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# Gender, Gays and Gain: The Sexualised Politics of Donor Aid in Malawi

Emmie Chanika, John L. Lwanda and Adamson S. Muula

**Abstract:** Many Malawian politicians have exploited religious and cultural discourses, encouraging the discourse of the “God-fearing Malawi nation” while also acknowledging the country as a secular state. This discourse – which most recently underwent further development in the early 1980s when Christians and Muslims, funded by donor money, accelerated their evangelical drives in the context of a one-party Malawi – resonates with a patriarchal, conservative political dispensation. This paper traces the evolution of the “God-fearing nation” discourse in Malawian politics. It posits that the government used the “gay rights issue” as a strategy to disorient human rights activists and donors. Gay rights were de-linked from other civil rights, forcing a binary approach toward gay rights, which were seen by government supporters as “anti-Christian”, “anti-Malawian” concepts. The debate with donors enabled the government to claim “sovereign autonomy” and galvanise the population into an anti-aid mentality (better no aid than aid that supports homosexuality).

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**Keywords:** Malawi, domestic policy, foreign and development aid, homosexuals/homosexuality

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This analysis explores the interface between local and international politics, public religion, gender and sexuality in the relations between donors, human rights activists and NGOs and the Malawian government and people. It does this against a backdrop of the rhetoric by sections of political and religious establishments that Malawi is a “God-fearing Christian nation”<sup>1</sup> and that homosexuality is a concept foreign to Malawi and its culture (Sibande 2012). A significant factor here is the current reality that Malawi is a “donor-dependent” nation (cf. Peiffer and Englebert 2012), with donors providing funding to the government, as well as to NGOs that deal with human rights and HIV/AIDS issues.

During his rule, Dr Kamuzu Banda exploited culture (Forster 1994), religion (Muyebe and Muyebe 1999) and gender (Lwanda 1993; Semu 2002), utilising politicised cultural populism (Chirambo 2009). Bakili Muluzi, his successor, was also adept at using cultural discourse for political ends (Tambulasi and Kayuni 2005). Mutharika, a less-gifted public speaker, formed Mulhako wa Alhomwe, an ethnocultural organisation that maximised support for him from his ethnic group. Mulhako wa Alhomwe was publicly sold as a trust founded to provide exposure to the cultural traditions of the Lhomwe tribe. The purpose was

to expose children, and people from other tribes and countries, to the ethnic customs (dance, drumming, storytelling, poetry, tribal history, arts and crafts) as a means of promoting self-esteem, creativity and preservation of the Lhomwe tribal customs.<sup>2</sup>

His “re-construction” of the Mulhako group and “revision” of Lhomwe history echoed Dr Banda’s “re-invention of tradition” (Vail and White 1989). More recent, President Joyce Banda<sup>3</sup> has encouraged the formation of a Yao heritage group, attesting to the tendency of ruling politicians to maximise political stability and longevity by appealing simultaneously to “traditional conservatism”/orthodoxy and “modern” religious – mostly Christian – tenets for legitimacy (Lwanda 1993; Forster 1994; Semu 2002; Chirwa 2001).

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1 This analysis distinguishes the significantly powerful role that faith groups play as members of civil society – for example, the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) – in spreading “Christian” or “God-fearing nation” concepts. For the God-fearing discourses see official documents, like Malawi Vision 2020 at <[www.sdn.org.mw/malawi/vision-2020/index.htm](http://www.sdn.org.mw/malawi/vision-2020/index.htm)> and newspaper articles like Mhangochi (2012).

2 See their aims at <<http://mulhakowaalhomwe.org>> (28 September 2012).

3 No relation to Kamuzu Banda.

## History of Gay Rights in Malawi

As a British colony, Nyasaland's homosexual "rights and practices" were guided by the so-called "sodomy laws" (Human Rights Watch 2008). "Sodomy laws" are seen as a British colonial export to the colonies, via the Penal Code of India, Section 377 (Human Rights Watch 2008; Barclay et al. 2009). Section 377 formed the basis of the Nyasaland's "sodomy laws" in its own penal code of 1930. Rangeley (2000) notes the occurrence of sodomy in colonial Malawi.

