Drivers Keeping Civil-Military Relations in Equilibrium in Malawi: A Quantitative Approach

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Abstract: This study examined the factors that keep civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi. A quantitative approach was used in descriptive and explanatory research designs. The response variable of the study is the military as a fulcrum of civil-military relations. Eight explanatory variables; merit-based promotions, merit-based appointments, joint training and education between the military, citizenry and government officials, representational recruitment, reforms of the military institution, specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters, professionalization through professional military education and delivery of public goods and services were identified and responded to by civilians, the military, elected authorities, civil authorities and the judiciary. The structured questionnaire survey was used to collect data. Cronbach's alpha technique was used to test the instrument's reliability. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression in SPSS version 20. The results revealed that all eight explanatory variables have a significant positive impact on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi. The study found that the contribution of the factors varied in influence. Delivery of public goods and services had more influence, seconded by merit-based promotions and joint training and specialisation on defence matters being the least influential variables of the military as a fulcrum of civil-military relations and a precondition for democratisation. Further research is recommended to assess the roles of the key civil-military relations players in Malawi.

Keywords: Aetiology, civil-military problematique, meritocracy, representational recruitment, professionalization.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is about understanding the factors that can keep civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi. Malawi reintroduced a 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 civil-military relations. The classical scholars of civil-military relations, Huntington (1957) and Janowitz (1960) agree with contemporary scholars such as Bruneau and Tollefson (2006), Bryden and Olonisakin (2010), and Owens (2013) that civil-military relations describe the interactions among the people of a state, the various institutions of that state, and the military of the state. However, scholars such as Chuter (2011) argued that within this interaction, the military will likely have the upper hand, considering their capacity to exert force if no proper measures are implemented. Feaver (1996) coined this interaction imbalance a *civil-military problematique*.

This paper brings a unique feature of civil-military relations in the civilian subcategory of the local population. The local population is included in this study 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 a social contract which can be withdrawn if contractual obligations are not met (Boucher & Kelly, 2004). The classical theorists agree that the military is a fulcrum in healthy civil-military relations (Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1960; Finer, 1988). However, evidence in Ghana before 1981, Mauritania, Niger, Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso has shown unhealthy civil-military relations as militaries have intervened in politics through coups (Salihu, 2019; Agyekum, 2022; Eshiet, 2022; Sany, 2022).

The paper incorporates 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. Malawi civil-military relations have remained a flirting objective for study to understand what makes Malawi civil-military relations players unique in the dispensation of democracy with the military as a centrifugal force? Hence this paper assesses the military, elected authorities, judiciary, civilians and civil authorities' factors that keep civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi by building on Chazema et al. (2023) civil-military relation rhombus diamond theory.

Chazema et al. (2023) mathematically (Figure 1) argue in other words that the military to keep elected authorities, the judiciary, civilians and civil authorities in balance all have to have equal power of one (1). The army must always have a value of zero to remain a fulcrum to keep elected authorities, civil authorities, civilians and the judiciary in equilibrium to remain a safer nation. The theory assumes that the military itself can only be a balancer if it is professional. However, some factors can determine the equilibrium state on the horizontal and vertical axes of the Rhombus Diamond theory which have not been tested by Chazema et al. (2023). This paper determined whether merit-based promotions, merit-based appointments, representational recruitment and joint training of civilian and military, reforms of the military institution, specialisation on defence matters, professionalization of the military, and delivery of goods and services had an influence on the balancer (military) in Malawi civil-military relations. Hence, this paper quantitatively tested determinant factors that keep civil-military in equilibrium that cut across elected authorities, the judiciary, civilians, and civil authorities. Specifically, the paper tested eight hypotheses.

1.1 Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated based on the objectives of the study:

H_a 1: Merit-based promotions in the military keep civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi

H_a 2: Merit-based appointments in the military keep civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi

H_a 3: Joint training with civilians and government officials keep civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi

H_a 4: Representational recruitment of military personnel keeps civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi.

