even claimed that there is such a thing as 'Traditional African democracy' of which discussion, equality and freedom are essential characteristics (Kweka 1995). He emphasized the tradition of free discussions and the principles of consensus as typical African examples of 'government by discussion' (Simiyu 1995, Green 1995).

*Kenya:
Harambee*

In Kenyan context 'harambee' is an important feature in political as well as social life. Harambee means 'pulling together' or putting our hands together for a special cause or some common good. It may be constructing a school or water pipe, it may be someone needing help to pay for a funeral, a hospital bill or something else of importance. So 'everybody' chips in, as an act of fellowship, solidarity or taking responsibility for each other. It seems plausible to associate harambee with a democratic mindset.

*Tanzania:
Ujamaa*

The policy of 'ujamaa' on Tanzanian turf is founded on an idea similar to harambee. Ujamaa means family-hood and mutual involvement of all family members for the fellowship. During the 1970s rural people in Tanzania were assembled in special ujamaa villages. Here the inhabitants were supposed to share duties and jobs in such an organized manner that a larger variety of services than before could be available and the infrastructure like good roads, clean water, health services and education could be more easily available to more people. Since the larger part of the Tanzanians was rural peasants, an important part of the ujamaa policy focused on improving agricultural practices, and this was easier to achieve if people lived in villages rather than scattered in the countryside. Today very few seem to regard the ujamaa policy as successful, but that seems to be more because of the way it was implemented than the idea itself. The sharing of responsibilities, including decision making, in villages is clearly linked to democratic ways. And there is no doubt that President Nyerere regarded the ujamaa philosophy as something genuine African as he stressed the need to 'build upon the foundation of our past, and building also to our design' (Komba 1995: 37).

*Malawi:
Proverbs and
storytelling*

Chidam'modzi (1999) and Moto (1998) present a lot of examples of features in Malawian traditional systems of governance, proverbs and story telling that easily may be linked to democracy: social responsibility, discipline, conversation and dialogue, freedom of expression, the need to tolerate and respect other people's opinions

and choices, the need for accountability and transparency, an impartial, just and independent judicial system and 'the rule of law.' Moto (1998: 24) claims that 'proverbs and folk stories provide overwhelming evidence that democracy as a concept is not a totally new way of viewing how communities should be governed, but rather that democratic practice, ideals and principles are deeply embedded in the fabric of Malawian society.'

Depending on culture, history and situation, the brand of democracy differs between countries. Even so, the value of human dignity with its many and far reaching implications is universal and cannot be compromised as the ideal of democracy: Human dignity is the quintessence of democracy. In our days Western countries dominate the rhetoric and generally do well on measures of democratic governance. Still they have no copyright neither to the principles, practices nor rhetoric of democracy. There is no room or reason for royalty charges. Therefore every country, be it African, Western or other, must develop her own democracy. The challenge is to connect with own culture and history and blend it with the values, ideas, attitudes and practices supportive of human dignity. In this way it may become clear to more and more people that democracy is not a Western concept, but rather a universal one.

*Democracy
is not a
Western, but
a universal
concept*

Questions

1. Explain the difference between the substantive and the procedural parts of government.
2. Explain the meaning of the statement that democracy is government of, by and for the people.
3. How would you explain that human dignity is the underlying value of democracy?
4. Name some of the important advantages of democracy compared to other modes of government.
5. Explain the dimensions and foundations of democracy.
6. In this chapter democracy is claimed to be a tremendous social and political experiment. Which mechanisms may help to safeguard against negative effects of this experiment?
7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of representative democracy?
8. Majority rule is a main principle in democracy. Discuss some reasonable limitations to majority rule.
9. What is the main difference between learning *about* democracy and learning *for* democracy? Explain why the latter is considered to be more difficult.
10. Why should democracy be practised in schools?
11. Mention some indications that democracy may not be alien to African societies and culture.

Activities

1. The Inter-parliamentary Union's Universal Declaration on Democracy.

Read the declaration (in textbox). The declaration states: 'Democracy is based on two core principles: participation and accountability.'

- a. Discuss what participation and accountability means in practical terms in your situation today. Use concrete examples from your own experience.
- b. In which ways may increasing participation and increasing accountability contribute to the development of democracy in your country?

THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNIONS' UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON DEMOCRACY

In 1995 the Inter-Parliamentary Union assembled experts from various regions and disciplines to develop an international standard on democracy. Building on this work, the Universal Declaration on Democracy was adopted in 1997.

The declaration starts with basic principles. Democracy is a universally recognized ideal, based on values common to people everywhere regardless of cultural, political, social or economic differences. As an ideal, democracy aims to protect and promote the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, instil social justice and foster economic and social development. Democracy is a political system that enables people to freely choose an effective, honest, transparent and accountable government.

Democracy is based on two core principles: participation and accountability. Everyone has the right to participate in the management of public affairs. Likewise, everyone has the right to access information on government activities, to petition government and to seek redress through impartial administrative and judicial mechanisms.

Genuine democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in conducting the affairs of society. Democracy is also inseparable from human rights and founded on the primacy of the law, for which judicial institutions and independent, impartial, effective oversight mechanisms are the guarantors.

The declaration sets out the prerequisites for democratic government, emphasizing the need for properly structured, well functioning institutions. These institutions must mediate tensions and preserve the equilibrium between society's competing claims.

A parliament representing all parts of society is essential. It must be endowed with institutional powers and practical means to express the will of the people by legislating and overseeing government action. A key feature of the exercise of democracy is holding free, fair, regular elections based on universal, equal, secret suffrage.

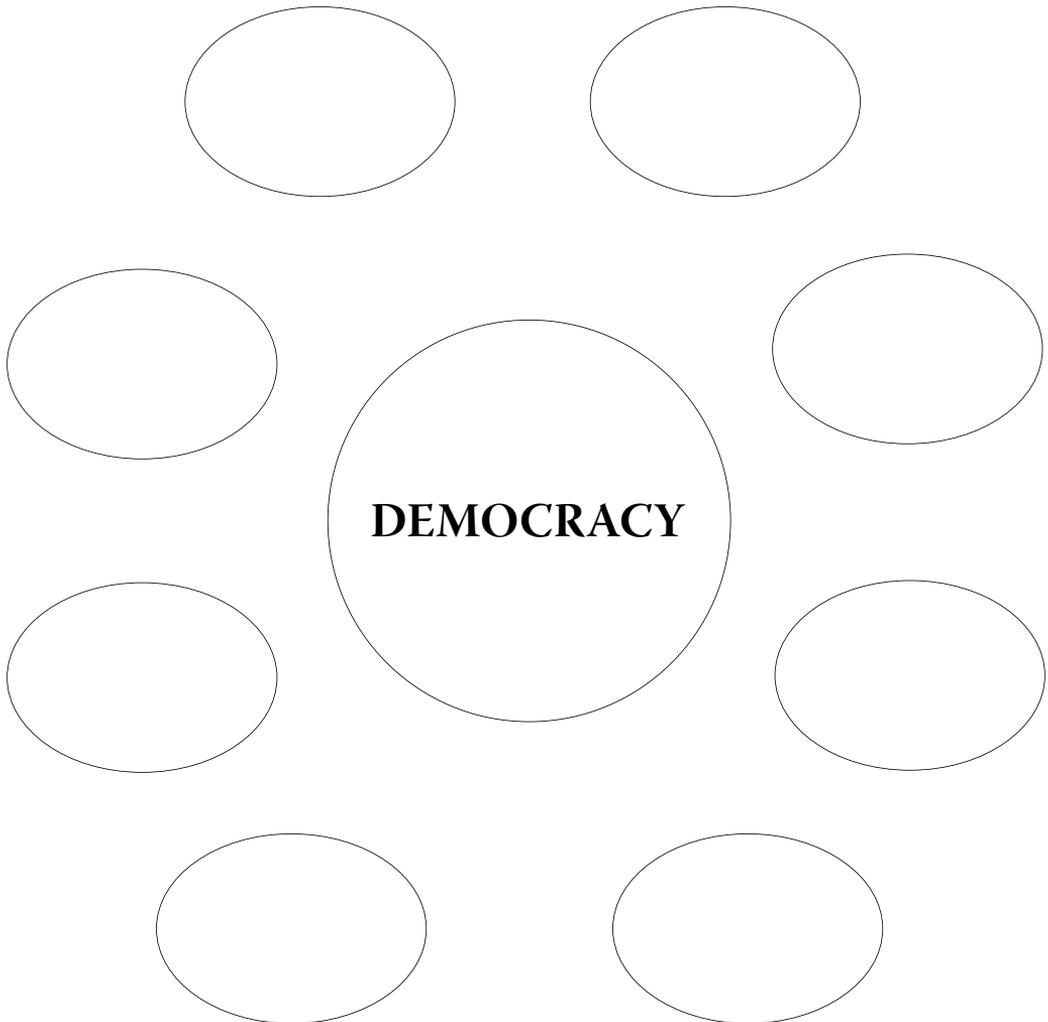
An active civil society is also essential. The capacity and willingness of citizens to influence the governance of their societies should not be taken for granted, and is necessary to develop conditions conducive to the genuine exercise of participatory rights. Society must be committed to meeting the basic needs of the most disadvantaged groups to ensure their participation in the workings of the democracy. Indeed, the institutions and processes essential to any democracy must include the participation of all members of society. They must defend diversity, pluralism and the right to be different within a tolerant society.

Democracy must also be recognized as an international principle, applicable to international organizations and to states in their international relations. Democracy is always a work in progress, a state or condition constantly perfectible. Sustaining democracy means nurturing and reinforcing a democratic culture through all the means that education has at its disposal.

Human Development Report 2002 Box 2,3 p 55

2. A mental map of democracy

- a. Write in each circle an association to democracy, or the name of an important aspect of democracy.
- b. Prioritize the associations or aspects of democracy.
- c. Explain your priorities.



References

- Chidam'odzi, H.F. (1999): 'Democracy and tradition in Malawi' In Chimombo, M., *Lessons in Hope: Education for Democracy in Malawi, Past, Present, Future*. Zomba: National Chancellor College Publications.
- Chirwa, C.W. (1998): "We Want Change": Transition or Transformation?' In M. Tsoka & C. Mikey, *Bwalo. A forum for social development*, Issue 2. Zomba: University of Malawi.
- Dewey, J. (1966): *Democracy and education*. New York: The Free Press. A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co.
- Githonga, A.K. (1995): 'The meaning and foundations of democracy' In W. O. Oyugi & A. K. Githonga (ed), *Democratic theory and practice in Africa*. Nairobi: East African Education Publishers.
- Green, R.H. (1995): 'Vision of Human-Centered Development: A study In Moral Economy' In C. Legum & G. Mmari, *Mwalimu. The Influence of Nyerere*. London. James Currey Ltd.
- Hesselberg, J. & I-E. Engh (1998): 'Befolkningsspørsmålet' In J. Hesselberg (ed), *Utviklingsgeografi*. Oslo: Tano Aschehoug.
- Janda, K. J.F. Berry and J. Goldman (1993): *The challenge of democracy. Government in America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Kamwendo, G.H. (1998): 'Democracy and Language Policy Reforms in Malawi: 1994-1997' In M. Tsoka & C. Mikey, *Bwalo. A forum for social development*, Issue 2. Zomba: University of Malawi.
- Komba, D. (1995): 'Contribution to Rural Development: Ujamaa & Villagisation' In C. Legum & G. Mmari, *Mwalimu. The Influence of Nyerere*. London: James Currey Ltd.
- Kweka, A. N. (1995): 'One-Party Democracy & the Multi-Party State' In C. Legum & G. Mmari, *Mwalimu. The Influence of Nyerere*. London: James Currey Ltd.
- MacJessie-Mbewe, S.L.W. (1999): 'Power vs. authority in the democratic Malawian classroom.' In M. Chimombo, *Lessons in Hope: Education for Democracy in Malawi, Past, Present, Future*. Zomba: National Chancellor College Publications.
- Mamdani, M. (1974): 'The Myth of Population Control: Family, Caste and Class in an Indian Village' New York, London: Monthly Review Press.
- Masolo, D.A. (1987): 'Ideological Dogmatism and the Values of Democracy' In W.O. Oyugi & A.K. Githonga (ed), *Democratic theory and practice in Africa*. Nairobi: East African Education Publishers.
- Midgaard, K. & B.E. Rasch (ed) (2004): *Demokrati – vilkår og virkninger*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Moto, F. (1998): 'Domesticating the Definition of Democracy' In M. Tsoka & C. Mikey, *Bwalo. A forum for social development*, Issue 2. Zomba: University of Malawi.

- Pateman, C. (1970): *Participation and democratic theory*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Shutt, H. (2001): *A New Democracy. Alternatives to a bankrupt world order*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Simiyu, V.G. (1995): 'The Democratic Myth in the African Traditional Societies.' In W.O. Oyugi & A.K. Githonga (ed), *Democratic theory and practice in Africa*. Nairobi: East African Education Publishers.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2002): *Human Development Report 2002. Deepening democracy in a fragmented world*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

PART 2

How to go about it:
Two Suggestions

CHAPTER 3

Survey on Democracy in the Classroom – a didactic Approach

By Odd R. Hunnes

Didactics is about practical and theoretical planning, carrying out, assessing and critical analysis of teaching and learning. In short didactics is often described as the *what, why and how* of learning. In this chapter performing a survey on democracy in the classroom will be presented in the light of this understanding of didactics.

What?

Civic Education Study (CES) is an international survey intended to give a picture of students' knowledge of democratic institutions and practices. In addition the young people's preparedness and will to participate in democratic processes in own socie-



FIGURE 1: A teacher's dream for a successful process of didactics? At first s/he detects some uncertainty (what?), afterwards there is a growing expectation (why?) which develops into enthusiasm (how?).

ty is focused. The democratic preparedness is mapped as knowledge, skills, views and attitudes. The will to involvement is mapped as the students' interest for politics and their present and probable future participation. The study offers a comparison between the 27 participating countries⁸.

From the vast number of questions in the CES, a selection is made with the intention to compose a questionnaire suitable for use in the classroom in secondary school (both lower and upper secondary)⁹. The questions have been tested in secondary schools in Malawi and Norway both. The selection of questions has been made on the following grounds:

- focus on important aspects of democracy
- focus on aspects where students answer differently, indicating that there is divergence in opinion or attitude

The selected questions are listed at the end of this chapter¹⁰.

Why?

What do students know?

Teachers know that when working in the classroom with this theme or the other, the students' existing competence on the actual theme usually is a good starting point. From this point we should further develop the students' competence to new heights. This is as clear in theory as it is difficult in practice. A main problem is that the teacher often does not know a whole lot about the students' existing competence. From the curriculum, text books and experience the teacher of course may know quite well what the school expects students to have learnt in school, but this may be something quite different from what the students actually know. Of course, different students also learn different things in the same classroom. Then students learn a lot outside school. On many topics, including important ones, they learn more outside school than inside.

Students know differently

For reasons like these, teachers in civics / social sciences are familiar with the situation that there are marked differences in existing competence between the stu-

⁸ You may read more about the study on <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/cived/faq.asp?FAQType=2>.

⁹ The presented selection is mainly done in cooperation with Leif Sletvold.

¹⁰ You will find an English version as well as a Norwegian one. Questions may of course be added or taken away to fit the actual situation.

dents in any classroom. This is the case for many themes and topics, including 'democracy'. Therefore it is quite challenging for the teacher to know what to focus on and how to go about it when democracy is on the agenda. This chapter suggests that running a survey on knowledge about and attitudes to democracy among the students in the class may be a viable approach.

Students find out what they know

Interestingly enough, often the students do also not know their own competence very well. Through participating in the survey they will become more consciously aware of their existing level of competence. This level may appear to be lower than anticipated for some and higher for others. To know what you know and what you do not know is important knowledge. So already during answering the questionnaire the students gain important knowledge about democracy and themselves.

An approach for participation

This approach is student centred in at least two ways. In addition to the focus on the students' competence comes the participation of the students in the activity through responding to the questionnaire. This participation is continued if the students are involved in registering the data from the survey. Surely they are further involved as the results from the survey are presented to them. On this basis they may also be invited to voice their opinion on what topics within the theme of democracy the class should focus on in the time to come and what approaches and learning methods they want to use. To involve the students when we plan learning processes is of course a good idea for a wide range of themes. Student participation and practising democratic procedures are general goals in our schools. When 'democracy' is the theme, democratic learning methods should be self evident.

A bonus profit

Running a survey like this also offers a bonus profit. Students and teachers alike often meet with statistics of different sorts and it is an important competence for students of civics / social sciences to know how to interpret them. A common approach is in class to read and discuss tables and figures. Through this work the students will gain knowledge about the topic and at the same time their ability to interpret statistics will improve. Being respondents may open their eyes for some new aspects of surveys. They will probably find that for some questions none of the programmed answers actually fit their opinions on the matter. Depending on the distance, they may end up ticking off the option which is least far away from their

own view or take their rescue in the option of 'do not know,' even though they actually may have an opinion. This may be of some help to them when they later interpret statistics in general, since they know from own experience that the options presented in the survey most probably do not portray accurately the opinions of the respondents. This leaves a little room for uncertainty connected with the results, which probably is quite healthy as a shield against an attitude that could be called the 'absolutism of statistics.'

How?

In good time

We envisage a situation where 'democracy' is on the agenda for the class for a certain period of time, may be a couple of weeks. The survey should be performed a few weeks before this period starts, leaving some time to follow up the survey through planning. This is especially important if the teacher plans to sum up the students' answers on his or her own. If the students are involved in the handling of the data, the need for a time span between the survey and the rest of the learning process is not quite as urgent.

15 minutes in the classroom

The students should be informed about the teacher's reasons for going through with the survey and how the survey will be used as part of the learning process about democracy. After this phase of information and motivation the students usually will need about 15 minutes to fill out their questionnaires.

Register and summarize results

After the students have completed their questionnaires, their markings have to be recorded and added up. Here a simple counting program on a computer may be used or the summarizing may be done manually. This work may be done by the teacher or students. If the students are participating, it is important that the teacher organizes and keeps a tight control. The teacher may chose to assign a selected group of students or all the students may be divided into groups in order to register answers from the questionnaires. In the latter situation each group will be given just a few questionnaires from which they will enter the data into a prepared form. Afterwards the results from each group will be entered into one final form where all the entries are summed up. The possible gain of engaging the students in the work

of registering the data is that they may see how difficult it sometimes is to interpret an answer even on a multiple choice question. In addition the summing up may take shorter time if the students are involved in this task. If students are participating in this work, it is very important that the anonymity of the respondents is observed.

Present results in class

The results from the survey must be presented for the class. This offers a good opportunity not just to describe or refer the respondents' answers but also to discuss them. To some questions there are correct answers, to others there are more or less probable answers. Then there are some questions where the attitudes and opinions of the respondents are asked for and in these cases there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer. However, the questions without correct answers are often the ones best suited for discussions and the teacher is encouraged to take the opportunity to do so.

A foundation for planning

The knowledge basis that is presented in the class is also a suitable basis for discussing which topics that should be focused during the rest of the time devoted to the theme 'democracy' in the class. Here the students' opinion should be taken into account. They may be invited not only to voice their opinion on the content, but also on learning methods to be used. Logically they should also be encouraged to take actively part in decision making and carrying out the plans agreed upon.



FIGURE 2: The survey may be a foundation for participation in the planning.

Assessment

At the end of the theme period, the learning process about democracy should be assessed. This should be done with the students as participants and the method presented below may be used.

Record positive and negative experiences

The students start by taking a sheet of paper and divide it into two parts. On the left hand side they put a minus (-) and on the right hand side a plus (+). On the left hand side they write everything they think negatively of in connection with the process and on the right hand side they write everything that they think positively of. The students have five minutes for this part. Then the blackboard is divided in two, the left hand side with a (-) and the right hand side a (+). On the blackboard the students now take turns to write all the points that they have taken down on their paper, but in such a way that no point has more than one entry.

Balance conclusions

Next, the students are divided into groups of two or three. From the entries on the blackboard each group prioritizes the five most important negative points and the most positive points, one list for each. The teacher collects, summarises and presents the two lists on a transparency film or on the blackboard. On the basis of these lists, the class discusses the way 'democracy' has been worked with. Two important questions are:

1. Which parts of the whole exercise have been so successful that we surely would like to repeat them another time?
2. Which parts of the whole exercise have failed so much that we sure would like to do it differently another time?

More questions may of course be added.

Store for future use

The smart teacher makes sure that notes are taken during this discussion and stored for future use.

A survey about knowledge and attitudes on democracy

1. In a democratic country (society) having many organisations for people to join is important because this provides ...

- A a group to defend members who are arrested
- B many sources of taxes for the government
- C opportunities to express different points of view
- D a way for the government to tell people about new laws

2. What is the main purpose of labour (trade) unions? Their purpose is to ...

- A improve the quality of products produced
- B increase the amount that factories produce
- C improve conditions and pay for workers
- D establish a fairer tax system

3. Which of the following is the clearest violation of civil liberties in a democratic political system?

- A An armed policeman in uniform enters a religious shrine.
- B A policeman breaks up a private meeting where people are criticising political leaders.
- C A policeman arrests members of a group who were plotting to blow up a government building.
- D A person carrying an unregistered gun is fined.

4. In a democracy the most important function of periodic (regular) elections is to ...

- A increase citizens' interest in government
- B make possible non-violent change in leadership
- C maintain current laws in the country
- D give more power to the poor

5. A dictator agrees to restore democracy in his country. Which of the following actions would be the most convincing evidence to support the claim that he is promoting democracy?

- A He makes statements supporting other leaders in his party.
- B He holds a Parade for Democracy in the largest city.
- C He agrees to a date for national elections including several parties' candidates.
- D He speaks to a newspaper reporter about the need for democracy.

6. Which of the following is most likely to cause a government to be called non democratic?

- A People are prevented from criticising (not allowed to criticise) the government.
- B The political parties criticise each other often.
- C People must pay very high taxes.
- D Every citizen has the right to a job.

7. Which of the following is necessary in democratic countries?

- A There are laws protecting the environment.
- B Many companies are owned by the government.
- C Citizens can influence public debate and decisions.
- D Political leaders are rarely criticised.

8. A country's constitution contains ...

- A statements about current relations with neighbouring countries
- B statements made by the President (Prime Minister) to the national legislature
- C statements made by the political parties to their supporters
- D statements of principle establishing the system of government and laws

9. Three of these statements are facts and one is an opinion. Which of the following is an OPINION?

- A Actions by individual countries are the best way to solve environmental problems.
- B Many countries contribute to the pollution of the environment.
- C Some countries offer to cooperate in order to diminish acid rain.
- D Water pollution often comes from several different sources.

10. Three of these statements are opinions and one is a fact. Which is a FACT (the factual statement)?

- A People with very low incomes should not pay any taxes.
- B In many countries rich people pay higher taxes than poor people.
- C It is fair that some citizens pay higher taxes than others.
- D Donations to charity are the best way to reduce differences between rich and poor.

11. In a democratic political system, which of the following ought to govern the country?

- A Moral or religious leaders.
- B A small group of well educated people.
- C Popularly elected representatives.
- D Experts on government and political affairs.

12. What is good and what is bad for democracy? Please tick the box in the column which best fits your opinion. If you think that the statement does not apply, put a tick in the last column.

	Very bad for democracy	Somewhat bad for democracy	Somewhat good for democracy	Very good for democracy	Do not know/ does not apply
a. When newspapers are free of all government (state, political) control, that is ...					
b. When courts and judges are influenced by politicians, that is ..					
c. When many different organisations (associations) are available (exist) for people who wish to belong to them, that is ...					
d. When political parties have different opinions (positions) on important issues, that is ...					
e. When laws that women claim are unfair to them are changed, that is ...					
f. When people refuse to obey a law which violates human rights, that is ...					
g. When newspapers are forbidden to publish stories that might offend ethnic groups (immigrant groups, racial groups, national groups), that is ...					
h. When government leaders are trusted without question, that is ...					

13. Please read each statement and select the box in the column which corresponds to the way you feel about the statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Do not know
a. Members of anti-democratic groups (groups that are against democracy) should be prohibited from organising peaceful (non-violent) demonstrations or rallies.					
b. Members of anti-democratic groups (groups that are against democracy) should be prohibited from running in an election.					
c. Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections.					
d. The politicians quickly forget the needs of the voters who elected them.					
e. I am able to understand most political issues easily.					

14. For each of these activities, tick the box to show how often you do it.

	Never	More seldom than once a week	About once a week	Daily	Do not know
a. How often do you have discussions of what is happening in your national (your country's) politics (government)?					
b. How often do you have discussions of what is happening in international politics?					
c. How often do you read articles (stories) in the newspaper about what is happening in this country?					
d. How often do you read articles (stories) in the newspaper about what is happening in other countries?.					
e. How often do you listen to news broadcasts on television?					
f. How often do you listen to news broadcasts on the radio?					

PART 2: How to go about it: Two Suggestions

15. Tick one box in each row for each action to show how likely you would be to do it.

	I will certainly not do this	I will probably not do this	I will probably do this	I will certainly do this	Do not know
a. Vote in national elections.					
b. Get information about candidates before voting in an election.					
c. Join a political party.					
d. Write letters to a newspaper about social or political concerns.					
e. Be a candidate for a local or city office.					
f. Participate in a non-violent (peaceful) protest march or rally.					
g. Block traffic as a form of protest.					

16. To do a good job as an active participant in our democracy I need to know more about

.....

.....

.....

.....

En undersøkelse om kunnskaper og holdninger knyttet til demokrati

1. Organisasjoner er viktige i demokratiske land fordi de sørger for ...

- A at det er noen til å forsvare medlemmer som er arrestert
- B at myndighetene har flere muligheter til å kreve inn skatt
- C at forskjellige synspunkter kan diskuteres
- D at myndighetene når folk med opplysninger om nye lover

2. Hva er hovedformålet med fagforeninger? Hovedformålet er å...

- A forbedre kvaliteten på produktene
- B øke fabrikkens produksjon
- C forbedre lønn og arbeidsforhold for arbeideren
- D lage et mer rettferdig skattesystem

3. Hvilket av punktene nedenfor er det klareste bruddet på folks rettigheter i et demokratisk land?

- A En væpnet politimann går inn i en kirke eller moské.
- B En politimann stanser et privat møte hvor folk kritiserer de politiske lederne.
- C En politimann arresterer medlemmer av en gruppe som planlegger å sprengte en regjeringsbygning.
- D En person som blir tatt med ulovlig våpen, får en bot.

4. Hensikten med regelmessige valg er å ...

- A øke innbyggernes interesse for politikk
- B gjøre det mulig å skifte ut politikere med ikke-voldelige midler
- C sikre at lovene i landet ikke blir forandret
- D gi mer makt til de fattige

5. En diktator ønsker å innføre demokrati i landet sitt. Hvilken av følgende handlinger vil være mest overbevisende for å vise at han virkelig ønsker demokrati?

- A Han gir støtte til andre ledere i sitt eget parti.
- B Han avholder en parade for demokratiet.
- C Han bestemmer en dato for nasjonale valg med kandidater fra flere partier.
- D Han snakker med en avisjournalist om behovet for demokrati.

6. Hva er en koalisjonsregjering? En regjering som ...

- A består av medlemmer fra ett stort politisk parti
- B består av medlemmer fra to eller flere politiske partier
- C er dannet uten deltagelse fra noe politisk parti
- D er dannet med støtte fra ledere i næringslivet

7. Den viktigste grunnen til å ha mer enn ett politisk parti i et demokrati er ...

- A å sørge for at velgerne har flere alternativer
- B å sørge for arbeid til partimedlemmer
- C å informere folk om regjeringens beslutninger
- D å hindre korrupsjon og uærlighet i regjeringen

8. Hva vil være det beste eksempelet på 'direkte demokrati'?

- A Å la statistiske data bestemme.
- B Å fatte beslutninger etter en folkeavstemning.
- C Å beslutte på grunnlag av meningsytring fra seerne etter TV-debatter.
- D Å la statsministeren bestemme.

9. Nyhetsoppslag:

REGJERINGSMEDLEM BLIR BEDT OM Å GÅ AV

Samferdselsministeren valgte A/S Asfalt til å bygge en vei til tross for at firmaets tilbud var høyere enn andre firmaers. Det ble senere avslørt av ministerens bror

har en større aksjepost i A/S Asphalt. Flere stortingsrepresentanter krever ministerens avgang.

Hvorfor vil stortingsrepresentantene at ministeren skal gå av?

- A Ministeren bør ikke bestemme hvem som skal bygge veier.
- B Ministerens familie bør ikke eie aksjer i noe firma.
- C Ministeren mottok penger fra firmaet som skal bygge veien.
- D Ministerens beslutning ble påvirket av hans private interesser.

10. Hva er bra og hva er dårlig for demokratiet?

	Svært dårlig for demokrati	Ikke så bra for demokratie	Ganske bra for demokratiet	Svært bra for demokratiet	Vet ikke
a. Hvis staten ikke kontrollerer avisene, er det ...					
b. Hvis politikere har innflytelse på dommere og rettsvesen, er det					
c. Når det finnes mange organisasjoner som folk kan melde seg inn i, er det ...					
d. Når politiske partier har forskjellige meninger om politiske saker, er det ...					
e. Hvis det finnes lover som blir forandret fordi kvinner mener de er urettferdige mot dem, er det ...					
f. Når folk nekter å følge en lov som krenker menneskerettigheter, er det ...					
g. Hvis det er forbud mot å trykke artikler som kan komme til å henge ut bestemte folkegrupper, er det ...					
h. Hvis man uten forbehold stoler på politiske ledere, er det ...					

11. Les hver påstand og kryss av i boksen som passer best med hva du mener.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Enig	Svært enig	Vet ikke
a. Medlemmer av grupper som er mot demokratiet bør ikke få gjennomføre fredelige demonstrasjoner eller møter.					
b. Medlemmer av grupper som er mot demokratiet, bør ikke få stille til valg.					
c. Innvandrere som har levd i et land i flere år, bør ha rett til å stemme ved valgene.					
d. Politikerne glemmer fortønskenene til velgerne som valgte dem.					
e. Jeg forstår lett de fleste politiske spørsmål.					

12. Kryss av den boksen som viser hvor ofte du gjør dette.

	Aldri	Sjeldnere enn én gang i uka	Omtrent én gang i uka	Daglig	Vet ikke
a. Hvor ofte er du med på diskusjoner om det som skjer i norsk politikk?					
b. Hvor ofte er du med på diskusjoner om det som skjer i internasjonal politikk?					
c. Hvor ofte leser du artikler i avisene om det som skjer i Norge?					
d. Hvor ofte leser du artikler i avisene om det som skjer i andre land?					
e. Hvor ofte ser du på nyheter i fjernsynet?					
f. Hvor ofte hører du på nyheter i radio?					

13. Sett kryss ved hver linje som viser hvor sannsynlig det er at du kommer til å gjøre akkurat det.

	Jeg kommer helt sikkert ikke til å gjøre dette	Jeg kommer sannsynligvis ikke til å gjøre dette	Jeg kommer sannsynligvis til å gjøre dette	Jeg kommer helt sikkert til å gjøre dette	Vet ikke
a. Stemme ved Stortingsvalg.					
b. Skaffe meg informasjon om partiene før jeg stemmer.					
c. Forbli medlem eller melde meg inn i et politisk parti.					
d. Skrive brev til en avis om sosiale eller politiske saker jeg er opptatt av.					
e. Stille opp som kandidat ved kommunevalg.					
f. Delta i en fredelig protestmarsj eller møte.					
g. Blokkere trafikken for å protestere mot noe.					

14. Hvordan bør uenigheter løses i et demokrati?

- A I et demokrati bør vi ende opp med den løsning som flertallet ser seg tjent med.
- B Holdningen bør være at mindretallet har alltid rett.
- C Hvis saken er av meget stor betydning for de som er i mindretall, bør flertallet ta hensyn til dette.
- D En bør finne løsninger som alle kan gi sin tilslutning.

15. Stortinget står overfor et lovforslag som hvis det blir vedtatt vil få store konsekvenser for landet. For at forslaget skal kunne vedtas må det kreves ...

- A alminnelig flertall (d.v.s. mer enn 50 prosent av stemmene)
- B et høyt krav til valgdeltagelse og alminnelig flertall
- C kvalifisert flertall (d.v.s. minst 2/3 av stemmene)
- D slike forslag bør avvises

16. Hvem har den lovgivende makten?

- A Høyesterett.
- B Politiet.
- C Stortinget.
- D Menneskerettighetsorganisasjoner.

17. Hva innebærer *parlamentarisme*?

- A At nasjonalforsamlingen (i Norge Stortinget) har den lovgivende makt.
- B At de som styrer er valgt av folket.
- C At regjeringen må ha nasjonalforsamlingens (i Norge Stortingets) tillit.
- D At nasjonalforsamlingen (i Norge Stortinget) er landets øverste myndighet.

18. Det store flertall av de som arbeider i departementene er

- A valgt
- B ansatt
- C utnevnt av den sittende regjering
- D statsrådenes nære politiske medarbeidere

19. For å kunne fungere godt i vårt demokratiske system, trengte jeg å kjenne bedre til

CHAPTER 4

Searching for Traces of Democracy in the Students' own Culture

Suggesting how to work with this challenge

By Odd R. Hunnes

Democracy is government of the people, meaning that the government is not alien to the people's way of life. Democracy is supposed to be in line with the values, attitudes and ways of the people. These ways may be reflected in the constitution, laws, regulations, procedures of government and they are certainly reflected in the general culture of the people. This implies that in Malawi as well as in Norway, there are many ideas, views, values, mindsets, procedures, rules and regulations that may be positively associated with democracy.

So the exercise presented in this chapter is mainly about searching for all sorts of traces of democracy in the students' own culture. The aim is to familiarize the students with the concept of democracy not only intellectually, but also culturally. Hopefully this work will help the students identify their own relation to democracy as a starting point for a learning process where they may further develop their understanding and their attitudes in this field.

This presentation has the following structure:

1. Working on a list of traces
 - a. From scratch
 - b. Checking existing list

2. Written assignment

The teacher may of course take parts of the methods here presented and combine them in ways s/he sees fit for own use.

Working on a list of traces

Two approaches are suggested:

- a. From scratch. Here a process including activities at home as well as at school is suggested. This approach should be possible to use in Malawian and Norwegian schools both.
- b. Checking an existing list. This is an approach which is intended for Malawian students. A list of traces of democracy is presented and the students are invited to check whether or not they are familiar with the entries on the list.

From scratch

In the classroom

This approach starts with the students in the classroom, giving them the following assignment conducted as a classroom discussion:

‘Let us make a list of as many traces of democracy in our own culture as possible.’

We organize the work in three phases:

1. Brain storming
2. Sharing
3. Prioritising

Brainstorming

The main challenge for this phase is to bring forth all sorts of ideas that may be relevant to the present theme. The more ideas, the better it is.



FIGURE 1: Brainstorming: The more ideas that we may come up with, the better.

This work may be organized

- Either as an individual work, where each student during 15 minutes writes down own ideas
- Or as a group work where the group of learners during a similar period of time writes down all the ideas the group participants can come up with. During this work no discussions and no criticism of any idea or suggestion may take place in the group. The slogan is: Let us get most ideas possible on the list!
- Or as a plenary discussion in the class. In this case the brain storming phase and the sharing phase are combined. (See about the sharing phase below).

