An investigation of women participation in fish value chains and value chain governance in Malawi: A case of Msaka on Lake Malawi and Kachulu on Lake Chilwa

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Presentation outline

• Introduction
• Research problem
• Methodology
• Conceptual framework
• Findings
• Discussion
• Policy implications
• Conclusions
• Acknowledgements
Introduction & context

- Women’s contribution in value chain activities is underestimated
- Decision-making processes undervalues women’s economic and social contribution in the value chain
- Limited information on women involvement in fish value chains and their governance in Malawi.
Research objectives

• Investigate and document women's’ involvement in value chain activities and their governance
• Identify the factors that influence/hamper women’s participation in fish value chain
• Contribute to knowledge and literature on fish value chains and their governance from a gender perspective
• Hopefully contribute to gendered policy reforms
Methodology

- Two groups (about 20 each) of women at two landing sites (Kachulu & Msaka) have been identified and formed as the focus groups for this PhD study.
- A number of men have been included in each group as ‘control’
- In the last three months, a preliminary investigation of the women’s involvement in value chains of *Engaulicypris sadella* (Usipa) and *Barbus palodinosus* species (Matemba) was undertaken
Methodology continued...

- Techniques and approaches used:
  - Value chain & value chain governance (literature review)
  - Value chain mapping (routes and modalities being used to get fish from landing sites to retail markets)
  - Costs and revenues at each of the main nodes identified
  - I am using Focus Group discussions, Key informants and journals records
Conceptual framework

Value chain constraints
- Market information
- Resources and infrastructure
- Institutions

Value chain upgrading
- Upgrading options
  (value added, network position, governance)
- Partnerships

Value chain analysis
- Value added
- Network structure
- Governance forms

Global value chain analysis framework (Trienekens, 2011)
Findings

• **Value chain nodes and actors**
  – Five nodes identified
  – Production, collection, processing, trading (wholesale and retail) exporting

  – **Seven major actors identified**
  – Fishers, Auxiliary actor *(macheucheu)*, Processors, Traders, Processor/traders, Transporters, Wholesalers, Retailers
Value chain structure & activities

• Catching sector is artisanal characterized by non-selective fishing gears
• Fishers sell most of the catch, but keep some for family and crew members
• Fish is sold to processors or Processor traders (use buckets or basins).
• Rrices range between MK3,500 (US$ 4.66) and MK6,500 (US$ 8.78) depending supply & demand (catch levels and seasonality)
• Fish is sun dried; para-boiled & sun dried; fried & sun dried
• It is then transported to different markets using bicycles, buses and pick-ups
Value chain actors cont’d

- Auxiliary actors exist (locally known as *Macheucrehu at Kachulu* & *Jolova at Msaka*

  - They facilitate trade between fishers and processors at the beach for a fee (e.g. for K3500 tin of fish, a processor pays K3700. The R200 goes to the Macheucrehu/Jolova)

  - role usually played by divorced or widowed women who usually do not have enough capital to go into processing or other businesses.

  - get power for the role from being local and sympathized by community
Fish flows from Kachulu & Msaka to various Markets
Gender differentiated value chain roles and power relations

• men and women processors/traders spend an equal amount of time (approximately 8 hours per day) on fish processing and trading

• 46 % of the women and 22 % of the men were engaged in other economic activities to make ends meet
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Value chain activity</th>
<th>Gender roles</th>
<th>Power relations</th>
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| Production           | • Both men and women are involved at catching level  
                      • Men as gear owners & crew, women as gear owners | • Women gear owners employ men as crew members  
                      • Crew members make operational decisions (e.g. where to go fishing) |
| Collection (auxiliary actors) | • 80% of the actors are women | • power lies in that they are local (from within the community) ~ allowed to broker the trade and have bargaining power with fishers |
| Processing           | • Both men and women involved, but women dominate (over 70% are women) | • Increasing number of women receiving technical support, thus have power to control who has access to the solar drying facilities at Kachulu. |
| Trading              | • Both men and women with women dominating including export | • Married women seek permission from the husbands to travel  
                      • Women from Msaka have power to withhold the money as men and women have different spending patterns  
                      • Women tend to economise the money |
Extent of women involvement in governance

• Value chain governance; relationships that operate within or influence the range of activities required to bring a product or service from inception to consumers & the institutional mechanisms through which non-market coordination of chain activities takes place.

• Relational
  - whereby the auxiliary actor ‘macheucheu’ are allowed to transact between fishers and processors
  - Fishermen in Msaka prioritise their wives for sale of fish in case of shortage of catches

• Market
  - marketing is highly informal and transactions are relatively simple.
  - information on demand and product specifications for specific markets is easily transmitted through mobile phones
  - processing of fish is done with no input from buyers.
Governance cont’d

• Membership in Associations
  • In BVCs and Fisheries Associations women representation is below 10%  
  • lower representation often make it difficult for them to influence key decisions.

• Intermediary node
  • Women have self-organized groups

• Fish processing associations
  • facilitated by the different projects being implemented by different partners
Governance cont’ d

• Fish product standards
  • fish products from both Kachulu and Msaka beaches are not subjected to quality control
Discussion and conclusions

- Women tend to be well integrated in most of the value chain nodes at the two study sites as participation requires limited financial resources and business skills.

- Women tend to be dominant at the processing nodes, probably because this node involves preparing the fish for processing including washing, sun drying, smoking and para-boiling (a reflection of cultural stereotypes on gender roles?)
Discussion & conclusions cont’d

• Governance patterns and interactions are based on spatial proximity, family and ethnic ties (e.g. auxiliary actors ‘macheucheu’ are allowed to facilitate trade between fishers and processors & fishermen in Msaka prioritise their wives for sale of fish)

• Prioritisation of auxiliary actors and wives plays a crucial role in that it contributes to well-being of women and their families

• With respect to marketing, the governance mechanism is price whereby processors/traders inform each other of markets which offer better prices for particular products
Discussion & conclusions cont’d

• Standards are voluntary and awareness of these has not been brought to the attention of the various value chain actors
• The lack of minimum universally acceptable product standards does not appear to be affecting the export of fish products to neighbouring countries, though this could change in future
Policy implications

• Need to establish fish collection/processing/trading organizations as entry points for capacity building.

• Improve the conditions and advancement of the auxiliary actors who are currently not targeted for any interventions

• Evidence is emerging for coherent national and international policy on minimum product standards as part of promoting intra-regional fish trade

• Need for debates and discourse on acknowledging, recognising and improving the role women in fish values chains in Malawi and SADC
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