

Research Article

The Taxonomy of the Interaction of Key Civil-Military Relations Players in the Democratisation Process in Malawi

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Abstract

This study analysed the consequences of the interactions of key civil-military relations players in a democratic Malawi. Militaries play a crucial role in democratic transitions. The transition from autocracy to democracy in Malawi necessitated institutional reforms to sustain democracy. One such institution that required reforms is the military, owing to the inherent coercive force it possesses. This study was conducted as evidence suggested a recurrent increase in military interventions in domestic politics of a number of global south countries through coup d'état hence, portraying militaries negatively. Coup d'état has been given much scholarly attention in the global south. However, this study focused on situations where civilians and the militaries have defended democratic values which have not received adequate pedagogical attention. The qualitative research design was used and data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires. A total of 65 key informants were interviewed. The respondents included Members of Parliament, the Parliamentary Defence and Security Committee, Judges, representatives from Civil Society Organizations, media practitioners, officials from the Ministry of Defence, the Malawi Defence Force, members of the District Security Technical Committee and the local population. Data was analysed using critical thinking once the data collection saturation point was reached. The study revealed that the various civil-military relations stakeholders' managerial, operational and oversight roles represent the centres of power critical for successful democratisation. The study further revealed that the role familiarity gap remained a fault line in the civil-military relations system. The study recommends the establishment and channels of knowledge markets to resolve the familiarity gap problematique. Further study is warranted on the effectiveness of the key civil-military relations players towards democratisation in Malawi.

Keywords

Citizenry, Civil-Military Problematique, Civil-Military Relations, Concordance Theory, Democracy, Military, State, Taxonomy

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1. Introduction

Civil-military relations (hereinafter CMR) differ from country to country due to several factors. These factors range from the historical nuances, type of government, socio-economy and the level of professionalism of the key players in civil-military relations [1, 2]. This study, therefore, analysed the taxonomical consequences of the interaction of key civil-military players since Malawi embraced multiparty democracy in 1994. It focuses on the interface between the military on the one hand and the state and the citizenry on the other hand. The study focused on the various responsibilities of the military, elected authorities, civilians, civil authorities, and the judiciary. The Malawi Defence Force (MDF) represents the military category; Members of Parliament (MP) represent the elected authorities and the Defence and Security Committee of Parliament (DSC); the civilians' category comprises the media, the local population, and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the District Security Technical Committees (DSTC) represented the civil authorities' category. The DSTC comprises the District Commissioner (Chairperson), District Intelligence Officer, District Commander of MDF, District Police Officer-In-Charge, District Immigration Officer, District Prisons Officer and any other co-opted member. In the judiciary category, the focus was on the role of judges in handling cases of civil-military relations nature [3, 4].

This study analysed the consequences of the interaction of the key CMR in a democratic Malawi, underscoring that such interactions, determine the path of democratic transition. The different key CMR players present participatory centres of power required in a democracy, hence the roles and the level of interaction warranted a study as they are a precondition for a healthy CMR and democracy. This study is significant as it informs the key CMR stakeholders of their transformative roles in contributing to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 of the Agenda 2030 which enhances peace, justice and the strong institutions required to promote peaceful and inclusive societies.

1.1. Background of the Study

Political system changes in Malawi necessitated institutional changes. One such institution is the military alongside the other instruments of national power. In the wake of the demise of the bipolar region, a third wave of democratisation swept the non-democratic countries, including Malawi. Malawi reintroduced multiparty democracy in 1994 following the referendum that ended a one-party rule imposed after the country attained a Republican status in 1966. One of the notable developments following this change has been the growing debate on CMR. The classical scholars of CMR agree with the contemporary scholars that CMR describe the interactions among the people of the state, the various institutions of that state, and the military of the same state [4-9].

These interactions revolve around the civilian democratic control, efficiency, and effectiveness of the military in discharging its duties, and the state's role in managing its public affairs. However, [10, 11] argued that within this interaction, the military is likely to have the upper hand considering their capacity to exert coercive force if no proper control measures are implemented. This interaction imbalance was coined as a "civil-military problematique" [11]. In the civil-military problematique thesis, it is argued that CMR is based on a dilemma which requires a polity to balance two concerns on the CMR spectrum [11]. The polity must create a strong military to protect the state and somehow ensure that the military does not harm the same state that established it [11, 12]. The response to the "civil-military problematique" is a bargain negotiated among the citizens, the civilian governmental authorities, and the military which can allocate prerogatives and responsibilities among the parties.

The study brings a unique feature of CMR in the civilian subcategory of the local population in the cultural and historical context of Malawi. The local population is included in this study owing to the thoughts of classical philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) in his book titled *Leviathan* and John Locke, (1632 - 1704) in his work *Two Treatises of Government*, who argued that people give authority to govern and that people and the state relationships centre on social contract which can be withdrawn if contractual obligations are not met [13]. As such, this study recognises the power of the local population in influencing the CMR. The study assesses the power of the local population drawing from the 2019 and 2020 persistent demonstrations against the results of the 2019 tripartite elections that resulted in the nullification and conducting of fresh presidential elections in Malawi. The power of the people brought into CMR discourse a circumstantial democratisation feature that made security forces protect the population rather than the regime.