H_a 5: Reforms of the military institution keep civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi

H_a 6: Delivery of public goods and services such as disaster relief and infrastructure projects by the military keep civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi

H_a 7: Specialisation of civil-military relations players in defence matters keeps civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi

H_a 8: Professional military education keeps civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Key civil-military relations players in Malawi will understand why the Malawi military does not intervene in politics. The factors that build a professional military that supports democratisation will be well known and supported by the pulse keepers and all key civil-military relations players in Malawi. The study will further serve as a repository for knowledge.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is governed by the civil-military relations rhombus diamond theory (Chazema et al. 2023). The Rhombus Diamond theory proposes several assumptions covering the five key civil-military relations players (the military, the

judiciary, civilians, elected authorities and civil authorities) interactions in democratization (see Figure 1). The rhombus diamond theory proposes that the military as a dependent variable is a fulcrum where power concentrates owing to the monopoly of weapons and management of violence. The power is derived from the four stakeholders (independent variables) in the apexes of the diamond namely, civilians, judiciary, elected authorities and civilian authorities. It is synthesised that the relationship between the military and the key civil-military relations players shall shape the outcome of democratic governance.

The theory assumes that:

a) The military is a centrifugal force keeping in check the other four key civil-military relations players as it has a monopoly of coercive power. The military is a balancer in civil-military relations and a precondition to democratisation and a function of merit-based promotions, merit-based appointments, joint training and education between the military, citizenry and government officials, representational recruitment, reforms of the military institution, specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters, professionalization through professional military education and delivery of public goods and services.

b) The Judiciary plays a crucial role that involves legal interpretation of the military's role in managing domestic affairs. The Judiciary enforces the rule of law, fulfils its role in protecting human rights and curbs abuses of military powers as well as validating military interventions.

c) Civil authorities such as the Ministry of Defence, Defence and Security Committee of the National Assembly and District Security Committee present the nation with expertise and represent the interests of elected authorities.

d) Elected authorities such as the executive and the legislature may be a causal factor for unhealthy civil-military relations and present potential security threats if they try to politicise the military. The role of elected authorities is to carry out the civilian democratic control of the military through shaping and formulation of the national security policy.

e) Civilians, thus the local population, Civil Society Organisations and the media monitor the activities of other civil-military relations key players. Civilians offer alternative views on national security policy.
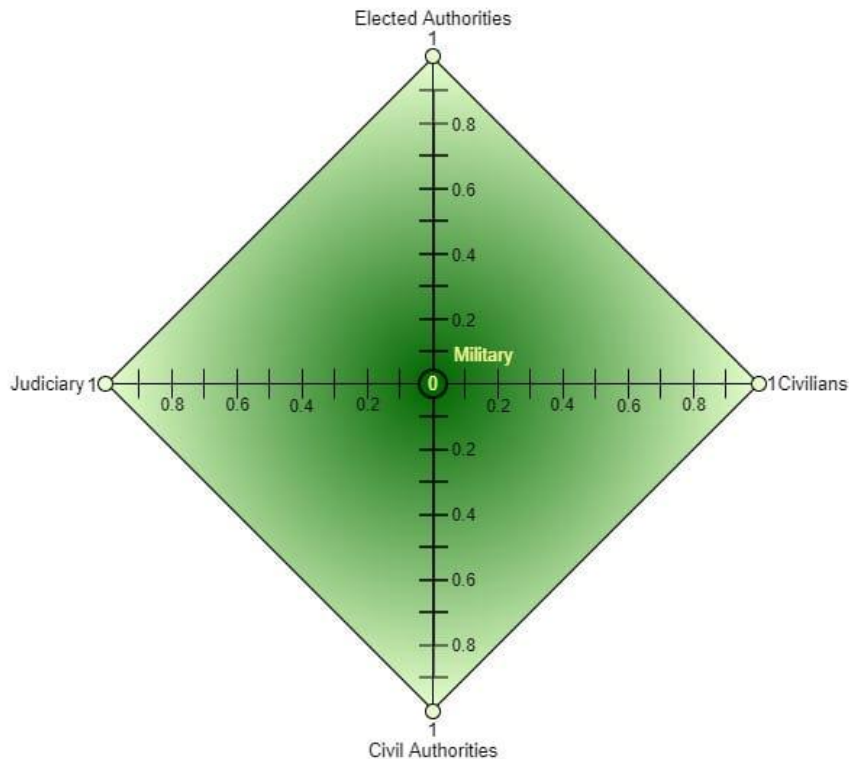

Figure 1: Civil-military relations rhombus diamond theory by Chazema et al. (2023).