There were no changes to the "sodomy laws" in the constitutional revisions made between 1965 and 1995. Indeed, these "sodomy laws" have not been changed despite all the freedoms bestowed by a "multiparty" dispensation and despite the new constitution which guarantees "human rights",<sup>4</sup> especially with regard to the freedom of expression, association, opinion, privacy and liberty. The Malawian Constitution spells out existing rights and opens a door toward legal clarification:

- (1) Discrimination of persons in any form is prohibited and all persons are, under any law, guaranteed equal and effective protection against discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status.
- (2) Legislation may be passed addressing inequalities in society and prohibiting discriminatory practices and the propagation of such practices and may render such practices criminally punishable by the courts (Constitution of Malawi, Chapter IV 20: 1 and 2).

During Dr Banda's era, between 1965 and 1994, having an open discussion about homosexuality was not possible in Malawi. Even so, reports from prisons and mines (Chirwa 1997; Mwangulube et al. 1997) showed that the existence of homosexuality was acknowledged by both citizens and colonial authorities. Even more significant, linguistic evidence – *cha matonde, mathanyula*<sup>5</sup> (Lwanda 2002) – and frequent newspaper reports of "defilement and buggery" showed that "homosexual practices" were known in urban (Mlozi 2012) and rural areas (National Youth Council of Malawi 2009).

One of the problems that NGOs and donors faced was presentational:

Many countries in Africa appear to have a de facto culture of tolerance (or indifference) to same-sex sexuality that amounts to freedom

4 See the Malawian Constitution at <[www.sdn.org.mw/constitut/dtindx.html](http://www.sdn.org.mw/constitut/dtindx.html)> (28 September 2012).

5 "Between two he-goats".

from discrimination, notwithstanding sometimes harsh laws and elite homophobic rhetoric[. ...] [T]he key proviso is that non-normative sexuality not be named as such, but take place under the umbrella of hetero-patriarchal constructions of family, faith, and African identity – don't ask, don't tell, in other words (Epprecht 2012: 223-224).

For most of the period between 1964 and 1991, a culture of public heterosexual machismo pervaded Malawi. The youth were cultured into this intolerance of public difference, whatever the private realities – (as linguistic and other evidence including numerous press reports suggest) – may have been. HIV/AIDS complicated matters as the initial epidemiology indicated that homosexuals were at high risk – as a consequence, they were stigmatised (Muula 2007).

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) communities in Malawi took slow, tentative steps and stands for their rights after the onset of the multiparty era. The Malawi Gay Rights Movement (Magrim) emerged only in 2008. And even the formation of that organisation was mired in controversy about the role of donors and Western interests; foreigners were seen as imposing their culture and sexualities on a “heterosexual” Malawi. A case in point was when Peter Sawali, a gay rights activist, was arrested by police for putting up public posters proclaiming “Gay rights are human rights”. The police spokesperson for the Southern Region, Davie Chingwalu, said:

We are still investigating because we believe there is a chain of people who were working with Sawali [... ] We cannot rule out international sponsors because of the quality and the quantity of the posters. They might even have been produced outside.<sup>6</sup>

The defining moment for public discussion of homosexuality and gay rights was the case of Tiwonge Chimbalanga and Steve Monjeza, two gay men who declared that they had married (Mujuzi 2011; Mlenga 2012). Even in a supposedly democratic free country, most Malawian commentators could not accept that these gay men could choose to go public. They claimed that foreign interests, and interestingly, money “had to be involved”. Some speculated it was a “political plot” of some kind. Few Malawian observers treated the Chimbalanga-Monjeza case on its *prima facie* merits. Some went as far as to question why a government that included two legal heavyweights, George Chaponda and Peter Mutharika, had let such a thing happen, unless it was by design. The fact that Peter Mutharika, a respected international constitu-

6 See *Newsjiffy*, Gay Rights Supporter Arrested in Malawi, 5 February 2010, online: <<http://brennybaby.blogspot.com/2010/02/gay-rights-supporter-arrested-in-malawi.html>> (5 October 2012).

tional expert and the second-most powerful man in government at the time, had little to say publicly on the matter only added to the speculation.