It may be a help during the brainstorming to focus on one area at the time (for instance 3 minutes on each of the following):

- at home
- at school
- in organizations like church, sporting club, NGOs etc.
- in the village
- in politics

During this phase it is important that the teacher does not disturb or intervene with the students' work, but rather encourage them to fearlessly bring forth any idea that crosses their minds.

Sharing

The students in the class are now asked to share with each other the ideas and suggestions that have come up during the brainstorming phase. The students suggest and the teacher (or a selected student) writes the ideas on the blackboard (or a transparency film or a flip over sheet).

The suggestions that come, will give an impression of the students' conceptions of democracy. So here the teacher may take the opportunity through questions to gently lead the students into fields where they up to now have not thought of as relevant to democracy. Through her/his own understanding, the teacher thus may help the students expand their associations and enlarge their understanding through connecting their own culture to democracy.



FIGURE 2: The groups should share the ideas that they have come up with to the benefit of all.

Prioritising

Surely, not all the suggestions that come forth during the sharing will be equally relevant to the theme 'democracy'. The challenge during the prioritising phase is to place each idea in one of the three following categories: 'of large relevance', 'of relevance' and 'of little relevance'. There is of course no 'correct' answer into which category each suggestion should be included. What is important is the discussion in the class *where* to put the different ideas and *why*. Therefore there may be room for writing comments to each idea. A form like the following may be used:



Suggestions / ideas	Comments
Of large relevance	
Of some relevance	
Of little relevance	

Home work

After having concluded the classroom exercise described above, the students may be given an assignment as home work. For day students this assignment should last for at least a week, for boarding students the assignment has to be performed during a school break upon their return home.

The assignment is to find all sorts of traces of democracy that may be detected in their home area: at home, in the village, in their church and other relevant places. Their investigation will include observing what is taking place in their home area and interviewing parents, relatives, age mates, village dwellers, teachers, local politicians and so on. They will make a list of what they find. The list will consist of a description of each example.

Once back at school, the students report their findings to the class. All the examples are collected in a folder which may be included in the school's teaching material for later occasions.

Checking an existing list on Malawian culture

Sometimes it is stated that democracy is a Western concept and thus alien to African societies and culture. This is not necessarily so. Mr Amos Chauma, Mr Matthew Chilambo and Mr Robert Chonzi have therefore made a list of traces of democracy in Malawian culture.

Malawian students may use this list as a bank of examples or they may mark and comment upon their own familiarity of each of the examples (mark with 'yes' or 'no' in the relevant column in the table). The challenge for the students is then to add examples to the list from their own home, school, church, NGOs, village and what they know from politics, newspapers and more.

Example	Known from own experience Yes / No	Comment
Getting married or preparing to marry: Communication between the two partners verbal or otherwise. The proposed partner has the obligation to respond either positive or negative.		
Getting married or preparing to marry: Communication from parents of either partner on their wishes for their children to marry.		
Getting married or preparing to marry: Kind services offered willingly to the parents or relatives of the possible marriage partner.		
Getting married or preparing to marry: Formal discussions on marriage arrangements where representatives of both parties meet, hear and agree.		
The parents of the betrothed boy and girl formally report to the chief in good time about the marriage agreements.		
Indaba of elderly women to select a village head.		
The selected successor for a chief is usually taken unawares on the day of installation with the approval from the senior chiefs. On the main day of enthronement the group village head calls for a meeting of the citizens including those from neighbouring villages to celebrate.		

Promoting peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups for example tobacco tenants as well as land re-settlers from congested parts of the country, are given land and allowed to inter-marry.		
Voluntary communal labour for common good.		
Consultations and open discussions in times of disputes / problems such as land disputes and epidemics (to the extent of fasting to seek a solution).		
As a principle, equity is upheld in Malawian culture as demonstrated in equal/fair distribution of land and other resources administered by the chief. Even the chiefs' titles demonstrate this for example Gawa undi, make Wana, Chalo.		
Handling of calamitous situations such as witchcraft practices including training of youngsters as wizards. The suspect is brought before a council of elders to be heard and brought before the chief for further action. Decisions are made by consensus.		
When accused, there is a right to be heard before councillors and witnesses.		
Settlement of serious disputes where the accused, who might have killed someone, has a chance to confess to the chief (kugwira mbendera) and is punished accordingly.		
Settlement of serious disputes where the offended has the right to appeal to the same chief and is compensated or appeased appropriately.		
The right to appeal is upheld in all disputes.		
In the chief's court the right to remain silent is not granted because of the belief in contact and dialogue		
Councillors consult and discuss after hearing from both compliant and defendant before making judgement.		

Councillors related to the accused excuse themselves from handling the case to avoid bias.		
The accused also consults on the judgement before appealing.		
Respect of authority of the chief by being given a seat of honour at civic meetings, funerals and festival meetings. In return the chief respects the views and needs of the citizens.		
Family disputes between husband and wife are settled through consultation and discussion by marriage councillors from both families. With the advent of Christianity, if the partners belong to a church, church elders are consulted and they may settle the dispute. The right to appeal to the chief's council is still respected where the parties are not reconciled.		
In connection with death: Cooperation, consultation and team spirit particularly relating to preparation of the grave and coffin or linen.		
In connection with death: Women donate flour, firewood and cash / relish for the meals during the funeral ceremony.		
In connection with death: The bereaved family's house is cleaned or floors smeared.		
In connection with death: Close relatives give company to the bereaved family for at least seven days.		
My own additions to the list:		

Written assignment

This theme may be concluded as the students are given the assignment to write a paper on the following topic: 'Is democracy a concept alien to our culture?'

PART 3

A Look back: Historical Background

CHAPTER 5

Democracy in Norway in a Historical Perspective

By Eivind Indresøvd

When looking at changes taking place in societies we will find different types of development. Two of the most characteristic ones are *trends* and *turning points*. Gradual and rather slow changes are always taking place in societies. This type of change may be called a *trend* and is not always easy to see, partly because it develops over a long period of time. Then we have changes that happen more rapidly. These are called *turning points* and in such cases much new will appear in a rather short time period. Many will also say that society has changed more profoundly. Both types of changes will be discussed in this chapter as we look at the development of democracy in Norway. But in an overview like this the turning points get special attention, mainly because they are more visible than the trends.

*Trends and
turning
points
important in
history*

Norway in the 1800s

200 years ago Norway had about 900 000 inhabitants and the country was reckoned to be among the poorest in Europe. In the following century the population increased to 2.2 million. In the same time period, from 1860 to 1920, more than 700 000 Norwegians emigrated to North America, many of them driven out by poverty. What caused the increase in population? More food was being produced in agriculture and in the fisheries, so nutrition had improved and many could afford to build better houses. The first vaccination (smallpox) was introduced in 1810 and hygiene also improved. The country was in the midst of a process of rapid

*Increasing
population
and rapid
moderni-
sation*

Seven years of compulsory school

modernisation. Both an agricultural and an industrial revolution were in fact taking place. In a country where communication between different regions had been made difficult by tall mountains and long distances, a communications revolution evolved. People were 'knit' together in new ways by steamboats, railway lines, roads, telephone lines and so on. Culturally the modernisation showed through the establishment of a school system that was compulsory for all and had a common curriculum. From 1889 everyone had to go to school for at least seven years.

This process was enhanced by the founding of a large number of interest associations. In this way people joined organisations they sided with. To many, these organisations came to be a good training ground for performing on the public stage and many also learnt that the aims these organisations wanted to pursue, must in the end be realised through political participation.

1814: Background

Union with Denmark

The development of democratic institutions in Norway started more than two hundred years ago. The year 1814 may be characterised as a major turning point in Norwegian history. Until this year Norway had been in union with Denmark for more than 400 years. It was called a union, but Denmark was no doubt the stronger part. The two countries were for many years governed by absolutist monarchs and their common aim was to weld the countries together politically, economically and culturally. In short, the kings wanted to create a united nation with the Danish capital, Copenhagen, as its centre. The position of Norway in this union can to some extent be characterized as that of a colony. Vital political decisions were made in far away Copenhagen, often by people who did not know Norway very well. The important political institutions were also located in Copenhagen and a disproportionately large part of the money paid by the people of Norway as taxes, ended in Copenhagen and was spent in Denmark. But it should also be added that historians still discuss the financial relations between Norway and Denmark. The government in Copenhagen did quite a lot to help encourage trade and industry in Norway, especially in the 1700s, and goods produced in Norway enjoyed advantages in the Danish market. Compared to the way other peripheral countries (like Ireland) were treated at this time in Europe, it may be

argued that Norway was lucky to have Denmark as its 'mother country.'

Economic activity increased sharply in Norway during the 1700s and an urban bourgeoisie began to develop. The population was also increasing rapidly. Local government had to expand and a number of new public servants, *embetsmenn*¹¹, as they were called, were employed. Many of the persons employed in government and the leaders of trade and industry in Norway had a Danish background. But after a generation or two in Norway, many of them gradually began thinking more like Norwegians. Questions like the following began to appear: Why should all the important decisions be made in Copenhagen? Why do we not have a Norwegian bank in Norway? Why should we send our sons all the way to Copenhagen to get a university education? This 'independence' thinking can be seen as an early emerging Norwegian patriotism. There was, however, no question about leaving the union, but rather a wish that the union should adjust some more to Norwegian demands.

*Emerging
Norwegian
patriotism*

At the end of the 1700s there were clear signs of an emerging Norwegian patriotism in the upper classes in Norway. This could, under the right circumstances, develop into a national movement aimed at establishing Norway once more as an independent nation. The question was whether the Norwegian society was strong enough, rich enough and self-conscious enough to be able to leave the association with Denmark and step into the ranks of independent states.

1814: a new constitution and democratic institutions

During the year 1814 'the right circumstances' did appear. On the European continent war had been raging for many years (the Napoleonic wars). Denmark-Norway managed for some years to keep itself neutral. But it became steadily more difficult to balance between the principal antagonists, France and Britain. In 1801 and later in 1807 British forces attacked Copenhagen and captured the Danish-Norwegian fleet and after the last attack a choice had to be made. The king in Copenhagen decided to ally with Napoleon. This might have been the best decision for Denmark, but it resulted in

¹¹ Singular: *embetsmann*, plural *embetsmenn*

serious problems for Norway. Britain put up a sea blockade and Norway was completely isolated by the British navy. In this way the export by ship of Norwegian goods like timber, fish and iron was prevented. At the same time the vital import of grain from Denmark was stopped. This meant difficult times and lack of food for many and starvation for the poor. To many it also illustrated the problems of staying in a union with Denmark. Norway had to find her own way!

A Norwegian rebellion

The events on the continent, with Napoleon's defeat to Russia in 1812, marked the beginning of the end of the emperor. Sweden decided to join Britain and her allies and demanded Norway as the 'reward' for her support. This led to what may be called a Norwegian rebellion. In an attempt to prevent the transfer of Norway to Sweden, the Danish crown prince was sent to Norway on a secret mission to start an uprising. He probably had a hope that if Norway could stand up as a kingdom of her own, it would be very difficult for Sweden to force Norway into a Swedish-Norwegian union. And perhaps Norway would want to renew her union with Denmark after the war?

A national awakening

At once the crown prince of Denmark took a leading role in the Norwegian rebellion. It was decided that a national assembly had to be elected. A constitution had to be agreed upon by the assembly and then a king could be elected. Norway would then be a kingdom in her own right. At the beginning of April in 1814, 112 elected representatives met and started working on the new constitution. By the 17th of May the work on the constitution was finished and the crown prince was elected king. Norway had been restored as an independent state. And the representatives could do what they did knowing that behind them was a strong national movement. A national awakening had taken place.

The new constitution

What kind of a constitution had the representatives drafted for Norway? We clearly see the inspiration from the American Constitution of 1787 and the new constitution in France from 1791. The Norwegian constitution was written in five weeks and it is the most important legacy of 1814. Ever since it has been the basis on which political life and the country's civil rights have rested. The sovereignty of the people was to be the backbone of the constitution combined with the division of power. Power was divided between *Stortinget* (the national assembly), the *king* and his government and the *courts*. *Stortinget* was to make laws and decide on

the national budget, the king was to have the executive power while the independent courts had the judicial power. Stortinget was to be elected on the basis of a wide franchise. The rules of suffrage were liberal for the time and all men over 25 years of age who were public officials, farmed taxed land or had a property of a certain value, got the right to vote. This meant as many as 30-40 per cent of all men. In this way many of the small farmers were given political influence, not only as voters, but they could also be elected members of Stortinget. No other country in Europe had such a wide franchise at that time.

*Division of
power*

1814: the Swedish-Norwegian union

The year 1814 also meant that the political drama on the European continent left its mark on the development in Norway. Early in 1814 Norway left the union with Denmark and the year ended with Norway having to enter a new union, this time with Sweden. The nations that defeated Napoleon had promised the Swedish king Norway as a prize and a small and poor country like Norway had no chance to stand up against this. But in the autumn the situation in many ways had changed to the advantage of Norway. A democratic constitution, her own political institutions, with the national assembly at the centre and a strong national movement were vital elements. So, when Norway was to enter the forced union with Sweden, it became much more a union between equal partners than had been the case in the Danish-Norwegian union. True enough, the Norwegians had to accept the Swedish king and he was given much power. Norway was not allowed to have her own foreign policy and the king also had a suspensive veto on legislation. But the rest of what had been won in the spring of 1814 was saved. The first paragraph of the constitution stated: 'The Kingdom of Norway is a free, self-governing, indivisible and inalienable realm unified with Sweden under one king.'

*A new union,
now with
Sweden*

Comparing the two countries, Sweden was definitely the strongest. The country had also been dominated for a long time by an aristocracy ruling in an alliance with the king. This meant that Sweden was strongly influenced by powerful groups with rather conservative attitudes. Could a more democratic Norway safeguard her constitution and political institutions in the union in the coming years?

*Difficult
years after
the war*

As expected, the first years after the war proved to be difficult years for the new state. Many private companies went bankrupt and the state lost money as well. Financial problems were made worse by an enormous rate of inflation. A special tax, called 'the silver tax,' had to be paid in silver by all who were well off. But what was even more threatening was the king's plan to weaken democracy and to put Norway into a closer union with Sweden. Again and again the king's proposals were rejected by Stortinget and the independent position of Norway was gradually secured.

*The group of
embetsmenn
was pivotal*

The leaders of the resistance against the king's attempts to strengthen his power and to weaken the democratic institutions of Norway were the embetsmenn, a small but very important group of officials, or public servants. They were few, only about 2 000, but thanks to their background and their position in society more generally, they came to constitute what we could call a national class along with the business elite and some of the largest farmers. Since Norway lacked an aristocracy, the farmers and the middle classes were ready to accept the embetsmann group as their political leaders, at least for the time being.

1837: local self government

*More power
to the people*

Another important step in the development of democracy in Norway was taken in 1837 with the introduction of local self government. A local board elected by the people was given the power to decide how they would govern their municipality in certain areas such as the building of schoolhouses, the salary of the teachers, building and maintenance of local roads and the care of the poor. This reform was introduced in Stortinget by a group of farmers, but was also supported by the embetsmann group. So far the local communities had been governed by public servants. This group came to lose some of their power and it may seem strange that the embetsmann group in Stortinget would support the reform. But this tells something about the way they looked upon their role as a national class. They were, quite naturally, interested in safeguarding many of their privileges, but they were also progressive. More power to the people and more of local self government meant to the embetsmann group that the administration of local communities was improved. The idea was that as the leading class in Norwegian society, they also had to take responsibility for the modernising process

of the nation. Material progress would also come easier with good governance and this would enhance development for everyone.

The local board that was to be elected was called the *Formannskap* and the law that established local self government was called *Formannskapsloven*. In the first years rather few took part in the local elections, but gradually interest increased. And these local boards came to be very important for the development of Norwegian democracy. An increasing number of persons became involved in politics and the running of their local communities and they had to learn the basics of political participation. They also came to learn that some of the problems they met in local government were strongly influenced by decisions made in Stortinget. So really to change things in their own communities they also had to get involved in politics at the national level.

*Local board:
an important
step for the
development
of democracy*

Seen from a more general point of view the task of local government is to make decisions in local matters and to be a link between citizens and central government. To most citizens central government is something distant and the most important link is the vote every fourth year. In the long periods between elections, local government should give citizens a feeling that they are included in the system of governance. In other words: a feeling of ownership. Interest associations may often have the same function.

After the introduction of local government the king gradually became less involved in Norwegian politics. He was not the young and energetic man any longer. He had not succeeded in his attempts to direct Stortinget and the cabinet. The political institutions of Norway would not accept the power of a strong monarch. With the king more in the background, the officials of Norway came to dominate the cabinet. The cabinet itself ended as a self recruiting body of politicians with a background as embetsmenn. For several years the embetsmenn also came to play a dominating role in Stortinget, much because the majority of farmers and others with a middle class background looked upon them as representatives of the leading national class and accepted their leadership.

*Government
closer to the
people*

Parliamentary government

Early in the 1860s a growing tension between groups of representatives appeared in Stortinget. The majority belonged to the farmers'

group. They were only loosely organised and had so far accepted the leadership of the embetsmann group. But now things had started to change, both inside the national assembly and outside. In Norway, as in most of Europe, there was a rapid economic development and this implied that changes were taking place in the balance between different social groups.

*Opposition to
the
embetsmann
group*

The position of the embetsmenn as the leading national group had been marked by their control of the cabinet and their leadership in Stortinget. But a fast growing middle class was now less inclined to accept this leadership. The values of the middle class and their ideas of how society should develop did not always correspond with the ideas of the embetsmenn. Attempts had been made as early as 1859 to organise an alliance in Stortinget between the farmers' group and the growing number of representatives with a middle class background, but with little success. Ten years later, however, an alliance was formed between the two groups. It was called the Liberal alliance. From now on they could control what was taking place in Stortinget, but still they had no control over decisions made in the cabinet.

The conflict between the old national class of embetsmenn and the fast growing middle class gradually came to be linked to the question of the introduction of parliamentarism in the Norwegian political system. The constitutional principle that a cabinet must have the support of a majority in the national assembly was not mentioned in the constitution. On the other hand, the national assembly was the elected and therefore the democratic body which expressed the will of the people.

*The king
sided with
the
embetsmenn*

The conflict was intensified by the role of the king. He came to side with and support the embetsmenn. In this way the conflict also brought into the open the old antagonism felt by most Norwegians towards the Swedish king. The embetsmenn came to stand out as a group which would fight against democratisation, in an alliance with the king. Things had really been turned upside down. In 1814 and for many years on, the embetsmenn had been the strongest defenders of the constitution against the king's attempts to curtail the democratic institutions. Now they had ended up in an alliance with the king, against the majority in Stortinget. To many Norwegians the embetsmenn came to be looked upon as representatives of an old and outgoing regime. The social foundations of this regime were also under pressure. The old alliance between embets-

menn, businessmen and large farmers was crumbling. New groups of businessmen tended to side with the Liberals.

Parallel to the political and social processes, new ways of expressing and exerting political influence developed. An impressive number of voluntary organisations were part of this, together with a number of new newspapers. The political rally, as a way of meeting and discussing political questions, also appeared for the first time in the 1870s.

New ways of exerting political influence

In Stortinget the Liberals passed amendments to the constitution giving ministers in the cabinet access to the sessions in Stortinget. In this way ministers would have to come to the national assembly to defend the policies they were implementing. But the king claimed he had an absolute veto in constitutional matters, even though nothing was said of this in the constitution. The ministers of the cabinet advised the king to refuse to give his consent. They feared they would come under pressure if they were to appear in Stortinget to explain and defend their decisions. In the end the cabinet would lose its independence and this was not in accordance with the idea of the division of power as it was expressed in the constitution. Finally, the Liberals were to use the weapon of last resort. They decided to make the members of the cabinet appear before the Court of Impeachment.

A requirement for impeachment was a clear majority for the Liberals in Stortinget. The election campaign of 1882 marked a turning point with regard to political involvement. The dividing lines between the opposing forces were now more clearly drawn than earlier and this campaign was the first in Norway where strong efforts were made to mobilize the voters. The arguments were more polarized than before; you were for or against government by the people, for or against popular control of the constitution. The involvement and turnout of voters were also much higher than in earlier elections. The campaign was fought in a fair way and basic rights of a democratic society like the right of assembly, the right of expression and the right of publication were now recognized.

The impeachment process

In 1884 the prime minister and several of the cabinet ministers were sentenced to lose their positions for having advised the king not to sanction the constitutional amendments. The king had to ask the leader of the Liberals to become the new prime minister and parliamentarism had won its way. A coup d'état was planned by the king and those who supported the cabinet ministers, but in the end

Parliamentarism: Stortinget to be the source of the Cabinet's power

no one dared to start what could have ended in a civil war. For the first time in Norway a government had been formed by a prime minister because he had the support of a majority of the representatives in the national assembly. Stortinget was from now on the source of the cabinet's power. To the Liberals this was an important step in the democratisation of Norway.

Breakthrough of the party system

Party system from 1884

The struggles for parliamentarism also led to the establishment of political parties. The majority group in Stortinget, the Liberals, had worked more and more like a political party in the years before 1884; first as a parliamentary party and gradually as a national party with a widespread network of local party organisations. In 1884 groups supporting the cabinet ministers organised their own party, the Conservatives. A few years later, in 1887, the Labour Party was started. Their first representatives to Stortinget were not elected until 1903. In the years after 1884, the Liberals used their parliamentary majority to decide on questions of special importance to them: a widening of the franchise, a new law on primary education, new military arrangements and the introduction of the jury system. All these issues went well along with the Liberals' idea of a more open and democratic society and has been, along with the introduction of parliamentarism, characterized by historians as a democratic revolt.

Universal suffrage

Universal suffrage; men from 1898 and women from 1913

The rules of suffrage, which had been liberal in 1814, remained almost unchanged up to 1884. Large groups of people were dissatisfied and demanded the right to vote. To expand democracy, the Liberal Party had pledged to introduce universal suffrage. In 1898 this right was given to all grown men and in 1913 the same right was given to all women.

The end of the union

During the 1890s conflicts relating to the union with Sweden were intensified. Since the difficult years immediately after 1814, many Norwegians had defended the union because it secured political

stability and gave economic advantages. But from the 1880s it was obvious that a more self-conscious Norwegian nationalism came in conflict with the old system. The country enjoyed a period of strong growth, both economically and culturally. Many felt that this did not correspond with Norway's position as a 'junior partner' in the union. The foreign minister was still Swedish and the countries shared consulates abroad. It was more and more obvious ever since 1884 that Stortinget had an ambition to control political life including the foreign service. The union prevented in this way the free development of Norwegian parliamentary democracy.

A more self-conscious nationalism

By the turn of the century, clashes between the two countries on the union problem were intensified and in 1905 Stortinget decided that Norway should leave the union with Sweden. A referendum was held to clarify whether the nation as a whole agreed with the decision. 368 392 men voted to end the union, 184 wanted the union to continue. Both countries had been preparing for war, but after difficult negotiations an agreement on a peaceful dissolution of the union was reached. When the Swedish king ceased to function as the Norwegian king, Norway had to decide on the question of the future form of government. A large majority of the population was in favour of a monarchy and Stortinget invited a Danish prince to become the new king of Norway. He took the name Haakon VII.

Norway decides to leave the union

The 1900s

The Norwegian economy continued to grow after 1905 and there were periods with fast industrialization. Norway soon became an industrial society. In 1910 42% of the work force was employed in agriculture and forestry, today that figure has sunk to less than 5%. The world economic crisis reached Norway at the end of the 1920s and unemployment became a severe problem until the outbreak of the Second World War.

An industrial society

Norway's position as a neutral power meant nothing when Germany decided to attack and occupy the country in April 1940. After a few weeks of fighting the Norwegian forces had to surrender and the king and the cabinet fled to England to organize the resistance from abroad. The five year long occupation put heavy strains on the Norwegian economy. In a country with a population of about 3 million an additional 400 000 German soldiers had to be housed and fed mainly from Norwegian resources. The building of

1940-1945: war and occupation

a large number of different types of fortifications, roads, railway lines and the like made things even worse. The German exploitation of the Norwegian economy meant that almost everyone had to accept a sharply reduced standard of living. But the increasing economic activity during war time also meant that unemployment disappeared for the time being.

*Resistance
against the
Nazi dicta-
torship*

The five years of occupation (1940-1945) was a very difficult period in many ways. The Nazi dictatorship based its control of the population on the use of terror. But the civil and military resistance against the Nazi regime also came to create a strong feeling of national solidarity among most Norwegians and as a consequence class differences became less important. A common enemy brought people closer together. A strong support for what had been lost, the values of democracy and free political institutions also developed.

*Rebuilding
the country:
political
agreement*

After the war came the enormous task of rebuilding the country. Thanks to the national solidarity that developed during the war, the political parties managed to agree on a policy of reconstruction. It was expressed in a joint political programme. In cooperation with private industry the state should take a leading role and create a strong economic development. In the future this would make it possible for the country to give all inhabitants a higher standard of living.

*Oil and gas
led to
economic
affluence*

The reconstruction period ended earlier than expected (after about five years) and most of the post-war period has been marked by steady economic growth. This has been the basis for progress in other areas of society as well and most notably the building up of a modern welfare state. The welfare state with its social safety net, gives everyone the right of support if they should find themselves in a situation of insecurity or poverty. The mass unemployment from the inter-war years has not reappeared. In 1969 oil, and later on natural gas, was found in the North Sea and this led to a considerable production and export of oil and gas. This strongly increased the national income of an already wealthy nation.

The deepening of democracy in the 1900s

The development of democratic institutions is the basis for deepening democracy, but in society a feeling of ownership to these institutions must also be developed. During the first century with dem-

ocratic institutions, the upper and the middle classes had or were in the process of developing this ownership. So what about the working classes? When and how would they demand the same access to political power? A Norwegian sociologist, Stein Rokkan, has developed a model to illustrate the thresholds a rising political movement often has to pass to reach political power. (Flora 1999: 246)

- The first is the threshold of *legitimizing*: from which year or decade will historians judge that there was regular protection of the rights of assembly, expression and publication and within what limits?
- The second is the threshold of *incorporation*: how long did it take before the potential supporters of rising movements of opposition were given formal rights of participation in the choice of representatives?
- The third is the threshold of *representation*: how high were the original barriers against the representation of new movements and when and in what ways were the barriers lowered to make it easier to gain seats in the legislature?
- The fourth is the threshold of *executive power*: how long did it take before parliamentary strength could be translated into direct influence on executive decision making?

Rokkan's model on political power

The upper classes of Norway, led by the embetsmann group had passed all four thresholds from the start in 1814. The state of Norway was their state. The middle classes had also passed the first, the second and the third of the thresholds from 1814, but they were excluded from the executive power until 1884.

The first working class movement was organised in Norway in the wake of the revolutions in many European countries in 1848. The movement spread rapidly and in 1851 there were about 400 workers' unions all over the country. The leaders of the movement demanded the right to vote for all men, equality before the law, better primary schools, universal military service and the abolition of the corn tax. The officials feared the movement and the leaders were imprisoned. The movement thereafter died out. This means that for the working classes the first threshold had not been passed by 1850. In the 1870s the embetsmenn did not fear a working class movement in the same way as before and the first trade unions were now being organised. In 1887 the trade unions started the Labour

The first working class movement was subdued

20 years later trade unions were organised

Party, but the party could not elect representatives to Stortinget until universal suffrage for men had been introduced. In 1903 the first representatives of the Labour Party could take their seats in Stortinget.

*Universal
suffrage: the
Labour Party
becomes
largest*

With the introduction of universal suffrage for both men and women the Labour party soon became the largest of the political parties, but they had to wait some years until parliamentary strength could be translated into direct influence. As they could not muster a majority on their own, support from another party in Stortinget was required to form their own government. This support came in 1935 from the Farmers Party and from then on the Labour party has been the dominating party in Norwegian politics. The last threshold had been passed. The strong position of the Labour Party has been accompanied by the development of a strong trade union movement. From the start in 1887 there has been a close cooperation between the two. This has also caused changes in the understanding of what democracy is and how democratic development shall continue in the future. To the Labour movement it has been very important to reduce differences between social groups and in this way create more equal opportunities for everyone. Likewise, the fight against poverty and the creation of a social safety net for everyone has been seen as part of a good democratic society. New groups reaching executive power will often put their own imprint on the concept of democracy.

*The labour
movement
works for
more equal
opportunities*

Democratic development in the post war period

The Norwegian historian Berge Furre claims that probably the two most important features of development in the post war period in Norway has been the building up of the *welfare state* with its social safety net and the changes brought about by the *woman's liberation* movement. Both these developments can be seen in the light of democratic institutions meeting new challenges. The battle for equality has led to more women being involved in politics and the number of women in democratically elected bodies has also increased sharply. As an example, today it will be unthinkable in Norway to form a Government where less than 40% of the cabinet ministers are women. The development of the welfare state is a signal to every citizen that the state will try to help everyone, when in need.

The women's liberation movement was especially active in the 1970s and paved the way for a more equal relationship between men and women in many areas of society. One example of this is the development of the modern Norwegian family. This type of family is characterized by the Norwegian sociologist Ivar Frønes as the 'negotiating family'. The father's traditionally dominating position in family life has been replaced by a more democratic negotiating process, where all family members shall be heard. The family has in this way become a training ground for democratic behaviour. This implies the development of independence among children and the ability to reflect and to make personal judgements.

The negotiating family

In this way democracy has been made broader and deeper in the post war period. But democratic development has also met problems. A living democracy must be based on a society with people who want to develop personal opinions, who want to get involved, who want to do something, like getting involved in political work or in other voluntary organisations. Even so, you may chose to be just a spectator who watches the political process taking place like a struggle between elitist groups. More and more people are today choosing to be spectators and this is an increasing problem in Norway today.

Some find that the political process is important and that it is possible to change things in society by getting involved. But as a politician, at the local or at the national level, you will probably experience that today there is more scepticism than before concerning politicians and their motives. This scepticism is a democratic problem for politicians of course, but also for the political system itself. Luckily, research shows that even though there is an increasing scepticism of politicians, people's confidence in the political system is still very strong. In fact, more than 80% of the population says that they have confidence in our political system (Makt og demokratiutredningen 2003). From this we may conclude that our political system and our democratic institutions are still strongly supported by most people.

Democratic institutions face problems

Still strong support of democracy

Questions

1. Are monarchical democracies more stable than republican democracies? Discuss.
2. What are, in your opinion, the most characteristic *turnings points* in the history of democracy in Norway?
3. Do you find distinctive *trends*?
4. Why was the introduction of local self government important for the development of democracy?
5. The *embetsmenn* were for a long period in the 1800s the leading class in Norwegian society. How did they look upon their role in society?
6. What do you understand by parliamentarism?
7. Why could the union with Sweden be said to slow down democratic development in Norway?
8. Rokkan `s model is of course only a 'model' that simplifies what is complicated. But can it still help us to understand the process of rising political movements? If so, why? Discuss.
9. Do you agree that the battle for equality between men and women is a natural part of the deepening of democracy? Discuss.

Compare and contrast Malawi and Norway

After having read two or all of chapters 5, 6 and 7 in this book, discuss the following questions.

1. Make a list of similarities and differences between Malawi and Norway in the development of democratic government.
2. What similarities and differences can you draw from Norway's union with Denmark and Sweden and how does this compare with Malawi's experience as a British protectorate?

References

- Danielsen m.fl. (2002): *Norway: A history from the Vikings to Our Own Times*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- Flora, P. (1999): *State Formation, Nation Building and Mass Politics in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Frønes, I. (2003): *Moderne barndom*. Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag.
- Furre, B. (2000): *Norsk historie 1914-2000*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget.
- Makt og demokratiutredningen* (2003): Oslo: Gyldendal Akademiske Forlag.
- Nerbøvik, J. (1999): *Norsk historie 1860-1914*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget.
- Pryser, T. (1999): *Norsk historie 1814-1860*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget.
- Stenersen, Ø. & I. Libæk (2003): *The History of Norway*. Oslo: Dinamo Forlag.

CHAPTER 6

Democratization Process in Malawi since Independence

By Annie F. Chiponda

Malawi was known as Nyasaland after the British colonized it in 1891. Full independence was reached in 1964 and the country then changed her name to Malawi. This chapter discusses the democratization process in the country. Starting with a discussion of the failure of democracy in Malawi in the 1960s and Dr Banda's dictatorial rule throughout his reign, we move into an analysis of factors that led to the reintroduction of multiparty democracy and the genesis of this political system in the early 1990s. The consolidation of democracy is then outlined with special focus on problems that discourage democracy and some strategies for strengthening democracy, ending with an assessment of the current situation.

The failure of democracy in the 1960s and Dr Banda's dictatorial rule

Britain ruled Nyasaland as a protectorate up to 1953 when a federation under British control was established between Nyasaland (Malawi), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Although the federal period had a representative form of government, negotiations for full independence were held between Britain and the three countries in various forums. Connected with these negotiations Nyasaland conducted her first general elections in August 1961. Three parties, The Malawi Congress Party (MCP), the Christian Liberation Party and the United Federal Party contested in these general elections. Led by Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda the MCP won all except one of the seats. Negotiations for full independence continued. Self government was reached in 1963 and

*A federation
with a
representative
system*

Malawi became fully independent on July 6th 1964 when general elections once more were conducted. During the period after these elections, the losing parties got discouraged due to Dr Banda's dictatorial tendencies. From this brief overview it may be seen that although the concept of multiparty democracy sounded new to most Malawians in the early 1990s as they were used to one-party politics for about 30 years, multipartyism was not entirely new or foreign to Malawian politics.

*Multiparty-
ism abolished*

The constitution was reviewed and Malawi became a republic on July 6th 1966. The new republican constitution and its subsequent amendments stipulated that the MCP was to be the only legally recognized political party in the country. Multipartyism was abolished. As expressed by Kanyongolo (1998), the republic and constitution 'did not purport to be a repository of principles of limited or accountable government, as a liberal democratic one would. On the contrary, it reflected the widening of state powers, the diminishing of guarantees of individual liberties, and the merging of the party and government into a centre of virtually absolute power.' Consequently under such a constitution and political atmosphere, the other parties had no chance for survival and what followed was a long period of the MCP dictatorship under Dr Banda.

There is ample evidence that Dr Banda never accepted any differing opinion from his cabinet or any participatory decision making either in the party or government. This was made abundantly clear as early as 1964 during the 'Cabinet Crisis' barely three months after gaining independence. Some ministers in his first cabinet were dismissed and others resigned in sympathy with their dismissed friends because of a disagreement with Dr Banda on several policy issues. Most of these went into exile.

*Seeds of
authoritarian
rule from the
past*

However, before exposing more evidence of autocratic tendencies of Dr Banda's reign, it is essential to comment upon the background of his dictatorial leadership. Phiri & Ross (1998) observe that: 'Most analysts trace the seeds of the extreme authoritarianism, which characterized the Banda regime to the period of national revival and struggle for independence from 1958 to 1964. The nationalist movement driven by a single minded commitment to the achievement of independence, cultivated an intolerant political culture characterized by hero-worship, centralized authority structures, exclusiveness, and intimidation of potential critics. These became the hallmarks of the one-party system'

Unfortunately, after gaining independence Dr Banda did not lessen his power as could be hoped for but instead strengthened it even more. All power and authority were concentrated in the office of the president and there were limited and ineffective checks and balances to monitor government affairs. He made decisions and the judiciary and legislature were not considered in decision making, they were merely used as rubber stamps of the decisions made by the president. For instance, parliament could not question his decision of continuing trade relations with apartheid South Africa despite being a member of the organization of African Unity (OAU)¹².