2.2 Empirical evidence

Some studies on the drivers/factors or the aetiology of healthy civil-military studies have been conducted (Chazema et al., 2023). The studies agree that healthy civil-military relations are a function of some endogenous and exogenous factors that interplay in the civil-military community.

Agyekum (2022) and Hutchful's (2013) found that merit-based promotions and appointments and professional military education (PME) of the military personnel significantly and positively affected civil-military relations in Ghana. The country curbed persistent coups as it introduced a meritocracy policy when promoting and appointing its officers and soldiers. As a result, Ghana has been a stable country owing to the professionalization of its military.

Forman and Welch (1998), Bruneau and Tollefson (2006), Bryden and Olonisakin (2010), Bruneau and Tollefson (2006), Chuter (2011); Siegle (2022), Pantev (2005); Houngnikpo (2010) studies found that joint training between the citizenry, government officials and military personnel has a significant positive impact on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium. The joint training entails that each key civil-military relations player knows each other's role and fuse easily in the interest of democratisation

Agyekum (2022) and Hutchful (2013) studies noted the importance of representational societal makeup in the military as a determinant of peace and security. Representational recruitment of military personnel keeps civil-military relations in equilibrium as there are ethnic checks and balances within the military. Non-representational recruitment brings internal divisions and patronage system hence the military becomes politicised and degenerates into a tool of oppression.

Bruneau and Matei's (2013) studies noted that reforms of the military institution are necessary to conform to human security needs. Reformed militaries are subjected to the control of the democratically elected executive and legislature. Reformed militaries are efficient and effective in achieving their goals of defending territorial integrity and providing military aid to civil authorities and administration. Reforms of military institutions have a significant impact on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium as they did in Argentina where the country has enjoyed democracy against the backdrop of persistent coups.

Bryden and Olonisakin (2010); Bruneau and Matei (2013) studies noted the need for specialisation of civil-military relations community in defence matters. They noted persistent clashes between the military and other civil-military relations players on security issues. Lack of knowledge on security matters resulted in poor reporting, interpretation and implementation of security policies. As a result, the military clashed with the very same people whom they must protect.

Janowitz (1960); Forman and Welch (1998) and Owens (2013) studies found the delivery of public goods and services by the military has a significant impact on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium in the USA. The constabulary works of disaster management and infrastructure development brought the civil-military relations community closer and collaborated on issues of national interest. Disaster management and infrastructure development projects made the population rate their military highly even though the population did not fully know the roles of the military. The military's completion of tasks that directly impacted the population mattered most to the population.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This is a cross-sectional quantitative study covering six districts in Malawi that have military cantonments. These districts were Karonga, Mzimba, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Zomba and Blantyre and were deemed convenient because the population frequently interacts with the military and might have a better understanding of civil-military relations. Respondents were drawn from the judiciary, the military, the Ministry of Defence, the District Technical Security Committee, Members of Parliament and the local population.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Technic

A sample of 400 respondents (Slovin, 1960) who were sampled using cluster random sampling (Acharya et al., 2013) was obtained. The researcher used the Slovin statistics formula and proportional probability sampling technique since the target population census was known. From the sample, 386 questionnaires were completed successfully.

3.3 Data Collection Method

The paper used a structured questionnaire to collect data from respondents to examine the factors that can keep civil-military relations in equilibrium in Malawi. The independent variables measured in the structured questionnaire were 8: merit-based promotions; merit-based appointments; representational recruitment; joint training; reforms of the military institution; specialisation on defence matters; professionalization of the military; and delivery of goods and services. All independent variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging as 1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree. In contrast, the dependent variable (military i.e., equilibrium) was measured using a binary response (Yes or No).

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

Descriptive and inferential statistics analyses were used. The descriptive analysis used frequency and percentiles. Correlation and regression were used to show the relationship between independent and dependent variables in SPSS Version 20. The multiple regression model is a statistical technique that uses several explanatory variables to predict the outcome of a response variable. The multiple linear regression model was adopted to model the linear relationship between the explanatory (independent) variables and response (dependent) variables (Keith, 2015).