1.2. Problem Statement

In Malawi, Chapter XVI, Section 160 of the Constitution mandates the MDF to uphold and protect the constitutional order and assist the civilian authorities in properly managing public affairs. This constitutional mandate calls for an interface and interaction between the military and the citizenry [14]. Civil-military relations scholars have concentrated on the negative side of the military where they are involved in non-constitutional changes of governments [15-18]. Scholars of Malawi civil-military relations have focused on the historical context of power relations between the military and political elites and partially on institutional challenges of civilian control [19, 20]. However, situations where the interaction of citizenry and the military have worked in defence of democratic values, have stagnated at the rhetoric level and have remained a flirting field of academic enquiry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Literature Review

Civil-military relations Concordance Theory guided this study. Concordance theory is based on historical and cultural nuances of the polity [1, 21, 22]. Concordance Theory argues that effective civil-military relations are achieved through a cooperative relationship among three key partners: the military, political elites, and the citizenry. Concordance Theory suggests that a high level of integration and agreement among civil-military relations partners can prevent domestic military intervention. Concordance Theory purports that when the social composition of the officers' corps, the political decision-making process, the recruitment method of the ranks and file and the military style of leading, commanding and managing the military establishment are in harmony, the likelihood of military intervention in domestic politics is reduced.

Concordance Theory considers national contexts where the balance of military involvement in civilian life depends significantly on historical events, institutional nuances, and cultural realities [23]. Concordance Theory governed this study because it fosters a sense of mutual trust, respect, and understanding among civil-military relations partners, and a shared responsibility for national security. Concordance Theory, however, can entail a loss of civilian control, a politicization of the military, and a divergence of interests and values among the partners, the weakness which has been taken care of in this study through the buttressing of empirical evidence.

2.2. Empirical Literature Review

The study identified the elected authorities, civil authorities, civilians, judiciary, and military as the key players in Malawi's specific context, which could also be applied elsewhere in the global south. The key players were identified using stakeholder analysis. As such, the identified key players are empirically reviewed to lay the foundation for the study.

Scholars have conceptualised and differentiated the key players' methods of interaction in CMR [10, 24, 25, 26-28]. Differentiation of the methods and their consequences in CMR is meant to improve the effectiveness of the CMR system. The apparent variation of responsibilities and rights between the centres of political power represents one of the key preconditions for successful democratisation. The constitutional system and judicial definition of the relationship among the various centres of authority have a decisive impact on the character and tempo of democratisation. However, this study realised that a health system needs a holistic functioning of the whole part. Conversely, the hard truth is that in a global approach, multiple players centre on self-respect and protection from the other players. As such, in democracies, the multiple players; elected authorities, civilians, civil authorities, and the judiciary, have multiple, sometimes divergent

interests driven by political mandates promoting political agenda [29, 30]. In this instance, the elected authorities' role is to give policy directions for the development of any democracy.

The responsibilities of elected authorities, such as the Presidents (Commanders-in-Chief) and MPs, are portrayed directly or through the executive and legislature. The responsible Defence Minister and Deputy Defence Minister, as representatives of the ruling cabinet, carry out civilian democratic control by the executive powers in shaping and formulating national security policy. They may use different assistance forms, including seeking civil society representatives' advice. However, the political parties that have nominated them bear a special moral responsibility in providing feedback on the issue.

The responsibility of the Defence Ministry is to provide a qualified internal professional control over the processes of defence policy formulation, implementation, and reviews. The Defence Policy looks at how best to deploy the military and civilian resources to ensure the protection of national interest [31]. In the defence policy processes, CMR studies note that the self-control and self-restraint of the particular military personnel matter significantly for the defence policy to yield national interest results [25, 31, 26].

In the United States of America, elected authorities play a pivotal role in shaping defence policy. The President, Congress and Senate ensure military control through the trinity of CMR [7, 32]. The CMR trinity encompasses the democratic civilian control, effectiveness and efficiency of the armed forces [7]. The CMR trinity ensures that the military is well-resourced, accountable and responsible for achieving tasks of national interest. To conform to the democratisation dictates, Argentina embarked on reforms of CMR by asserting civilian control of the armed forces. The country established an elaborate legal basis, the civilian-led MOD, and gradually the civilians assumed control over central areas of national security and defence policy [26].

The role of parliaments in civil-military relations varies across political systems. In the United States, Congress has significant power to shape defence policy, as demonstrated by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act. While the British Parliament appears less influential, it still plays a role in setting the agenda for defence reforms [32]. In Nepal, the Parliamentary Defence and Security Committee is crucial for civilian control of the military, deciding on issues such as budget and procurement [23, 33]. The UK Parliament has recently increased its role in representing the intersection of government, military, and public interests [34]. However, in Indonesia, poor parliamentary post-legislative scrutiny has hindered security sector reform, allowing the military to maintain involvement in civilian affairs and resist change [35]. Effective parliamentary oversight is essential for maintaining democratic control of the military and ensuring proper civil-military relations.

A study conducted in Bulgaria found that MPs in CMR are

involved in budget appropriation and contribute to national defence matters during parliamentary deliberations [25]. However, the MPs are well represented in the CMR with a parliamentary committee on defence and security [23, 36]. The Defence and Security Committee (DSC) is a specialised body of parliament that gives advice and makes recommendations concerning laws and decisions about national defence and security of citizens [23, 37]. The DSC exercises oversight powers to investigate major policy issues, defective administration, accusations of corruption or scandals. The DSC's responsibilities among others include holding hearings or enquiries, summoning military personnel, civil servants or experts to testify, scrutinising transparency and efficiency of defence spending, examining petitions and complaints from military personnel and civilians concerning the defence and security sector and visiting and inspecting military bases and other security sector installations as well as the deployed troops [36, 38].