*Dictatorship
under Dr
Banda*

Nobody could challenge the president's decisions. Any citizen who dared to do that could be imprisoned, detained or killed in a dubious manner. A well known example is 1983 when three cabinet ministers and a member of parliament were murdered in a make believe road accident for criticizing how government affairs were conducted. Furthermore government was not accessible to the general public as popular participation in government affairs was non-existent. Dr Banda amassed so much power that everything revolved around him.

Dr Banda's manipulation of the constitution in 1971 declaring him Life President of the Republic of Malawi was another indication of his autocratic style. This meant people could not remove him out of office if they were not satisfied with his leadership. Similarly, selection of members of Parliament was tightly controlled. The ruling party selected its candidates every five years and the names had to be approved by the president. The right of the people to elect their own representatives in Parliament was not respected.

*President for
life*

Furthermore, there were many human rights abuses during Dr Banda's reign. The 1966 republican constitution removed the Bill of Rights that was provided for in the 1964 independence constitution. Consequently abuses of human rights became the order of the day. There was no freedom of the press, the president selected the

*Abuses of
human rights*

¹² For example, in his state opening address to parliament on July 2nd 1971, Dr Banda boastfully challenged his international critics on his relations with South Africa as follows: 'I do what I think is right, in the interests of my people, no matter what anyone thinks, feels, or wants to do. Let others talk and argue about dialogue either in Addis Ababa (headquarters of OAU), New York (United Nations General assembly), London (Commonwealth secretariat), Singapore (venue of the meeting of Commonwealth Heads of state and Government in 1971), or anywhere else. Let them argue, debate this issue, philosophize about it. I will practise, act, behave, live contact and dialogue and take the consequences (Chimphamba 2003).

members of parliament, rights of political organizations were restricted and the government was not responsible and accountable to its citizens. In addition, Moto (1998) states that: 'the judiciary was not independent. There were countless arrests and detentions without trial and freedom of expression and freedom of association were non-existent. Malawi, it was often said, was a huge prison.' As regards detentions without trial, Chirwa (1998) estimates that over 2 000 Malawians were in prisons and detention camps in various parts of the country for political reasons between the late 1960s and 1992.

*Claims of
being
democratic*

Despite his dictatorial tendencies, Dr Banda and the MCP claimed to be democratic. He often referred to himself as a democrat in his numerous political rallies. It may therefore be concluded that he practised lip-service democracy.

Factors for the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in the early 1990's and the genesis of multiparty democracy

Dr Banda's autocratic behaviour coupled with other problems made people cry for political change in form of multiparty democracy. As Chirwa argues, 'the crisis was deepened by three catalytic factors: poor economic performance; Dr Banda's old age and poor health; and international pressure. The last came from two sources: international human rights organizations and both bilateral and multi-lateral donors' (ibid).

To begin with, Malawi faced serious economic problems between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. This was in contrast to the situation from 1964 towards the late 1970s. During that period the economy improved by over 6 percent annually. The improved economy was due to increase in estate production which had a positive impact on exports. Unlike the estate sector, peasant agriculture was in a bad state because of shortage of land, low market prices and high cost of fertilizer and other inputs.

*Poor
economic
performance*

However, the economic achievements of the 1970s did not last long for a number of reasons. First, Chirwa observes that 'by the early 1980s the country entered a period of recession. Prior to 1979, Malawi borrowed substantially from abroad on floating rates; total interest payments on public debts rose from US\$ 7 million in 1977 to US\$24 million in 1979; about 11 percent of this increase was the result of the hike in rates' (ibid).

Second, there was low maize output in 1980 and 1981 because of drought and, to arrest the situation, government imported 11 000 metric tonnes of maize in 1980 and 26 000 metric tonnes in 1981. This was worsened by the closure of the Nacala railway (Malawi's shortest and most direct route to the sea) because of the civil war in Mozambique, which made transport costs to rise very high to about US\$50 million a year by 1984.

Third, estate production upon which the economy of Malawi depended very much, declined throughout the 1980s. By the early 1990s therefore, Malawi's economy was in a very bad shape and rural poverty became the order of the day. Consequently, 'by the time of political change between 1992 and 1994, the majority of the rural poor, who constitute the majority of the Malawian population, was economically and politically disgruntled' (ibid).

During the early 1990s, Dr Banda became very old and his health was poor. However, as Life President, he had to continue ruling the country and his condition affected his performance as leader. Generally, he lacked a vision for the future of the country and there was no clear successor to him in the party or the government. This created uncertainty in people about the future of the country's leadership.

*Dr Banda's
poor health*

International events also contributed to the pressure for change in Malawi. The most important events that had a direct impact on Malawi were the collapse of the Soviet Union and the eastern block in 1989 and the coming to power of the pro-human rights democrats in the United States in 1992. Despite its dictatorial leadership, Malawi prior to 1989 was on good terms with Western countries and continued to receive aid from them. This was because Malawi was used as a tool to help Western countries fight against the spread of communism in Southern Africa. When communism collapsed, Western countries saw no need of maintaining their relationship with Malawi and consequently the flow of financial aid declined. At the same time when the pro human rights democrats came to power in the US, its policy was to support democratic transitions in third world countries. The international community began to use adoption of human rights and good governance as criteria for financial support of third world countries. Since Malawi fared badly in terms of good governance and human rights, she faced serious financial problems as she could not get any aid from international donors. This coupled with the economic crises Malawi was facing

*Internatio-
nal pressure*

during the same period as well as the severe drought in 1992 aggravated the situation. Consequently, the cry for change became intense while the political bureaucracy remained unmoved.

The final catalyst for change came with the publication of *Living Our Faith*, the pastoral letter of Lent dated March 8th 1992, by the Catholic Bishops. This letter expressed all the human rights abuses and all the suffering of Malawians due to government policies and style of leadership. This letter was read in all Catholics churches on March 8th and made accessible to most Malawians. The letter won many hearts as it touched on problems the people were facing in the country. This was dramatic because the bishops took a risk of throwing the country into a civil war. Dr Banda became furious and wanted to kill the bishops. The pastoral letter was consequently banned. The result was mounting pressure against the government for change since the pastoral letter spoke for millions of voiceless Malawians (Chirwa 2003). University students, urban workers and political activists pressurized the government through demonstrations and riots. Furthermore political and religious activists formed pressure groups. Three influential ones were the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD), the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Public Affairs Committee (PAC). These organizations pressed the government to call for a national referendum to decide whether to continue with one party system or change to multiparty democracy. For a long time Dr Banda gave a deaf ear to this demand and in his political speeches told people that multiparty meant war. However, in October 1992, Dr Banda yielded to the call for a referendum, which was conducted on June 14th 1993. The results clearly showed that people were in favour of multiparty democracy.

*Referendum
in 1993*

Once people had voted for multiparty democracy, the next step was to hold general elections. During the period after the referendum and before elections, known as a transition period, two institutions were formed to act as an interim government. These were the National Executive Council (NEC) and the National Consultative Council (NCC), which acted as parliament and cabinet respectively. Finally, on May 17th 1994 the presidential and parliamentary elections were held simultaneously. The United Democratic Front (UDF) won the majority of the votes in both the presidential and parliamentary polls. Therefore this party became the first one to govern under the new liberal democratic constitution.

*General
election in
1994*

Unlike other countries in the region, the transition to multiparty democracy in Malawi was a peaceful one. With the coming to power of this democratically elected government, Malawians witnessed tremendous changes in the political sphere.

Signs of democratic changes in Malawi since 1994

Indeed the new democratic government brought dramatic and far reaching changes in the politics of the country. To begin with, the provision for Life Presidency was repealed and replaced by a State President elected by the people and mandated to serve a term of five years with a maximum of two terms. Thus people were given the right to choose their own government. At the time of writing (2007) this has happened in 1994, 1999 and 2004. Furthermore, the executive authority of the president is balanced by a careful separation of powers. Special attention has been given to secure the integrity of the legislature and the judiciary. Opposition in Parliament is also permitted and one is free to criticize government. This became evident during the discussions on and defeat of the third term Bill in parliament proposed by the Muluza reign in 2003.

*The Life
Presidency
abolished*

The constitution has enabled the exercise of free expression, political association and individual rights without fear of being victimized by the state (Chirwa 2003). Other human rights that have been achieved include freedom of information, right to liberty and freedom from detention without trial, the right to dissent, freedom of worship and dress and the right of access to courts and other institutions for protecting rights. Since literacy is considered a right for all, free primary education was introduced in 1994 for every child of school going age.

*Human
rights re-
introduced*

The democratic government also created national mechanisms that help people to promote, protect, claim and redress their rights. Among these are the office of the Ombudsman where people whose rights have been violated or not respected, can appeal their cases; and the Anti-Corruption Bureau that ensures accountability for resource management by those entrusted with public office. Equally important mechanisms are the Human Rights Commission, the Law Commission and the National Compensation Tribunal.

Furthermore, Non Governmental Organizations that act as watchdogs in the political system have mushroomed with the com-

ing of the new democratic government based on the constitutional review of 1994. Several of these organizations¹³ champion the rights of the poor and marginalized. This is part of the civil society which has been growing and spreading and which actively works to ensure that people's rights at the grass root level are respected.

Problems that discourage democracy in Malawi

Despite many positive changes, some problems still persist and discourage the growth of democracy in the country. There is no doubt that Malawi really underwent a transition from one-party dictatorship to multiparty democracy. However, the transition did not and still does not ensure the complete dismantling of the institutions that were entrenched in the dictatorship (Chirwa 2003). Some legacies from the era of dictatorship still remain and discourage the attainment of genuine democracy in Malawi. For instance, in 1998 Chirwa observed that the press was far from being free, and in 2007 this is still the case. Reports of press personnel losing their jobs and sometimes being jailed under the cover of irresponsible journalism have been published in the country. The electronic media such as TVM, MBC and others are still controlled by the Broadcasting and the Telecommunications Act. Even today the ruling party as opposed to the other parties monopolizes use of the national radio as well as TVM.

*Remnants of
the
dictatorship
culture*

Furthermore, the attitude of the people towards political leaders has not changed much despite living in a democratic era for about 13 years. From 1994 to the present, people still show signs of hero-worshipping their leaders as they were doing with Kamuzu Banda. For example, women still dance for political leaders and the leaders themselves show signs of wanting to be treated with special respect and obedience. Most politicians of today, just like during Dr Banda's regime, do not take criticism kindly and there is always suspicion and mistrust of one another amongst themselves.

Corruption

Another hindrance to genuine democracy in Malawi is corruption. This was on the increase especially in the first ten years of democracy. For example, Chirwa (1998), states that in less than a year of its launch, between March 1997 and January 1998, the Anti-

¹³ For instance Women's Voice, Malawi CARER, Civil Liberties Committee and Public Affairs Committee (PAC)/NICE

Corruption Bureau received a total of 3,100 written reports and complaints of corruption. Interestingly enough, politicians and government officials are still major perpetrators of corruption and economic inequalities. For example, a report of the Consumer Association of Malawi towards the end of the 1990s indicated that over 70 percent of the sugar business in the country was in the hands of politicians and the rest in the hands of their relatives, influential bureaucrats in government and organizations with political connections and traders of Asian origin. In his campaign speeches, the current president, Dr Bingu wa Mutharika, stressed that once elected he would fight corruption. This indicates corruption was still a major problem before he came to power. As a consequence of the strict measures the president is taking against any cases of corruption, the tendency has been reduced. Some people have lost their jobs and others have been jailed because of corrupt practices.

Despite 13 years of practicing democracy, incidents of police brutality and abuse of power, political intolerance and violence have been witnessed in the country. There have been widespread allegations against the police of ill-treating and torturing people in custody (Chirwa 2003). Political intolerance and violence is very common in almost all major political parties. The dismissal of some members of AFORD from the party because of their opposition of the party's joining UDF in government provides an example of such political intolerance. There had been cases of young democrats in the major parties inciting violence during political meetings.

Furthermore, a misconception of democracy, stressing the freedoms and neglecting the responsibilities, represents a huge challenge. Chidam`modzi (1998) argues that 'violence against women including rape and other forms of harassment has multiplied, incidents of mob justice have become common, and the youth and students have abused the democratic freedom through indiscipline and lack of respect for cultural values.'

Ethnicity and regionalism pose another challenge to our democracy. Phiri & Ross (1998) argue that 'Malawian politics revolves around ethnicity and regionalism in a way that inhibits the development of a mature approach to policy formation and implementation.' The results of all the three presidential and general elections so far testify to this as most people voted for candidates from their own regions. This is a serious problem yet not much effort has been put to address the issue.

Abuse of power

Neglecting responsibilities

Ethnicity and regionalism

Poverty

As expressed by Chirwa (2003), one of the issues raised by Catholic Bishops in their heralded Pastoral letter of 1992 was their concern over the growing gap between the rich and the poor. So poverty is another fundamental obstacle to genuine democracy in Malawi. It is disheartening that after 13 years of democracy poverty still remains the major problem in the country. The rural and urban working classes are still lowly paid and life is hard for them due to exorbitant prices of commodities and services allowing a large gap between rich and poor. As Chirwa (1998) argues, 'political changes have not been accompanied by substantial material benefits to the majority of the ordinary Malawian people.' According to this writer's judgment, this is still the case. Such a poor economic climate is not conducive to genuine democracy as the poor hardly can access their human rights. The rich tend to dominate. 'Tragically, too many Malawians are not even aware of the relationship between their suffering and the deprivation or violation of their rights' (ibid).

Some strategies for strengthening democracy

Civic education

If Malawi is to strengthen her democracy, one of the strategies is to offer intensive civic education. This includes human rights issues to the people at grass root level as most violations of their rights are ignored because of lack of knowledge on their part. It is sad that even today, most people are unaware of their rights, and that their rights are being violated. It is therefore essential to maximize civic education efforts to empower such people to be able to claim and defend their rights.

A vibrant civil society

A strong and vibrant civil society is essential for dealing with the challenges in any democracy. For instance, the fight against the third term Bill would not have been won if the civil society were not united and strong in opposing it. The church and other civil society organizations worked hard and in unison in sensitizing people to fight against this Bill and in the end democracy prevailed.

Erase poverty

Since poverty is one of the challenges confronting our democracy, economic development is fundamental. Private sector should participate actively in this endeavour. Government should institute programs that will help to reduce poverty among people. Some of this is already taking place like for instance free primary education and the 'One Village One Product' project. Intensification of such

measures combined with improved infrastructural development is essential. Democracy thrives in environments where the economic climate is viable and conducive to development.

Finally, there is need to ensure that people in authority over others and those responsible for enforcing the law exercise their duties with integrity. Such people include clergy, lawyers, MPs, police, teachers and many more. Such people should be knowledgeable and accountable for their actions, offering good examples as role models for democracy.

*Personal
integrity*

The current situation

In the Human Development Report (UNDP 2002: 4) it is said that a central challenge for deepening democracy is building the key institutions of democratic governance. Six key institutions are listed:

- A system of representation, with well-functioning political parties and interest associations.
- An electoral system that guaranties free and fair elections as well as universal suffrage.
- A system of checks and balances based on the separation of powers, with independent judicial and legislative branches.
- A vibrant civil society, able to monitor government and private business – and provide alternative forms of political participation.
- A free, independent media.
- Effective civilian control over the military and other security forces.

*Key
institutions*

How does Malawi fare on these measures? A system of representation is established on the national level. Political parties and interest associations are there, but we can hardly claim them generally to be well-functioning. The electoral system has several times given a result contrary to the sitting regime which in the context of an early democracy may be taken as a sign of a free and fair system. Checks and balances in government have not been touched heavily upon in this chapter, but institutions like the Ombudsman and the Anti-Corruption Bureau have been mentioned. It is further clear that the executive, legislative and judicial powers are separated even though the executive in the form of the president surely exercises a lot of

*The country
is making
progress*

influence on the national assembly. The civil society played a highly celebrated role as the multiparty system was re-introduced in the country and still exercises considerable influence. We should, however, be careful not to overrate its potential but rather strive to strengthen civil society's role in the shaping of the democracy. As pointed out above, it is far from certain that the media is free and independent even though today the problems and shortcomings in government and society may be described with considerable boldness. The president is the Commander in Chief for all branches of the armed forces and thus at least formally there is civil control over the military and claims of police brutality seem to come forth more seldom than before.

Summed up, it seems fair to say that on most of the measures from the Human Development Report (UNDP 2002), Malawi has made substantial progress after the Banda period. However, it is obvious that there is still some ground to cover before it may be claimed that the stage of a well-functioning democracy is reached.

Questions

1. Describe the transition from British control to independence for Malawi.
2. Which were the forces and processes that brought about a change for multi-partyism in the early 1990s?
3. Name examples of the legacy from the dictatorial era in Malawi today.
4. Which hindrances to genuine democracy may be observed in Malawi today?
5. Make a list of strategies for strengthening democracy in Malawi.
6. Describe the present state of democracy in Malawi.

Compare and contrast Malawi and Norway

After having read two or all of chapters 5, 6 and 7 in this book, discuss the following questions.

1. Make a list of similarities and differences between Malawi and Norway in the development of democratic government.
2. What similarities and differences can you draw from Norway's union with Denmark and Sweden and how does this compare with Malawi's experience as a British protectorate?

References

- Chidam'modzi, H.F. (1998): 'Democracy and Moral Degeneration in Malawi: Some Personal Reflections,' *Bwalo. A forum for social development*, Issue 2, pp. 63-73. Zomba: Chancellor College Publications.
- Chimphamba, B. (2003): 'What We Fought for.' In B. Immink, S. Lembani, M. Ott & C. Peters-Berries (ed), *From Freedom to Empowerment: Ten Years of Democratisation in Malawi*, pp. 39-44. Balaka: Forum for Dialogue and Peace.
- Chirwa, V.M. (2003): 'What we Fought For.' In B. Immink, S. Lembani, M. Ott and C. Peters-Berries (ed), *From Freedom to Empowerment: Ten years of Democratisation in Malawi*, pp. 49-60. Balaka: Forum for Dialogue and Peace.
- Chirwa, W.C. (1998): "We Want Change": Transition or Transformation?' *Bwalo, A Forum for Social Development*, Issue 2, pp.1-23. Zomba: Chancellor College Publications.
- Kanyongolo, F.E. (1998): 'The Limits of Liberal Democratic Constitutionalism in Malawi.' In K.M. Phiri & K.R. Ross (ed), *Democratisation in Malawi: A Stocktaking*, pp. 353-376. Blantyre: CLAIM.
- Moto, F. (1998): 'Domesticating the Definition of Democracy,' *Bwalo. A forum for social development*, Issue 2, pp. 24-43. Zomba: Chancellor College Publications.
- Phiri, K.M. & K.R. Ross (1998): 'Introduction: From Totalitarianism to Democracy in Malawi' In K.M. Phiri & K.R. Ross (ed), *Democratisation in Malawi: A Stocktaking*, pp. 9-18. Blantyre: CLAIM.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2002): *Human Development Report 2002. Deepening democracy in a fragmented world*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

CHAPTER 7

To legitimate Power or to be a prophetic Voice – a Choice for Churches

By Birger Løvlie

*There is a time for everything –
a time to be quiet and a time to speak up.*

Eccl 3, 1: 7

This chapter compares the roles of different churches in the development of democracy in Malawi and Norway. We will look at the two nations with their histories with differences and similarities. A special attention will be given to churches with differences in understanding, not primarily of doctrine and message, but of their relationship to state and secular authorities. A church will carry out one part of her mission by being silent or by speaking up – in support or in critique of the national authorities. So it is also with the churches of Malawi and Norway. We will look into their history to see if they have been silent when they ought to speak, or have spoken in favour of the authorities when they should have condemned their policies.

How a church relates to her surroundings is determined by many factors and tradition is most important. Tradition makes a church quite predictable and this implies that we rather seldom think that the church can change. This is especially true for a church and a nation with a long tradition and therefore it is interesting to compare Malawi and Norway. The latter has a relatively long church history of about 1000 years while the former has a shorter one of about 150 years.

Since our tradition is normally not questioned, it is fair to think that there are parts of it that are not well known. After all, who

*The main
question: to
speak or to be
silent*

*Tradition is
important*

knows that nine paragraphs in the Constitution of Norway are more or less connected to ‘the official religion of the state?’¹⁴ This chapter will show how the state church reacted to the development towards a modern democracy in Norway. It will also show in the case of Malawi how the younger churches relate to a young nation. It is meant to be a supplement to the other chapters about the history of democracy. But first, some words about how and why churches understand themselves differently.

Church and state

Churches can be different in many ways as a result of different histories and cultures. State churches have been linked to the monarch as the head of both church and state, while other churches have tried to limit the power of the rulers to earthly matters. A people may be under the influence of one or many churches with quite different links to a particular society and state. There can be a state church or a free church. A free church can be either national, regional or more universal in her approach. Let us have a look at the state church first. For historical reasons a church may understand herself as a national church and accept the monarch as the supreme head. The Church of Norway has developed a double structure. One is based on the Constitution of Norway, making the king the head of the church. He has the authority to appoint the bishops, deans and priests/pastors and to sanction new liturgies and hymnals. The other structure was formed little by little in the second part of the 1800s as a voluntary one, by lay people who were not comfortable having the king as the supreme bishop. They stayed formally in the state church, but they formed independent organizations and built prayer houses where they had their own services, led by lay people. Today, lay people are also involved in the formal structure of the state church. Each congregation elects members to a district synod and the members of all district synods are members of a national synod. The king has delegated most of his authority to these synods, except the appointment of bishops and deans, because that would have been violating the constitution. Since this chapter is connected to the 1800s, the word ‘church’ will mostly

The Church of Norway has a two sided structure: an official and a voluntary

In the 1800s the official church was more or less the clergy

¹⁴ This is the expression you will find in the constitution. The writers did not use the word church.

refer to 'the official religion', i.e. the clergy.

A church of this kind will be understood as an important element in the identity of the people. Some famous words from the 1500s 'high church' theologian Richard Hooker explain the vision: "There is not any man a member of the Commonwealth which is not of the Church of England." This is the church of the establishment, a state church, built on the theory that the king, or state, has a divine right to exercise power in the church.¹⁵ How much the Church of England, from now on called the Anglican Church, was linked to the Crown, can be seen from the beginning of her mission work in Malawi. The initiative came from English universities, where a 'Mission to Central Africa' was formed and the committee wanted the work to be led by a bishop. But at that time, the land around Lake Nyasa was not under British rule and therefore it was impossible to get sanction from the Crown to ordain him. The problem was handed over to the Anglican bishops in South Africa, who agreed to ordain him. This is a parallel to the problems that the first Norwegian missionary to Africa, H.P. Schreuder, created when he wanted to be ordained by the Church of Norway as bishop for the church in Zululand. Finally the king gave his permission with one reservation: Schreuder would have no Episcopal authority within the borders of Norway.

Church of England: from a national church to a worldwide communion

On the other hand a church can have a theology for separation between church and state, like the so-called "Two Kingdom Theory."¹⁶ In principle there is only one authority in the church and that is the word of God. The power of the king, which is also from God, should be limited to the earthly realm. The Church of Scotland is a good example. In the last part of the 1800s this church was strongly influenced by a way of thinking that was expressed in the slogan 'a free church in a free state.' This principle is not a hindrance for a church to influence a people to the degree that the church may be an integral part of the identity of the people. This church has no bishops at all. The cornerstone of its constitution is the local 'Kirk', where the members elect elders, or presbyters, who lead and represent the congregation in the synod.

The Two Kingdom Theory

¹⁵ The Church of England is one of the reformation churches, founded as the pope refused to cancel the marriage between King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. The king answered by enacting a number of bills (1532-1534) that established a national church with the king as the supreme head. Later, this church was established in most of the colonies and all these churches are a part of the Anglican communion, see Tengatenga 2006: 36-49.

¹⁶ Although this theory is explained here by an example from a Calvinistic church, this theory found its first expression in the (Lutheran) Augsburg Confession, article XXVIII.

Aristocratic thinking: Church and society as a pyramid

There are some important differences coming out of these basic theories. An understanding of the king as the head of the church leads to an understanding of society in aristocratic terms. In more modern words, society is understood as a pyramid. At the top you find the king and the bishops, in dependency of each other for legitimacy. As king James said: 'No bishops, no king.' Though it is an oversimplification we may say that this goes for all Episcopal churches. However, when a theory of a Christian king is combined with episcopalism, the result has often been a church with a clergy closely linked to aristocracy. European history shows us pyramidal societies with the king at the top and the bishops are officials of the crown directly beneath him. At the bottom you find the people who are supposed to be obedient subjects. In this connection it should be noted that an Episcopal church does not need to be a state church. The Roman Catholic Church is Episcopal, but not national at all. The universality of this church is expressed through the bishops under the Holy See.

The churches have had to accept more egalitarian and more pluralistic societies

Both a state church and a free church can adapt to democracy. The state churches of Europe have had to walk the long road from aristocratic thinking towards the democratic idea that all are born equal, although that has been fundamental in their theology all the time. Churches with a self-governing structure are mostly younger. Many of them are results of great revivals at a time when equality of man became basic to those who fought against poverty and injustice. They motivated their members to struggle for a more egalitarian society and they did so within the framework of a Christian nation. Today both state churches and free churches have to accept liberal political ideas and find their places in pluralistic societies. That means a kind of society where churches are without legal privileges, but at the same time there is a room of freedom for independent organizations that are not controlled or suppressed by political authorities. In the future, the contribution of Christian churches to a democratic state must include acceptance and even defence of such a pluralistic state.¹⁷

Democratic development and the church in Norway

The constitution of Norway of 1814 gave little or no room for religious freedom. Most of the clergy in the second part of the 1800s

¹⁷ That this should be the Christian strategy has been convincingly expressed by the former Finance Minister of Germany, Hans Apel (2007) in his book *Europa ohne Seele* (Europe without a soul).

did not accept democratic ideas at all, because they did not manage to combine it with Lutheran theology. Their idea of a Christian nation was little by little conquered in the secularization process that produced the liberal democracy.

The two nations have one thing in common in their histories, namely a period as colonies. For Norway, the colonial period ended early, compared to Malawi.¹⁸ The people of Norway could celebrate 150 years of freedom from Denmark the same year as Malawi became independent from England. As part of the celebration, the principle of religious freedom was written into the Norwegian constitution.

The lengths of our histories as free nations are different. Norway got her own constitution in 1814 at the end of the Napoleonic wars and under the influence of liberal ideas from the French Revolution in 1789 and the American Constitution of 1787. The result was a relatively liberal constitution for that time. Here three exceptions could be mentioned. One concerns religions. Jews and monastic orders were excluded from the country and the state church was protected from criticism by a limitation of the freedom of expression. This intolerance was a remnant of the royal autocracy¹⁹ and reflects the theocratic understanding that the king should make his subjects obedient to the Ten Commandments. The second was the right to vote, which was not a personal right, but a privilege given to men with property and a certain social position. The third was in the area of distribution of power. The king had the right to appoint the government without consulting the national assembly, Stortinget, and to appoint persons to civil and military positions as well as to offices in the church.

Liberal and democratic winds blew over Norway in the second part of the 1800s, reaching a climax with the adoption of the parliamentary system in 1884. New victories were won as the right to vote was extended to all adult men in 1898 and to women in 1913. How did the church react to these radical changes? In order to answer and to explain, it should be made clear that all the anti liberal paragraphs of the constitution mentioned above had a connection to how the church understood a nation. According to the church a nation was an order of creation, made by a divine act,

A liberal constitution with some exceptions

More political freedom and a theology against democracy

¹⁸ On the other hand, Norway was a colony for about 400 years, while Malawi had 73 years of colonial rule.

¹⁹ The king had absolute power in Denmark and Norway from 1660 till 1814.

where the inhabitants should remain in the position where God had placed them. Liberal ideas were looked upon as a result of growing atheism, a sign of rebellion against God, and therefore something that worked against the great project of that period: to build 'a nation under God.' From this point of departure, professors of theology, bishops and priests took a stance against a democratic development, mainly expressed in an open letter to the people under the title: *To the Friends of Christianity in Our Country* in January 1883, shortly after a general election was won by the liberal party. The message of the letter, a compendium of aristocratic theology and ideology, was very simple: If Norway was to remain a Christian nation, Christians had to fight against political radicalism.

*A gap
between
clergy and
lay people*

The effect of this act of panic was an almost permanent gap between the clergy and the lay people of Norway, especially in the Western part of the country. The clergy had no theology that could support a democratic development and the lay people answered by limiting the realm of theology. They more or less rejected the idea of a Christian nation and proclaimed that the Christian faith primarily should have its impact on the personal level. Their understanding of a Christian people was that it should not be built on political power, but on believers who by their witness fulfil the parable of the leaven (Math 13: 33)²⁰. The clergy was caught in a theology that gave no other option than to think of society as composed of classes. In that system it became a sign of ungodly pride to try to advance from one class to another. After all, St. Paul had written: 'Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called' (1 Cor 7: 20). Founded on a conviction which was a mixture of Christian faith and political liberalism, common people fought for the right to vote, for their children's right to get an education, for better health care, for fair wages and so on. It goes almost without saying that this struggle also included the right to leave the church without losing common civil rights. This fight included a demand for changes in the constitution.

*Christian lay
people and a
few pastors
fought for
democracy*

With the conservative clergy in mind, we should notice that there were many exceptions. The first social democrat in Stortinget was a pastor, Alfred Eriksen, and many other pastors joined the struggle for democracy led by the Liberal Party (Venstre). The most famous example is Lars Oftedal, clergyman, newspaper editor and

²⁰ Leaven was used in baking and had the same effect as yeast in the dough, see Gal 5: 9.

social worker in Stavanger. Bernt Støylen, a bishop from Sunnmøre, could also be mentioned. He was untiring in his political liberalism. One hundred years ago he signed, together with some laymen, a petition to Stortinget for a new constitution with freedom of religion and without an official religion. They were not heard. There is one important thing to be remembered from this history. The Christian contribution to the development of democracy did not come from the church as an institution, but mainly from lay people who fought for democratic rights as a consequence of their faith.

When we look at the second part of the 1900s, there is one crucial question in many political debates in the history of Norway: What should the church do when a reform can be seen both as a democratic progress and as a loss of her influence? This question points to the effect of modernization. Norway had in practice become a secular country and the church seemed to lose her hegemony in one area after another. This process reached a climax as Stortinget passed a liberal law on abortion in 1978, a reform that could be seen as a decisive victory for the women's liberation movement. The church protested vehemently, pointing at §2 in the constitution, where it is written that the Evangelical Lutheran religion is the official religion of the state. The protests were more or less silenced as the Supreme Court decided in 1983 that this paragraph does not set barriers for Stortinget or government (with one exception: the state cannot rule the church contrary to the official religion).

The development in the school system in the period from 1936 till 1969 is another example of the same dilemma. Church leaders looked upon the school as a Christian school, ruled by the church and with a main objective to teach the Lutheran doctrines to all baptized children. The reforms were heavily influenced by the ideology of the social democrats: in order to get a more democratic and tolerant school system, the hegemony of the church needed to be diminished. At the end of the reform process both educational and democratic gains were obvious. On the other hand it is easy to see the losses of the church. Stortinget decided that every qualified person could be a headmaster or teach Christianity in school, a discipline that was given an ever smaller space in the curriculum. In the years after more reforms came. The laws that criminalized homosexuality and the practice of living together without legal marriage were abolished and when the first law about pre-schools

The Supreme Court: political decisions cannot be limited by an official religion

The ties between school and church loosened

was introduced in 1975, it had no formal Christian basis. In all these reforms, the social democratic device: religion is a private matter, had its way. From a constitutional point of view this is totally wrong: Norway is a state with an official religion. At the same time it is evident from the perspective of a liberal democracy that a secular state has a very limited competence in religious matters and cannot give privileges to one religion without violating its basic liberal ideology.

The welfare state needs the churches to support society with basic values

The history of Norway after World War II is the history of a welfare state, pluralistic with regard to religion and ideology, but centered around equality, education for all and social security as a moral contract. Obviously, it is difficult to maintain a common moral obligation based on pluralism. Therefore a state like the Norwegian has an ongoing debate about how power and politics can be legitimated. A church commission concluded in 1973 that the function of wrongly legitimating power is a constant danger for a state church in a modern society. The church needs a free position to speak up against the abuse of power. We may still remember how angry Prime Minister Kaare Willoch was when the bishop of Oslo, Andreas Aarflot, tried to change our policy towards the apartheid regime in South Africa. The political authorities are not concerned about the freedom of the state church in Norway. The church is thought to supply the public sphere with welfare of 'non-material character' within the framework of a democratic state. The church is used by the state as an answer to the need of basic values for a pluralistic society. The church is there to legitimate a pluralism that is a part of democracy. This represents a formidable problem for an institution that is committed to what is regarded an absolute truth.

UN: compulsory religious instruction has to be pluralistic

To what extent the church has accepted or adopted this role, can be discussed. The most recent example is the introduction of compulsory religious instruction in school in 1997. It was a reform that violated individual rights, but it was useful for a state with a policy of integration or assimilation of immigrants. The church played an active part in the work with the plans for this instruction, which from the beginning was meant to have a qualitative and quantitative centre of gravity in Christianity. Some minorities protested in vain, but when they appealed to The United Nations commission of Human Rights, the conclusion was that the plans had to be changed. A compulsory instruction in religion has to be neutral and pluralistic. Nobody can be forced to participate in something that can be regarded as religious activities.

The first period of independence in Malawi – ambivalence between church and state

Malawi started her history as independent nation in 1964 with Dr Banda as the first president. In this period the churches were mostly silent about his abuse of power. This was not only a time for building a nation it was also a time for the churches of Malawi to find their own way, independent of European mother churches.

Arab slave traders brought Islam with them to Malawi in the 1840s. The Yao tribe, also involved in slave trade, began to adopt the Islamic practices. Christianity came a little later, with Scottish missionaries like David Livingstone (1813-1873). He is regarded as the most influential person in the history of modern Malawi. Christian missionaries brought with them many changes: The abolition of slave trade,²¹ improvement of agriculture and modern education. The church was also successful in bringing tribal wars to an end. Today 75-80% of the inhabitants are Christians while 10-15% are Muslims. They seem to live side by side without serious conflicts. When Dr Banda was removed from his office as president of Malawi in 1994, the people elected a Muslim, Dr Muluzi, as the new president. The fall of Dr Banda came after pressure from the Catholic Church with the support of other churches. This shows that Christian religion, the driving force behind the abolition of slavery and tribal conflicts, played an important role also in the development of the democratic republic of Malawi.

In 1891 the area that we know as Malawi was declared to be a British protectorate, called Nyasaland. The colonial government came to Nyasaland upon an invitation by the church for the church's protection. At that time British policy seemed to be in favour of giving most of the land over to Portugal, as a part of Mozambique, but the Scottish Presbyterian mission protested and thus there was laid a basis for a movement that eventually led to the forming of the nation. A long struggle ended in 1963/1964 with Malawi as an independent country. Dr Banda, who was an ordained elder of the Presbyterian Church, became the first president. He led the country in an autocratic style and turned the country into a

European missionaries important in Malawian history

Dr Banda was replaced by a Muslim as president

Dr Banda was an ordained church elder

²¹ Slavery was abolished in the British Empire in 1833, but the Arab slave trade from East Africa to Turkey, Persia and French and Portuguese colonies continued on a large scale. Livingstone made the termination of slave trade 'the first great step to any mission'. He appealed to the Parliament and the sultan of Zanzibar was forced to close the slave market in 1873, one month after the death of Livingstone.

police state. According to his view, political opponents were to be meat for the crocodiles.