3.4.1 Model Specification

The multiple regression model was employed to test the research hypothesis; the military is a balancer in civil-military relations and a precondition to democratisation and a function of merit-based promotions, merit-based appointments, joint training and education between the military, citizenry and government officials, representational recruitment, reforms of the military institution, specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters, professionalization through professional military education and delivery of public goods and services. The following model was derived and applied for this study.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + e$$

Where: Y = the military is a balancer in civil-military relations and a precondition to

democratisation

x_1 = merit-based promotions

x_2 = merit-based appointments

x_3 = representational recruitment

x_4 = joint training

x_5 = reforms of the military institution

x_6 = specialisation on defence matters

x_7 = professionalization of the military

x_8 = delivery of goods and services

Y = dependent variable

e = Error term

$x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_8$ = independent variables

β_0 = Intercept (Constant term)

$\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_8$ = parameters of model

3.5 Reliability of the Instrument

As illustrated in Table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of all independent variables are greater than 0.70 which means the instrument for this research is reliable (Agresti, 2012).

Table 1: Reliability Coefficients of Variables

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Merit-based promotions of military personnel	8	.880
Merit-based appointments of the military personnel	8	.879
Joint training between the citizenry, government officials and military personnel	8	.904
Representational recruitment of military personnel	8	.891
Reforms of the military institution	8	.879
The specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters	8	.884
Professionalization through professional military education	8	.874
Delivery of public goods and services by the military	8	.896

Source: Own Survey Data SPSS Output (2023)

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Status of the Military as a Fulcrum in Civil-Military Relations

Table 2 shows the overall mean value of the military as a balancer in civil-military computed based on the Likert scale was 3.54 with a standard deviation of 1.062. This result indicates that the majority of the respondents agreed that the military is a balancer (fulcrum) of civil-military relationships in Malawi. These results support the argument of Chazema et al. (2023).

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Mean of Exploratory Variables

Dependent Variable	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
The military is a balancer in civil-military relations and a precondition to democratisation (Mean of the exploratory variables)	386	3.54	1.062

Source: Own Survey Data SPSS Output (2023)

4.2 Correlation Analysis Findings

Correlation analysis was performed to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) was used to test the levels of relationship between the variables (Table 4.2.1).

Table 3: Correlation between variables

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Merit-based promotions of military personnel	.817	.000
Merit-based appointments of the military personnel	.831	.000
Joint training between the citizenry, government officials and military personnel	.591	.000
Representational recruitment of military personnel	.712	.000
Reforms of the military institution	.822	.000
The specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters	.786	.000
Professionalization through professional military education	.863	.000
Delivery of public goods and services by the military	.703	.000

Source: Own Survey Data SPSS Output (2023)

It can be seen from the results in Table 4.2.1 that all independent variables have a significant positive relationship with the military as a balancer of civil-military relations (mean of the exploratory variables). This means that an increase in independent variables will result in an improvement in the dependent variable and vice-versa. Besides, merit-based promotions of the military personnel, merit-based appointments of the military personnel, joint training between the citizenry, government officials and military personnel; representational recruitment of the military personnel; reforms of the military institution; specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters; professionalization through professional military education; and delivery of the public goods and services by the military have a strong association with the dependent variable significant at 0.000 with $r=.817$, $r=.831$, $r=.591$, $r=.712$, $r=.822$, $r=.786$, $r=.863$ and $r=.703$, respectively.

4.3 Regression Analysis Findings

The study scrutinized the effect of the merit-based promotions of the military personnel, merit-based appointments of the military personnel, joint training between the citizenry, government officials and military personnel, representational recruitment of the military personnel, reforms of the military institution, the specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters, professionalization through professional military education and delivery of the public goods and services on the military as a balancer in civil-military relations. Table 4 shows the results of the regression analysis.

Table 4: Regression Analysis Results (Model Summary)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig. F Change
1.000[a]	1.000	1.000	.000

Source: Own Survey Data SPSS Output (2023)

Predictors: (Constant), Merit-based promotions of the military personnel; merit-based appointments of the military personnel, joint training between the citizenry, government officials and military personnel; representational recruitment of the military personnel; reforms of the military institution; The specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters; professionalization through professional military education; and delivery of the public goods and services.

As shown in Table 5, the model's adjusted R square (R^2) is 1.000. This means that 100% of the variance of the dependent variable (military as a balancer in civil-military relations) is explained by the variation in the independent variables.

The beta value (β) illustrates the degree to which each independent variable can explain the dependent variable. The significant level (0.000) indicates that the combination of these variables significantly (p<.001) predicts the dependent variable. Regression analysis results are shown in Table 4.3.2.