The study of Ghana's military governance revealed great strides in democratisation as Ghana has arrested and reversed the civil-military relations imbalance to a reasonably robust democracy. Ghana has restructured the security sector to achieve civilian control of the armed forces [27]. The President exercises overall control of the security services, appointing service chiefs and senior commanders in consultation with the Council of State and service councils. The president also makes appointments to the National Security Council (NSC), the Council of State, and the three service councils. The administration and operational command and control of the services rest with the chiefs of the individual services, subject to the control and direction of the service councils on policy matters. To ensure strong links with the apex of the government, the secretary of the cabinet also acts as the secretary of the NSC.

In the context of Malawi, conceptually, the country adopted the civil-military relations trinity; thus democratic civilian control, effectiveness and efficiency of the armed forces to embrace democratisation. Malawi studies on Malawi CMR revealed that since 1994 there have been significant security reforms, such as the disbanding of the repressive Police Mobile Force (PMF), and outlawing of the draconian security legislation that allowed security forces a wide range of human rights violations [19, 20]. The repealed laws included the Forfeiture Act, the Decency in Dress Act and Detention without Trial, among others [39]. Civilian military control was adopted by appointing a parliamentary Defence and Security Committee and creating a MOD.

The MOD among other functions was established so that it formulates national defence policies in liaison with the defence force and acts as a headquarters through which government policy decisions are translated into operational plans and orders. However, [19] argues that the MOD has not been effective in its operations as most of its tasks are performed by the military itself as the MOD is understaffed and lacks the necessary expertise in defence issues to manage the military

effectively. In furtherance of the reforms, the Law Commission reviewed the Malawi Army Act to align with democratic norms. The President is the Commander-in-Chief who appoints the Defence Force Commander [19, 20]. For the elected authorities to function appropriately they require the support of civil authorities.

Civil authorities support elected authorities in exercising their duties. Civil authorities provide expertise in areas of their profession such as policy drafting, budgeting, human resource management, planning, organising, coordinating and procurement [26]. Regarding civil authorities, studies have concentrated on those who are required to provide civilian expertise to the elected authorities necessary for the management of the military institution. In Argentina, Ghana and Malawi, institutional issues of lack of capacity by civil authorities in the line ministries at the national level are well documented [19, 26, 27, 47]. However, these studies overlooked the perspective of delivering public goods and services to the population through civil-military relations at a local level for example at an administrative district level. As such, this study zips on the District Commissioners and the DSTC as principals representing the population and the military as agents to ensure the delivery of public goods and services from a local level. The DSTC is responsible for coordinating security initiatives among various stakeholders, including civil authorities, military institutions, law enforcement, and community leaders. The collaborative approach enhances trust and ensures that security efforts are aligned with local needs [40].

The DSTC is pivotal in managing security crises through effective communication and resource allocation. During emergencies, the DSTC facilitates rapid responses and mobilises resources to ensure public safety. The DSTC conducts outreach programs and community dialogues to address grievances and gather insights on security concerns, fostering mutual respect and understanding [41]. While civil authorities represent the interests of elected authorities and civilians, in some cases, they might be compromised and lean on one key player as a result compromising the required neutrality from them. In this case, civilian organisations such as CSOs and media houses complement civil authorities to ensure checks and balances for the perceived biases from the District Commissioners as agents of elected authorities.

CSOs play a civilian role in civil-military relations. The responsibilities of CSOs, their expert institutions and the media have become indispensable in implementing democratic civilian control over the military process in established democracies like the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada. Civilian democratic control has arisen in emerging democracies from the need to increase society's democratisation and deal with the rising complexity of military issues, requiring additional competence and professional assessments. The public demands and expectations that the funds, provided to the state, would be spent most effectively a fundamental reason for civil society representatives to have a

say on national security policy issues [25, 26, 42]. In Pakistan, the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement which aims at protecting the human rights of the ethnic Pashtun people challenged military practices, leveraging societal legitimacy to elicit concessions and contest military behaviour publicly. The power of civil society in Pakistan underscores the importance of CSOs in shaping civil-military relations [43]. Thus, vibrant civil societies, typical of established and progressive democracies, guarantee that the national security issues of the state do not turn into an area for selected groups of people.

The media plays a complex role in civil-military relations, often reflecting societal attitudes while also shaping public perception. In Israel, despite appearing more confrontational since the 1990s, the media continues to reinforce military ethos and construct enemy images, impeding the development of a post-war society [44]. Similarly, during the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) enlargement debates in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the media highlighted a gap between the governing elite and public opinion on military matters [45].