*For a long
time the
churches gave
him their
support*

The Presbyterian Church was from the beginning linked closely to the nationalist movement. On the one hand we see that the modern state could not have been brought into being without the presence of Christian missions. On the other hand, churches were in danger of losing credibility because of their support of the dictator. There are ample indications that the joint message from the Catholic and Presbyterian churches on the 10th Anniversary of Independence was written more in fear than in truth as it read: 'What has been achieved during this period in all fields is so unbelievable that it confounds even the most optimistic expectations of most of us and there is no doubt that all of this achievement is due to the untiring efforts, dedicated, selfless and responsible leadership of His Excellency, the Life President Ngwasi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda...' (Ross 1998: 131). Thus, most people did not think of the church as an agent for political change. But the reform process in the 1990s cannot be properly understood without looking at the role of the churches. It started with the Pastoral Letter of the Catholic bishops in March 1992 and the next step was the forming of a Public Affairs Committee (PAC) the same year, with representatives from different churches. PAC became involved in a very effective way as steps were taken towards a multiparty system. At the same time the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) issued a declaration admitting with regret that the church had been too closely linked to the ruling political party, often to the point of performing ceremonies around various government functions. Looking back, most churches admit that they legitimated the Banda regime by their practice, as well as by their silence. Contrary to the expectations of the masses, the church leaders 'danced to the tune of the government' This is not to say that they did nothing, but that the churches focused on important civil society issues like health and education.

*Churches'
influence in
society*

To understand this, we have to recognize some of the differences between Malawian and Norwegian societies. Norwegians are accustomed to systems of social and political security and a more or less defined role of the churches as a sector within the civil society. That limits the role of the church towards the state. European churches would be more than happy to increase their influence in areas like education and health, but that would be asking for the moon. Most people in Europe seem to think that the church is there for the ceremonies they need. In Malawi the involvement of

churches in education and health has been an important part of the process of building an independent nation. The churches and the state seem to have relied on each other in a common task and the churches have been granted more influence in public life than would be possible in Norway today. The churches should not be criticized for that, but it is important to see and understand that churches in different nations will have different ways to act as a church of Christ in relation to the state.

One example can be enlightening if we use it as an exercise. In 1998 the CCAP synod of Livingstonia wrote to president Muluzi, a Muslim, a letter that opened with these words:

‘His Excellency the State President
Dr. Bakili Muluzi

Church Concerns on Socio-Economic and Political Situation in Malawi.

Your Excellency Sir,
We greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and congratulate you for the first four trying years in a Multi-Party State.’

For Norwegians it may be recommended an exercise where they exchange the names Bakili Muluzi and Malawi for Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and Norway and try to find church leaders who could have written the letter!

The church as a prophetic voice as dictatorship is fought out

The churches played an important role as the dictator of Malawi was removed. The churches acted according to a theology that made them responsible for the welfare of the people. It started with a pastoral letter from the Catholic bishops and gained support from other churches, both in Malawi and abroad.

The Pastoral Letter of the Catholic bishops of March 1992, *Living our Faith*, had an explosive effect on the nation. The ruling party, Malawi Congress Party (MCP), which was gathered for an emergency session, condemned the act of the bishops. All efforts to stop the effect of the letter were in vain: ‘It was like the moment in the fairy tale when the little boy pointed out that the Emperor had no clothes’ (Ross 1998: 95). Modern Malawian history is divided between before and after the Pastoral Letter.

The bishops spoke with great courage

A political shock

The main message: a quest for equality and justice

The bishops claimed authority from the New Testament

Much of the content of the letter can be read as not provocative. It starts with a short statement about the dignity and unity of mankind, with emphasis on 'equality and the same basic rights for all'²². Next paragraph is about the obligation for the church to express her concern for these rights in the society. The third paragraph points out the need to work for greater equality and unity, while the Malawian society shows a growing gap between the rich and the poor, between people struggling for survival and a minority who 'can afford to live in luxury'. The letter speaks about the right of a decent and just salary and against bribery and nepotism. It spells out a concern about poverty, health and illiteracy. It speaks about the need for a close cooperation between church and state in order to give people equal access to education. In these matters the bishops just wrote what everyone knew but nobody dared to say. But the letter also, by focusing on basic elements in democracy, exposed the problems in political life of Malawi, especially in a section called 'The Participation of all in public life', where the bishops write about the New Testament teaching about the gifts of the Spirit, concluding that no individual can claim to have a monopoly of truth and wisdom. In the following paragraph the highlight is on the freedom of expression: 'Nobody should ever have to suffer reprisals for honestly expressing and living up to their convictions: intellectual, religious or political. We can only regret that this is not always the case in our country...' The bishops also proposed some steps towards a restoration of trust: an independent press, places for open discussions, freedom for associations for political purposes and impartial courts of justice. The crown argument is taken from John 8:32: 'The truth will set you free.' The bishops ended their letter by quoting Luke 4, 18-19: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free...'

These are words from the first public speech of Jesus, a speech with a programmatic character. He announced the Kingdom of God that he brought with him. By quoting this passage, the bishops claimed to be commissioned to continue the work of Jesus, the head of the church. To place oneself in a messianic role may be perceived as taking too big shoes on, but what the bishops tried to

²² This and following quotations are from *Living our Faith*, 1992.

make clear was that they addressed the state on behalf of the church of Christ.

Shortly after The Pastoral letter, a group of church leaders sent an open letter to president Banda, supporting the critique that came from the Roman Catholic Church. They asked for a commission that should propose a new and democratic system in the country. At the same time, in May 1992, the Western donor community decided to stop all aid to Malawi until there was evidence of greater respect for human rights in the government. In August the same year the Christian Council, consisting of the different protestant churches, along with the Roman Catholic Church, the Muslim Community and the Malawi Law Society wrote a letter to the government about the need for a referendum. The referendum should decide if Malawi should reintroduce a multiparty democratic system or not. Thus the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) was established as a representative organ, being able to sit down with the Presidential Committee on Dialogue, which they did for the first time on October 19. The day before they met, the president announced that the government's plan was to hold the referendum that the churches had asked for. The MCP continued to use violence against people who fronted the campaign. Clergymen were detained for preaching a political message, which indeed they did because they worked for a participatory democracy. Both the chairman and the secretary of PAC were exposed to several attempts of assassination. But people were willing to suffer for their convictions.

Church of Scotland (CofS) played an important role in the colonial history of Malawi. Already before the time of national independence, CofS had given the local leadership full responsibility and that implied that the local church should decide how the church should act on political issues. It was no longer a relation between a mother church and a mission field (or between patron and client), but between sister churches. During the long Banda period it seems as if CofS advised the Malawian Presbyterians to keep silent and the Malawians did so, maybe as a sign of subordination to the mother church. There were, of course, exceptions. Many Scottish missionaries had supported the opposition to Banda and at least in one case, the CofS more or less forced Banda to change a death sentence to imprisonment for life. But such cases could not hide the feeling of Malawian people that CofS supported the dictator.

Support from other churches as well as Muslim leaders

The silence of CofS was by many taken to be support for Dr Banda

*Eventually,
the CofS
also acted*

As the international climate changed rapidly around 1990, the end of the cold war encouraged churches to speak out more loudly about human rights in different parts of the world. This change of popular thought influenced of course also CofS and when president Banda made it a part of his rhetoric that he was an ordained elder of CofS, the time had come for this church to choose: whether to support the Banda regime by silence or to speak for the people of Malawi. Seven days after the Pastoral Letter of the Catholic bishops, the World Mission General Secretary, Chris Wigglesworth, announced in an interview with the BBC that Banda could not be regarded as an elder of CofS. This was confirmed at the General Assembly of CofS the same year and the immediate response from the opposition in Malawi was: 'The Moral authority of the KIRK will emancipate us for the second time' (Ross 1998: 122).

As mentioned above, a group of church leaders followed up with strong support of the Pastoral letter and with a request to the protestant churches to take their prophetic role seriously. This letter went on to ask for a broadly based Commission with a mandate that revealed the specific wishes of the church leaders for a democratic state. The Commission should 'make specific proposals for structural reform towards a political system with sufficient checks and balances on the use of power and guarantees of accountability at all levels of government: to review the judicial system in line with the rule of law, to look into the distribution of income and wealth required by the demands of social justice' (ibid : 98).

*Churches
were engaged
in the work
for reforms*

This letter was signed not only by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, but also by representatives for Presbyterian (CofS) synods within Malawi. The immediate result was the Public Affairs Committee, the main instrument in the struggle for a peaceful political change, a purple revolution. After the initiative from the Catholic bishops, the reformed churches seem to have taken a responsibility for the construction of a modern democracy. Distribution of power and wealth, accountability and justice were some of the claims. The PAC started to work on a programme for democratization supported by CofS and the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland. The first major aim was the National referendum on 14th of June 1993. The result was a majority of 63 % in favour of a multiparty system. The next task was the campaign before the General Election on 17th of May 1994. At both elections the CofS was responsible for an ecumenical group of observers.

Biblical inspiration in fight for democracy

Recent history shows that relevant theology can be an important force in the development of democracy. The most striking aspect of the action of the churches of Malawi is their willingness to let the Bible speak for peace, justice and freedom.

So far we have seen that churches with a different approach to political authorities played a role in the democratic development in Malawi. And it is clear that it was the Catholic bishops who really saw the *kairos*²³ of the Malawian nation and had the courage to be the prophetic voice, while the Presbyterian Church can be blamed for silence. Different traditions do not seem to be decisive for whether a church speaks or keeps silent towards the political establishment. We have to look for a better explanation than just aristocratic traditions. In the following are some other elements.

It happened in the aftermaths of the second Vatican Council (1963-65). Pope John XXIII initiated biblical studies of the nature and commission of the church, focusing on the church as the body of Christ (Eph 4), sent to the world with the gospel and to practise his divine love to all people, especially those who are suffering. His successor, Paul VI, followed up by an encyclical called *The Evangelization of Peoples*. The Pastoral Letter quotes Paul VI, saying that the church cannot disassociate her self from man's temporal needs because that is to deny both creation and the purpose of the church. An awareness of the universality of both mankind and church, combined with a biblical understanding of the church as Christ in the world, made the bishops compelled to speak – with one voice. The visit of John Paul II in 1989 may have encouraged the bishops, but it is also obvious that this awareness was woken up by studies of the Bible. It is a radical use of the Bible we meet in this letter. It starts with a passage from Mark 1: 15: 'Repent and believe the Gospel', a passage that explains both why the bishops had to speak publicly and that those who exercise power are accountable to God. Further, the bishops argue directly from the creation story in Genesis chapter 1 and 2 to conclusions about the dignity and unity of mankind and from St. Paul's teaching of the body of Christ to a statement of participation of all in public life. Both in the beginning and in the end of the letter other passages are quoted to support the

Why were the Catholic bishops the first to protest?

Inspiration from the universal church

Courage to let the Bible speak the truth

²³ Kairos is a word from the Greek New testament and is often used in literature of recent history of Malawi. It literally means 'time', but has become a word for a decisive moment, or a 'moment of truth'.

reasons for the Church to speak. Finally the bishops have a word about how to build a climate for trust: the truth will set you free (John 8: 32).

*Close ties
may prevent
a church
from
speaking up,
but also
inspire to be
an advisor*

The other two influential church bodies, the Anglican and the Presbyterian, were different in many ways, but they had one thing in common: They were closely linked to the project of building a nation. That may have contributed to their silence during the Banda period. On the other hand we can observe that the Church of Central Africa Presbyterians little by little became very specific in advises to the new regime. In an open letter of August 1998 this church wrote in length about what politics would be best for the people of Malawi. The advices were given according to the church's concept of a democracy and aiming at the realization of a vision for the nation. Democracy is defined as '... a system of Government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is a Government where members of Parliament listen to the views of ordinary people, the electorates, and present them to Parliament...People demand that elected leaders be responsible, hardworking, accountable and transparent, and can vote out of office anybody who does not satisfy their needs. People are free to speak out and express their opinion, free to criticize the Government...People are free to join any association of their choice...True multiparty Democracy is sustained when there is a strong opposition...' (Church Concerns 1998: 6). The vision is 'By the year 2020, Malawi as a God-fearing nation will be secure, ecologically balanced, democratically mature, environmentally sustainable, self-reliant with equal opportunities for and active participation by all, having social services, vibrant cultural and religious values and being a technologically driven middle-income country' (ibid: 8).

*The debate
on churches'
role in
democracy
must go on*

Statements like these are first and foremost witnesses of churches that are willing to take up an obligation for the future of a nation and its people. On the other hand they raise a lot of questions that can only be answered in the future. The future will show whether the churches are able to contribute to democracy that takes traditions and culture of Malawi into consideration and not mostly copy ideas and practices from Europe and USA. It is important that there is an ongoing discussion on this and related questions. From this the churches of Malawi may get some advices in the task of finding their public identity, their role in a democratic society and how to communicate Christian and ethical conviction in their political and

civil context. Such advice might be useful for the churches in Norway too. One of these related questions, perhaps the most important one, concerns the practice of the churches: How can a church communicate a commitment to democracy in teaching and practice? The problem is outlined here and is treated as an ethical and didactical question in chapter 14 'Building Democracy by teaching Religion and Ethics.'

Clearly, there are many factors of history, culture and doctrine that may have some influence on how a church understands her role in a society. These factors may be more or less important, but they seem to be secondary in the sense that in the Malawi case they were not strong enough to make the church speak against the abuse of power. It is obvious that the action of the churches to a larger extent was based on Bible studies. The Bible gave the bishops an analytic tool and a language that enabled them to address poverty and injustice as a violation of the will of God as well as a clear understanding of the church's obligation to speak out, calling the rulers of this world to take their responsibility towards God's will seriously. This way the Bible became a basis for *acting as a church of Christ* in a way that was understood by people and politicians alike.

*The Bible
gives the
church
courage and
tools*

This happened in the early 1990s. At the kairos of the Malawian nation, churches spoke with a prophetic voice against oppression and injustice. Today, in a society where democratic ideals are more or less institutionalized, the roles of the churches are likely to be different. Malawi may have entered 'a post prophetic era' (Ott 2000: 13). Bible studies do not give churches all competence needed in the building of a nation. To build up a welfare state that can be measured to sound democratic standards takes all political skills that are available. The job will have to be done through political institutions and the churches should refrain from becoming too detailed technically and judicially involved in that process. The churches will still play a role, because it is vital for a democracy to have people committed to Christian values at all levels of political institutions. The most important job for the churches will be formation of lay people with an ethical commitment that prepare them to act consistently as Christians in politics.

Questions

1. Describe some similarities and differences between The Anglican Church, The Church of Scotland and The Church of Norway.
2. What was meant by ‘a Christian nation’ in the history of Norway? Why could this ideal be used against a democratic society?
3. What did Christian lay people want to gain, fighting for democracy?
4. To what extent should churches accept a secular state?
5. What made the Malawian churches prepared for a fight for democracy?
6. How can the parable of the leaven, or the yeast in the dough, be applied to understand the role of a church in society today?
7. In the minds of western readers, for example from the perspective of a modern and liberal state, religion has become a private matter. From that perspective one may think that the churches of Malawi have become too closely involved in politics. It may be an eye opening exercise to try to answer some historical questions (Looking for answers to these questions might lead to an expanded understanding of the role of a church in building and nourishing a young as well as an old democracy):
 - a. What would have been the result if the Norwegian clergy had written about democracy in 1883 like the Catholic bishops did in 1992 and Church of Central Africa Presbyterian did in 1998?
 - b. What would have happened if people had not fought for this idea of democracy *as a part of their Christian conviction*?

Compare and contrast Malawi and Norway

After having read two or all of chapters 5, 6 and 7 in this book, discuss the following questions.

1. Make a list of similarities and differences between Malawi and Norway in the development of democratic government.

2. What similarities and differences can you draw from Norway's union with Denmark and Sweden and how does this compare with Malawi's experience as a British protectorate?

References

Apel, H. (2007): *Europa ohne Seele*. Giessen.

Church Concerns on Socio-Economic and Political Situation in Malawi (1998). Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia.

Living our Faith (1992), Pastoral Letter of The Episcopal Conference of Malawi. Lent.

Ott, M. (2000): 'The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999)'. In Ott, Phiri & Patel, *Malawi's Second Democratic Elections. Process, Problems, and Prospects*. Blantyre.

Ross, K.R. (1998): *Here Comes Your King! Christ, Church and Nation in Malawi*. Blantyre.

Tengatenga, J. (2006): *Church, State and Society in Malawi*. Zomba.

PART 4

Perspectives of special Interest

CHAPTER 8

Christian Faith and Values of Democracy

By Ralph Meier

Nowadays it is commonly accepted in almost all churches over the world that democracy is the best of all political systems in the light of Christian anthropology and Christian ethics. This opinion is empirically observable by the fact that the Christian religion dominates in nearly 90% of the democratic states today. This alliance between Christian faith and democracy has not always existed. In Western Europe only after the Second World War the Lutheran and Roman Catholic Church claimed democracy as the best form of government. In this chapter the focus is on three biblical aspects: the rule of the almighty God, the creation of man and woman in the image of God, and the sin of mankind. These aspects will be related to democratic principles. At the end, this chapter will consider some virtues which can be important for democracy.

The almighty God and the limited power of government

In the Bible God is presented as Creator of the world and the universe (Genesis 1 and 2). He is the sovereign Lord of the universe and of all human beings. God is creator, mankind is his creation. This means that there is a sharp distinction between God as creator and mankind as creation. We find this distinction in the three monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This distinction means that all people are subordinated to the almighty God. According to the Bible, God handed over the world of nature to man as a sphere over which to rule (Genesis 1: 2-28). But this world is still the world of God as creator and this excludes arbitrary control by man. The human dominion is like the work of a gardener

*God is
creator,
mankind
creation*

(Genesis 2: 15) and all human beings are responsible before God for how they rule over the nature (Pannenberg 1994).

*Only God
has absolute
power*

God is the only one who has absolute power. All human beings are subordinated to God and are responsible before Him. This has also consequences in politics. If we think of a state, it is important that in a biblical perspective the state and the authorities in the state have their power from God. This includes two ideas. First: God's use of power and his way of ruling are examples for the way people should rule on earth. The characteristics of God's reign are that it is a reign in love which is the opposite of oppression and tyranny²⁴. Second: The power of a state is always limited and cannot be absolute. In former times, when the rulers, the statesmen and monarchs were a part of the Christian church, they could be reminded of God's law and order. This was the situation in past centuries in many countries in Europe. A monarch had his power from God and was subordinated to Him, so he himself could not have absolute power. Nevertheless, this did not guarantee a good sovereign and in many cases the ruler did not care for what the church reminded him about. In the 1900s we had examples of totalitarian states where the ruler had absolute power. There was no longer belief in God or God was totally separated from state and politics and the state got a religious dimension in its own right. Examples in Europe until the end of the Second World War include Italy, Germany and the Soviet Union.

*The power
of a state is
limited*

*Democratic
government
– limited by
time and
institutions*

In a democracy we have a kind of structural limitation of power for the sovereign in two ways. First, a democratic government is limited by time and institutions (separation of powers); usually the government can be voted out or removed from office. These control mechanisms can help to avoid a government or a sovereign from reaching absolute power as in monarchies and totalitarian governments. No structure of government can guarantee this limitation of power. As always, it is important what people make of it. But democracy, compared to other systems of government, seems to have an advantage in this respect.

Obedience to the state

In his letter to the Romans, Paul proclaims: 'Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist

²⁴ Pannenberg deals with the omnipotence and love of God in more detail (1991: 410-448).

have been established by God' (Romans 13: 1). Both theologians and politicians have argued that Christians have to obey state authorities under all circumstances because of this statement. It is a common view among theologians that Paul in this text calls Christians to respect and submit to government in principle. But it is important to notice that Paul speaks about *submission* and not about blind obedience (Witherington 2004: 312). Further he writes that 'rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong' and that the authority is 'God's servant to do you good' and that it has 'to bring punishment on the wrongdoer' (Romans 13: 3-4). Here we can see a condition that opens for (non-violent) resistance and opposition under specific circumstances, when government rules against protecting the good and punishing the wrong. The 'focus is on an exhortation to Christians as to how they should respond to the *legitimate* claims of the state on them for respect, honour and resources.' (Witherington 2004: 307) A democratic state gives all citizens a legal possibility for 'revolution' in the sense that they can vote from time to time and by this change the leadership of a state.

*Romans 13:
Submission
to govern-
ment, but not
without
conditions*

Image of God and the dignity of mankind

The creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1: 26-27) is one of the basics in biblical anthropology. In Christian theology the image of God has been interpreted in different ways, but one central aspect is that man and woman are created to relationship in communion with God and with each other. In this view every person is created by God and has a relationship with Him, other human beings and the whole world. The origin of man is seen as origin from God and this gives human beings dignity. The first paragraph in the Pastoral Letter by the Catholic Bishops of Malawi of 1992 focuses on 'The Dignity and Unity of Humankind'. Because man and woman are created in the image and likeness of God, each person is in communion with Him and is sacred. 'Human life is inviolable since it is from God...' (p 2). It concludes: 'Rejoicing in this truth we proclaim the dignity of every person, the right of each one to freedom and respect. The oneness of the human race also implies equality and the same basic rights for all. These must be solemnly respected and inculcated in every culture, every constitution and every social system' (p 2).

*The creation
in God's
image gives
man dignity*

*Declaration
of Human
Rights*

Written two years before Malawi regained a democratic government²⁵, these sentences were eminently political on the basis of Christian belief. The bishops did not proclaim more than what is said in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948. It reads: 'Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.'

In the preamble, this declaration states that 'recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.' The *recognition of inherent dignity* will be accepted in most cultures on face value as the declaration plainly states this value. Even so, it is good to strengthen the notion of human dignity by reason. Such a reason is given in the biblical view and the Pastoral Letter makes this clear as it refers to the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God. God himself gives dignity to mankind, to every individual.

*Dignity and
inviolability
of each
individual*

This biblical view of mankind also proclaims the inviolability of human life in each individual. Genesis 9: 6 relates the prohibition of murder to the creation of man in the divine likeness. The thought of the inviolability of each human life has its reason in the biblical view, that every man is under a supreme authority, God, 'that releases us from obligation to other powers and especially from being controlled by other people or by society' (Pannenberg 1994: 176). The thought of the dignity and inviolability of each individual is important for example for the questions of abortion, bioethics, genetic research and euthanasia.

In addition to the dignity of all human beings, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also claims that they are endowed with reason and conscience. This statement suggests a positive or optimistic view of the abilities of human beings with the assumption that it is enough to listen to reason. To trust in this capability is an essential condition for democracy, because democracy is based on the assumption

²⁵ Malawi had a starting democracy during 1961 – 1964 when she had a self government status. The budding democracy was discouraged by Dr Banda's dictatorial tendencies. He was prime minister 1961-1964 and president 1964 – 1994.

that the majority of people will vote for the good and the right.

Compared with this optimistic view of the human being, Christian faith emphasizes the mixed and ambivalent character of human nature – creative impulses matched by destructive impulses. A Christian view that every human being is endowed with positive as well as negative abilities goes well along with Niebuhr's statement: 'Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary' (1944: XI).

Every human being has positive and negative abilities

The sin of human being and control of power in democracy

The Bible talks about the sinfulness and fallibility of the human being. After the fall (Genesis 3) the relation between the human being and God, mankind and the world, has changed. Christianity has the doctrine of original sin which in short means that every human being is born turned away from God and with a drive to egoism, a desire to be in the place of God and to have power. Reason and conscience are seen as influenced by the fall and consequently by sin. Therefore we do not always choose what is best for the whole society, but what is best for us and for one self. But how could Niebuhr state that 'man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary'?

Sinfulness makes democracy necessary

What is the advantage of democracy over other forms of government in the light of 'man's inclination to injustice'? Two principles in constitutional democracy are important in this perspective: the separation of powers and the limitation of government in time. Separation of powers means that legislative, executive and judicial powers are exercised by different institutions. The legislature makes the laws and decides on the national budget. Usually it is the national assembly or another representative body that has legislative power. The executive is not supposed to make laws, but is responsible for the day-to-day management of government. Its actions have to be within the limits set by the legislature. The leader of the executive is the Head of State as for example the Prime Minister or the President. The judiciary interprets the laws made by the legislature. The separation of powers thus implies a system of checks and balances between the different powers in the state discouraging any of them to seize undue powers for it self. In addition, most democracies have special instances to control each of the different powers. From a Christian view this separation of powers takes the fact of

*Media – the
forth power
in the state*

sinfulness and fallibility of human being seriously.

In addition to the three traditional powers in democracy, the role of media as the forth power is easily underestimated. A free media is significant in any democracy. Press, broadcasting, television and internet must be seen as important for shaping public opinion. Some politicians are aware of the power of media and want to use it to their own advantage. Media has a strong manipulating influence and because of this it has a special responsibility in society.

Another important factor in democracy is the limited time of rule for the government. The government can be confirmed or voted out through regularly conducted elections. In the light of the Christian view that human nature has capacity for justice and injustice, good and evil, this aspect must be seen as an advantage for democracy. A system of limitation of government in time thus makes government accountable to the citizens for their actions.

Threats to democracy

*An open
letter to the
State
President*

In spite of these constitutional principles, democracy often does not work as it should and as intended. Examples of this experience are illustrated in the *Open Letter to His Excellency the State President Dr Bakili Muluzi* of 1998, written by the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia. As deficiencies the Synod mentions for example the practice of taking away land from the owners, privatisation of companies and organisations in favour of a few individuals and foreigners, lack of security and lack of good education. Democracy, in which everybody in a country should participate, cannot thrive without education. People need to see the advantages and possibilities which come with democracy. Therefore education is an important factor in order to consolidate democracy.

Education

Corruption

Possibly the biggest threat to democracy today is corruption. Corruption in the public sector is often defined as the abuse of public office for private gain: public money is used for private ends and consolidation of power. The Synod of Livingstonia writes in its letter of 1998: 'The creation of Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Office of Ombudsman is commendable. However, we note that Corruption in Malawi has been institutionalised... It starts from the leaders at the top down the ladder. Scandals associated with leaders

have become the order of the day' (p 7). In 2005, President Bingu wa Mutharika, who was elected in 2004, championed an anticorruption campaign. This seems to be a positive tendency, but the effect it has on corruption in the country is yet to be seen. The problem of corruption in nearly all democratic states demonstrates that a democratic constitution does not guarantee democratic practices. However, the democratic principles of transparency and accountability are important weapons in the fight against corruption. It is important that the people who live in democratic states in their daily life adhere to the values and principles of democracy.

A democratic constitution is no guarantee for democratic practice

The need of virtues for democracy

We can proclaim that constitutional democracy is the most human and most efficient political system. But it is also necessary to remember that democracy does not work automatically. All citizens in a country have a responsibility to make it succeed. It is important to think of the welfare of *all* citizens. The German Bishops' Conference in 2006 published a paper titled 'Democracy needs virtues.' Virtue is a character trait or personality trait valued as being good. In our context it may be defined as an attitude which focuses on public welfare (German Bishops' Conference 2006: 18-19). The Bishops' paper focuses on four groups in the society: the citizens, especially the voters, the politicians, the journalists and the different organizations.

A bishops' paper about virtues in democracy

For the *citizens* it is important that they accept the reciprocity of rights and duties after the golden rule: 'In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you' (Matthew 7: 12). All citizens should look for the welfare of all people (German Bishops' Conference 2006: 22). The citizens as *voters* should confide in the politicians they want to elect and they should take part in elections. The *politicians* must be aware that they are responsible towards all citizens and that they work for the welfare of the whole society (ibid: 26-27). They have to think of the majority and also the minorities and take care of them. By being elected the politicians have got power and are expected to rule the country. How to rule without selfishness and in a way that takes care of the citizens is shown in the New Testament. Jesus as the Lord did rule as a servant and the politicians should listen to the words he says to his disciples: 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to

Citizens' responsibility

Politicians should rule as servants

Journalists have an ethical responsibility

The role of interest groups in the society

Germany's first attempt at democracy

become great among you must be your servant' (Matthew 20: 25-26). According to Christian theology the Head of State should look upon himself as the first Servant and take Jesus as example for reign. The politicians have to tell the truth also when it is unpopular and they should be persons of integrity and competence. The *journalists* as well have an ethical responsibility. Media informs the citizens about politics and the main issues in society. Journalists are competing in a tough market and there is a danger for giving in to the temptation of sensational journalism at the cost of truth and objectivity. They should be aware that media is forming the public opinion of politics (German Bishops' Conference 2006: 34- 40). Every society has different *interest groups and organizations*. They all try to influence politics and want to get money for their own concerns. This is a legitimate interest, but every organization should also think of the common welfare (ibid: 40-45).

Is there an alternative to democracy?

'Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time' (Churchill 1947). We have no reason to glorify democracy. But is there an alternative in our time? Germany²⁶ had the first democratic government after the First World War, from 1919 until 1933, called the *Weimar Republic*. This first attempt to establish a liberal democracy in Germany happened during a time of civil conflict. There were many internal political conflicts and from the beginning the Republic was under great pressure from both left and right-wing extremists. Also there were many different smaller parties which were not used to work with each other, with the result, that the government was not strong enough to rule the country. In addition, the judiciary and the military had not been democratised enough after World War I and the Chancellor (the president) had a strong position which gave him power to take all necessary steps if public order and security were seriously disturbed or endangered. Another problem was that Germany had to pay reparations to other countries which lead to a

²⁶ Germany is this author's home country.

very difficult economic situation for the Germans. Also there was much unemployment and the Great Depression from 1929 made the economic situation worse. The political system was not solid, the Chancellor changed very often. The antidemocratic parties both on the left and on the right wing became stronger. Especially the right-wing National Socialist Party, with Adolf Hitler as leader, influenced with its propaganda against the democratic parties many of the citizens who were unsatisfied with the government. His party made people to believe that all the problems in the country had been caused by the Weimar Republic with a weak government. Hitler proclaimed that Germany needed a strong leader who was able solve the problems of the country. After the National Socialist Party had been the strongest party in government and after Hitler had become Chancellor in 1933, he managed to abolish democracy in a very short time. And, no doubt, in a way he was successful. His totalitarian regime gave employment and more welfare to many people. But this was just one side of the coin. With the Hitler regime came also absolute control by the state, a one party system, racism, holocaust and the Second World War. We can only speculate: What would have happened if the Germans had not lost democracy at that time?

*From
democracy to
totalitarian-
ism*

The example of Germany between 1919 and 1945 shows that there were many threats to democracy, but also that the totalitarian system was a bad alternative to democracy. Obviously the democracy was not strong enough against the antidemocratic parties, and there are several reasons for the Weimar Republic's failure. It had very serious economic problems with hyperinflation, massive unemployment and a large drop in living standards. The radical parties blamed the government for this. Also the democratic institution had several weaknesses, as for instance the strong role of the Chancellor and the pure proportional representation of any party in the parliament with the result of too many small parties. As another important reason it should be mentioned that many citizens had been influenced by the massive propaganda of the extremist parties and did not believe in the advantages of a democratic system. The failure of the Weimar Republic demonstrates that democracy does not guarantee welfare and employment – no political system does. But compared to the totalitarian state after the failure of the Weimar Republic there should be no doubt that democracy is worth to fight for, also in hard times.

*No good
alternative to
democracy*

Questions

1. What does it mean that in a biblical view the state authorities have their power from God?
2. What does Paul in Romans 13 say about the obedience to the state?
3. Give a biblical reason for the statement that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.'
4. Why is the separation of powers and the limitation of government in time important in a Christian view of state government?
5. What are great threats to democracy – and why?
6. Discuss the question of obedience to the state from your point of view.
7. Discuss the sentence: 'Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.'
8. Discuss the statement: 'Democracy needs virtues.' Give reasons for your point of view.
9. How do you interpret the word of Jesus: 'Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant' (Matthew 20: 26)?
10. Find reasons for democracy in favour of other political forms of government and discuss them.

References

The Bible. New International Version.

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia (1998): *Open Letter to His Excellency the State President Dr. Bakili Muluzi*, 20th August, 1998.

Churchill, W. (1947): <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/24926.html>

Corruption Perceptions Index 2006:

http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2006

The Episcopal Conference of Malawi (1992) *Living our Faith*, Pastoral Letter. Lent.

German Bishops' Conference (2006): *Democracy needs virtues*. German title: *Demokratie braucht Tugenden*. Gemeinsames Wort des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland und der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz zur Zukunft unseres demokratischen Gemeinwesens. 20. November 2006. Gemeinsame Texte Nr. 19.

Niebuhr, R. (1944): *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness. A vindication of democracy and a critique of its traditional defence*. New York: Scribner.

Pannenberg, W. (1991): *Systematic Theology*. Volume 1. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd.

Pannenberg, W. (1994): *Systematic Theology*. Volume 2. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Witherington III, B. (2004): *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

CHAPTER 9

Promoting the Use of Mother Tongue in Education – a Case for Democracy

By Amos M. Chauma, Foster Kholowa and Kjell N. Holby

The purpose of this chapter is to argue for the importance of promoting the use of local languages in education in order to strengthen democratic development. The chapter first presents the development of language in Malawi and Norway in a historical perspective. The second part discusses the language situation in Malawi with special focus on democracy and the need for the use of local languages in schools, leading to a discussion on challenges and opportunities in this respect.

Mother tongue in education

Before discussing the historical background, it is important that we briefly look at the general situation of mother tongue in education in Malawi and Norway. The introduction of mother tongue in an education system has been debated for a long time in a number of countries including Malawi. The first supportive document was published in 1953 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization after their study on 'The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education' (UNESCO 1955). From that time, mother tongue education has become an integral part of education systems around the world. Malawi remained very much in isolation and did not explore the benefits of such an approach until after the introduction of Free Primary Education in 1994. Equality of access to the language of instruction can be promoted by starting primary education in a child's mother tongue or the language of the immediate community. This means a language commonly spoken in the area where the

*Mother
tongue
education is
an integral
part of
education
systems
around the
world*

Literacy acquisition is easier in home language

school is located. In so doing children are free to use the language of their choice and teachers should respect and support such usage. It must be appreciated that literacy acquisition in young children is greatly facilitated if they are taught to read, write and even count in their home language first. Using mother tongue in the classroom improves the quality of communication and interaction and children are more active and participative during learning activities (Schott 2005). Mchazime (1999) maintains that the first language helps the child to establish both the emotional and intellectual closeness with his or her parents. Most parents communicate their feelings to the child in their own language. They also transmit aspects of their culture to the child in their language since language is a carrier of culture. So the choice of language is also a question of identity. Success stories indicate that learners perform better when the mother tongue is the medium of instruction (Mtenje 1999 and Kachaso 1988).

