

# Review of: "Exploring the Role of Social, Economic, and Cultural Factors in Community Development: A Social Work Perspective in T/A Chimwala, Mangochi"

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I was very glad to read about this work in Malawi. To realise that beyond the distance of our countries (I am from Bolivia-South America), we share so many concerns, challenges and opportunities to improve the conditions of our local contexts. Particularly, I share with the authors the importance of enhancing community development through more active participation and local actors' engagement. Furthermore, I found it quite interesting to reveal the social, cultural, and economic factors that can influence community development. I think this article is a nice first start to begin digging into this subject. However, I would recommend deepening the inquiry into the following elements:

1-To talk about social, economic and cultural factors is too broad. The authors should explain from the very beginning how they are understanding these huge spheres of social life. Kapucu (2012) is quoted to present the link between these factors and community development. However, I believe that a stronger literature review should be conducted to understand with more detail how the authors understand these factors, based on social and cultural theory. Subsequently, to reveal how these factors actually influence the community development in the context of Traditional Authority in Chimwala.

2. I was quite interested in the "Strengths-Based Perspective" as the theoretical framework presented in the "Introduction". However, I don't find a sufficient discussion in this section, neither in the Discussion or Conclusions section. How do the social and cultural factors that seem to hamper Community Development, in the context of T/A Chimwala, can be reframed into strengths, as I believe this approach speaks about? Why in the questions to the participants, strengths were not present if "this perspective underscores the utilisation of individuals' and communities' strengths, resources, and capacities to facilitate sustainable development" (pg.3)?

3. The methodology is far too general. There is no mention of which quantitative or qualitative research methods were applied, nor to whom particularly they were implemented or how they were actually implemented. In the "Results" section, I can see some statistics that can be relevant. However, I haven't seen the specific population that was considered in the survey, nor the results of any qualitative data. The "scholarly resources" and the "potential limitations" should also be displayed in much more detail.

Finally, I have a lot of interest in learning more about participation in the context of T/A Chimwala. You present the "lack of participation" as the first factor that influences (and hampers) community development. I encourage the authors to see

with more detail how the people in your research context are not sufficiently participating or how they can actively participate.

Participation and development have been linked since Paulo Freire's book about Communication and Education (1969). The list of authors following this link is vastly large and diverse. You can find some references in the “Antología de Comunicación para el Cambio Social” from Gumucio and Tufte (2008). Based on these authors or others, to reveal how participation is linked to community development in the T/A Chimwala context? I believe this could be a very interesting research question to be dogged in by the authors of the article, based on this first writing.

I think the results of such inquiry will be appreciated in development, community and communication research.