Although at the Malawian constitutional review conferences in 1995 and 2006 some human rights activists fought for the recognition of gay rights, these were not included in the prevailing definition of human rights. It is only when the relevant individual aspects of these rights are challenged that the specific issues are addressed. In the case of Monjeza and Chimbalanga, Malawian non-governmental and civil society organisations – mostly donor-funded – were caught between toeing the government line of “no homosexuality in Malawi” and supporting the individual rights of Chimbalanga and Monjeza. Some activists did speak up for the pair but it was not a unanimous chorus of human rights activists. “Progressive” authority figures found themselves disoriented. Take the case of Dr Mary Shaba, the principal secretary for HIV/AIDS in the Cabinet Office, who had previously been a “progressive” on the issue. She even

made it clear [in 2010] that the fight against the deadly disease cannot be meaningful if we decide to ignore homosexuals when we do have them in Malawi. Recent reports have shown that even children living in the streets are exposed to homosexuality. This only means that homosexuality is greatly practised in Malawi but it is not openly done (Center for Social Concern 2010: 7).

Despite her being thus on record and despite her public support for donor-funded projects that target men who sleep with men (MSM), she was, in this instance, forced to state that “homosexuality is alien to Malawi”.<sup>7</sup> These conflicting messages not only put Malawi’s progressive activists on the defensive, but also confused those donors who were unfamiliar with Malawi’s cultural mores (Lwanda 2003; Muula 2007). Inevitably, there was a perception that Malawi’s application to the Global Fund Round 10 was denied partly because of the contradictory messages the country was sending about wanting to prevent the transmission of HIV, yet providing no support toward MSM. While Malawi’s Global Fund application recognised MSM, Malawian public official discourses were largely anti-gay (Donnelly 2011).

Local controversies, stemming from various traditionalist or religious perspectives – those of Christians, Christian fundamentalists and “born-again” who “interpret the Bible literally”, Muslims, and those who consider LGBTI people to be un-African – have contributed to the debates (some-

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7 See *Wikileaks*, Malawi: Same Sex Arrest Update, cable 10Lilongwe20 of 8 January 2010, online: <[www.cablegatesearch.net/search.php?q=Malawi](http://www.cablegatesearch.net/search.php?q=Malawi)> at <<http://cablegatesearch.net/search.php?q=10lilongwe20&qo=71680&qc=2&qto=2012-12-28>> (9 June 2012).

times, paradoxically, having been informed by Western analyses) over the last few years (Mhango 2012b). In some instances, politicians and religious groups used their homophobia for different agendas. Among some Christians, the divergence of views often manifests in intra-church squabbles. For example, a potential Anglican bishop from England was rejected on the grounds that he had supported gay rights in the UK Anglican Church.<sup>8</sup> And as if to put some distance between her and the new ambiguities of the new female president, Anita Kalinde, a high-profile female MP, told schoolgirls that she did not believe homosexuality was part of Malawian culture and was against homosexuality “and all its forms” (Khunga 2012). Bishop Joseph Byumbwe of the Lutheran Evangelical Church stated that he did not want aid tied to projects in support of homosexuality (Nyayah 2011).

## Gender in Malawi

Many current dynamics of gender relations in Malawi have roots in precolonial and colonial times (Kachapila 2006; Davidson 2007). As a British colony, from a governance point, gender issues in the colony reflected those in other colonies and the metropolis, but had an added complication of local cultural factors. The colonial-era gender agenda was one of “agriculture, community development, and also education [...] home economics [...], needlecraft, [...] home care skills, cookery and nutrition” (Ngwira 2010: 1).