Every child has the right to be taught in mother tongue

For a long time Malawi did not promote the use of mother tongue but is now moving towards that. Things took a u-turn in 1996 when the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education issued a directive that from then onwards standards 1–4 would be taught through vernacular languages. The directive followed the original UNESCO document as well as Article 26 of the 1994 constitution of Malawi. This Article states that ‘every person shall have the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of his or her choice.’ Malawi is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Children’s Rights in Education which, in article 30, stresses the right to every child to be taught in his or her mother tongue. This is supported by the Policy Investment Framework of the education sector in Malawi, which re-affirms that the Government of Malawi is taking its commitment towards mother tongue education seriously (Ministry of Education 1996: vii). So depending on their locality, children are expected to learn in the indigenous languages of Malawi such as Chichewa, Chitumbuka, Chiyao, Chisena, Chilomwe, Chinkhonde and Chitonga. English starts as medium of instruction in standard 5.

Two varieties of Norwegian with equal rights

The situation and history of Norwegian as a national language is very different from that of Malawi. Nevertheless, it is relevant in this context to give a brief outline of how two varieties of Norwegian have become national languages both enjoying ‘equal rights’ according to the laws of the land. Norway with her 4, 5 million indigenous inhabitants, in good will, understands both variants, in spite of the many

regional accents and dialects. Children in primary school learn to read and write and are instructed in the Norwegian variant of the municipality they live in. The variant of Norwegian in use is a result of a democratic decision made by the local authority. In secondary schools instruction may be given in either variant and the students have to sit compulsory exams in both variants, with a few exceptions. Textbooks and course books are supposed to be published at the same time in both 'languages.' However, this has so far been a wanton wish. The Sami people are an ethnic minority with their own language, but as Norwegians they speak Norwegian as well. Their core area is in the northern part of Norway and through history their culture has been treated with variable respect by government and fellow countrymen.

A brief historical background to language education in Malawi

The idea to use vernacular languages as a medium of instruction in the lower primary in Malawi was initiated by the former colonial masters. Between 1918 and 1934, the administrators in the then colonial government of Nyasaland (now called Malawi) worked to promote Chinyanja (now called Chichewa) as a national language. At that time the language of learning in the early stages of primary education especially standard 1 up to standard 4 was Chinyanja in the southern and central provinces and Chitumbuka in the northern province (Ministry of Education 1996). Chinyanja language was used because the Nyanja dialects had a much longer history of literary use, was codified and standardized, grammars and dictionaries were developed. The other reason was that of all the Bantu languages in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, Chinyanja is the most widely spoken. It is spoken in parts of neighbouring Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania and as far as Zimbabwe, The Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa.

The early missionaries played an important role in developing and promoting indigenous languages. They used vernacular languages for evangelization in an attempt to spread the word of God. Apart from helping the natives understand the word of God, the missionaries encouraged the use and teaching of some local languages in order to prepare a special group of people for the missionary work. For example, when the Scottish missionaries started their work at Khondowe in Northern Malawi, they established schools in

Colonial masters promoted vernacular languages

Early missionaries important in language development

Rumphu and other districts. By 1934 the government asked the missionaries in the north who operated in the areas where Chinyanja was not the indigenous language, to introduce and teach Chitumbuka as a subject in their schools (Mchazime 2000). This was not only happening in Malawi but also in the former British colonies of Kenya and Tanzania. The missionaries produced orthographies, grammars and dictionaries along with a fair amount of religious reading materials in the local languages of those countries. The missionaries translated the Bible into a number of indigenous languages and produced both Hymn and Scripture books in local languages. More evidence for the use of local languages in Malawi is given by Pachai (1973) who points out that the missionaries who worked among the Yao and Tumbuka communities encouraged the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in their schools. In so doing the converts were able to understand and write down what they heard and read. This was done to ensure full participation by the local people.

Before and immediately after Malawi attained independence in 1964, Chinyanja and Chitumbuka were used as media of instruction in sub standard A to standard 2 (the current standards 1 to 4) in school as well as on radio and in print media. Chinyanja was used as a medium of instruction in the Southern and Central regions and Chitumbuka in the North. But from the 1969/70 school year the Malawi government directed that only Chichewa (the then Chinyanja) be used as a medium of instruction in primary schools, standards 1 to 5 and that it should be taught as a subject in standards 1 to 8 and Forms 1 to 4 in secondary schools throughout the country. Gradual introduction of English as a medium of instruction in other subjects was to start in standard 5. Chichewa was later introduced as a subject in the University of Malawi. But unfortunately it is taught in English, Chichewa is used only to give examples.

At the same time, Chichewa also became the only local language to be used in the media. Manda (2006) explains that in the printed media, dailies and weeklies present 95% of the pages in English and 5 % in Chichewa²⁷. Television Malawi (TVM), the only TV station, uses mainly English and Chichewa. The public broadcaster, Malawi

Chichewa became a medium of instruction in schools and is also used some in the media

²⁷ The two daily newspapers, *The Nation* and *The Daily Times*, are in English only. The week end newspapers, that is, *The Week end Nation* and *Malawi News*, 93.5% of the pages are in English and only 6.5% of the pages are in Chichewa. *The Nation on Sunday* and *The Sunday Times* present all their pages in English.

Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) station, Radio 1, broadcasts news and short programmes in English and Chichewa 93.6% of the air time. The other local languages, Chitumbuka, Chitonga, Chilomwe, Chisena and Chiyao are given only 6.4%. However, some private radio stations like Zodiac, Radio Maria and Radio Islam are broadcasting in some of the local languages of Malawi.

A brief history of the Norwegian languages

1500 years is a long time and during that period the Norwegian language has gone through many stages and undergone many changes. Over the years modern Norwegian has borrowed countless words from German, English, French, Latin, Danish and Swedish.

The first alphabet consisted of runes and is believed to have come from early Greek or Latin. The letters were considered to be magic ('runes' means 'secret'). Few people mastered the skill of writing with runes and they were carved into stone or wood. The Vikings (AD 700-1000) spoke Old Norse and generally with the same accent. They travelled far and wide and it seems that Norwegian Vikings and Englishmen could communicate without problems. Many Vikings also settled on the British Isles and their language influenced English a great deal. Like in Malawi, missionaries had considerable impact on the development of language as Catholic missionaries introduced the Latin alphabet to the Norwegians around the year 1000.

Missionaries influenced the language

In 1349 the Black Death harassed Norway's west coast. The plague wiped out more than half the population and many of the dead were priests and monks, so there were only a few literate persons left to preserve the written Norwegian language. Shortly after the plague the Swedes took over rule of the nation; then some years later the Dano-Norwegian Kingdom was founded. The Danish and Swedish rule of Norway influenced the Norwegian language heavily. From 1380 Norway became subordinate to Denmark. Therefore Danish replaced Old Norse as the standard written language during the 1400s and 1500s. In speech, however, the Norwegian dialects carried on in unbroken tradition. Danish was taught in schools and the children had to speak and write Danish as long as they were at school. The children faced a problem when they had to describe the Norwegian nature in Danish as it simply did not have the adequate words. For example, at that time there was no Danish word for a high mountain, the closest one was 'hill'.

Danish and Swedish rule influenced the Norwegian language

The union with Denmark came to an end in 1814. On the 17th of May Norway got her own constitution. Shortly afterwards Norway was joined with Sweden in a union with her own national assembly, government and judiciary system. The elite of the country now wrote Danish and spoke a modified version of this language. The rise of nationalism and national romanticism created dissatisfaction in influential circles with the fact that there was no separate Norwegian language except in the dialects. National romanticism was a movement to promote cultural nation building in Norway, which included important activities for the collection and publication of folklore (fairy tales, local legends, ballads, folk music). The study and 'rediscovery' of the Norwegian dialects was a part of this. This was accomplished by Ivar Aasen (1813-96), who came from a small farm between Volda and Ørsta. He went partly on foot through large regions of the country collecting words and sayings of the many different dialects. In 1848 he published a comparative grammar of the rural vernacular he had collected. Two years later a comprehensive dictionary was finished. Aasen also wrote poetry in his language, other writers followed suit and the 'new' language was soon used in various genres, such as poetry, fictional prose, non-fiction, journalism, textbooks and drama. This indigenous language, called *Nynorsk* (literally New Norwegian) was officially equalized with Danish in 1885. It was the dominant language in large parts of rural Norway, particularly in the West. In 1902 it was made compulsory in teachers' education and in 1907 even in secondary school exams beside the other language, Danish, which was norwegianized by spelling reforms, creating modern *Bokmål* (literally Book Language). In 1930 it was decreed that the government should use both languages according to the wishes of the citizens in each case.

*Nynorsk
officially
equalized
with Danish
and
compulsory
in education*

New Norwegian has always been the lesser used written variant. It had its all time high in 1944 when 34% of the school districts used it as their main written language. To ensure that New Norwegian is not undermined, the government has come up with a list of regulations:

*Regulations
to prohibit
Nynorsk from
being
undermined*

- All textbooks printed in Norway must be published in both languages.
- At least 25% of the programmes shown on the national broadcasting channel NRK must be in New Norwegian. This includes subtitling of movies, the speech of narrators,

announcers, news-casters and the like.

- At least 25% of all official documents must be written in New Norwegian.
- All persons working in official positions must have a command of both languages; a person who sends a letter to someone in, for example, the local authority, is entitled to get a reply in the same language that his/her letter is written in.

The way these regulations are practised by the government varies a whole lot and many of those who fight for New Norwegian claim that government does not enforce the regulations strictly enough. Nevertheless the general opinion seems to support the existence of the regulations, giving the underdog a tool with which to fight for its cause.

The Sami people were most probably the original inhabitants in the far north of Norway and left rock carvings that are about 5000 years old. Since 1980 the legal status of the Sami has been considerably improved. An Article in the Norwegian constitution reads as follows: 'It is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop their language, culture and way of life.'

The Sami people

The pietistic Thomas von Westen was chosen to lead missionary work among the Sami. He strongly opposed the Sami practice of shamanism. However, he encouraged the use of the Sami language among the missionaries and the clergy, a policy which met with growing opposition after his death in 1727. In the 1800s another missionary, N.V. Stockfleth was very active among the Sami and his interest in Sami was highly instrumental in promoting acceptance of the language. He translated many works into Sami, including the New Testament and he even succeeded in getting courses in Sami studies accepted at the University in Oslo. However, social Darwinism led to a change in attitudes towards the Sami around 1850. Reforms were introduced starting with the schools. At the end of the 1800s teachers were instructed to restrict the use of the Sami language in the schools; the children were forbidden to use it, even in the playground. From 1902 it was illegal to sell land to anyone who could not speak Norwegian. The process of norwegianisation was at its worst.

Christian mission opposed shamanism and encouraged the use of Sami language

After World War 2, the authorities' policy towards the Sami changed character and became more liberal. The major step came

Sami on an equal footing with Norwegian

in the 1960s when the Sami right to preserve and develop their culture was officially acknowledged. The language was taught in the schools as well as *duodji*, Sami handicraft. The aim of the Sami Language Act was to bring the Sami language on to an equal legal footing with Norwegian and to increase the possibilities for using Sami in an official context.

In Norway there are about 70 000 Sami, but one reckons that only one third speak the language. Sami language newspapers and magazines have been issued since 1870 and broadcasts started in 1946. Courses in Sami have been offered at the University of Oslo since 1848 and are now available at three other universities in Norway (Helander 2007).

Registration of any language is vital to its survival

The above examples from Norway and Malawi demonstrate that a thorough registration of any indigenous language is vital to its survival. Registration assisted by trained and highly motivated linguists resulting in grammars and dictionaries available to people is essential. With this in place, the activities, the folklore and everyday culture of those people can be described and nurtured in their own vernacular. This, of course, does not prevent English from being taught as the first foreign language in the schools.

Education and politics are conducted in Norwegian

From the presentation above, it is clear that there are similarities between the language situation in Malawi and Norway. However, when it comes to the situation concerning mother tongue, the differences are striking. In Norway it is fair to say that education as well as politics is conducted in the vernacular, which is Norwegian. Sami is used for matters and in contexts that are of special interest to the Sami people. In Malawi English dominates official communication and the use of vernacular languages is therefore a much more outstanding issue. Because of this, the rest of this chapter will mainly focus on the situation in Malawi. Even so, the aspects that are discussed in the following should be of general interest.

The role of local language in democracy

Language is an effective means of promoting democracy

Language is an effective means of promoting democracy in a community. Citizens acquire democratic values easier when the medium of instruction and communication is their mother tongue. Mother tongue literacy can promote understanding of democratic values, a sense of identity as well as self esteem. Lack of communication with the masses in a language that they understand has been

a main cause of hindrance to creating a democratic culture. When messages on democracy are made available to the people in a foreign language, it is difficult for them to understand the message, let alone disseminate it. The Organisation for African Unity (now called African Union) General Secretariat's report on Language Plan of Action for Africa (1987), states that mass literacy campaigns cannot succeed without the use of indigenous African languages. Centre for Language Studies (2006) in Malawi recognizes the important role that local languages play in national development. It observes that communication is crucial in any development process because it is concerned with the transfer of ideas and knowledge. Furthermore it enables the recipient to understand, react and act upon the information received. A familiar language is then central to that communication process.

The use of local languages will facilitate democracy and at the same time national development. This is because new ideas on agriculture, health, education, politics, human rights, gender, HIV/Aids, business and technology will be easily understood. If the aim of communicating is to transfer ideas from a source to a receiver (the masses) through face to face interaction, through print media, television and radio, with the intent to change their behaviour then use of local languages is the ideal. It is obvious that if people do not understand the language that carries messages, it will be difficult for them to understand such messages or information. Therefore local communities need to have access to information using the local language. This is on the understanding that language is a liberation tool, unites people and promotes participatory approaches to nation building endeavours. In Malawi, so far the potential of local languages has not been employed in the mass media in the fight against poverty and on various other issues of national development.

This shows that the masses are denied valuable information on democracy and other national development issues, for example, on health, agriculture, technology, HIV/AIDS, gender, human rights, politics and entrepreneurship (Manda 2006). Realising that 'democratic politics is in the vernacular' (Kymlicka 2001: 214), it is only exposure to democratic values and principles through a familiar language that will facilitate people's understanding and participation in politics, development programmes and processes. This is so because people will be able to share ideas, articulate their needs and

Language that carry messages need to be understood

Illiterate persons are excluded from effective participation

problems, take initiatives and assert their autonomy. As of now the vast majority of the population is excluded from effective participation in any official business and communication because they cannot read, write or speak the language in which laws are written and political debates are conducted.

In Malawi, for example, to show how powerful the use of local languages can be in disseminating information we can look to drama groups and comedians like Izeki and Jacob and others. They use local languages in their successful dissemination of important information and messages on culture, democracy, human rights, family planning, gender, education, politics, health, agriculture and technology.

Challenges and opportunities for the use of local languages

Many developing countries face major constraints in the choice of local languages as a medium of instruction in schools. This certainly is the case for Malawi. Obanya (1999) points out that the problem is due to the multilingual make up of most countries, especially in Africa. The problem is also highlighted by Quane (2005) who argues that the majority of the African languages compete with each other for attention and this poses a serious challenge for decision makers. The presence of so many languages in one locality leads policy makers in Africa to turn away from use of their own languages and seek salvation, natural cohesion and openness in foreign languages. Now let us discuss the challenges and opportunities in the use of indigenous languages in Malawi.

African languages compete for attention

The first challenge concerns financing mother tongue education. The production of teaching and learning materials such as teacher's guides, textbooks, manuals, pupils' reading materials in all the languages is expensive and would require quite substantial amounts of money. Apart from Chichewa there is not a single school text in the other indigenous languages. However, when the national language policy in education is approved, it will be possible to translate the current Chichewa textbooks with cultural adaptations using funds that will have been budgeted for that task.

Insufficient funding

The second challenge is lack of trained personnel to handle the various local languages (Mchazime 2000). This would require pre-service and in-service training of teachers in those different local languages on offer as media of instruction. The training is required

Lack of trained personnel

because being a native speaker of a language is not enough qualification for teaching it (Ufomata 1998). So there is a need to re-train teachers who are native speakers of such languages in methodologies of language teaching. It would also require re-deployment of the teachers to different areas depending on their language specialisation. However, the good thing is that expert trainers are there. What remains is proper identification of personnel and adequate funding in order to offer such training.

Third is the challenge of the negative attitude that most Malawians have towards indigenous languages. Malawi like most African countries was, over the years, affected by Western language policies that promoted underutilization and sometimes exclusion of indigenous languages from public communication. Such policies created and promoted negative attitudes among Africans towards their own indigenous languages. Foreign languages were seen as being superior. Indigenous languages were discouraged from being used as official languages in the mass media as well as media of instruction in schools (Margulis & Nowakoski 1996). As a result, use of foreign languages in schools and the media has left out indigenous knowledge which Africans have depended upon for survival over the years. Some parents want their children to learn through the prestigious English language. One is also likely to find educated Malawians conversing in English rather than in their own local languages. From experience in primary and secondary school learners were punished by teachers for speaking mother tongue. Dr Banda (the first head of state) used to address people at political gatherings in English through an interpreter when he himself and most of the people at those political gatherings could speak the language the interpreter used. Some preachers use English and prefer preaching through interpreters to congregations full of people who share one common indigenous language including the preacher. It seems the purpose is to show how articulate they are in the English language. Even though the interpreters interpret some messages wrongly (Chisoni 2006), they are used since speaking English is a symbol of superiority, power and literacy that gives the speaker a certain social status.

Negative attitudes towards local languages

At the moment, of all the five universities in Malawi, it is only the University of Malawi that includes the teaching of one local language in its curriculum. However, from the time it was introduced up to date no additional local language has been added to the list. In

addition we note that the one local language is taught in English, only examples are given in the local language. The low prestige attached to African languages in the school system and in the world of work demonstrates the need for a policy of African languages in schools (Bamgbose 2004). This is because as media of instruction, African languages are restricted mainly to primary education and as subjects on the curriculum they are often treated as optional. In the job market, there is usually no special advantage for someone with a good knowledge of an African language as compared to knowledge of an imported official language such as English. How can this situation be improved? One suggestion may be to raise the prestige of African languages by extending their use as media of instruction beyond lower primary education and make at least one of them compulsory at secondary level. In the job market qualification in an African language could be made a requirement for certain positions. It is only when parents and learners find that there is something to be gained by learning an African language other than persuasion or patriotism that the negative attitude may die.

Limited markets

The fourth challenge is that of publishing in local languages and the use of local languages in the media. This challenge is compounded by high costs of publishing and increased competition with publishers from overseas. There is also lack of skilled authors and translators for the local languages. In addition, authors are scantily motivated to write in local languages since publishers will be reluctant to publish such literature because the market will be limited. Hopefully, with time this will change.

Lack of political will

A fifth challenge is lack of political will. Up to date there is no language policy in place. A language policy is a political statement of ideals about use of languages in school and other government institutions, for example in the national assembly, in the judiciary, in trade and industry. The primary purpose of a language policy is to make decisions on language use. A language policy attempts to achieve social and political national goals of education and development. These can be achieved through language empowerment of a country's citizens. Functional and information literacy will liberate their minds from the bondage of ignorance. Malawi, being a multi-lingual country with sixteen languages (Mchazime 2003), needs a clear policy to guide educators on the medium of instruction for use in schools. The drafting of a language policy started in 1999. It has been revised and presented to the Ministry of Education sever-

al times but it is still not yet approved²⁸. The reason given by higher authorities for this delay is change of ministers and frequent transfers of principal secretaries in the ministry. This has impacted negatively on the language education policy. Nobody can start teaching or translating and adapting the school textbooks into the other local languages before the policy is approved by government.

A sixth challenge is the fear that the use of different mother tongues will encourage tribalism in the country. Smaller groups of people will want to identify themselves with their mother tongues (Chauma et al 1997). Kishindo (2006) states that most scholars and politicians in the 1960s viewed having several languages as a definite impediment to unity, integration and development. But it seems there is nothing intrinsically unifying in a language. For example, in countries like Burundi (with one national language, Kirundi) Rwanda, (with one national language Kinyaruwanda) and Somalia (with only Somali) despite being monolingual societies have encountered conflicts and disasters detrimental to nation building. Unity has not been achieved. The problem of national unity is complex and its failures cannot solely be blamed on a multiplicity of languages. In Malawi there are indications that the multiplicity of languages would not be divisive in nation building. According to a report by the Centre for Language Studies (1999), there is a general acceptance of the use of Chiyao, Chitumbuka, Chilomwe and Chisena as media of instruction in standards 1 to 4. The important influence of Chichewa and its acceptance as 'lingua franca' is also clearly noted.

The final challenge is that the vernacular languages will require standardization of orthographies, development of grammars and compilation of dictionaries (Bwanali 2001). Apart from Chichewa, the other languages that have their orthographies standardized so far are Chitumbuka and Chiyao. But their grammars and dictionar-

*Use of
mother
tongue may
encourage
tribalism*

*Vernacular
languages
must be
standardised*

²⁸ The following is a brief of the outline of the draft: Pre-school Education and Primary Education (up to standard 3) will use a familiar local language as a medium of instruction and materials in local languages will be provided. In Secondary Education, Chichewa and other local languages will be taught as subjects. In Vocational and Technical Education, the use of local languages will be promoted. In Tertiary Education, the study and teaching of major local languages shall be promoted, other African languages may be offered as well. For Special Needs Education, measures will be taken to provide special needs materials in local languages. In Adult literacy education, basic reading and writing skills will be through Chichewa and any other familiar local language. In Teacher education English and Chichewa will be the main language of study and the teaching of major local languages will be promoted. Literacy shall be promoted by use of both English and local languages through supplementary readers, school libraries and other publications (Centre for Language Studies 2006 Draft version).

ies are yet to be written. There will also be need for lexical (terminology) development in order to empower and equip the particular languages for use in science, technology and other domains such as law, administration, politics, legislature, economics and trade.

Concluding remarks

*Promotion of
vernacular
languages
strengthens
democracy*

Communication, information literacy and democracy are important in society. For communication and democracy to flourish mass literacy in the mother tongues should be promoted. Not doing so would create a division in society between the literate and illiterate masses and thereby hinder development. The promotion of African languages in education is therefore a catalyst for promoting communication, information access, identification and democratic values to the grassroots. It is also a process of preparing them to understand issues of development and participation.

As in the case of Norway, people's ability to understand official communication, which is in their vernacular, is a very important factor in the development and the upholding of their democratic culture. Hopefully, continued cooperation between Malawi and Norway will strengthen the awareness of the importance of the vernacular language in democratic development in both countries.

Questions

1. Why is using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction favoured when teaching children?
2. What shows that the colonial masters cared and respected the use of vernaculars in Malawi?
3. What was the language situation before and immediately after independence?
4. Describe the changes on language policy that was introduced in the 1969/70 school year.
5. There are vast differences between the situation and development of the languages in Malawi and Norway. Even so, are there also similarities in the language history and situation in the two countries?
6. Would any of the ways of making people aware of the benefit of using their vernacular to enjoy and disseminate the treasure of folklore that took place in Norway be feasible in Malawi?
7. List any Malawian writers who use their vernacular in their works.
8. Would you agree that language is an effective means of promoting democracy? Why or why not?
9. Do you know any institutions that have recognized the role of language in a democracy? What is their position or what have they said?
10. Why do you think the use of local languages in Malawi has not been given the prominence they deserve in facilitating democracy and national development?
11. From your own perspective discuss the negative impact (if any) that the little use of local languages has had on the masses in Malawi.
12. What steps could be taken to improve the local language use situation on radio, television and print media?

13. From your experience describe the vulnerability of the illiterate masses in the absence of use of local languages in various domains in Malawi.
14. Out of the seven challenges discussed for the use of local languages, which one do you think is the most challenging and why?
15. Why do you think members of the elite do not seem to encourage mother tongue education?
16. How is the introduction and teaching of local languages in the University of Malawi being defeated?

References

- Bamgbose, A. (2004): 'Sauce for the Goose, Sauce for the Gander: Why An African Child Should Be Taught in an African Language.' In J.F. Pfaffe (ed), *Proceedings of the Fifth National Symposium on Making Multilingual Education A Reality For all*. Lilongwe, Zomba: GTZ and University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.
- Bwanali, A. (2001): 'Developing Chichewa into a Cross-Boarder Lingua Franca: Prospects and Challenges.' In J.F. Pfaffe (ed), *Cross-Boarder Languages Within the Context of Mother Tongue Education: Proceedings of the Third National Symposium on Language Policy and Language Policy Implementation*. Lilongwe, Zomba: GTZ and University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.
- Centre for Language Studies (1999): *Sociolinguistic Surveys for four Malawian Languages with Special Reference to Education*. Zomba: University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.
- Centre for Language Studies (2006): *Language Mapping Survey for northern Malawi*. Zomba: University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.
- Chauma, A., M. Chimombo & A. Mtenje (1997): 'Problems and Prospects for the Introduction of Vernacular Languages in primary education: The Malawi Experience.' In Smieja, B. (ed), *Languages in Contact and Conflict in Africa*. Duisburg: LICCA.
- Chisoni, E. (2006): *Foreign Language literacy. A Challenge to development in Malawi: Proceedings of the Sixth National Symposium on Literacy for Development: The Role of African Languages*: Lilongwe, Zomba: GTZ and University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.
- Helander, E. (2007): *The Sami of Norway*, www.reisenett.no/facts/culture_science/sami.html
- Kachaso, L. (1988): *Language Effects on Pupils' Performance in Mathematics Word Problems in Standard 7*. M. Ed. Thesis. Zomba: University of Malawi.
- Kishindo, P.J. (2001): 'A National Approach to Cross-Boarder African languages.' In Pfaffe (ed), *Cross-Boarder Languages Within the Context of Mother tongue Education. Proceedings of the Second National Symposium on Language Policy and Language Policy Implementation*. Lilongwe, Zomba: GTZ and University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.
- Kishindo, P.J. (2006): 'Language and Health Services Provision.' In *The Lamp*, No. 62, November-December 2006, pp. 20-21.
- Kymlicka, W. (2001): *Politics in the Vernacular*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Manda, Z. (2006): *Local Media, Local Content, Local Literacy: How Malawian Media thwart Popular Participation in Development: Proceedings of the Sixth National Symposium on Literacy for Development: The Role of African Languages*. Lilongwe, Zomba: GTZ and University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.

- Margulis, J. & P. Nowakoski (1996): Language.
<http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Language.html> accessed 4th December, 2006.
- Mchazime H. (1999): 'Mother Tongue education in Malawi: Some implications for Planning, Implementing and monitoring' In Kamwendo, Mtenje, Pfaffe & Sandhaas (ed), *Towards a national Policy for Education. Proceedings of a National Symposium on Language Policy Formulation*. Lilongwe, Zomba: GTZ and University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.
- Mchazime, H. (2000): *A Feasibility Stud on Chitumbuka as Medium of Instruction in Northern Malawi. Local Languages in Education, Science and Technology: Proceedings of the Second National Symposium on Language Policy Formulation*. Lilongwe, Zomba: GTZ and University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.
- Mchazime, H. (2003): 'Implementing Multilingual Education in an African Setting.' In Pfaffe (ed), *Implementing Multilingual Education: Proceedings of the fourth National Symposium on Language Policy and language Policy Implementation*. Lilongwe, Zomba: GTZ and University of Malawi, Centre for Language Studies.
- Ministry of Education (1996): *Teaching Standards 1 to 4 in Vernacular or Mother Tongue*. Press Release. Circular Letter, Ref. No IN/2/14 dated 28rd March 1996.
- Mtenje, A. (1999): *Sociolinguistic Surveys of Four Malawian Languages: With Special Reference to Education*. Zomba: Centre for Language Studies.
- Obanya, P. (1999): 'Popular Fallacies on the Use of African Languages in Education' *Social Dynamics* 25(1), pp. 81-100.
- Pachai, B. (1973): *The History of the Nation*, Limbe, University of Malawi.
- Quane, A. (2005): *Learning, but in which language?* In ADEA Newsletter
- Ufomata, T. (1998): *Major and Minor Languages in Complex Linguistic Ecologies: The Nigerian experience*.
- UNESCO (1955): *The Use of vernacular languages in Education*. Paris: UNESCO.

CHAPTER 10

Democracy and Gender Issues

By Matthew N. Chilambo

Throughout history gender issues have been dominated by the need to put an end to discrimination against women. Males were consistently represented in prestigious positions. They were depicted as being more courageous and more skilful than women. Women were represented in subservient positions in social service roles. Discrimination against women became institutionalized in that both boys and girls believed in the superiority of the male. Gender bias is still being experienced in schools, politics and work places and McElroy (1988) claims that most decision making positions are filled up by males in most countries.

Males dominate decision making positions

Gender in school

McElroy also describes a situation where gender bias remains outstanding in schools. Girls receive less attention from classroom teachers than boys do. They have fewer interactions with teachers but attempt to initiate such actions more frequently. He further states that sexual harassment of girls by boys and male teachers, from innuendo to actual assault, is increasing. This suggests that there are 'two worlds' in the classroom, one of active boys and the other of inactive girls. Male students control classroom conversation. They ask and answer more questions. They receive more praise for the intellectual quality of their ideas. This description from 1988 seems still to be viable in Malawi today, while in Norway the opposite seems to have become the case. These days, girls are systematically performing better than boys in school (Nordahl 2007) and since 2002 more than 50% of all students in Norwegian universities and university colleges are female (Statistics Norway 2004). So edu-

Classroom situation different in Malawi and Norway

cators are debating how to encourage boys to become more active in school. Democracy education has surely a role to play in order to balance these situations. If properly taught, democratic principles and ideals would saturate the culture in such a way that gender dominance one way or the other would not be tolerated. Ideals of equal opportunity and share of teacher attention would come natural.

Students exercise their right to be heard

As schools practise democratic ideals, for instance through discussing the what, why and how of learning, this is a tremendously strong witness of respect for the need of students' participation in class. Through participatory strategies students learn to listen and work as a team. Given opportunity for group work and debate, students exercise their rights to be heard and contribute freely in the discussions. They learn to act responsibly. They can make informed decisions through training in decision making skills. In addition they will be able to clarify their values through value clarification activities. Through selection of representatives who consult and discuss school and classroom issues, they learn to participate and accommodate dissenting views. Such representatives would in Malawi be prefects and monitors, while in Norway they would be members of the student board or student parliament.

Entrepreneurship for self-sufficiency

Where schools run entrepreneurship programmes, students learn some income generating activities and skills. This will enable them to be self sufficient after leaving school. Hand outs from politicians would not persuade them to vote for the wrong or corrupt candidate during elections. They will see the many opportunities available for them to enjoy a better life in the future.

Need for political literacy

Through such strategies students experience human dignity which does not discriminate on basis of gender, age or intellectual capacity. Crick & Porter (1978) claim that political literacy is an important shield against discrimination of any kind. They define political literacy as knowing what the main political disputes are about, what beliefs the main contestants have of them and how they are likely to affect people. Above all, to be predisposed to try to do something about the issue in question in a manner which is effective and at the same time respectful of the sincerity of other people and what they believe. Political literacy will help learners or the citizens to develop a critical consciousness that encourages reflection, questioning of evidence, consideration of alternatives and ability to participate (Freire 1972). To be a vibrant shield against discrimination, Porter points out the necessity for political literacy to be underpinned by

certain values (Fien et al 1988). These values include willingness to

- adopt a critical stance towards political information
- give reasons why one holds a view or acts in a certain way and to expect similar reasons from others
- respect evidence in forming and holding political opinions which also means to be open to the possibility of changing one's own attitudes and values in the light of evidence
- appreciate fairness as a criterion for judging and making decisions
- appreciate the freedom to choose between political alternatives
- tolerate a diversity of ideas, beliefs, values and interests

*Values
underpinning
political
literacy*

From this it seems obvious that schools need to make sure that learners acquire political literacy and the values and attitudes that go with it to be an active part in the fight against gender inequality.

Strategies for improving gender equality

The political ground and the work place are no exception for gender inequalities. The fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women noted that combating gender inequalities in the world of work call for equal access to social protection. Thus an enabling environment would be created by extending national social security systems more widely. Women need to gain confidence, increase women's representation and acquire for them selves a voice in local, national and international employment policy making (Commission on the Status of Women 2006).

*Combating
gender
inequalities*

The Commission vice-chairperson Szilvia Szabo of Hungary said equal access to decision making and leadership at all levels is a necessary precondition for the proper functioning of democracy. According to her equal participation in political affairs makes governments more representative, accountable and transparent. It also ensures that the interests of women are taken into account in policy making. By tradition, however, women are excluded from decision making processes in many countries.

*Equal access
to decision
making*

It is encouraging to note that since the fourth world conference on women in 1995, women's visibility in public life has grown. In 1995, 11.3 % of all legislators were women, a number which in 2006 had grown to 16.3 %. More women judges had been appointed and

more women had reached the highest executive positions in public and private companies. Unfortunately, persistent barriers to women's entry into positions of decision making persist, and equitable participation remains a challenge.

*Women
representa-
tion*

The Secretary General of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU), Anders B. Johnson, observed at the fiftieth Session of Commission on the Status of Women (ibid), that achievement of democracy required a balanced participation of men and women in politics. He emphasized that one could not talk about democracy when half of a country's population did not participate in its work. The IPU has been tracking the numbers of women in national parliaments since 1970. Sweden was leading then, but in 2006, Rwanda, a developing country, had the highest proportion of women in its national assembly, at 48.8%. The critical mass which the Beijing Platform (1995) had asked for (30%) may not be generally reached until 2025, and parity may not be reached until 2040.

*Strategies for
gender equity*

The present leadership in Malawi is also trying to achieve gender equity in decision making positions and in Norway the authorities have set high targets. Torild Skard writes that the key rhetoric of the Norwegian gender equality debate is the argument that we are 'en route' (ibid). The gender debate is characterized by harmonization strategies in which everyone seeks to agree on common efforts towards a common goal.

Use of quotas

Skard thinks that political systems must be made more 'women-friendly'. The use of quotas²⁹ is felt to be an important instrument for breaking down barriers and furthering women's political participation and integration. In Norway, she reported at the fiftieth session of the commission on the status of women, the use of quotas has been crucial leading to a 50/50 ratio of women and men in the Norwegian cabinet.

Johnson (ibid) points out that another requirement for women is quality education that promotes gender equality and prepares girls and women for a productive life. Besides, gender equality legislation, standards and accountability mechanisms for protection and promotion of women workers' rights should be adopted and enforced regardless of the sector of employment or place of work. The creation of an enabling environment for enhancing women's participation

²⁹ The quota system in Norway generally demands that no representative body in government, commercial firm or other organization must have less than 40 % from either of the sexes.

would more than likely require transforming current institutions and structures. In addition better policies and programmes that respond to women's rights, needs and concerns must be created.

Create an enabling environment

The equal participation of women and men in public affairs is one of the fundamental tenets of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and has been in force since 1981. Today, more than 20 years after the signing, with 165 ratifications by states and at the dawn of the millennium, Johnson reports that women in all parts of the world continue to be largely marginalized and underrepresented in politics (ibid). Women's participation in politics on equal footing with men is still a challenge for democracy. The linking of democracy with gender equality is therefore a generally accepted principle.

Equal participation

Women constitute half of the world's population and comprise about 50 percent of the labour force. Decision making and priority setting continues to be largely in the hands of men. Women want to influence the decisions that affect their lives and their families. They also want to have their say in the political economy and the destiny of their communities and nations, as well as the structure of international relations. The creation of an enabling environment is urgent to improve the management of the global economy and development in general. The UN has a key role to play, particularly in limiting the negative repercussions of globalization and trade liberalization on the poor. Furthermore it should ensure healthy and safe working conditions for all. Gender balanced political participation and representation is essential for the achievement of these ends.