To guard against politicisation of information by CSOs, countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada have specific legislation on access to various types of information as the central feature of established and functioning democracies [7]. In mature democracies, the news provided by the media must meet specific criteria as truth in areas of accuracy and fairness. The “right to knowledge,” as a fundamental right in a democratic society, is guaranteed through the efficient work of the media [25, 26]. However, in emerging democracies such as Argentina, Ghana, Zambia and Malawi, the role of CSOs and the media in civil-military relations has been superficial. CSOs and the media have not fully exploited their responsibilities due to a lack of expertise and ignorance of the roles of the defence forces [10, 25-27, 46, 47]. The widening familiarity gap presents an oversight problem and puts into question who is supposed to guard the guardians [7, 16]. This is a potential threat to democracy because armed forces can operate without being accountable to the population that employs them. Vibrant CSOs and the media are essential in the democratisation processes. CSOs also contribute to developing standards around new weapons and military technologies, often undertaking broader roles than the narrow review mechanisms adopted by states [49]. Consequently, active CSOs and the media, typical of established democracies, guarantee that the national security issues of the state do not turn into an area for selected groups of people.

The judiciary as a key player plays an important oversight role in CMR in areas of the rule of law. The judiciary's role in CMR involves interpreting the law on matters concerning the military, the citizenry and the state. The judiciary validates military interventions during power voids in times of internal political dynamics and weak political institutions based on the doctrine of necessity [28]. In addition to the latter, the judi-

ary plays a supporting role, holding military individuals personally accountable in ways that prevent military interference in politics and assure that officers know that they will be punished for law violations [24, 27]. United States of America, Argentina, Ghana, Zambia, and Malawi judiciaries enforce the rule of law, protect human rights and curb abuses of military powers. Judiciary authorise search warrants and reviews certain decisions of military courts [10, 20, 26, 27, 46].

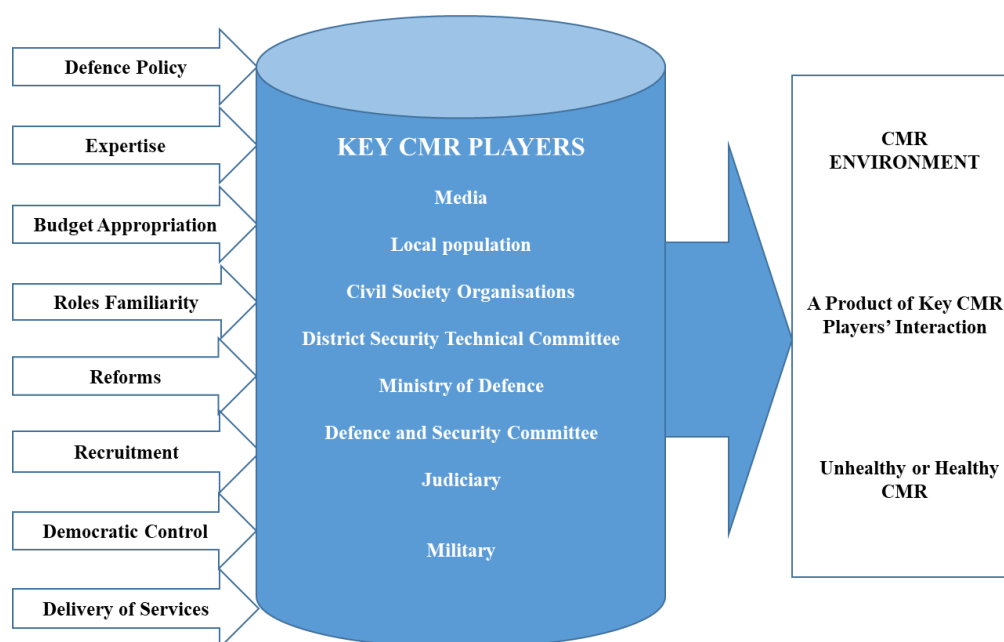
Studies in Latin America and Pakistan indicated the importance of the judiciary. The judiciary was found to be playing a mediator role post-armed conflict. However, in an increasing change like contemporary security, the courts are also involved in policing the nature of military operations so that they do not infringe on human rights. The mediation role during post-conflict situations has helped in confidence-building for reconciliation and cemented a solid base for peacebuilding [51-53].

The role of the judiciary in keeping the equilibrium of CMR is unprecedented in that it operates on the principle of equality before the law; meaning no one is above the law. The relevance of the judiciary in national security issues is to weigh the pros and cons of the situation at hand and do the needful in the interest of the safety of the citizens [54]. However, the effectiveness of such an assertion needs to be interrogated to ascertain the judiciary's role as a key CMR player in the democratisation of Malawi. The judiciary's roles are central within CMR, and so are the military roles.

The military as an enduring bureaucracy brings about the stabilising role in the civil-military relations linked to democratisation [25]. The military brings on the relations-table factors such as professionalism, and progressive and continuous education in exchange for neutrality [2, 48, 55, 56]. The military is involved in the roles of defending territorial integrity and constabulary tasks (military assistance to civil authorities (MACA)) to ensure the state's survival [6, 9, 59]. The classical theorists agree that the military is a fulcrum in healthy civil-military relations [2, 4-6]. However, evidence in Ghana before 1981, Mauritania, Niger, Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso have shown unhealthy CMR as militaries have intervened in politics through coups [17, 18, 47, 58].

2.3. Civil-Military Relations Taxonomy Framework

The key civil-military relations players keep a healthy status when they fulfil their mandates of safeguarding national interests. The empirical literature revealed that the key players (dependent variable) are influenced by several factors that include (independent variables) such as shaping the defence policy, provision of expertise, budget appropriation, familiarity with others' roles, reforms, representational recruitment, democratic civilian control, and provision of public goods and services (see Figure 1).



