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The Political Crisis in Malawi: From Authoritarianism to Democracy

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The Political Crisis in Malawi: From Authoritarianism to Democracy

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts (International Relations)

By

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Abstract

The thesis is a contribution to the existing literature on the democratic process in Malawi with specific focus on two areas namely, the factors that led to the opening up of political space and the implementation of multiparty democracy. The thesis argues that multiparty democracy in Malawi, which transpired due to internal and external factors, had been perceived as the means of transforming the oppressive climate created by the Banda regime.

However, despite three multiparty elections since the 1990s, the UDF government, which succeeded Banda, has failed to broaden the avenues for the consolidation of democracy in Malawi, leading to disillusionment among the people. Ten years of multiparty democracy have only resulted in the regression to the practices of the very regime it replaced. Currently Malawi is plagued with a lack of independent media, weak civil society, corruption among top government officials and a weak economy to mention a few. The thesis argues that this is because of the nature of the ruling class as well as the issue of ethnicity, which has resulted in the contestation of power.

Declaration

I declare that this research is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in International Relations at the University of Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

_____ _____

A.R. Nsanja **Date**

Dedication

I dedicate the thesis to my late mother, Stella Nsanja. Mum this one is for you.

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Acronyms

ADMARC	Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation
AFORD	Alliance for Democracy
CCAM	Chitukuko Cha Amai kuMalawi
CCAP	Church of Central African Presbyterian
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSTU	Civil Service Trade Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MCTU	Malawi Congress of Trade Union
MYP	Malawi Young Pioneers
NAC	Nyasaland African Congress
NCC	National Consultative Council
NDA	New Democratic Alliance
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NGR	National Grain Reserve
PAC	Public Affairs Committee
PPM	People's Progressive Movement
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
UDF	United Democratic Front
UN	United Nations

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