Women want to influence their lives

Concluding remarks

Globally women constitute 14.3 % of parliamentarians. In the Nordic countries there are 40 % compared to 4.6 % representation in Arab countries (IPU 2002). There is a need to leave behind the traditional norms and perceptions of the position and role of women and men in society. The quality of women's participation in politics will also be valued when there is a shift in traditional perceptions of power and dispelling the notions that public life is largely reserved for men. This will require political literacy and the practice of democratic principles in all sorts of contexts. The school should work very hard to help achieve this through purposeful democracy education.

Questions

1. Discuss the circumstances that make women feel guilty for entertaining emergent, socially unsanctioned ideas and begin to question the collective knowledge that stigmatized them as intellectually and physically inferior.
2. How can gender inequality be reduced in education and society in general?
3. Are the millennium goals on gender equity and gender equality achievable?

References

- Commission on the Status of Women (2006): Fiftieth Session 4th and 5th Meetings Panel Discussions, United Nations Economic and Social Council. February 2006.
- Crick, B. & A. Porter (ed) (1978): *Political Education and Political Literacy*. London: Longman.
- Fien, J. and R. Gerber (ed) (1988): *Teaching Geography for a Better World*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd.
- Freire, P. (1972): *Cultural Action for Freedom*. Harmondworth: Penguin.
- IPU (Interparliamentary Union) (2002): *Women in National Parliaments*, February 2002.
- McElroy, B. (1988): 'Learning Geography: a route to political Literacy'. In J. Fien & R. Gerber (ed), *Teaching Geography for a Better World*. London: Oliver and Boyd.
- Nordahl, T. (2007): 'Jenter og gutter i skolen'
http://www.forebygging.no/fhp/d_emneside/cf/hApp_101/hPKey_10877/hParent_574/hDKey_1
- Statistics Norway (2004): 'Flere høyt utdannede kvinner'
http://www.ssb.no/vis/magasinet/slik_lever_vi/art-2004-02-11-01.html

CHAPTER 11

Participation in Democracy – a Challenge

By Matthew N. Chilambo

While democracy as a value is widely supported, participation is often low. Participation is a fundamental principle as democracy can only be realized through involvement of the citizens in political decision making. In this perspective democracy is active, interactive, deliberate and genuinely representative of the wider population (Gould 1988). Being fundamental and at the same time often low, participation is a main challenge to any democracy. One of the oldest claims about the conditions for democratic rule holds that dense intermediary organization and lively participation in them are of critical importance both for the establishment of democracy and for the quality of democratic governance.

Participation is more than consultation where views or opinions are solicited. It is a privilege and a duty of citizens to influence and share control over priority setting, policy making, resource allocation and access to public goods and services. As observed in the Human Development Report of 2002, international efforts to promote change do not work if national actors feel excluded.

Fundamental as participation is, in some instances it may be dysfunctional, or negative. In a situation where a candidate insults his opponent and his followers are 'paid' to applaud that kind of conduct or the candidate delivers small gifts (handouts) to gain support from voters and they comply, these are examples of negative participation. In such cases support of the candidate is not founded on arguments or political conviction, but on politically irrelevant matters. This is an example of Chidam'odzi's observation that the very ideals of freedom of expression and individual liberty 'are capable of shooting democracy in the foot' (1999: 95). Quality of participation requires knowledge, integrity and respect of morals and human dignity among the participants.

*Participation
a
fundamental
principle in
democracy*

*Participation
more than
consultation*

*Participation
may be
dysfunctional*

Forms of participation

Sharing

Participation may take various forms. First, there is sharing of information. Through various means of communication citizens and those in power share or access information which may enable or even require them to take action for the common good of the nation. A challenge in this connection is to guard against misinformation by leaders or their agents. With impunity political leaders may mislead the public at political mass rallies and during campaigns by presenting half lies and distorted information. Another challenge is to have people engage in information sharing. A survey on political participation in Malawi reported in Afrobarometer³⁰ 2003 shows that 45 % of the respondents occasionally discuss politics while 36 % never do so. 19 % said they regularly discuss politics with their friends. 32 % said that they follow what is going on in government and public affairs sometimes and 18 % do so most of the time while 50 % hardly follow these issues at all. The majority almost never express their views in newspapers. Attendance at meetings was also reported. 56 % attended self-help associations while at trade union meetings 23 % attended often and only 8 % had never attended. Election rallies come out best as 72 % have attended at least once and as many as 38 % do so frequently.

Consultation

Another form of participation is consultation. This may take place between citizens, public officials, members of the national assembly and civil society. It has the potential of reducing any forms of discord or conflicts among citizens as well as being a powerful means of taking initiatives for the betterment of society and life in general. Afrobarometer 2001 reports after eight years of multiparty democracy in Mozambique that citizens were empowered to participate in a democratic system which enabled them to voice their demands to the state and hold it accountable.

Joint decision making

The third form mentioned here, is joint decision making. This implies the right to negotiate programmes through unions, professional associations such as the Malawi Law Society and religious organizations. It may also take the form of inviting different parties with special competence or interest in a matter in order to reach constructive and acceptable decisions. This strategy is often a robust basis for the implementation of the policies agreed upon.

³⁰ Afrobarometer is a compilation of research reports on democracy in selected African countries.

Initiation and control by stakeholders is yet another form of participation. Here citizens exercise some control in monitoring and evaluating to make sure that the political programmes meet their interests and demands. A good example is the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) where the people choose which project to be realized in their community with funding from MASAF. Another example may be taken from surveys where citizens express their attitudes, like trust for different parts of the government. Simutanyi reports that Zambians display a very low attachment to political parties (2002). They had little general trust in local government (20 % trusting), parliament (23 %), the president (37 %) and the police (38 %). About half the population (51 %) said that in their view most officials in government were corrupt. Management of the economy was rated at 33 % satisfaction while creation of jobs was given 26 %. The government performance of the then president (Chiluba) however, was rated relatively good at 64 %. Giving responses in this kind of surveys is a way of participating in their democracy.

*Initiation
and control
by stake-
holders*

The next to be mentioned is actions. The regular tool in politics is to use words, written or spoken. But there is also certain precedence in some situations to use some sort of action, be it demonstration, picketing line or sit ins. Rather usual as such actions may be on television and other media, statistically they do not happen very often. This notion is supported by a survey reported in Afrobarometer 2003 which shows that 67 % of the respondents said they would never attend a demonstration and 73 % would never participate in a boycott of rates, services or taxes. 84 % said they would never participate in sit ins or disruptions of government meetings or offices. 90 % said they would never use force or violent means such as damaging public property. Scarce as they may be, the mere fact that such actions may be an option for participation, they probably play an important part in the total relationship between political leaders and the man in the street.

Taking action

Finally comes voting. Free and fair elections at regular intervals are taken to be the most significant mark of democracy and voter turn out is a very important indicator of the state of democracy in a society. It is therefore interesting to note that voter turn out in Malawi Presidential Elections declined to 59% in 2004 from 80% in 1994 and 93% in 1999. In the parliamentary elections in 2004 voter turn out was lower in the southern region at 56% compared to 64 % in the north and 61 % in the centre. There are reasons to believe that

*Voting in free
and fair
elections*

this decline is a reflection of disenchantment with the political process rooted in the perception of Malawian politicians as being self-interested. Citizens see the vote as of little value except putting people into positions where they can advance their own personal interests. The fact that nearly half of the eligible voters opted to stay away from the 2004 elections suggests that the newly elected members of parliament and the president has a limited public mandate in Malawi. Observers noted that the president was elected by only 36 percent of valid votes (Malawi Government Press 2004).

The Norwegian situation

An ideal situation?

Norway has a formal democratic tradition dating back to the beginning of the 1800s. Stein Ringen (2007: 257) regards it among the most robust of today's democracies. The constitution of 1814 is still fundamental to the nation's identity. The country may be characterized as one of great equity with no historical aristocracy and a weak bourgeoisie, with a general high level of education and as a champion of gender balance. The country may proud herself of good governance which is supported by broad-based popular movements and mass political parties. This situation seems to be close to ideal. Norway scores among the best on most indicators on democracy reported by the UN (UNDP 2002). Nevertheless, there are some trends that should be noted.

Voting participation on a decline

Voter participation is steadily declining. Ringen (2007: 259) reports a downward trend in voter turn out from 85% in 1965 to 75% in 2001 in national assembly elections (Stortinget). In the municipal elections participation is down from 81% in 1963 to 55% in 2003. Interestingly enough, women are reported to have caught up with men in voter participation. The power of the people in the chain of government from election to position and to decision making has been weakened. People have limited confidence in the system of representation. In a study on power and democracy in Norway (Østerud et al 2003), three out of four interviewees were in agreement with the view that political parties were not interested in views of the people. Four out of five agreed wholly or partly that elected representatives to Stortinget give little consideration to the views of the common people. These figures indicate that the system of representation is facing a crisis.

The traditional equity is under pressure. The study mentioned above, reports that popular reform movements and parties mobiliz-

ing mass participation are showing signs of a downward trend. Institutions such as the state church are faltering in their efforts to cope with an increasingly multi religious society and in spite of a national curriculum schools are becoming more diversified. The Norwegian state is becoming a petroleum state with extensive ownership interests in the commercial sector and substantial allocation of reserves. Utilisation of the abundant resources such as fisheries and hydropower is being partly privatized and concentrated on fewer hands. Economic inequality is on the rise particularly in terms of investment income and private industry.

Traditional equity under pressure

Political parties and organizations do not to the same extent as before serve as the channel for broad-based, long term mobilization. The political parties undergo a transformation from mass parties into parties based on networks. It is now possible to obtain political power independent of victory at the polls. Norwegian minority parliamentarianism implies that there is no immediate connection between electoral result and a position in the government. This probably undermines people's trust in the formal channels of government.

Election results do not solely determine political power

It has been observed elsewhere that democracy builds on power through popularly elected bodies but also on rights and guarantees of rights for individuals and groups. This implies that there are various forms of participation available outside of voting, parties and political popular movements. Examples are the ability to exert influence as user, consumer and active member of pressure groups. These and others represent a kind of supplementary democracy and may take different forms like rights based democracy, direct action democracy, participatory democracy, consumer democracy, lobbyist democracy and barometer based democracy. Ringen (2007: 259) claims that middle class citizens dominate these arenas while the working class is not so much involved here. Such arenas supplement and challenge representative democracy as decision making system but they cannot replace it.

Supplementary types of participation challenge representative democracy

Challenges for participation

Effective participation requires guarantees on human rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, the right to elect representatives and freedom of access to information held by state authorities. Participation in the democratic activ-

Participation a right and an obligation

ities of the country or state is not only a right, it is also a duty which each citizen should be proud to assume and exercise responsibly. The voting process entails participation in democracy. Therefore voter apathy is one of the challenges as shown by the decline in voter participation during elections. It appears that people too seldom participate in activities that enhance democracy and that democracy itself allows them to do so.

*Legacy of
history:
subject rather
than citizen*

Bauer (2004), referring to Afrobarometer of 2002, claims that legacy of the one party rule makes many Malawians accept being subjects rather than citizens. They welcome the new freedom of expression but at the same time still feel hesitant to express their political opinions. They also continue to shy away from criticizing government. They remain accustomed to being passive receptors of government policies. They find it easier to go to political rallies than to engage themselves in open debate and discussion. The absence of a critical mindset is manifested even in parliament where there is little meaningful debate on major issues affecting the politics and economics of the country.

*Poverty a
challenge to
participation*

Poverty is a challenge to participation in Malawi where politicians generally take advantage of needy and ill-informed populations, easily swaying public opinion in favour of their causes without being challenged. Coupled with poor information flow, poverty makes the poorly educated masses vulnerable to handouts by politicians. Furthermore, poverty in general creates a dependency syndrome, which makes it hard for poor people to believe that they can participate in running the state. Most poor people are preoccupied with keeping body and soul together. Participation in politics is secondary in survival strategies. Thus a combination of social and economic factors work against informed political participation by the poor. An electorate that easily votes on the basis of election handouts or not so important political issues like region, religion and tribe is rather easily manipulated by cunning politicians. This may lead to a situation where misinformed voters actually make up the majority and vote into office persons that will not be good representatives of the poor.

*Focus on the
national level*

It is evident that attention in the media as well as in research has a tendency to focus on the national level. Important as this obviously is, except for elections, participation on a lower geographical level may be more easily realized. This is so mainly because of the difference in geographical and psychological distance between common

man and government on local and national level. A main challenge is therefore for local and district institutions to take a special responsibility for moulding a participatory culture in politics. The nearness to the situation makes it easier for local people to identify projects and activities which will improve their area. Their motivation for participating will rise accordingly. At local level people may gain experience in taking initiatives, accounting for funds, using resources and organizing projects or activities in general while improving the welfare of their area. Through local experience people may gain the competence and self confidence to engage in political activities on regional and national level.

Illiteracy is also one of the challenges to participation. Where the majority of the citizens cannot read and understand the constitution or party manifestos, frequently they blindly follow political leaders and party slogans. They cannot follow what goes on in government. Since they cannot read they may not follow written instruction before casting their vote. This leads to spoiled or rejected ballot papers denying their candidates some vital votes. Afrobarometer 2003 reports that in the six countries surveyed³¹, 50% hardly follow political issues. Such citizens cannot engage in meaningful political debates necessary for nurturing democracy.

Illiteracy a challenge to participation

Concluding remarks

As Gould (1988) states, democracy is active, interactive deliberate and genuinely representative of the wider population and can be done any time, any place. There is need to improve and encourage participation for democracy to flourish. The falls in voter turnout at elections is a consequence of many factors. In most cases there is a lack of ownership of the system. Poverty encourages corruption of the voter through handouts and easy promises. Poverty of the mind (illiteracy) is worse. Civic education, including democracy education and economic empowerment may improve this situation.

Participation must be encouraged

³¹ The six countries were Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South-Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Questions

1. Bratton et al (2000) defines participation in democracy as the extent to which ordinary folks (citizens) join in development efforts, comply with the laws of the land, vote in elections, contact elected representatives, engage in protests and consider migration. Based on this definition Bratton claims that most of the countries in the South are not yet ready for full participation in democracy.
Discuss whether or not Malawi is ready for full participation in democracy.
2. The many challenges to democracy include lack of guarantees on human rights, misinformation and promising citizens the sky by politicians. Lack of interest and knowledge is quite an outstanding challenge. Many are ignorant of the political playing field. There is also low attachment to political parties coupled with non-compliance to political ideals. In Malawi legacy of the one party dictatorship lingers while poverty and election handouts in form of cash or materials aggravate the problem. Assess these challenges in light of your own experiences.
3. Reflect on the political situation in your country.
How do you rate your own participation in strengthening her democracy?

Activity: Classroom debate

Conduct a debate in the classroom on the following topic:
'Negative participation discourages democracy and encourages corruption.'

Instruction

When you conduct a debate of this kind in the classroom, after presenting the topic, the students are allowed to choose sides, for or against the statement. The teacher may take the function of chair but this assignment may also be given to one of the students. Let the two sides elect a leading proposer and opposer. The proposer represents the affirmative view on the issue, while the opposer contradicts it. After a short period of preparation (a few minutes), the leaders present their view in an

opening statement, outlining the main arguments supporting their view. After the opening presentations, the floor is opened for others to participate. The debate may last until the arguments are exhausted or until the planned time expires. Towards the end the two leaders sum up the discussion. Finally a secret vote may be conducted, where the participants vote for the view they now support. Note: It will not always seem viable to vote on the issue. Leaving the topic with an open end may in some cases be just as good, signalling that the debate may continue outside the classroom.

References

- Bauer (2004): *Afrobarometer Round 2 Compendium of Comparative Results from a 15 Country Survey on Attitudes towards Democracy, Governance, and Economic Development*.
- Bratton, M., C. Logan, Wonbin Cho, and B. Paloma (2000): *Public Opinion, Democracy and Market Reform in Africa*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Chidam'odzi, H.F. (1999): 'Democracy and tradition in Malawi' In M. Chimombo. *Lessons in Hope: Education for Democracy in Malawi, Past, Present, Future*. Zomba: Chancellor College Publications.
- Gould, C.C. (1988): *Rethinking Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ringen, S. (2007): *What Democracy is for. On Freedom and moral Government*. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2002): *Human Development Report 2002. Deepening democracy in a fragmented world*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Østerud, Ø., F. Engelstad, S. Meyer, P. Selle & H. Skjeie (2003): *The Norwegian Study on Power and Democracy*. Translated by Carol B. Eckmann.

CHAPTER 12

Entrepreneurship and Democracy

By Bjørn G. Tafjord

Innovation and entrepreneurship are terms that keep turning up in the media. They are buzz words or a sort of medicine that offers solutions to most of our regional and national challenges both to more or less desirable trends and to concrete challenges such as globalisation, international competition, regional development and the like. It is recognised that entrepreneurship is a major factor and driver of innovation and growth and most countries therefore need a more entrepreneurial culture.

Buzz words

The first part of this chapter introduces entrepreneurship in general. This is followed by an overview of different perspectives before pointing out the relevance of entrepreneurship for democracy. Finally the chapter links entrepreneurship to education in order to show how teaching and learning processes can foster an entrepreneurial mindset in both teacher and student.

Entrepreneurship in general

Entrepreneurship is about people's ability to turn ideas into action. This includes creativity, innovation and risk taking. This is a challenge to everyone in our day-to-day life at home and in society. It makes employees more aware of the context of their work and improves their ability to see opportunities and provides a foundation for a person to establish social or commercial activities.

Turn ideas into action

Entrepreneurship is defined as one of the new basic skills that should be provided through lifelong learning. Because of this, the promotion of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills has been at the centre of the political agenda for some years in many countries around the world. The important role of schools and universities in

*Relevant for
business as
well as social,
cultural and
political
areas*

fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among young people is often emphasised. Nevertheless, learning how to run a business is only one aspect of it. Entrepreneurship should be understood in a broader sense. Entrepreneurial skills and attitudes provide benefits for society beyond their application in business activities, for instance social, cultural and political areas. Such skills are also important for personal development. Learning entrepreneurship will in fact include developing personal qualities which generally will be useful in life and in any working and social activity.

In general, entrepreneurship is a *universal human qualification* including the attitude to life characterised by preparedness and courage to act in a variety of contexts. This presupposes openness, daring and the will to take calculated risks when entering new fields. An entrepreneur may be described as an active participant who has

*Active
participation*

- *ability* to see resources and opportunities locally and to be innovative
- *qualifications* to use these resources in a productive, creative and meaningful way
- *understanding* of consequences of own choices and actions
- *a will* to take responsibility for joint concerns and show a never-say-die attitude.

This means that entrepreneurship may be a *strategic resource in local communities*, fostering people with fresh ideas who can see opportunities and who have the ability to turn dreams into reality and make things happen.

These are positive qualities that are essential in a world where things are changing at an ever increasing speed. They are not only important in establishing enterprises. They are just as important when it comes to the individual human being's possibilities of becoming an active participant in his and her immediate circle, in the local community and in society at large. In this perspective it could be pointed out that *cultural prerequisites and the culture of entrepreneurship* varies a lot from region to region, from school to school and so on. Availability of good education is important in this connection and has brought forth entrepreneurs from families at all levels of economic, political and social status. Another crucial cultural element is a general acceptance of the view that entrepre-

*Important
cultural
prerequisites*

neurs are engaged in activities that are admirable and vital to the success and growth of a country. By being able to exercise their economic freedom, entrepreneurs reinforce political and personal freedoms and represent an important force in establishing and maintaining an open democracy. Their social and professional contacts are essential to build the relations and networks that are needed to succeed.

Opportunity-centred entrepreneurship

Thinking and acting as an entrepreneur are real world learning processes through which people can develop the skills and the confidence to recognise, create and act effectively on opportunities. People may use this approach intuitively, without being aware of it, yet it can be learned consciously. Opportunity centred entrepreneurship enables people to identify and explore opportunities, to select and make decisions on them, to relate them to their personal and social goals and to plan and work with others to act and profit on them.

Identify and act on opportunities

This means active learning through discovery and achieving by working with other people. Opportunity centred entrepreneurship integrates creativity and innovation, making people able to recognise their world as an opportunity rich environment. In this world we all face the constant challenges of investigating, making sense of, selecting and acting on opportunities. Thus opportunity centred entrepreneurship helps people shape a new reality by doing new things and acting as innovators in order to create new ventures, experiences, products, services and values in a broad sense (Rae 2007).

Learning by discovery

Entrepreneurship and competence

Entrepreneurship is a complex concept that consists of three different areas of competence that complement each other. In combination they may be summed up as the *competence to act* (see figure 1). The first one is the *social competence* that enables us to act and interact with others. People should increasingly gain competence to cooperate, make networks and learn to assume new roles. This competence also includes the courage to experiment (trial and error). By nature, children are inquisitive and creative and the work

Competence to act

*Social,
method and
professional
competence*

to develop this competence should therefore start as early as possible. Kindergarten and school should cherish and nurture these qualities because we know that attitudes are created by experience, encounters and through role models. The second area, the *method competence*, is developed through experience and training in contexts where theory and practice are intertwined. Finally we talk about the *professional competence* which represents knowledge in certain fields across disciplines and is partly based on experience and knowledge that must come from outside of kindergarten and school. The professional competence also focuses on knowledge of resources and how a person can get knowledge about establishing a business.

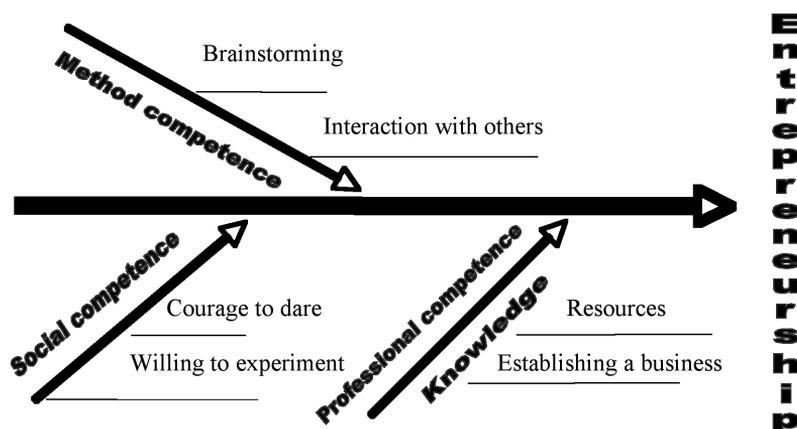


FIGURE 1: Competence to act: three areas of competence in entrepreneurship

We build a society for the future. The education must do whatever is necessary to give ‘the coming generation’ opportunity to be successful. The Norwegian government’s vision for entrepreneurship in training and education is part of the government’s priority of an integrated innovation policy. One of the main aims is to establish a coherent education in innovation and entrepreneurship from kindergarten to college/university. Within education and training, competence building concerning innovation and entrepreneurship focuses on at least two elements (Ødegård 2000: 20-22). *Personal qualities and attitudes* like creativity, self-confidence, mastering,

enterprising approach, will to take risks, ability to see consequences of own actions plus the ability and will to find new solutions. 'Attitude is everything – innovative and dedicated people who believe that nothing is impossible! Are you ready to roll up your sleeves?' (Johnson 2004). The other key element is *knowledge and skills* which include what must be done to establish new enterprises or how to succeed in translating an idea into practical and purposeful activities. Someone with such personal qualities, attitudes, knowledge and skills will often discover opportunities and do something about them and contribute to the development of innovative and entrepreneurial approaches and behaviour. School's challenge is to develop teaching methods and tools that give students at all levels in the educational system what it takes of practical and theoretical knowledge to realize their ideas and possibly their dreams. A key issue is how such training can incorporate entrepreneurial action and behaviour.

Personal qualities, attitudes, knowledge and skills

The relevance of entrepreneurship for democracy

Entrepreneurship and democracy are closely linked because they are two dimensions of personal freedom. These and other freedoms that are widely agreed upon in many societies as ideals are related to and reinforce each other. The varieties of personal freedoms are not really separate concepts but are all facets of the same diamond and inseparable over time. A difficult balance is required so that the exercise of one kind of freedom in a society does not unduly diminish the exercise of the others. Usually countries have their constitutions and laws that supposedly both protect individual freedoms and limit them. The people in a working democracy express their will politically and play the ultimate role in defining the extent of the freedoms in question.

Two dimensions of personal freedom

Entrepreneurs, by exercising their economic freedom to serve markets as they see fit, are key players in promoting the political freedom that brings and sustains democracy. They may also be said to be revolutionaries because they use economic freedom to challenge existing economic, social and political structures (Johnson 2004). Entrepreneurs constantly challenge the economic status quo.

Entrepreneurs exercise their economic freedom

Governments that may make starting a company a bureaucratic nightmare are not acting in the interests of the societies which they are supposed to serve. They are weakening the individual freedoms

of their citizens by limiting their selection of goods and services and inhibiting the challenge of entrepreneurs to the existing order. Citizens of democracies should not choose governments that will take away their freedom to make decisions and instead have decisions made by 'wise people' in central positions who claim to help the poor or strengthen public safety, but mainly care for their own interests.

A society has to strike a balance between the several facets of political, personal and economic freedoms. Other freedoms or rights sometimes asserted as fundamental, such as freedom from want or the right to education, health care or equal opportunities, are important but derivative because they depend heavily on economic prosperity, itself partly dependent on entrepreneurial activity, a function of economic freedom.

Entrepreneurs are important in fostering democracy because the opportunity to create entrepreneurial companies is widely available to people at all economic levels, even though this is untrue in many countries and completely true in none. Widespread education is one basic component of a good entrepreneurial environment in any country. Mini company programmes run by students at schools offer special opportunities to learn democratic attitudes, skills and procedures. The main idea is that the mini company represents an arena where business is run according to democratic principles. This arena is made available to pupils and students as they are invited to participate in planning and implementing a business idea. So here the students learn to practise democratic procedures as a lot of real life decisions have to be made. In short: a mini company is an arena for student participation in decision making, where the decision makers also enjoy (and possibly suffer) the consequences. In other words: it is a healthy breeding ground for democratic skills and attitudes. In this way a mini company or a student company is a pedagogical tool based on practical experience by means of running a complete enterprise project and on interaction with the external environment.

Mini companies – an arena for democratic practices

Motives for focusing on entrepreneurship in education

Entrepreneurship is seeing opportunities rather than obstacles, thinking fresh ideas, ideally in cooperation with others. A school may develop to become an entrepreneur in it self. Such a school

reflects on and is willing to change the teacher/pupil roles and to find new ways to organise subjects and timetable and develop relations with the community around the school (The European Commission 2005).

It is possible to identify several motives for focusing on entrepreneurship in education. The *entrepreneurial motive* is to ensure that the pupils show an interest in the development of their own living environment and the creation of their own jobs. The *regional-political motive* is for children and youth in school to become acquainted with and make use of local resources so that young people after leaving school can find opportunities for work and a place to live in their home district. The *job market or industrial development motive* is to educate youth for future tasks in a business and industrial life that is in constant change. This requires the ability to adapt and to regenerate and demands the desire to establish new enterprises. Finally, the *general pedagogical motive* is among pupils to develop creativity, the will to cooperate and take responsibility for the common good. In an entrepreneurial school teaching and training should focus on and take into consideration personal qualities of the student, be organised and shaped in relation to practical skills training combined with theoretical knowledge. It should put emphasis on wealth creation based on respect for resources and solidarity, secure relevance of activities in all subject fields, see all of its activities in the context of the local community and inspire to student participation in decision making.

*Motives:
Entrepreneurial,
regional –
political,
job market –
industrial
development,
pedagogical*

Promoting entrepreneurship in schools³²

How can we make progress in promoting entrepreneurial mindset and skills through primary and secondary education? The teacher is obviously pivotal. In fact, without her/his enthusiasm and active involvement it is unlikely that much progress will be achieved in this area. So what kind of competence should the teacher have to be able to develop the pupils' entrepreneurship competence? S/he must first of all see each individual pupil and his and her talents and potential for development and have competence in organizing learning processes accordingly. When entrepreneurship is integrat-

*The teacher:
a talent scout*

³² In school, it may be natural to use the term *pedagogical entrepreneurship* in addition to innovation strategies in vocational training within education. In international contexts, e.g. in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the term 'entrepreneurship education' is used (Ødegård 2000).

ed in the educational ideals and the professional pedagogical foundation, this will help teachers to contribute to the development of the pupils' self-confidence. The teacher also needs confidence in and knowledge of her/his own local community or region, to develop regional identity, see opportunities, be creative and innovative, have ability to cooperate, think systematically, work purposefully, organise and lead and be result oriented. A teacher with full score on all these competences hardly exists. Important as these competences are, the starting point may have to be less ambitious, for instance asking questions like: What pupil role do we aim for? Do we want the learner as an actor or a pawn? The wish for an active, participating pupil or student is a feasible foundation for promoting entrepreneurship in school. Then improving the ability of teachers to understand and teach entrepreneurship becomes crucial.

*Direct
experience
and practice*

For the pupil or student the best way of learning entrepreneurship is through direct experience and practice. Instruments that would help monitoring such progress are mini companies in primary school and student companies in secondary schools. Such programmes are important within any strategy for stimulating entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. The objective of mini companies *run by pupils* is to develop on a small scale *real economic activity*. Another is to *simulate*, in a realistic way the operations of real firms. Yet another objective is to create an arena for participation in decision making and democratic procedures, as mentioned above. Operating in a protected environment and for educational purposes, student companies frequently produce and sell *real products or services*.

*Develop
personal
qualities*

These activities allow students to acquire basic business skills, but also to develop personal qualities and transversal skills that have become increasingly important for all in order to live and work in a knowledge based society. In fact, through participation in mini companies, pupils have the possibility to display *creativity*, develop enthusiasm and *self-confidence*, learn how to *work in a team*, become more willing to take *responsibility* and to use their *initiative*. Acquiring such skills and attributes will contribute to prepare young people for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society. A report from Nordland Research Institute of Norway states that students who have participated in mini company activities are more self-reliant, more proactive, more innovative and more likely to seek new opportunities (Nordlands-

forskning 2000).

At the level of primary education entrepreneurship teaching will aim to foster in the pupils those personal qualities mentioned above. In this phase, autonomous and active forms of learning should be developed. This teaching will provide early knowledge of and contact with the world outside school and some understanding of the role of entrepreneurs in the community. Activities may include working on projects, learning by playing, presentation of simple case studies and visits at local enterprises and organisations. *At the level of secondary education* the teaching will also include raising the awareness of the students about self-employment as a possible career option. The students will experience the method of learning by doing through running mini enterprises and specific training on how to create a business. *At the level of higher education* entrepreneurship teaching will provide the students with specific training on how to start and run a business, including the capacity to draft a real business plan and the skills associated with methods of identifying and assessing business opportunities (European Commission 2005).

The main question then is how the education system can contribute in creating a more entrepreneurial culture in the Norwegian and Malawian societies. Starting at an early age school education should stimulate young peoples' awareness of entrepreneurship as options for their future and help them to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they do later in life. The first step is to integrate entrepreneurship as an important part of the curriculum at all levels, from pre-schools to universities. Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset as well as the relevant skills among young people will help reach strategic goals of the Norwegian and the Malawian governments. Education for entrepreneurship is already high on the agenda in most European Union (EU) member countries as they promote entrepreneurship through education at all levels. Their aim is in this way to equip young people with the skills they will need to manage a complex world. Creativity, innovation, independence and initiative are essential attributes for personal fulfilment. Entrepreneurship is therefore considered to be a new basic skill to be provided through lifelong learning. The development of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills can be encouraged in people of all ages, starting in school.

In order to accomplish this, the following types of interventions

Increasing qualification with increasing level of education

Entrepreneurship into the curriculum

should be considered:

*Inter-
ventions
necessary*

- *The development of entrepreneurship within the current education system at an early age.* First of all we need a broad concept of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, which includes developing personal qualities such as creativity and taking initiatives.
- *The strengthening of cooperation between education and training authorities, enterprises and business associations.* Cooperation has to be facilitated with special focus on developing practical entrepreneurial learning by doing.
- *The training of trainers.* This includes not only improving the ability of trainers to understand and teach entrepreneurship but also the recognition of their role in this area through the setting-up of reward-incentive systems and appropriate training. Within schools the agents for change are foremost the teachers. Trainers, especially teachers, should therefore be made more aware of entrepreneurship since they often are called upon to assist pupils or students in the development of their entrepreneurial attitudes and skills.
- *The development of entrepreneurship initiated within enterprises.* This should be done in order to promote self-employment and the development of an adaptable and entrepreneurial workforce and to support innovation.

Questions

1. Does today's school allow room for independence and a wealth of ideas?
2. In which ways is today's school innovative?
3. Do you think that the school as an organisation is aware of what entrepreneurship is and why the learners should develop this competence? Explain your views.
4. According to your experience, does school encourage or discourage creativity among teachers and pupils/students? Give examples.
5. Give examples of how *your* creativity was stimulated and inhibited during your time at school.
6. Are curricula and syllabi obstacles to creative learning methods and processes? If so, in what ways does this happen?
7. How should we as adults and teachers stimulate our children to cherish and develop their creativity and approach the intentions about creative and entrepreneurial teaching?
8. How can we facilitate the development of entrepreneurship and promote entrepreneurship competence at the different levels in school?
9. According to the Norwegian curriculum school shall become more open in relation to working life, business & industry and the local community. Discuss how school and the local community can work together to develop and increase pupils' and teachers' entrepreneurship competence.

References

Nordlandsforskning (2000): *Realisere draumar, ikkje berre drøyme dei! Kartlegging av Kommunal- og regionaldepartementet si ungdomssatsing*. NF rapport nr. 23/2000.

Johnson Jr, F.P. (2004): *Entrepreneurship and Democracy. Entrepreneurs as the revolutionaries of our time*. Adapted from a speech at the Russian Venture Fair in St. Petersburg on October 8th.

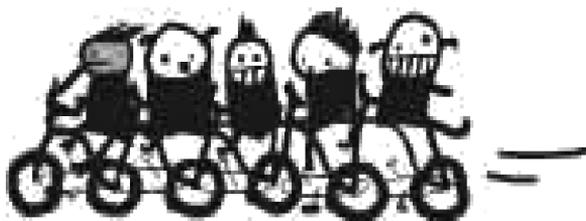
Rae, D. (2007): *Entrepreneurship – from opportunity to action*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ødegård, I.K.R. (2000): *Pedagogisk entreprenørskap – Framtiden på timeplanen*. Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget.

The European Commission (2005): Report: *Mini companies in secondary education*.

Do you want to join?

Entrepreneurship in education and learning –
accept the challenge!



CHAPTER 13

Can Democracy be measured?

By Odd R. Hunnes

Democracy – a matter of governance and culture

In general terms democracy may be defined as a form of governance in which rule is of, by and for the people. However, democracy is not only a matter of governance it is also a matter of people's shared values, beliefs, attitudes, standards, morals, customs, habits and knowledge. In short: democracy is also a matter of culture.