Source: Author synthesised from literature review

Figure 1. Civil-Military Relations Taxonomy Framework.

Figure 1 indicates that the interaction of the key civil-military relations is the product of factors such as defence policy formulation, expertise in the field, budget appropriation reforms, democratic control of the military and delivery of goods and services to the public as well as representational recruitment of the military personnel in line with the nation's societal fabric. The familiarity of each other's role influences the country's civil-military relations. The interaction of the key players determines the civil-military relations environment and determines a pathway towards democratisation.

3. Methodology

This was an exploratory study that adopted a qualitative research design. The philosophical viewpoint that underpinned this research is a transformative worldview. The transformative worldview holds that research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political change agenda to confront oppression at whatever level it occurs [57, 60]. The methods to implement this exploratory research were a literature search, expert surveys, which are also called key informational conversations and case analysis [61]. The chosen methods helped to candidly interrogate the taxonomy of civil-military relations (CMR) in a democratic Malawi.

The study was carried out in the administrative districts of Karonga, Mzimba, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Zomba and Blantyre. The six districts have military cantonments of the Malawi Defence Force, the judiciary, the District administrative headquarters, political constituencies and the local population composed of farmers, traders, artisans; public and private sector employees and community leaders that were critical in data provision. The areas were conveniently selected because

the population frequently interacted with the military, hence they might have a better understanding of CMR. The sample size was 65 participants which was realised after reaching a saturation point during data collection. The participants were randomly selected from the clusters. Data became repetitive and no new information and codes emerged beyond 50 interviews. Fifteen more interviews to reach 65 interviews were conducted to validate and ascertain the redundancy of information. Participants provided similar responses regardless of the cluster. Saturation was reached when data collection provided sufficient information to develop a comprehensive understanding of the taxonomy of civil-military relations (See Table 1 for the data sample size).

Table 1. Qualitative Data Sample Size.

SERIAL	KEY INFORMANT	SAMPLE SIZE
1	Members of Parliament	9
2	Media Practitioners	7
3	Civil Society Organisations	9
4	Ministry of Defence	3
5	District Security Technical Committee	11
6	Malawi Defence Force	10
7	Judges	4
8	Local Population	12
	TOTAL	65

Data was analysed using critical thinking analysis [60]. Data was collected from in-depth interviews and analysed using NVivo version 14, analytical software as follows: (1) Data transcription where responses from in-depth interviews were transcribed before distinguishing patterns for coding (2) Data coding which involved building nodes and child nodes that expanded as data was worked on (3) Building themes which mapped the main themes, created more child nodes as appropriate and mapped various interconnections. Literature was called during this step to ascertain the themes and categories (4) Content analysis. This step involved building and verifying theories. Data was analysed over and over and was interpreted for credibility and (5) Drawing conclusions. Conclusions aligned with the research objectives were drawn to answer the research questions [62].

4. Results and Discussion

The study sought to analyse the consequences of the interaction of the elected authorities, civilians, civil authorities, the judiciary and the military in civil-military relations in Malawi. The MPs and the DSC represented the elected authorities. The media, local population and Civil Society Organisations represented civilians. The DSTC and the MOD represented civil authorities. The study further analysed the interaction of the judiciary and the military in civil-military relations.

4.1. Members of Parliament in Civil-Military Relations

The study found that the responsibilities of the MPs in CMR include working with impartiality by not allowing the political elites to politicize the security sector or manipulate the security sector in any way as a means of achieving self-interests; to upholding and protecting the provisions of the constitution to avoid disfranchising the citizenry from enjoying their rights; promoting and preserving democratic principles and institutions including; being subordinate to civilian authority, practicing professionalism and neutrality and supporting democratic processes. The finding supports Cleary and McConville's study which purports that MPs are guardians who ensure that the military and associates operate within democratic principles and that the military must be professional by not intervening in internal politics [31].

On top of the latter, the roles of MPs were revealed to be the provision of accurate and unbiased information on different issues by educating and informing the public and constituents about the importance of CMR in promoting democracy and good governance. MPs also facilitate the provision of security, law enforcement and defending human rights for all Malawians without fear or favour and advocate for policies that enhance CMR in parliament and create more inclusive programs thereby increasing knowledge among the CMR stakeholders. These findings are consistent with [26] who

argue that MPs have to inform their constituents of defence policy matters and that defence policy should not infringe on the human rights of their constituents.

MPs also mentioned that they accommodate military personnel when they are embarking on different sets of operations in their areas, hence playing a vital role of liaison and that they make sure that their wards do not stay in conflict with the military personnel during times of national outcry. These study findings complement the thoughts of [25] that the MPs must interact with the military and the constituents so that military operations are conducted when the need arises without infringements on the CMR stakeholders.

The roles that emerged for the MPs are quite intriguing. The roles of the MPs are in line with the [23, 25, 26, 31, 32, 34] which generalise the roles of the legislature and the executive in the arm bits of oversight of the armed forces, appropriation of the armed forces' budgets, and the shaping of national defence policy. However, the study found that responses from the respondents were more human-centric as they touched the core of the local population. Respondents mentioned that elected authorities do provide accurate and unbiased information on different issues by educating and informing the public and constituents about the importance of civil-military relations in promoting democracy and good governance. This is a departure from the autocratic tendencies that concentrated on regime security at the expense of the sovereigns.