Table 5: Regression Analysis Results

Variables	β	p-value
Merit-based promotions of military personnel	.174	.000
Merit-based appointments of the military Personnel	.172	.000
Joint training between the citizenry, government officials and military personnel	.151	.000
Representational recruitment of the military Personnel	.155	.000
Reforms of the military institution	.157	.000
The specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters	.148	.000
Professionalization through professional military education	.168	.000
Delivery of public goods and services by the Military	.178	.000

Dependent Variable: Mean of exploratory variables. R^2 = 1.000. Note: significant 5%

Source: Own Survey Data SPSS Output (2023)

4.4 Hypotheses Testing

Table 4.3.2 results revealed that all 8 independent variables were significant at p=0.000 in keeping the civil-military in equilibrium. Merit-based promotions of military personnel have a significant and positive impact on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium with a beta value (β = .174) and at a 1% significant level (p= 0.000). This result is consistent with Agyekum's (2022) and Hutchful's (2013).

Merit-based appointments of military personnel have a significant effect on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium with (β = .172) and (p< .001). This result concurs with the second hypothesis (H2) of the study. The result is in agreement with the findings of Agyekum (2022) and Hutchful (2013).

Representational recruitment of military personnel has a significant positive impact on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium with (β = .155) and (p< .001), thus, supporting the fourth hypothesis (H4) of the study This result is supported by the findings of Agyekum (2022) and Hutchful (2013).

Delivery of public goods and services by the military has a significant effect on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium with (β =.178) and (p< .001). The results supported the sixth hypothesis (H6) of the study. This finding is in line with what Janowitz (1960); Forman and Welch (1998); Owens (2013) and Chazema et al. (2023) found.

Joint training between the citizenry, government officials and military personnel has a significant impact on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium with (β =.151) and (p< .001). The results validate the acceptance of the third hypothesis (H3). This result aligns with the findings of Forman and Welch (1998), Bruneau and Tollefson (2006), Bryden and Olonisakin (2010), Bruneau and Tollefson (2006), Chuter (2011); Siegle (2022), Pantev (2005); Houngnikpo (2010) and Chazema et al. (2023).

Reforms of military institutions have a significant effect in keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium with (β =.157) and (p< .001) The findings supported the fifth hypothesis (H5) of the study. This result is consistent with the findings of Bruneau and Matei (2013) and Chazema et al. (2023).

The specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters has a significant impact in keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium with (β =.148) and (p< .001) thereby supporting the seventh hypothesis (H7) of the study This result aligns with the findings of Bryden and Olonisakin (2010); Bruneau and Matei (2013) and Chazema et al. (2023).

Professionalization through professional military education has a significant impact on keeping civil-military relations in equilibrium with (β =.168) and (p< .001). The findings support the eighth hypothesis (H8) of the study. This result is consistent with the findings of Agyekum (2022); Hutchful (2013) and Chazema et al. (2023).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that merit-based promotions of the military personnel, merit-based appointments of the military personnel, joint training between the citizenry, government officials and military personnel, representational recruitment of the military personnel, reforms of the military institution, the specialisation of the key civil-military relations players on defence matters, professionalization through professional military education and delivery of the public goods and services have a significant positive relationship with the military as a fulcrum of civil-military relations and a determinant for democratisation in Malawi. The study further found that merit-based promotions, merit-based appointments, joint training, representational recruitment, reforms, specialisation on defence matters, professional military education and delivery of public goods and services have a significant contribution to the military as a fulcrum of civil-military relations and a precondition for democratisation in Malawi with beta value of .174, .172, .151, .155, .157, .148, .168 and .178 respectively. However, the contribution of these factors varied in influence. Delivery of public goods and services has the most significant effect, seconded by merit-based promotions and specialisation of defence matters being the least influential factor.

The paper recommends that civil-military relations in Malawi can be kept in equilibrium if the key stakeholders give considerable attention to these influential aetiological factors of healthy civil-military relations. This paper only focussed on factors that can keep Malawi's civil-military relations in equilibrium, as such, further research into the roles of the key civil-military relations players in Malawi to understand their practice is recommended.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest. Co-authors have reviewed and agreed to the manuscript, and there is no financial interest to report. The submission is original and has never been submitted to other journals for publication.

Acknowledgement

The authors extend heartfelt gratitude to all the respondents who participated in survey.

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