Democracy a matter of governance and culture

Today a wide range of countries name themselves democratic, and Human Development Report (HDR) states that 'The democracy a nation chooses to develop, depends on its history and circumstances' (UNDP 2002: 4). Consequently different countries develop different brands of democracy and the report describes countries as 'differently democratic.' In other words: democracy does, and probably should, have a wide range of appearances, reflecting different countries' histories, cultures and circumstances.

Countries are differently democratic

At the same time, globally there seems to be a need and a will to develop certain commonly accepted measures for democracy. Beginning in the early 1990s, democracy as part of good governance is often being mentioned as a condition for receiving development aid. This is a significant change compared to the 1980's which mainly focused on economy and markets, and this illustrates the need. HDR claims that the world is more democratic than ever before (ibid: 2), using the number of countries that conduct multi-party elections as an indicator. This illustrates the will.

There is a need and a will to develop measures of democracy

The fundamental questions in this connection are what the core traits of democracy are, how they may appear and how they may be measured. The aim of this chapter is to shed some light on these questions.

To measure what avoids measurements

Democracy is difficult to measure

There are a lot of features in human life that are difficult to measure and one of these is human development. A lot of time and effort have been spent on developing a measure for human development, so that today there is a human development index that will be commented upon below. So far there is no corresponding measure for democracy. In this chapter we therefore will take a look at a few principles of how the concept of human development is being measured, as an example of something that avoids measurements. The idea is that some of the same principles and reflections are valid for the concept of democracy. This approach seems relevant also since the two concepts overlap to a certain degree.

Human development measured as GDP per capita

In this context human development may be defined as the improvement of human welfare or human well-being. For a long time income, measured as GNP pr. capita in a country, was used to represent human well-being in international statistics. However, the well-being of people in a society does not depend on the level of income itself. It is more important what the income is used for. Human Development Report states that income alone is not the answer to human development (UNDP 1990: 18) and that the use of statistical aggregates to measure national income and its growth has tended to move the focus away from the importance of human well-being (ibid: 9). This illustrates one of the weaknesses of this measure.

GDP has important weaknesses as a measure for human welfare

In addition there are several aspects of human well-being that are not reflected in the amount of income. The report presents two main reasons for this: 'First, national income figures, useful though they are for many purposes, do not reveal the composition of income or the real beneficiaries, Second, people often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in higher measured income or growth figures: better nutrition and health services, greater access to knowledge, more secure livelihoods, better working conditions, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, and a sense of participating in the economic, cultural and political activities of their communities. Of course, people also want higher incomes as one of their options. But income is not the sum total of human life' (ibid: 9).

For reasons like these, another and more detailed measure for human well-being was established and presented for the first time

in Human Development Report 1990. This measure is named the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI has been widely used since that time as a measure of human well-being. The main point of development in this context is improvement of human well-being. Thus development may be regarded as a means as well as an end towards improved well-being. The use of the term 'development' in the name rather than 'well-being' helps keep focus on the improvement of human well-being, the paramount challenge of our time.

The starting point for the HDI is the notion that human development is a question of enlarging people's choices: The most critical choices concern leading a long and healthy life, to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living. Additional choices are about political freedom, guaranteed human rights and self-respect (ibid: 10). Consequently the report suggests that the HDI should focus on three essential aspects of human life: longevity, knowledge and decent living standards. These are represented by the following key indicators, with the report's explanation of each (ibid: 11-12):

- *Life expectancy at birth.* A long life correlates closely with adequate nutrition, good health and education and other valued achievements. Life expectancy is thus a proxy measure for several other important variables in human development.
- *Adult literacy rate and combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools.* For knowledge, literacy figures are only a crude reflection of access to education. But literacy is a fundamental step in learning and knowledge-building, so literacy figures are essential in any measurement of human development. In a more varied set of indicators, importance would also have to be attached to the outputs of higher levels of education. But for basic human development, literacy clearly deserves emphasis.
- *Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (PPP US\$³³).* This concerns command over resources needed for a decent living.

Human Development Index (HDI) was constructed in 1990

Starting point: enlarge people's choices

HDI is composed of:

– life expectancy at birth

– literacy and school enrolment

– GDP per inhabitant

The key indicators are compiled into the Human Development

³³ Purchasing Power Parity: 'A theory which states that the exchange rate between one currency and another is in equilibrium when their domestic purchasing powers at that rate of exchange are equivalent' (Bannock et al 1977: 336). This implies that the numbers used in the GDP are adjusted in such a way that the amounts that appear as GDP should buy the same goods regardless of which country the purchase is made. This makes comparisons between countries feasible.

Index. The HDR comments on two important concerns about this index (UNDP 1990). First about the number of indicators used to build the index, and second, about the distribution of human well-being within a population:

HDI has a multitude challenge

‘In any system for measuring and monitoring human development, the ideal would be to include many variables, to obtain as comprehensive a picture as possible. But the current lack of relevant comparable statistics precludes that. Nor is such comprehensiveness entirely desirable. Too many indicators could produce a perplexing picture – perhaps distracting policymakers from the main overall trends. The crucial issue therefore is of emphasis’ (ibid: 11).

HDI has an average challenge

‘All three measures of human development suffer from a common failing: they are averages that conceal wide disparities in the overall population. Different social groups have different life expectancies. There often are wide disparities in male and female literacy. And income is distributed unevenly. The case is thus strong for making distributional corrections in one form or another. Such corrections are especially important for income, which can grow to enormous heights. The inequality possible in respect of life expectancy and literacy is much more limited: a person can be literate only once, and human life is finite.’ (ibid: 12). The report then continues to point at the Gini index³⁴ as a possible measure for distribution, but at that time (1990) sufficient statistics were not available to put it into use.

Supplementary indexes to HDI

Human Development Report 2002 discusses the HDI and states that since the index was created, some supplementary measures have been established to highlight different aspects of human development. These are the human poverty index (HPI³⁵), the gender related development index (GDI³⁶) and the gender empowerment measure (GEM³⁷), which are used in all the Human Development

³⁴ Gini index: A measure for distribution of income or expenditure between individuals or households in a country. For instance, the Gini index captures disparities in the percentages of income that each 1% (percentile) of the population receives. If each percentile receives 1% of the income, there is no disparity, and the Gini coefficient is 0. If one percentile receives all the income, there is maximum disparity, and the Gini coefficient is 100 (UNDP 1990: 21- 22).

³⁵ Human Poverty Index: A measure for human poverty which takes into account the distribution of human development in the country. There is one measure for developing countries (HPI 1) and one for developed countries (HPI 2) because what is regarded to be poverty is influenced by the living standard in the actual country.

³⁶ Gender Development Index: A measure of human development, where differences between men and women show. The indicators are the same as in the Human Development Index and for each indicator the scores are defined separately for men and women.

³⁷ Gender Empowerment Measure: A measure for female participation in politics and business.

Reports since 2001. The report also points out that the ability to participate in the decisions that affect one's life is left out of the HDI, and regards this as a major drawback: 'A person can be rich, healthy and well-educated, but without this ability [to participate] human development is held back' (UNDP 2002: 34). The report continues on the same page: 'The omission of dimensions of freedom from the HDI has been highlighted since the first Human Development Report – and drove to the creation of a human freedom index (HFI) in 1991 and a political freedom index (PFI) in 1992. Neither measure survived past its first year, testament to the difficulty of adequately capturing in a single index such complex aspects of human development. But that does not mean that indicators of political and civil freedoms can be ignored entirely in considering the state of a country's human development.'

HDI lacks indicators of political and civil freedom

This statement actually leads us to the concept of democracy, and the question of constructing a measure for this important part of human well-being and human development.

Democratic governance

Human Development Report claims that democratic governance is valuable in its own right (UNDP 2002: 1), giving people a fair chance to determine their own destiny through political freedom and participation. This is an important aspect of human dignity. The report continues to argue (ibid: 3) that democratic governance has the potential of advancing human development because it helps protect people from economic and political catastrophes. As examples it upholds that democracies help avoid famines and contribute to political stability by providing open space for political opposition and handover of power. In his special contribution in the report, UN secretary general Kofi Annan writes: 'Indeed, one lesson of the 20th century is that where the dignity of the individual is trampled or threatened – where citizens do not enjoy the basic right to choose their government, or the right to change it regularly – conflict too often follows, with innocent civilians paying the price in lives cut short and communities destroyed' (ibid: 14). Furthermore, democratic governance may trigger virtuous circles of development. This may happen 'as political freedom empowers people to press for policies that expand social and economic opportunities as open debates help communities shape their priorities' (ibid 3).

Democratic governance has the potential of advancing human development

Challenge: to build key institutions of democratic governance

HDR 2002 (ibid: 4) maintains that a central challenge in many countries is to build key institutions of democratic governance, like

- A system of representation, with well-functioning political parties and interest associations.
- An electoral system that guarantees free and fair elections as well as universal suffrage.
- A system of checks and balances based on the separation of powers, with independent judicial and legislative branches.
- A vibrant civil society, able to monitor government and private business – and provide alternative forms of political participation.
- A free, independent media.
- Effective civilian control over the military and other security forces.

When institutions function badly, poor and vulnerable people tend to suffer the most. Good governance therefore must foster fair and accountable institutions that protect human rights, human security and human development, in short: human dignity (Villumstad 2005). Countries therefore may promote human dignity for their citizens by developing governance institutions that are fully accountable to all the people – and allow the same people to participate in the political debates and decisions that shape their lives. Therefore accountability and participation are core principles on which democracy is based (UNDP 2002: 55). In addition comes freedom of choice.

Democratic institutions should secure accountability, participation and freedom of choice

The virtues of democratic governance seem obvious and focus on building institutions to enhance democracy is consequently very much to the point. Therefore, it is plausible to employ the occurrence and state of different institutions as indicators of democracy in a country. HDR 2002 presents a list of so called *objective indicators of governance*. The indicators are organized in three groups: 'Participation', 'Civil society' and 'Ratification of rights instruments'. To my mind the three groups are very much relevant to democracy³⁸ and should therefore be correspondingly relevant as indicators of democratic governance. The indicators are the following (source in parenthesis):

³⁸ See chapter 1 'So what is democracy about?'

Participation

- Date of most recent election (Inter-Parliamentary Union).
- Voter turnout in last general election (Inter-Parliamentary Union).
- Year women got the right to vote (Inter-Parliamentary Union).
- Seats in parliament held by women (Inter-Parliamentary Union).

Objective indicators of governance:
– *Participation*
– *Civil society*
– *Ratification of rights instruments*

Civil society

- Trade union membership (Inter-Parliamentary Union).
- Number of non governmental organizations (NGOs) (Yearbook of International Organizations).

Ratification of rights instruments

- Ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN treaty section).
- Ratification of Freedom of association and Collective Bargaining Convention 87 (UN treaty section).

Democratic culture

So far, nobody has been able to come up with one indicator, or a set of indicators, that are unambiguous or uncontroversial measures of democracy. HDR points at two options in this connection (UNDP 2002: 36). One is objective indicators as mentioned above. The main drawback for objective indicators is that they may fail to capture important aspects of democracy. A country may for instance perform an election without this leading to a change in power. On the other hand a change in power does not necessarily lead to civil liberties like freedom of expression and choice, which are fundamental for realizing accountability and participation. It is therefore safe to say that objective indicators are not sufficient to portray the degree of democracy in a country. Fortunately they are also not the only possible indicators of democracy or political and civil rights in countries. There exists a second option and this is *subjective indicators of governance*. Subjective indicators should be able to capture a broader variety of aspects of governance compared to the objective ones. Especially important in this context are the cultural aspects. The indicators are based on assessments by experts, but

even so the subjective approach may lead to disagreement and perception biases. HDR 2002 submits a set of subjective indicators of governance and these are organized in the following groups: 'Democracy', 'Rule of law and government effectiveness' and 'Corruption'. As measures of democratic governance the indicators in the group 'Democracy' may be our first choice. But 'Rule of law and government effectiveness' and 'Corruption' are also very relevant. The indicators are the following (source in parenthesis):

Democracy

- *Polity score* (Polity IV dataset University of Maryland): competitiveness and openness of chief executive recruitment; constraints on chief executive; regulation of participation; regulation of executive recruitment; competitiveness of participation.
- *Civil liberties* (Freedom House): freedom of expression and belief; freedom of association and organizational rights; rule of law and human rights; personal autonomy and economic rights.
- *Political rights* (Freedom House): Free and fair elections for offices with real power; freedom of political organization; significant opposition; freedom from domination by powerful groups; autonomy or political inclusion of minority groups.
- *Press freedom* (Freedom House): media objectivity; freedom of expression.
- *Voice and accountability* (World Bank): free and fair elections; freedom of the press; civil liberties; political rights; military in politics; change in government; transparency; business is kept informed of developments in law and policies; business can express its concerns over changes in laws and policies.

Rule of law and government effectiveness

- *Political stability and lack of violence* (World Bank): perceptions of the likelihood of destabilization.
- *Law and order* (International Country Risk Guide): legal impartiality; popular observance of the law.
- *Rule of law* (World Bank): black markets; enforceability of private and government contracts; corruption in banking; crime and theft as obstacles to business; losses from and cost

Subjective indicators of governance:
– *Democracy*
– *Rule of law*
– *Government effectiveness*
– *Corruption*

of crime; unpredictability of the judiciary.

- *Government effectiveness* (World Bank): bureaucratic quality; transactions costs; quality of public health care; government stability.

Corruption

- *Corruption perceptions index* (Transparency International): official corruption as perceived by businesspeople; academics and risk analysts.
- *Graft* (World Bank): corruption among public officials; corruption as an obstacle to business; frequency of 'irregular payments' to officials and judiciary; perceptions of corruption in civil service; business interest payment.

As we can see, some of these indicators overlap on some issues and this indicates that constructing a single index for democracy is a very complicated task. For the time being we must make do with the multiple of scores and indicators that exist. The combination of the objective and subjective indicators enables the reader to balance the strengths and weaknesses of the two principles used, thus leaving it to the reader's judgment which aspects to emphasize. This underlines something that is always the case when using statistics: it needs to be done with understanding and responsibility.

Weaknesses of the measures

The indicators of democracy mentioned above, have two main weaknesses. First, they present the average picture of the countries concerned. Second, they are stronger on the institutional aspects of democracy compared to the cultural ones.

Distribution

In general, average conceals a lot of disparities within a country. This may concern gender, age groups, social groups, ethnic groups, geographic areas and more. Inequalities for such reasons are unjust, economically wasteful and socially destabilizing, comments HDR (UNDP 2005 English summary: 24). This report spends a full chapter (2) on inequality and human development.

There is a general line of thought in development analysis and policies stating that the main problem in the world today is not lack of resources, but the distribution of them. This view is applied on

*'Average'
conceals a lot
of disparities*

Resource distribution is the real welfare problem

different geographic levels, and to omit distribution in measures of human well-being or access to democratic features seems to be a rather serious weakness.

The Gini index is a measure for wealth distribution

HDR 1990 states that for human development, the distribution of GNP is as important as the growth of GNP. The report continues to point to the Gini index as a measure of income disparities. Through the years the availability of relevant statistics has increased. While in 1990 the Gini index was available for less than 35 countries (UNDP 1990:12), HDR 2005 presents the same index for 124 countries. The broader availability of the Gini index should make it technically feasible to include distribution of income and wealth in the development index or in any measure of democracy. But so far this has not been done.

Gender related indexes: GDI and GEM

The UN portrays gender inequality through two indexes. The gender-related development index (GDI) employs the same indicators as Human Development Index (HDI), but takes the differences between men and women into account. Human Development Report 2005 presents the GDI for 140 out of the 177 countries for which the HDI is presented, which also should make it feasible for use in many contexts. The gender empowerment measure (GEM) is based on seats in parliament held by women, female legislators, senior officials and managers, female professional and technical workers and the ratio of estimated female to male earned income. This measure is presented for 80 different countries in HDR 2005, in other words far fewer than the GDI.

Participation and freedom of choice are important for cultural aspects of democracy

Cultural aspects

So far, it seems like the presented measures are stronger on the institutional aspects of democracy compared to the cultural ones. Participation and freedom of choice are main qualities of democracy where cultural aspects are especially obvious. In order to exercise choice and participation, a person needs

- energy
- self confidence
- practice

It may be argued that the person's health situation may serve as a measure for energy. The health condition of the people in a country may be portrayed through life expectancy at birth.

Self confidence may in this context be taken to be a question of being able to take in information, to make up one's mind and let one's voice be heard. Education seems to be a feasible measure for these traits.

Practice in democratic ways may be obtained at in several ways. If NGOs are run according to democratic principles, a lot of practice may be achieved through participation in such organizations. The same may be said about schools. Access to resources may open another way to practise democratic principles. Access to resources gives a person options; s/he may choose between different alternatives in ways of using the resources at hand. A life style that permits choosing between options in the everyday life should accustom a person to make decisions – and enjoy (or suffer) the consequences – as a way of life. This should be expected to include the political sphere as well as other spheres of life. Income is often used as a proxy measure for access to resources.

When we combine the three: life expectancy at birth, education and income, we arrive at the HDI. Derived from what is written above, to use the HDI as one indicator of democracy among some others, seems like a plausible idea. The GDI may be an even better idea for countries where the relevant statistics exist, since it also includes gender balance. A similar point may be made on account of the Gini index. To include the two, GDI and Gini index, may strengthen the cultural distributional aspects in the measurements of democracy. To my mind these are fields where improvements are most needed.

The HDI indicators have important properties that are supportive of choice and participation

Combined with others, GDI and Gini index may be used as indicators of democracy

What may measures of democracy be good for?

This chapter points out that there are a number of difficulties and uncertainties associated with the measures of democracy. Why then is so much energy spent on constructing and upholding a variety of such measures? The likely answer is the important potential that such measures hold in several fields, for instance:

- *Policymaking.* The measures may help politicians and anybody in a society to focus on important elements of democra-

*Measures of
democracy
may be
helpful for
– policy-
making
– monitoring
changes
– comparing
countries*

cy. Such a focus is probably necessary in any society in order to further develop democracy and defend democracy against retracting. This is important since democracy is not static in the sense that once it is reached, it is secured for ever. Democracy is an ongoing process, where the important aspects need to be tended to, developed and secured continually.

- *Monitor changes.* It should be in the interest of people in any society to further develop democratic governance and democratic culture. In that context knowing something about whether we are making progress or not is a great force of motivation and guidance.
- *Comparisons between countries.* Such measures are easily used to compare the situation of democracy in different countries. This may be a bit on the negative side since it may be taken to underline and perpetuate the supremacy of some countries and some regions. On the positive side, comparisons may give those lagging behind ideas about where to go for help, offering cases for studies of examples of better practice.

Concluding remarks

*Used with
caution
measures
may be
helpful for
development
of human
welfare*

As pointed out above, there are constructed several measures for democracy in countries. In order for them to be good for anything at all, we need to remember that they are all proxies. This implies that there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ measures, but more or less good measures. It is therefore important that we are aware of the weaknesses when such measures are constructed and used. We must be aware not to overemphasize whatever the measure may be able to tell us. Modesty on behalf of such measures is very much needed. On the other hand, used with proper caution, such measures may be of substantial help for us to describe, analyze and develop society, be it within the field of human well-being, democracy or any other important feature.

Questions

1. What does it mean that democracy is a matter of governance and culture both?
2. Explain why countries may be 'differently democratic'.
3. Why is democracy difficult to measure?
4. Why does this chapter start explaining about Human Development Index (HDI) while the actual theme is to measure democracy?
5. Which are the indicators that the HDI is composed of?
6. Name some of the weaknesses of the HDI.
7. In which ways has democratic governance potential for advancing human development?
8. Why is it important to build democratic institutions in a country – and what institutions may this be?
9. Explain why accountability and participation are essential in a democracy.
10. Explain the difference between objective and subjective indicators of governance.
11. Explain why the omission of 'distribution' in the indicators of governance (both subjective and objective) is a weakness.
12. In what ways do the HDI indicators have important properties that are supportive of democracy?
13. What may measures of democracy be good for?
14. How many indicators should be used in a democracy index – and which should these indicators be?

References

- Bannock, G., R.E. Baxter & R. Rees (1977): *The Penguin Dictionary of Economics*. Middlesex, New York, Ringwood, Ontario, Auckland: Penguin.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (1990): *Human Development Report 1990: Concepts and Measurement of human development*.
http://www.undp.no/article.asp?Article_id=340&Category_Id=HDR_arkiv
- UNDP (2002): *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening democracy in a fragmented world*. http://www.undp.no/article.asp?Article_Id=1483
- UNDP (2005): *Human Development Report 2005: International cooperation at a crossroads. Aid, trade and security in an unequal world*. http://www.undp.no/article.asp?Article_Id=2392
- Villumstad, S. (2005): *Social Reconstruction of Africa. Perspectives from Within and Without*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers.

PART 5

In Schools

CHAPTER 14

Building Democracy by teaching Religion and Ethics

By Birger Løvlie

*Democracy... is coming from the Sermon on the mount,
which I don't pretend to understand at all.
I believe in a moral universe and
a mighty judgement is coming.*

Leonard Cohen

This chapter is written with a background in the history of European churches. It will mostly deal with the role of the Christian church in that part of the world and in particular about the church in Norway. Nevertheless, it is written in the hope that some of the questions, observations and answers can be generalized and useful in a Malawian context. We are talking about two nations with their own history, a history that can reveal many differences, but also similarities. Above all they have a great task in common: to build a strong democracy in order to secure a safe future for the inhabitants. Democracy is not built once and forever. It has to be renewed in order to maintain an understanding of democracy as a moral contract between the individual and the society. That means it has to be taught to every new generation, in the schools and in daily life. As long as religion plays a role in the life of a people, it will also be able to participate in the formation of young people that makes them fit for fight for democracy. The main objective of this chapter is to give the reader some ideas of how and to what extent Christian faith can contribute to a democratic mentality. First some words about the church.

*Two nations
with a
common task*

The nature of the church

Church and society are different

The church is not primarily the bishops. She is the body of Christ,³⁹ a community of believers, praying for peace on earth, knowing that to establish and maintain a society with justice requires all political skills. How can a community so different from a political society by nature contribute to democracy?

Two points made by Hunnes in chapter 13 'Can Democracy be measured?' should be underlined. He writes: 'Practice in democratic ways may be obtained in several ways. If NGOs⁴⁰ are run according to democratic principles, a lot of practice may be achieved through participation in such organizations.' It is easy not only to agree with him, but also to say that this point is very important. If the church wants to promote democracy in a society it is not enough to preach democracy as a part of her social ethics; it is also necessary to practise democracy. Hunnes also shows that at the core of democratic mentality and thinking, you will find the dignity that should lead to participation in processes where decisions are made. This dignity may the churches nourish by their theology and practice. You will find a theological elaboration of this dignity in chapter 8: 'Christian Faith and Values of Democracy' by Meier.

Dignity of man: the foundation of democracy

The structure of a church is often a product of a long tradition that can be an obstacle to democratic thinking in the churches. In European history the churches have been institutions with a structure like pyramids. At the top you find pope, bishops or even a king. The lay people are at the bottom, expected to come to church, sit down, listen and sing or pray at command. The protestant churches had drifted far from the shores of reformation when the priesthood of all believers was rediscovered as a basic authority in the church. If we want the church to work for democracy, we should work for a more egalitarian structure where the congregation makes the decisions in responsibility and faith.

The pyramidal structure of churches is a problem

While we are talking about democracy, we should be aware that this word announces a tool, not the objective. A main ethical objective of the church is peace on earth. The church may seem more or less naïve as she preaches peace. Peace is a part of the Kingdom of God, a kingdom that is not only meant for eternity in heaven, but is meant for this life and it is present among the peacemakers that

³⁹ This metaphor is often used in The New Testament, see I Cor 12:12 and Eph 4:4.

⁴⁰ NGO: Non Governmental Organization.

Jesus talked about in his Sermon on the Mount. Democracy is a tool that becomes important as we use it to achieve a peace here and now with justice as a distinct quality.

We can, of course, also discuss who is the most naïve in working for peace. Let me illustrate by an example from modern history. In 1938, 29th of September, hundreds of thousands came home from evensong in the churches in England, celebrating the Day of St. Michael, the great apocalyptic conqueror. The evensong ended with a prayer: 'Give us, oh Lord, *peace in our time*.' Those words were meant to express the longing of hearts of believers. Some of them may have turned on their radios later in the night and heard their prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, coming home from Munich with the triumphant words: 'I bring with me *peace in our time!*' His words showed that he knew the prayer of his church, but the coming events also showed that he did not know Hitler very well. Prayers should be offered in a single-minded mood, and the church should never stop praying for peace. On the other hand, politicians have a duty to tell people that peace is achieved through 'blood, sweat and tears,' as Winston Churchill said.

Peace on earth should be prayed for and requires hard work

From religious homogeneity to pluralistic societies

In the history of Europe, religious intolerance has been frequent. Emperors and kings have mostly wanted their subjects to have the same religion. Religious freedom as a presupposition for democracy was established when Christian and ethnic minorities fought for their rights after the reformation.

The empires in the history of the Western world have mostly had religion as a constitutive element, often combined with a minimum of tolerance. The Roman Empire (ca 300 BC-410 AD) was a religious state, where the citizens had to pay absolute respect to the genius of the emperor as the Supreme Being. The empire accepted the religions of the different ethnic groups they conquered as long as they did not try to spread their religions to the Roman citizens. Jewish religion was accepted, and also Christianity as long as the ruling class believed it was a Jewish sect.⁴¹

The Roman Empire: accepted religions providing the emperor was duly respected

Later in the history of Europe, the problem of religious tolerance has mostly been a complex issue. At the time of the reformation,

⁴¹ Acts 18: 12-17 shows that this is how the Roman rulers dealt with the Jews.

The first steps towards religious tolerance

they tried to solve the problem by forcing the citizens to have the same faith as their king. At the end of the Thirty years war (1618-1648) many nations in Europe for the first time had to accept religious minorities within their borders. The 1600s mark the beginning of the development of religious tolerance in Europe (except for the Scandinavian countries, where only the Lutheran faith was allowed). But the religious element did not disappear from the conflicts. Different groups within the borders of the same nation have ever since fought for political freedom and used their faith as one of several expressions, easy to use, but not always well chosen, for their ethnic identity. Yugoslavia was divided in the 1990s between the Catholics in Croatia, the Orthodox Serbs and the Muslims in Bosnia, just to mention one complex of modern conflicts.

Churches accept a secular state

In principle most parts of Christianity accept to a certain degree a secular state today. You will find a state church in some countries, but these countries have also ratified the European Convention on Human Rights, including individual freedom to change religion, or to have no religion at all. Little by little, the churches have lost their legal and cultural privileges, and parts of the Western world have been secularized even to the point where the word Christmas is replaced by Xmas!

When we look at Norway, we see that it has not always been easy to practise religious freedom in the sense of justice and equality. The Lutheran church gained a status of monopoly during the time of autocracy (1660-1814), a position that was prolonged even in the liberal constitution of 1814. Those who wrote the Constitution of Norway at that time took it for granted that the Evangelical Lutheran religion should be the official religion of Norway. Until 1969 you had to be Lutheran to teach Christianity or be a headmaster in the public school, and the cabinet must still have a majority of state church members.

Freedom of religion in Norway grew after 1845

The process towards religious freedom started in 1845 when, for the first time, it became possible to be a citizen without being a Lutheran (but you had to be a Christian). Not until 1964 religious freedom was written into the Norwegian constitution. It took much time for us to learn and accept that a person's faith or lack of faith should not cost him any civil rights.

Secularization of education

The school system in Norway has little by little been secularized in the sense that the state religion has lost control. Ethics is still a dis-

cipline, but now as a philosophic matter, and not based on religious faith. Democracy is hardly mentioned as an ethic topic.

The public school in Norway goes back to 1739, in the days of pietism. The king wanted to give all citizens more knowledge of the Lutheran faith, with confirmation at the age of 14 as the final test. This meant that all children had to learn to read and write, and thus it became a Christian obligation to build a school system for all children in the country. Since then the history of the school has developed step by step, from being run by the church to become a school of and by the people.

From Church school to a school of and by the people

In the last 30 years Norway has become much more pluralistic in religious matters than before, and this has had consequences for the school. The major change came in 1997. Before that year religious instruction had been confessional, which meant Christianity according to the Lutheran confession. In 1997 a new national curriculum was introduced. We still teach Christianity, but only as one among many religions and world views, and the teaching has to be given according to the same pedagogical principles in all parts of the subject. One of the consequences is that in the curriculum ethics is separated from Christian/religious faith. Instead it is a part of elementary teaching about philosophy. On this background, one should expect democracy to be important as an ethical and philosophic issue, but that seems not to be the case. Many textbooks about religion and ethics for the school do not even use the word democracy. This silence speaks volumes to me, and the silence should wake us up before we all forget the roots of democracy in Christianity and humanism.

Christianity: from the one and only to one among several

According to Norwegian law, all teaching in our schools should still be done according to the basic values in our Christian and humanistic tradition. These values are, according to the national goals for the school, basic to a democratic state with equal rights for the individuals to involve themselves in politics, and they are also a foundation for our total culture. They are about love of your neighbours and human rights, and they are promoted by science, reason and critical thinking. All these values are basic in the sense that they are the point of departure when we deal with problems like poor and rich; ethnic minorities and racism; war and peace; religious faith and scientific thinking.

Teaching according to basic values, love and human rights promoted by science

Many of these problems are dealt with in chapter 13 by Hunnes about measuring democracy. It would not be wise of me to go fur-

The system in power was often opposed to democratic values

ther into that discussion now, but we should reflect over one question: Do we need an explicit moral basis for the criteria Hunnes has written about, or is it so that they go without saying? A possible answer is that democratic values are obvious enough but still they must be fought for. On one hand, our history shows that they often have prevailed in a fight against the establishment, including religious power. Churches have preached that some people are born poor by God's will and churches have accepted the use of military power against ethnic minorities and defended slavery. We cannot overlook the fact that the combination of religious and political power in given situations has been an obstacle to democracy, justice and peace. On the other hand if we are willing to learn from history, it should be possible to make religious faith a political support for all men of good will. Religion teaches us that some principles are not open for discussion. If a principle is evident, you do not vote for or against it; you die for it.

New sciences challenged the church

The problem about faith and science has been debated in the Western world since the time of Enlightenment. Church and religion have had to accept a growing competition from the new sciences in the matter of understanding the universe, society and man. Enlightenment theology tended to end in total rationalism. From a position as the administrator of absolute and objective truth, the church was dethroned and was only granted a place in man's heart. Christian faith became an option just as atheism became another. From that time the churches have had no other choice than to work for individual moral and religious convictions that could not be obliterated by modern 'scientific' and destructive ideologies like Nazism and Communism. Today, the main danger seems to be the unlimited individualistic understanding of liberty. According to our humanistic tradition, political liberty needs both a system of written laws, individual conviction and courage to practise them for the benefit of others. That is true also for our Norwegian welfare state. My point is that a liberal democracy, which should be accepted by the church, is far away from anarchism and (post-) modern individualism. It is difficult to see how a welfare state system may survive if the citizens are without a personal moral obligation to the benefit of the community. 'Do your duty, and claim then your right,' a Norwegian prime minister told his son. The welfare state is a realization of a modern concept of democracy, but for it to survive we as well as the coming generations must be willing to accept it as a moral contract, a contract that makes

True liberty requires laws

The welfare state is a realization of democracy

every inhabitant responsible for democracy's survival and growth. That is a task for the school.

What about Islam in this context? There are some crucial points from history to be mentioned. In the time of the Ottoman Empire, Islam won great victories, but from the beginning of the 1700s the Islamic world has suffered much humiliation in Europe. They lost one geographical area after another. They had already lost Spain, and now they had to give up Balkan and their lands around the Black Sea. They did not participate in the scientific progress, mostly because their imams said that they could not learn from the pagans. Today we see that many of them are able to live amongst the peoples in Europe, but at the same time they cannot permit the type of change that we call Westernization. They seem to be more able to adapt to than to adopt the cultures of Europe. The hijab on their women in the towns of Europe may be an illustration. It remains to be seen whether Islamic cultures can be integrated in European democracies, where equal rights for women is no longer a matter for discussion. In most countries where Islam is in majority, freedom of religion will be defined according to the ancient tolerance principle: they accept existing religious minorities within their borders, but they punish severely those who leave Islam for another religion. To express critics of a religion is a democratic right, but critics of Islam lead immediately to accusations of blasphemy, a sign of resistance towards the concept of a modern (Western) democracy.

Muslims are adapting to, more than adopting European culture

Church and secular power

History shows that a religion can be an obstacle to democracy. The church must be aware that she should not seek political power and privileges. It is her task to be a critical voice against all abuse, including the abuse of political power.

As mentioned above, in the Norwegian school the students shall learn about all religions, according to the same pedagogical principles. That means first and foremost that objective information shall be present in such a way that the homes of the students find the school as a support in their own religious education of their children. Norway has a tradition in her schools for critical teaching that makes it relatively easy to talk about what the church has done wrong in the past. The idea of tolerance towards minorities seems to make it easier to have a critical attitude towards Christianity than

Objectivity in teaching is a must

Difficult to be critical of minorities?

other religions like Islam. When the textbooks are telling the history of Christianity you can read about persecution of Jews, the use of military power against heretics and the burning of witches, wars of religion and so on. It is difficult to find much about Islamic fundamentalism or Arab slave trade in the same books. It is not easy to avoid the suspicion that the writers of the books are too afraid to be accused of unfair criticism.

Both own and other people's cultures must be treated critically – in fairness

A culture dominated by one religion can be an obstacle to the ideas we connect with democracy. It is sufficient to mention the cast system in Hinduism or sharia in Islam. We should also be willing to look at unpleasant elements in different parts of the European tradition. Religion and political power has always been a risky combination and have led European churches to support and bless dictators. Church leaders have often been too willing to forget some wise words in the Lutheran confession: Church and secular power should not be mingled.⁴² That sentence can have two meanings: The church should not have political power, and the kings should not rule the church. Both are important. This does not mean that the churches should not seek influence in society. On the contrary, we have an obligation as Christians to work for justice and peace, and when we educate people for that purpose, we have to be aware that religion can work both ways. This is discussed in chapter 7 'To legitimate Power or to be a prophetic Voice – a Choice for Churches'. In the 1700s the founders of Methodism challenged their listeners in both spiritually and social matters, by saying: You are responsible for your life, your life and eternal destiny can change, and it starts by an act of your will. You make a personal choice to be a Christian and by your own choice, you change your life. This message was the core of the great revivals in Great Britain, and it is easy to see that the next generations became liberal politicians and union leaders. The way Lutheran doctrine was preached at that time can be summarized: Common man needs strong authorities since he is a fallen sinner. The people should be subject to Christian kings with real political power. At a certain stage in history (1884), all the Norwegian bishops and most clergy drew the conclusion that democracy was contrary to Christian faith. It is an irony of history that the churches have contributed most to tolerance and democracy when they have lived as minorities. A most striking example is the history of the Protestants in France in the 1500s and

Christian revivals made men active in society

⁴² This is the message of article XXVIII in The Augsburg Confession.

1600s. Under the pressure of a hostile state, they developed the first democratic church order, the Presbyterian system, that was developed in correlation with the first modern republics in Europe.

Faith as foundation of ethics

A personal ethics is always based upon a conviction. Teaching ethics often reduces education in ethics to a question of knowledge, and that is to neglect pedagogical insight in how we learn.