4.2. Defence and Security Committee in Civil-Military Relations

DCAF stipulates the responsibilities of the DSC in areas of budget appropriation, making laws and recommending policies that govern the armed forces, the polity and the citizenry [36]. This is in line with the study findings which revealed that the role of the DSC is to make the military a tool for the state and allocate funds for the operationalization of the military activities. The study found that the DSC advises the military on defence matters and gives direction on issues of national interest. This aligns with previous studies which ascertain the DSC as the provider of oversight on issues of transparency and accountability, advice on policy direction, budget appropriation and creating conditions for healthy civil-military relations among stakeholders [7, 8, 16, 23, 25, 26, 36-38].

4.3. The Media in Civil-Military Relations

Empirical evidence demonstrated that media referred to as the fourth estate in the concept of branches of the government, plays a crucial role in shaping civil-military relations as described in the study findings, often reflecting and reinforcing existing societal attitudes and divisions [26, 44, 45]. This study however found that the media plays a crucial role in Malawi by enhancing transparency and accountability through broadcasting news relating to military issues. The media also contribute to civil-military relations by monitoring

and reporting the interactions between the military forces, society, and the government. These findings echo the views of [25, 26, 44, 45] which hold that the media provides checks and balances in CMR.

The media practitioners further noted the importance for them to remain nonpartisan to be professional. The media revealed that they delineate themselves from involvement in active politics so that they can be professional in their operations. The media also claimed that they can keep civil-military relations in a healthy state by publishing information that does not castigate any specific entity to disturb the equilibrium status quo. However, this is an understatement as it precludes the objective and critical eye of the media necessary for transparency and accountability.

The findings on the media entail that the key CMR players are aware of the media's role in Malawi. The media has become indispensable in implementing democratic civilian control over the military process in both emerging and established democracies. Civilian democratic control has arisen in emerging democracies from the need to increase society's democratisation and deal with the rising complexity of military issues, requiring additional competence and professional assessments. The public demands and expectations that the funds, provided to the state, would be spent most effectively is a fundamental reason for the media to have a say on national security policy issues [25, 26]. Thus, the media, which is human-centric would report issues professionally and avoid jeopardizing national security with sensational reporting.

Conversely, the media functions that the study found surrounded on reporting of CMR issues. Media is more than just reporting issues but, also offering critical and alternative views. The media should inform and educate the key CMR players. Media should be a medium of socialisation for CMR players. The media can occasionally bring key CMR players together through interviews to check the level of endogenous interactions. In so doing, the media can bring about CMR awareness, transmit the ideal CMR culture and be a catalyst for democratisation.

4.4. Local Population in Civil-Military Relations Context

The study included the local population owing to the thoughts of classical philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, (1588 – 1679) and John Locke, (1632 - 1704) who portends that authority to govern is given by the people and that people and the state relationships centre on social contract which can be withdrawn if contractual obligations are not met [13]. The study incorporated the power of the local population drawing from the 2019 and 2020 persistent demonstrations that resulted in the nullification and conducting of fresh presidential elections in Malawi. The power of the people brought into civil-military relations discourse a circumstantial democratisation feature. Healthy CMR requires a balanced contribution of civilians. Civilians, thus the local population, CSOs and the

media monitor national security activities and policy formulation and implementation. The study's findings are in line with the empirical evidence of previous studies which assert that the local population offer alternative views on national security issues directly affecting their well-being [13, 16, 25, 26].

The study underscores that collaborative efforts between the military and civilians are effective in reducing conflict risks and empowering locals. Similarly, during disaster relief operations the military works alongside civilian actors and international partners to provide critical assistance. This study emphasizes the significance of balancing power between the local population and the military to achieve national security objectives.

4.5. Civil Society Organisations in Civil-Military Relations

The study revealed that CSOs play an important role in maintaining a balance between civilians and the military. The roles include ensuring citizens are adequately informed about the ideal relationship among civil-military relations players; ensuring that citizens are disseminated with the required information about the vitality of the CMR to keep the nation secure; advocating for transparent and accountable civil-military relations and conducting policy advocacy that increases knowledge among laymen. These findings on CSOs resonate well with the works of previous studies which promote human security and the coexistence of the civil-military relations players [8, 26, 42, 43].

Furthermore, the study discovered that CSOs delineate themselves from involvement in active politics to maintain professionalism in their operations; The CSOs further revealed that they professionally handle CMR key players' subordinates during national turbulences so that they do not harass citizens when exercising their constitutional rights; and advocating for good governance and rule of law. This is in line with the thoughts of Bruneau and Tollefson [7] that entangled the dichotomy of who guards the guardians. The CSOs guard the key CMR players who in turn guard the CSOs by holding them accountable in the CMR domain and beyond.

Key CMR players in Malawi do understand beyond measure their roles. They do understand that specialisation in security issues is important in promoting security literacy and transforming civil-military relations for democratisation [27]. However, CSOs in Malawi know their endogenous weaknesses as respondents lamented that "we are involved in handling subordinates during national turbulences so that they should not harass population when exercising their constitutional rights". This shows that subordinates can harass civilians if they are unprofessional in their field of expertise, hence compromising their work on advocacy in CMR. This feature calls for the transformation of CSOs if greater democratisation has to be achieved.