We give young people the knowledge they need to understand and accept some ideas as evident rights for men and women. We teach ethics in our schools, but we should also admit that what is done in the schools is only giving a framework for building moral personalities. What has to be done outside the school, at least in Norway, is to build a conviction among people that these evident rights are integrated parts of God's will. Human rights are not only self evident; they are Christian evident in the sense that it is an obligation to defend them. It may be argued that it is difficult for them to survive only as more or less reasonable. They have to be supported and carried out by a faith in 'a moral universe' to use the words of Leonard Cohen. When he goes on to speak about a coming judgement day, he is underlining our responsibility towards him who gave us the Sermon on the Mount. My main point is that you do not change the moral attitudes of a man just by giving him more information. New knowledge may cause a person to change a bit, but not habits. A strategy for change must aim at influencing knowledge, behaviour as well as emotions at the same time.

It goes without saying that the way the connection between ethics and personal conviction is explained in this chapter is based on an understanding of Christian ethics which of course is not shared by everybody. That should not prevent anybody from getting more insight. Let us take a new look at the triangle that we find in chapter 1 'Learning Citizenship in Democracy' by Berge. There it is distinguished between the cognitive, psychodynamic and societal aspects of learning, giving a place both for knowledge and emotions combined with societal aspects. By taking all these aspects into consideration, teaching ethics will help building integrated personalities with skills that are preparing students for life in a community. This approach is in line with a holistic view of man. Man is created with reason, will and emotions, and all these elements should be

Ethics is based upon a conviction

Christians are obliged to defend human rights

Ethics and a holistic concept of learning

addressed in order to build up an ethic commitment. This commitment may have the character of Christian faith or something else. The point is that we are committed.

*Change may
be reached
through
influencing
emotions*

Here a comment upon emotions may be appropriate and introduced by asking: can we frighten people to behave morally? It is easy to say that the answer is no, perhaps too easy. In Norway we have worked more than 30 years trying to build up attitudes among students against smoking, drugs and alcohol. It did not work, at least not until we got laws making smoking illegal almost everywhere. The laws were followed up by a campaign on television with horrible pictures of throats and lungs after some years with cigarettes. The aim was to frighten and it worked. Another example is a German campaign for safer driving. On the highways you can see big posters with a picture of some vultures, saying: 'Come on crazy drivers, we are waiting!' Campaigns like these have taken the weakness of human nature seriously. The former Secretary General of UN, Kofi Annan, expressed the same understanding when he said: 'People will not change behaviour until they feel a pain in their bodies.'

*People learn
from what
they see and
enjoy in
practice*

Let us go back to the triangle in Berge's chapter (1). The concept combines learning through knowledge and emotions in order to produce an understanding and motivation that is vital for learning as a social process. It is important to take the whole triangle into account in learning processes in school as well as church. In family life we do it daily, by addressing feelings like joy or fear, honour or shame, in our children. At this point a democratic practice in the life of the churches becomes of highest importance. A church that wishes to promote commitment to democracy in society must show respect for the rights and duties of her believers in her own life. A holistic approach means to understand that people learn from what they observe and enjoy. It is vital that people are given opportunities to participate in making decisions in their churches if we want them to appreciate democratic processes. Norwegian church people could benefit from a study of the constitutions of churches like The Seventh Day Adventists or The Presbyterian Church of Malawi. In every detail it can be seen that measures are taken to avoid clericalism and other dangers that threaten the rights of the members in the congregation. When this is practised by churches in their lives, the result may be a growing responsibility that is prepared to fight for basic human rights in society.

Modernity and the validity of ethics

Modernity has put us under ‘the tyranny of individual choices.’ Our societies are threatened by unlimited individualism, which should be met by churches that are willing to fight for freedom and justice. This is a question about the realm of ethics. Can the validity of your ethics be limited to your individual and small world, just like religion in modernity, or are common accepted ethic values also basic to society at large? The question is often answered indirectly in the textbooks for Norwegian students by a short summary of European philosophy, ending with the subjectivism of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and the liberalism of John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). One conclusion is that textbooks often leave the impression that freedom is equal to individualism. The goal is to create *the good life* in society for oneself. It may be argued that the textbooks should be corrected here. As mentioned above, political freedom for the individual requires laws and regulations, made in a spirit of solidarity, or love for one another. As Malawians often say, the individual freedom stops where your neighbour’s rights begin. The combination of personal commitment and social responsibility should be an important contribution by the church in developing a democratic mentality. We have a right to expect from Christians a solidarity that never ceases to fight for peace, freedom and justice.

Modern ethics tends to be about the good life for individuals

Certain aspects concerning the confrontation between ethic values and politics, as well as between faith and science have been hard to deal with for European churches. The scientific development in the time after the Enlightenment seemed to be the major force for the secularisation of mind and politics, and the churches saw for some time no other way than to cling to their cultural hegemony by means of political influence. In chapter 7 ‘To legitimate Power or to be a prophetic Voice – a Choice for Churches’ it is pointed out that church leaders in Norway did not accept democracy at all late in the 1800s. Another example may also be mentioned. In 1870, at the first Vatican council, the catholic bishops condemned all that threatened the power of the church, from liberalism to socialism. But the council was interrupted as Italian troops marched into the Vatican and ended all political power of the pope. At the second Vatican council (1963-65) it was declared that the political basis for the church is not a catholic state, but the principle of religious freedom. From then on, the influence of the churches in society has had to be

From religious states to religious freedom

*A secular
state may do
good*

according to the parable of leaven, or in modern words: to be yeast in the dough.⁴³ The church can fulfil her ethical as well as her religious mission as long as her members understand themselves as representatives of the Kingdom of God in secular surroundings. And her ethical mission starts by understanding that a secular state is not automatically demonic. Rather, by granting freedom for individuals, a state is a necessary framework for human rights. It might be discussed to what extent these human rights are a product of our Christian tradition, but it should not be doubted that Christians are obliged to fight for them, and teach the next generation to do the same. After World War II, a German bishop said: ‘When Hitler arrested the Jews, we did not protest, because we were not Jews. When he arrested the communists, we did not protest, since we were not communists. When he took us, there were nobody left to protest.’

*Democracy
appreciates
plurality*

As pointed out above, it may be discussed to what extent the concept of democracy has its roots in our Christian heritage. It should be added that such a discussion can not be won. The moment you think you have won, you may have lost democracy. The point is not even to win a discussion, but to gain insight through discussion. The first insight could be that real democratic mentality includes appreciation of plurality. The next insight ought to be agreeing with Leonard Cohen that democracy has one root in the Bible, and thus to feel free and proud to use what we find there. In teaching ethics, the best way to use the Bible is to use the stories you find there, and by doing so, a teacher will little by little be trained in finding other relevant stories, and in telling them.

A didactical must: good stories

The national curriculum for teaching religion in the schools of Norway is built upon a narrative tradition. I recommend story telling, mainly because that is what I remember from my own childhood. In addition, it can hardly be doubted that the church has some very good, if not the best, stories. It is also evident that the stories have been used deliberately for ethical purposes. The history of Joseph and the Israelites in Egypt was told to give us an idea of injus-

⁴³ See Math 13: 33 and Gal 5: 9.

tice, how to suffer in confidence to God who can change evil into good, or how to stand up for freedom like Moses saying 'let my people go!' The history of David, Bat Sheba and the assassination of her husband will always serve as a warning against abuse of power and violation of the dignity of man. From Jesus we have even got a story about a corrupt manager.⁴⁴ The examples could be multiplied.

*Many stories
in the Bible
are about
human rights*

Biblical stories are not the only ones that are used in our tradition. There is one short fairy tale that was often told in primary school that may serve as an illustrating end of this chapter. It is a story about participation: Once upon a time, a little hen found one little seed corn. She picked it up and decided that she would sow it, in order to harvest enough to bake a bread. She asked her big friends: 'Who will plough the field?' 'I will not,' said the horse, the ox and the pig. So the hen did it herself. Then she asked: 'Who will sow the corn?' The answer from all her friends was: 'I will not,' and the same answer came as she asked for help harvesting, grinding the corn and baking the bread. Then she asked: 'Who will eat the bread?' The horse, the ox and the pig all answered: 'I will!' 'No, I will do that,' said the little hen – and ate the bread.

⁴⁴ You will find these examples in Gen 39, Ex 8, 2 Sam 11 and Luke 16.

Questions

1. What is wrong when the church is understood as a pyramid?
2. What is the main obligation for the Church in society?
3. How and when became Europe tolerant in religious matters?
4. What does it mean that the school in Norway has been secularized?
5. Find some basic Christian values mentioned in the text.
6. What has been the impact of modern scientific thinking on the Church?
7. What is the nature of the Church and what is it not?
8. Why should Church and secular power not be mingled?
9. Is it possible for Islam to accept a liberal democracy?
10. What does it mean for the Church to be yeast in the dough?
11. Read Genesis 39 and/or 1 Kings 21. Discuss how these stories are relevant in teaching human rights.

CHAPTER 15

Reconciling Democracy and Responsibility in Schools

By Samson MacJessie-Mbewe

To some extent, democracy deals with rights and freedoms. However, there is no absolute freedom when one interacts with other people in a social environment and in social institutions. While exercising one's rights and freedoms, one needs to observe the responsibilities that go with them. Without observing responsibilities in a democratic environment, social life becomes chaotic and unbearable. While democracy entails free choice, the responsibility has got a moral obligation. As stated by Burke (1989: 4) 'responsibility must be more practically as well as more theoretically informed.' One must know how to practically apply general principles of a responsible citizen in a democratic situation.

However, in recent times, it has been observed that due to misunderstanding of democracy, students as well as teachers in Malawi have exercised their rights and freedoms irresponsibly. Students have boycotted classes, gone on strike, pushed some students out of classes and so on without following a proper procedure as dictated by democratic principles. As stated by Fabiano (2006), the Principal of Chancellor College: 'In the recent past, we have witnessed a number of disruptions of, and threats to disrupt, core activities and services at Chancellor College. Reasons have been advanced for the actions taken or planned Such actions are sometimes taken as an expression of our rights and freedoms, suffice to say this is perfectly accepted provided it does not impinge negatively on other people's rights and freedoms. In addition, freedom without responsibility may not reflect the real world we live in.'

While the principal indicated that people have the right to express their rights and freedoms, he seems to show that these have to go with responsibilities. As he indicated, freedom without

Freedom goes with responsibility

A balance must be stricken in school as in life in general

responsibility does not reflect a real life situation. Similarly, we have heard of teachers gone on strike before they exhaust all the necessary procedures as demanded by democratic values. These are the problems we need to deal with in education in order to make our democracy a reality. Teachers have a responsibility to make students aware of responsible behaviour in a democracy. Students should recognize their responsibilities and their rights for them to behave in a democratically appropriate way. For this to successfully happen, teachers should also know their rights and responsibilities. It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to discuss some of the responsibilities that teachers and students need to observe in a democratic society and institutions. These responsibilities will be discussed with reference to our experiences of democracy in Malawi.

Respect for authority

*Democracy
needs
leadership*

The first responsibility is respect for authority. Authority in this chapter means legitimate leadership at any level for example a principal, teacher, prefect or any administrator or manager. In Malawi, when democracy was ushered in, many people understood it as freedom to defy authority. Teachers as well as students defied authority and went on strike at any time whenever they felt like it. They thought they were now free to express their rights to the authorities in any way they wanted. However, democracy does not mean freedom from leadership. Leadership is very crucial in a democratic society and leaders need to be given due respect for them to be able to make decisions in a democratic way. If leaders are pressed by any irresponsible behaviour by their subordinates, they may turn into autocratic leaders in order to make things move. In so doing, democracy fails. So both the students and the teachers need to understand that respecting authority helps those in power to exercise the power responsibly by abiding to the rules and values of a democratic society.

Likewise, those in authority need to respect the less powerful hence the respect becomes reciprocal. In authority, as stated by Weber (quoted by Clifton and Roberts 1993: 55), 'people comply voluntarily. Voluntary compliance is rooted in a shared set of objectives and mutual acceptance of the prevailing culture and social structure.' Clifton and Roberts (1993: 57) continue to write: '... the

reciprocal rights and obligations that unite people who hold different statuses in an authoritative relationship are not legitimated by self interests, as is the case with claims, but, rather, are legitimated by some collective interests.’

*Reciprocal
respect for
collective
interests*

Consequently, teachers need to be democratic in the way they handle students, in teaching and in other school activities in relation to their interest and the interest of the others. As supported by Gutman (1987: 76): ‘the professional responsibility of teachers is to uphold the principle of non-repression by cultivating the capacity for democratic deliberation.’ Gutman continues to say that democratic education obligates teachers to support the intellectual and emotional preconditions for democratic deliberation among future generations of citizens. According to him, among these preconditions are the recognition of common interests among citizens and the related commitment to reconsider individual interests in the light of understanding the interests of others. Therefore it is the responsibility of teachers to build capacity in students for critical reflection on democratic culture.

Commitment to work

The second responsibility is commitment to work. When democracy was introduced in Malawi, there was no civic education on how people should behave in a democratic society. As such, teachers and students tended to be less committed to their work: teaching in case of teachers and attendance of classes in the case of students. Both students and teachers could absent themselves from classes without any valid reasons. Students could also neglect their assignments in the name of exercising their rights. It is therefore important that teachers and students should know that commitment to work is one of the responsibilities of the democratic citizen. For democracy to be sustained, both students and teachers need to be committed to their work of learning and teaching respectively. Each of them needs to fulfil their obligations in the school. Lack of commitment on the part of the teachers at the time democracy was introduced, could be a reflection on the laxity of the authorities where some were busy engaging themselves in corrupt activities.

*Duties must
be fulfilled*

Participation

Neglect of participation may lead to autocratic rule

The third responsibility is participation. While in Malawi everybody seems to subscribe to democracy, their participation in decision making is rather low. Because the people were used to having decisions made for them in the autocratic regime, when they now are asked to participate in decision making, they either do not respond or respond very late with no tangible comments to the issues raised. For example, many times when a head of department sends memos to staff to comment upon a decision most of the time there are no responses and the head ends up making the decision alone. Even when one asks members of staff to contribute agenda items for a meeting one rarely gets any. This lack of response frustrates a leader who wants to make decisions in a collegial model. The ailing consciousness on this point is also evident in textbooks. Chimombo (1999: 51) states that ‘an examination of civic education pamphlets reveals that the issue of participation either was not addressed or was dealt with clumsily’. Teachers as well as students need to realize that in democracy one has the responsibility to participate in all affairs that affect them. Teachers must give students chance to participate in decision making and students must be willing to participate in school in matters pertaining to their life.

Participation builds character

Once students learn to participate, they will be responsible citizens in the affairs of a democratic society. Indeed they will actively participate in matters like voting and other activities. As stated by Gutman (1987: 90): ‘a participatory approach gives priority to cultivating self esteem and social commitment over humility and order, a priority presumed by the democratic goal of educating citizens willing and able to participate in politics’. He emphasizes that schools should be structured to help teachers cultivate the capacity for critical deliberation in their classrooms. When participatory virtues are cultivated they may lead to a desire to participate in politics, to social commitment and to respect for opposing views. Teachers should be able to make students intellectually independent. However, as Gutman further states: ‘too much independence ... can be as bad as too little’ hence the need to exercise independence with responsibility.

Negotiation

Another tool of a responsible democrat is negotiation. As stated earlier students and teachers in Malawi have been seen taking industrial action before they exhaust all the negotiations that are demanded in a democratic society. While they might have a good cause, they may be found acting illegally because of failure to follow appropriate negotiation procedures. It is undemocratic to smash other people's cars and block roads and pathways which are used by people who are not concerned with the disputes at hand. For students to learn to negotiate they need to practise the skill of negotiation with their teachers. MacJessie-Mbewe (1999) observes that if teachers and students sit down and negotiate change and the teachers show willingness to listen and value the views of the students, they become proud of their teachers. When students are valued in negotiations and see the fruits of the negotiation process they may internalize the process so that it becomes part and parcel of their lifestyle. They may not jump into strikes whenever there are misunderstandings with the school authority before negotiations have been tried. Negotiation is indeed a management strategy but there is need for sufficient information on the issues at stake. Those with the relevant knowledge must make this available in a convenient way before others get frustrated.

Negotiation must build on sufficient information

System knowledge

Finally, to acquire knowledge of the system, be it a school, an organization or the political system in one's own country, is an important responsibility for every citizen. Any system requires well articulated rules, regulations and procedures to be followed by all parties. The leadership has a special obligation to make sure that such rules, regulations and procedures exist and are clearly communicated to the public. The person who knows the system within which s/he lives, knows where to seek relevant information and where to turn for appropriate action. Ignorance of such regulations is no defence for disrupting activities even when frustration runs high. Schools represent an important arena for practising democracy. Both teachers and students will know that although education is a right, it requires them to be in school, to know the rules and abide by them as a matter of responsibility.

Good procedures must exist, be known and practised

Concluding remarks

Teachers and students must have a common understanding of responsibility

This chapter has discussed the responsibilities that go with democracy and has shown that democracy does not give total freedom or freedom without constraints. While being aware that the chapter has not exhaustively discussed all responsibilities that go with democratic practice, it has pointed out that a responsible democrat should show respect for authority, commit one self to work as opposed to being laize-fair, participate in matters of common interest, negotiate change before industrial action and gain knowledge of the system in which one operates. Teachers and students need to have a common understanding of their responsibilities for democracy to be productive. Disruptions that may emanate from disagreements between two parties in education should target those responsible for the problem. In short, it is the duty of teacher training institutions and the schools to teach also through practise democratic ways and thus nurture an appropriate democratic culture.

Questions

1. Identify rights and freedoms for teachers and students. For each right and freedom discuss responsibilities that go with them.
2. Discuss how students may negotiate change with the school authorities.
3. Discuss how teachers would use authority rather than authoritarianism to make students obey and achieve school goals and objectives.
4. Discuss the process you would take to make students develop a democratic culture with responsibility.

References

- Burke, J.P. (1989): 'Reconciling public administration and democracy: the role of the responsible administrator,' *Public Administration Review*, vol 49, no 2, pp. 180-186.
- Chimombo, T. (1999): 'Transition to democracy? Civic education before and after the first democratic election in Malawi.' In M. Chimombo, *Lessons in Hope: Education for democracy in Malawi past, present and future*, pp. 45-60. Zomba: Chancellor College Publications.
- Clifton, R.A. & L.W. Roberts (1993): *Authority in classrooms*. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall Canada Inc.
- Fabiano, E. (2006): *Disruption of core activities and support services at Chancellor College*. A paper written by the principal to the college community.
- Gutman, A. (1987): *Democratic education*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- MacJessie-Mbewe, S. (1999): 'Power versus authority in the democratic Malawian classroom' In M. Chimombo, *Lessons in Hope: Education for democracy in Malawi past, present and future*, pp. 19-30. Zomba: Chancellor College Publications.

CHAPTER 16

Possibilities and Challenges in initiating democratic Practices in Schools in Malawi

By Robert G. Chonzi

Introduction

Traditional African societies have stressed the importance of obedience and respect for elders among the youth. The traditional Swahili saying *adabu njema na heshima* (humility, good behaviour and respect for elders) emphasises the need for young children to obey elders. Similarly the saying '*mau akulu akoma akagonela*' (elders' words become sensible after a year) bears testimony to the importance that the Chewa of Eastern Southern Africa attach to the importance of obedience of youth to elders. Elders, as Mbigi (2005) maintains, are paragons of wisdom in African societies. The dictatorial regimes of Africa also called on obedience of all citizens. Children in Malawi, for example, were instructed to obey without asking questions. It is in such an authoritarian society that this chapter seeks to suggest ways of bringing about democratic practices.

*Elders are
repository of
wisdom*

Patriarchy, typical of many African societies, calls for unquestioning obedience to the older person, especially the male (Mirembe 2002: 291). Therefore, young people, especially girls, learn to be subordinates. In this connection it is reasonable to argue that Africa's history offers little precedent for the citizens to embrace democracy in their national institutions such as schools. This authoritarianism in schools seems to be reproduced from this macro-culture. Mirembe argues that we need more in place to lay the foundations for democratic values in our culture. Schools, sup-

posedly agents of change, are still largely bureaucratic and unresponsive to the need of change. Lessons are teacher-led, denying young people a choice of producing knowledge and being in charge of their learning. In this way authoritarianism may be understood as a system where students are being taught to sit submissively in front of a teacher.

*Need for a
democratic
culture*

Mirembe argues that democratic practices can exist alongside autocratic practices in a system because of the significant link between democracy and human rights. Given the situation described above, there is therefore little reason to delay the work for initiating democratic practices in schools in Malawi. Human Development Report (2002: 4) claims that democracy that empowers people must be constructed through interaction of pupils and the staff – it cannot be imported. Consequently, building on elements of democratic procedures in existing Malawian culture seems to be a viable approach.

Some aspects of traditional culture

The Yao village

Traditionally, people in Malawi live in villages. A village is an ascertainable locality in which one or more groups of persons reside in separate houses, subject to the authority of a village headperson. The Village Head (VH) had several responsibilities and duties which included public and religious transactions. The VH also was considered the owner of the village. In addition, s/he was the representative of such higher authority as existed to the village members (Mitchell 1966). The VHs in any particular area recognise the superiority of one of their number, the chief of the land. The chief is a representative of her/his people and it is her/his particular duty to ensure their welfare and that of the chiefdom as a whole. The traditional leaders in Malawi have always maintained that in their view, chiefs and VHs are first and foremost rulers and leaders of their people. They owe their position as chiefs and Village Heads not to the colonial government, but to their own people. This being the case, the government has no moral right to depose or create, demote or promote chiefs.

Chiefdoms are organised on some principles. For example, a chiefdom is headed by a chief. Then under her/him the subjects are organised in villages. Each village is represented by a village head who stands in a relationship to the chief and to other VHs. The main duty of a VH is to maintain harmonious relationships within her/his village and see to the welfare of its members. His/her own behaviour is expected to be exemplary in a way consonant with her/his position. The VH is responsible for keeping the peace between the members of the village and control her/his members in their relationships with other villages. The villages act as corporate groups in turn. For example, one field of village relationships is the corporate identity of villages seen in arguments that arise over rights over waterholes dug by a village.

Citizens' welfare and harmony are the duty of traditional leaders

The account of the Yao village given above is similar to that of principal tribes of Malawi. Among others, the principal tribes in the country would include the Achewa, Atumbuka, Atonga and Asena. In the following some examples of traditional institutions in the village will be described, indicating a strong aspect of 'rule of law' in the culture, and rule of law is a fundamental characteristic of democracy.

Presence of rule of law

Succession disputes

The rule of succession indicates a man's eldest sister's first born as the rightful heir. The village as a whole, as well as senior relatives, has a say in the selection of the new Village Head. They select the person who is likely to be the most suitable for the position. Here, as in most affairs, the women have an important say. Among the factors considered is the ability of the prospective VH to hold the village together. In each installation ceremony the chief has to give his/her formal consent to the succession. This is done after any succession dispute is over and the heir is decided upon.

Women's say essential

The chief's judicial functions

In the pre-colonial days the Village Head settled most of the disputes in her/his village. The chief settled most of the serious disputes in her/his chiefdom. Cases were tried following natural justice where witnesses would be called and cross examined. After the evidence is sifted a decision is made. The losing party has the

Values as guides

opportunity to appeal to the higher authority. The persons hearing the case would act with reference to a set of values common and understood in the village and/or in the chiefdom.

Legal nature of marriage

The consent of both parties to marry each other and the assent of the prospective spouses' parents is legally and customary essential for the validity of the marriage. In addition, the assent of marriage guardians is important. The main duties of a marriage guardian include the settlement of matrimonial disputes, guidance of the spouses in matrimonial proceedings and general supervision of the spouses and their children. The standard procedure for negotiating marriage is as follows:

Standard procedure

- The boy and the girl agree to marry
- The boy and girl may exchange gifts.
- The boy and girl exchange information regarding the identity of their parents and maternal/paternal uncles.
- The boy informs his uncle(s) of his agreement with the girl.
- The boy's uncle(s) seeks the opinion of the elders about the boy's proposal.
- The boy's uncle(s) having obtained the approval of the elders institutes formal negotiations with the girl's uncles and elders.
- A further meeting is arranged for a later date to enable the girl's uncle(s) to consult his family elders, and to make private enquiries about the boy's character and family background.
- At the meeting, if the boy's proposal is accepted, a convenient date is fixed for the conclusion of the marriage negotiations. Meanwhile, the boy will be encouraged to visit the girl's home. At some point he will be shown a piece of land on which he is expected to build the matrimonial home.

Marriage sealed by elders

Betrothal may be arranged either directly between a boy and a girl, or between their uncles on their behalf. Betrothal does not confer on the parties the right of cohabitation. The marriage may be regarded as formed when the girl is handed over by her marriage guardian(s) to the boy. The parties may now begin cohabitation. The handing over may be accompanied by special formalities and ceremonies. On the appointed day, the boy, accompanied by suit-

able male and female relatives, goes to the girl's village, where a feast is prepared. During or after the feasting, the parties receive instruction as to their matrimonial behaviour and obligations, where after they become entitled to cohabit as husband and wife. The precise details of the ceremonies accompanying the formation of marriage may differ slightly from one tribe to another (Ibik 1970). What seems to be clear from above is the observation that everyone in the village had a voice in matters of common concern and negotiations is a usual method of making decisions with long lasting consequences.

School management

This chapter will now describe some aspects of school management as recommended by the Ministry of Education vis-à-vis the traditional practices, discussed above, from which both school personnel and pupils do come.

To ensure effective and successful management the Head Teacher must be innovative, resourceful and dynamic. In addition, the head should be able to interact well with people both within and outside the school. Such people would include the staff and pupils, parents, members of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and many other members of the community all of whom need to be brought, in some way or other, into decision making processes. The Head Teacher must therefore create an environment for participatory democracy in the running of the school (Commonwealth Secretariat 1993, module 7: 29). Democracy at the school level should also connect with traditional culture in some ways. Some pupils would be elected into some offices such as prefects and monitors.

Gutman (cited in Mizzi 2006) states that schools represent a site of conscious social reproduction that shapes the ways in which citizens are empowered to influence education that in turn shapes the values, attitudes and modes of behaviour for future citizens. The school thus plays a primary role in shaping citizens' ideals in a manner that reflects the values of the democratic state. Below, some practical examples are given of how schools in Malawi empower pupils to influence education and behaviour at their institutions in some little way.

*Create an
environment
for
participation*

Prefects and monitors

Prefects are appointed to assist the Head Teacher and all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff in the smooth running of the school. They are liaison officers between staff and pupils and vice versa. They are given authority over their fellow pupils and must exercise that authority firmly but fairly. The duties of the prefects include inspecting the daily work done in hostels, rooms and ablution areas. They also check the tidiness of the school grounds. They ensure that all pupils obey the school rules at all times and report any infringements to the staff on duty. They also hold regular meetings in order to assess progress in all spheres of their duties.

*Pupils and
staff
cooperate*

Class monitors may be appointed by the form teacher or elected by the class members. They are responsible for orderliness during lesson times. They check on the cleanliness of classrooms and the chalkboard. They record pupils' attendance in period registers which are later signed by the subject teacher. They also report to the Deputy Head Teacher when a teacher has not turned up. This is an attempt to ensure that pupils are real partners in some decision making.

The form teacher

According to Grimmit (1973: 146) a teacher may be defined as a person who 'creates learning experiences and learning situations for others.' The form system is very important in the organization of the school. The form teacher is responsible for the general welfare of the class. It is the expectation of the Ministry of Education that the form teacher should be interested in the all-round growth and development of the pupils including physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual growth. The duties of the form teacher fall into four categories. One category deals with the teacher giving the pupil help or advice. The second category deals with discipline and behaviour ensuring that pupils are punctual and that they use furniture and textbooks carefully. Third category concerns pupils' general appearance. Finally the form teacher deals with administrative functions regarding maintenance of attendance registers and records of the pupils.

Some barriers to democratic practices in schools

Respect for elders

A question might be raised whether there are barriers in adopting and adapting democratic practices in the Malawi classrooms. There seems to be several areas that might cause problems. First problem concerns the climate within the teaching profession itself. Where the morale is low, adapting core democratic principles like participation and accountability is likely not to be greeted with enthusiasm. Second, as previously stated, some traditional and cultural practices in Malawi seem to hinder many attempts to democratise the schools. For instance, generally first born males and older children (both genders) are expected to be respected by those who are younger. One way in which the respect is shown is for the young to accept, almost without question, ideas from the older ones or the elders. The young should not speak against them. This culture and tradition appear to continually colour the manner in which respect is given to those in senior positions in the modern job sector. Therefore any suggestions from juniors (pupils) generally have little chance of receiving attention by the superiors (the classroom teachers).

A culture of strong hierarchy

The teacher is in the centre

Closely related to this factor is the general assumption that hierarchy of authority in schools is natural. This assumption is not false but surely has its limits and these limits tend to be exceeded in too many instances. In addition there is continued use of old traditional methods of teaching in the schools which would present a set of barriers for introducing democratic practices. For example, a subject teacher is seen and perceived as a central figure in the classroom. S/he is the overall authority in the teaching – learning situation. Consequently our pupils tend to look more to her/him as the provider of all knowledge in the subject. The result is that generally the pupils do little to develop the necessary self-awareness. To them, the teacher has the best answer which they should remember.

Teacher's role essential

Then there is serious shortage of teaching and learning resources which restricts learners from accessing information required for their lessons. For example, a recent visit to a two year old secondary

school in Blantyre showed that there were less than five copies of a prescribed textbook for a class of 40 or more pupils!

General scepticism to change

*Change
implies a
cost*

A further barrier to democratization of education might be that there are frequent changes in both policy and personnel at all levels in the educational system. Other factors that may make democratic innovations unsuccessful according to Commonwealth Secretariat (1998) include: fear of the unknown, threat to status, threat to power base, custom bound, peer group norms and reluctance to let go. The foregoing seems to be normal impediments to democratisation. It is generally felt that a certain amount of willingness to take risks about innovations is necessary and that considerable gains are within reach.

The introduction of democratic practices in education has many advantages, for instance allowing people to express their views, increase self esteem, each one having a say such as disadvantaged groups and others. In view of these advantages it should not be difficult to give the adoption and sustainability of democratic practices in Malawi schools a try. The teachers do not have to spend another year doing the same in the same place in the same way.

Concluding remarks

*Cultural
practices can
facilitate
adoption and
sensibility of
democratic
schools*

This chapter is based on the belief that any positive change nourishes recommitment (Barth 1990) and that democratic education is a suitable option for Malawi schools. Recognition of democratic elements in Malawian tradition is an important starting point. Examples are the role of traditional leaders and some practices in the society and schools of Malawi. On this background more democratic practices may be promoted and maintained in the schools and classrooms. The author is consciously hopeful of the Malawian education system to make a transition from autocratic to democratic school management. However, for this to be realized there is need for stakeholders to work tirelessly in propagating democratic management styles. This amounts to teaching citizens to respect other citizens' and partners' ideas regardless of age, colour or gender. We should strive to teach *for* democracy and not only *about* democracy⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ See chapter 1: Learning Citizenship in Democracy.

Questions

1. Given the current situation in the education system in Malawi, what proposals for change might be put forward?
2. In what ways might the head teacher, teachers and pupils become co-investigators in the teaching learning processes?
3. How might we assist head teachers to adopt and adapt democratic practices in their schools?
4. Are there any indicators among school personnel that suggest any readiness for attitudinal change? Any examples?
5. Where and how do we begin to engage the teachers for sensitisation?

References

- Barth, R.S. (1990): *Improving Schools from within*. Oxford: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Commonwealth Secretariat (1993): *The Governance of Schools*. London.
- Commonwealth Secretariat (1998): *Better Schools series. Resource materials for School L., Inspectors: Modules Four, Six and Seven*. London.
- Grimmitt, M. (1973): *What Can I do in R. E.?* Essex: Mayhew - McGrimmon.
- Ibik, J.O. (1970): *Restatement of African Law: 3. Malawi 1 The Law of Marriage and Divorce*. London: Sweet & Maxwell.
- Mbigi, L. (2005): *The Spirit of African leadership*. Landburg: Knowres Publishing.
- Mirembe, R. (2002): 'AIDS and Democratic Education in Uganda' In *Comparative Education*, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 291-302.
- Mitchell, J.C. (1966): *The Yao Village: A Study in the Social Structure of a Nyasaland Tribe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Mizzi, Charles (2006): *A Paper on Democracy in Schools*, Internett.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2002): *Human Development Report 2002. Deepening democracy in a fragmented world*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

List of Contributors

ARNGEIR BERGE was a lecturer at Volda University College for 2 years and he is now an advisor with Bergen Hospital Trust, Department of Research and Development. His field of special interest is ICT in learning.

AMOS MOSES CHAUMA is a lecturer in language education in his 28th year at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. His field of special interest is local language education.

MATTHEW N. CHILAMBO is a lecturer at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. During his 18 years of employment at the university he has also served as Dean of the Faculty of Education and as a full term member of the University Council. He taught secondary school for 16 years and served as Headmaster in several secondary schools for 12 years. He worked as curriculum specialist for geography and social studies at the Malawi Institute of Education for 5 years. His fields of special interest are geography and social studies with an integration of environmental education.

ANNIE F. CHIPONDA is a lecturer in her 6th year at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. She has been a teacher trainer at Domasi College of Education for 4 years and a secondary school teacher for 6 years. Her fields of special interest are history and history methodology.

ROBERT GASITEN CHONZI is a lecturer in his 15th year at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. He has been a classroom teacher in secondary school for 3 years, secondary school administrator for 10 years and school inspector rising to Principal Inspector for 8 years. He has been a team member in several research projects of primary and secondary education. His field of special interest is religious studies.

KJELL NORMANN HOLBY was a lecturer at Volda University College for 30 years and is now an international coordinator at the same. He taught senior high school for 5 years. His fields of special interest are English language, internationalization and student exchange.

ODD RAGNAR HUNNES is an associate professor at Volda University College. During his 21 years of employment at the college, he has held positions like consultant, lecturer and dean. He taught primary school for 6 years and was the rector at a folk high school for 5 years. His fields of special interest are geography, social sciences, leadership, religion and didactics.

EIVIND INDRESØVDE is in his 35th year as a lecturer at Volda University College. He taught senior high school for 2 years. His fields of special interest are history, social sciences and didactics.

FOSTER KHOLOWA is a Doctor of education and lecturer in his 11th year at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. He specializes in Language Education and taught in secondary school for two years before joining the University of Malawi. Over the years, he has conducted basic research and consultancy in education and other related fields.

BIRGER LØVLIE is Doctor of theology and an associate professor at Volda University College. He is in his 23rd year of teaching at the college. He was a pastor for 13 years. His fields of special interest are theology and religion.

SAMSON MACJESSIE-MBEWE is Doctor of Education and Senior Lecturer in his 14th year at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. In addition to his teaching he has been conducting research and consultancy in teacher education during his service at Chancellor College. He taught secondary school for 3 years.

RALPH MEIER is Doctor of theology and an associate professor at Volda University College. He is in his 8th year of teaching at the college. He was a pastor for 12 years. His fields of special interest are theology (ethics, dogmatics) and philosophy.

BJØRN GUNNAR TAFJORD is in his 12th year as a lecturer at Volda University College. He taught primary school for 4 years. His fields of special interest are social science, entrepreneurship in vocational training and higher education, history and public law and management.