4.6. District Security Technical Committee in Civil-Military Relations

The study revealed that the DSTC is involved in information sharing, resource allocation, crisis response, and management. The DSTC ensure the effective coordination and collaboration of security agencies in addressing security challenges at the district level. The DSTC also work hand in hand with security institutions to enhance security in their areas of responsibility. The findings align with the Malawi National Security Policy which stipulates the roles of the DSTC which coordinates resource allocation and crisis response [50]. The DSTC findings are also in line with the previous studies which asserted that the committee is responsible for coordinating security initiatives among various stakeholders thereby underscoring the importance of a collaborative approach to security matters to enhance trust and ensure that security efforts are aligned with local needs [40, 41]. The findings further agree with the latter's studies which confirm that the committee is important in managing security crises through effective communication and resource allocation, facilitating rapid responses and mobilising resources to support civil authorities, thereby ensuring public safety as such, building positive civil-military relations.

The study further discovered that the DSTC conducts threat assessment and analysis, planning, and coordination, and community engagement at the district level. The DSTC further engages in activities aimed at enhancing the capacity and professionalism of security forces at the district level. This is in line with the decentralisation of the security apparatus to quickly respond to threats at the grassroots level in consonance with the Malawi National Security Policy [40, 41, 50]. However, the study found that the DSTC is still in its infancy and where security threats are minimal; the committee has lower visibility and is less known to the polity. A deliberate awareness approach by the District Commissioners (DC) to make the committee known and serve the interests of the citizenry must be encouraged.

4.7. Ministry of Defence in Civil-Military Relations

The MOD utilisation of resources in the military and the division of responsibilities between the military and civilian experts agree with the study of Bruneau and Matei which purports that the MOD bridges the gap between the civil authorities and the armed forces by acting as a central organisation for strategic management of the armed force. The results further showed that the MOD makes sure there is a peaceful working relationship between the civil servants and the military, where necessary and makes the civil servants understand the nature of the military work [26]. These findings align with the study of Phiri [19] who argues that the MOD was created to act as a bridge between civil authorities and the armed forces and acts as a central control for the armed forces' strategic man-

agement. As such, MOD controls the operations of the military and confines the military in its limited space of operations as per the constitutional mandate. It further needs experts in defence matters to fully comprehend and contribute to the issues of national interest in a democratic world.

4.8. Judiciary in Civil-Military Relations

The study found that the judiciary plays a crucial role in civil-military relations, mediating and enforcing civilian control over the military. This finding corroborates a study by Rios-Figueroa [51] which revealed that constitutional courts reduce uncertainty in conflicts by providing information to the parties involved. In addition, judge advocates foster appropriate civil-military relations by ensuring civilian leadership preferences are understood and followed by the military. However, courts have historically shown indifference to military institutions, potentially reducing their effectiveness in overseeing the military within the constitutional framework [46].

The evolution of constitutional law and its interpretation is essential in creating a balance of power between civil and military institutions [51, 52]. As democratic norms and human rights concerns increasingly influence military discipline, the judiciary's role in civil-military relations must evolve and strive to maintain civilian control while addressing legitimate military needs [10, 28, 52, 54]. The study, however, underscored the importance of the judiciary in mediating and adjudicating issues affecting the polity and the military where national security must prevail to safeguard the territorial integrity and the people.

4.9. The Role of the Military in Civil-Military Relations

The military's roles in civil-military relations have evolved to encompass a wide range of functions beyond traditional war-fighting. These roles can be categorized into three core areas: collective defence, collective security, and aid to the nation [53]. Over and above, the study discovered that the military provides social services such as hospitals, education, sports and culture to the military personnel and the citizenry. This is in line with the thoughts of Schiff who argues that the military, the political elites, and the citizenry should aim for a cooperative and integrative relationship to stimulate a healthy CMR required in a participative democracy [22]. The integration and fusion of the military and the citizenry through social services brings out ownership and security of both entities. This line of thinking cements the reality that military personnel come from the very population they serve and that the population creates the military. As such, the military must be viewed as an agent of the government, citizenry and the polity.

The study findings also highlighted that the human-centric military in a democracy must have the protection of its people

first if the regime and some centres of political power infringe on the sovereigns' human rights. These findings align with the previous works [2, 17] which argue that professional militaries are subordinate to the democratically elected civilians and that where necessary, the protection of civilians must reign supreme on the spectrum of national security. The expanding scope of military tasks has implications for civil-military relations, necessitating a re-evaluation of traditional models like Huntington's separation of spheres. Military leaders are now expected to actively participate in strategy-making and policy discussions, given their expertise and public trust [55]. The military's operational experiences and role conceptions significantly influence civil-military relations, shaping the institution's place within the state and society [59]. This evolving landscape requires a comprehensive understanding of the military's diverse roles and their impact on democratic civilian control, operational effectiveness, and institutional efficiency [26].

4.10. Civil-Military Relations' Disparities and Areas of Improvement

The study faulted the recruitment process that allows politicians to bring their party cadres into the security sector and quickly promote them to high-ranking positions. Such recruitment processes are a catalyst for a patronage system which threatens national security [17, 58]. In addition, it was found that politicians disenfranchise public servants from executing their tasks freely which previous studies condemned and asserted that politicisation of the armed forces has to be avoided as it divides the officers' corps and the rank and file resulting in a polarised military capable of intervening in domestic politics [15, 17].

The role theory portends that the differentiation of roles in civil-military relations is meant to improve the effectiveness of the civil-military relations system. The apparent variation of roles between the centres of political power represents a precondition for successful democratisation [25]. While the study revealed the need for government officials to have the requisite knowledge of CMR, just as it was found in previous studies the need for such knowledge seems farfetched [19, 26]. Such knowledge would be offered by schools that offer executive courses in statecraft or from the professional military education (PME) institutions mandated to provide joint training and education of the key CMR players, institutions that are currently at an infant stage in Malawi.

Feaver [37] noted that military professionals and political elites need to balance the amount of civilian control required to avoid politicising the military, civilianising the military and militarizing the civilians. That balance can be found in the scale of meritocracy in the appointments of the military personnel, the bureaucrats and the political elites entrusted to oversee the military. Improving collaboration between the DSTC and the military would ensure that bureaucrats, the local population and military personnel have the requisite

knowledge of the benefits of having healthy civil-military relations in their responsibilities [22].

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study analysed the consequences of the interaction of Malawi's main actors in civil-military relations. The study concluded that MPs and the DSC are involved in the oversight and policy direction of the national issues affecting the military. The taxonomical roles, among which, are budget appropriation, investigation of major policy issues, handling complaints from the military personnel and other civil-military relations actors, visiting and inspecting military installations as well as deployed troops. The roles of the MPs and the DSC are aimed at creating conditions for healthy civil-military relations and ensuring democratic values in a political-military complex. However, due to the political tenure turnaround time of the elected authorities and inadequate statecraft institutions, education and programmes, the MPs and DSC were found wanting expertise on defence and security matters to fully implement their roles in a democratic Malawi.

The study further concludes that the media, local population and CSOs have a role in CMR. The media's roles among which are monitoring and reporting interactive issues between the military, society, government institutions and the political elites. In addition to the latter, the study conversely concludes that there are deficiencies in the media as they concentrate on monitoring and reporting only, rather than being agents of change by promoting and transmitting CMR awareness and culture respectively and being a catalyst of democracy. On the other hand, the local population provides informants during their interactions with other key CMR actors. In addition to the latter conclusion, the local population provide informal opinion leaders and engages in public debates. In this regard, the local population offers alternative policy views of national interest. The importance of the local population is typified in the involvement of the 2019 post-electoral demonstrations that brought a major policy shift in defining a majority in the political arena from a mere past-the-post to a fifty-plus-one.

The taxonomy of CSOs' roles was concluded to be informing the citizenry about the CMR, advocating and promoting transparency and accountability through scrutiny of budgets and procurements of defence material, defence policy advocacy and offering alternative views on matters of national interest. Contra-wise, the study found that there are moral hazards in some CSOs. The study concluded that there are internal weaknesses and threats as some CSOs are politicised and have inadequate expertise in the tenets of organisational ethics.

The study further determined the taxonomy of the roles of the civil authorities. DSTC and the MOD roles were determined. On one hand, the DSTC roles, among which were threat assessments and dissemination, resource allocation, crisis management and community engagement at the district level. On the other hand, the study determined that the DSTC

is still in its infancy and has inadequate expertise and experience to handle issues of interest at the district level. Where issues are handled, mostly it is because of the scale of the national impact. The MOD roles was determined, among which as oversight of the military operations, allocation of responsibilities of the military and civilians working at MOD, bridging the gap between civilian authorities and the armed forces, interagency coordination and policy direction to achieve national strategic objectives. However, the study found that the MOD core personnel strength was minimal and had inadequate knowledge of defence and security matters.

The study determined that the judiciary administers justice among CMR players. The judiciary also protects constitutional rights and conducts judicial reviews on defence and security matters. Furthermore, the study determined that the judiciary is involved in conflict resolution, the maintenance of national security and the enhancement of democratisation processes. Where necessary, the judiciary validates military operations in the interest of national security and the protection of the citizenry. As such, protection of citizens takes precedence on the spectrum of military operations tasks due to the inalienability of the right to life. On the part of the military, the study determined that the military is a centrifugal force keeping in check the other civil-military relations partners because of the monopoly of a coercive force. The coercive force and the structure of the military afford the protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the constitutional order and provide military and technical assistance, and resources to the nation's authorities. The military also supports the nation in bilateral and multilateral agreements requiring coercive persuasion. Nonetheless, the study noted the importance of raising a professional army devoid of participating in domestic politics.

The familiarity gap between civil-military relations partners needs to be bridged if a healthy relationship is to be realized. The familiarity gap can be sealed through professionalism, reforms of the institutions and the democratic civilian control of the armed forces. Agents of knowledge markets need to be vibrant in the country such as conducting executive training and courses, introduction of think tanks and harnessing the academia research and development to inform the civil-military relations partners. A further study is recommended to examine the effectiveness of key CMR players towards the democratisation of Malawi.

Abbreviations

CMR	Civil-Military Relations
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCAF	Democratic Control of the Armed Forces
DSC	Defence and Security Committee
DSTC	District Security Technical Committee
MDF	Malawi Defence Force
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MP	Member of Parliament
NSC	National Security Council

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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