During the nationalist phase, women played a significant role in the struggle for independence (Rotberg 1965; Short 1974: 37-39; Ross 2009). After independence, Dr Banda created a movement for *mbumba* (“women”) with gender rights dependent on him as “Nkhoswe Number One”. His idea of gender liberation was translating the individual, *malume* (“uncle”) relationship from the personal to the state level, with him as the national *nkhoswe* (“avuncular figure”) rather than pushing for individual and national gender equality. This was a vision he had spelt out in *Our African Way of Life* in 1946.

But Kamuzu Banda’s Nkhoswe Number One experiment, with him as the uncle to all *mbumba*, was arguably an improvement. It gave women, if only on a personal basis in day-to-day interaction, some power in relation to men. That women did not fully capitalise on this was not always Dr Banda’s fault. Leaders from the Women’s League and from Chitukuko Cha Amai m’Malawi (CCAM), both formidable political movements, failed to ensure that their temporary experiments were reified into sustainable law (Green and Baden 1994: 58-59). The year 1975 was designated “International

8 See *BBC News*, Malawi Rejects “Pro-gay” Bishop, 2 December 2005, online: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4491376.stm>> (7 September 2012).

Women's Year". Despite certain rhetoric in Malawi, it was not until 1987, two years after the follow-up Nairobi UN Women's Conference, that Malawi became party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Chanika n.d.).

Dr Banda's first major Malawian *Statement of Development Policies: 1971–1986* "did not mention gender or women's issues" (Ngwira 2010: 1). It was not until the early 1980s, according to Ngwira, that "the Women in Development movement started to influence" the Ministry of Agriculture's extension programmes towards "empowering them [women] with access to strategic resources and skills" such as "credit and farm inputs". The next major steps (such as the Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education project) resulted from the fallout from the Nairobi Women's Conference in 1985 (Chanika n.d.). The Beijing Conference in 1995, which took place against a backdrop of multiparty democracy, thus increasing many women's expectations, was more influential in attitudinal changes, as "government formulated a policy on gender [and liberating and empowering 'the girl child'] became a key area of [...] policy" (Ngwira 2010: 1). Despite these gains, however, gender activists lost opportunities or were thwarted by the male-dominated administration of Bakili Muluzi, which sought to keep women on the periphery as supporters without acting to significantly improve their status. Despite the aspirations of the "Vision 2020" exercise in 1997/1998 (Vision 2020, 1.5.3), no legislative steps of note occurred.

More progress was made when gender activists, lawyers and businesswomen began translating their efforts into initiatives like the National Association of Business Women (NABW), formed in 1990, and Women In Law in Southern Africa (WILSA). In the multiparty dispensation, various NGOs emerged specialising in gender issues, such as domestic violence, law reform, child abuse, and economic empowerment via micro-finance. The period from 1994 to 2004 also coincided with the Poverty Reduction Strategies of the government. These programmes, like the Malawi Social Action Fund, saw the submerging of women into the totality of donor-driven programmes, and rural women were particularly passive, if willing, recipients of elite-run funding programmes. Although the 2006 Malawi Growth and Development Strategy put gender at the core of development programmes, no specific steps to address the disparity by means of specific measures or quotas were noted (Malawi Government 2006 and Ngwira et al. 2003).<sup>9</sup> The ascension to power of Joyce Banda, Malawi's first female president and one

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9 For a provocative "philosophical" perspective, see Mwale (2002).



of the founders of the NABW, promises to usher in a period of empowerment, not necessarily via legislation but via business.<sup>10</sup>

All three presidents addressed gender issues: Kamuzu Banda as *nkhoswe*; Muluzi tried to be a *gama*;<sup>11</sup> Mutharika appropriated the moniker “Ngwazi II”. In terms of gender and politics, the patriarchal attitudes and culture of politicians were reflected in how they used women as political support and as “dancers” (Semu 2002).

On sexuality, Mutharika was forced to openly discuss the “gay question”, and Muluzi’s sexual discourse was ribald and macho. However, there are no public records of Dr Banda’s views on homosexuality; it is always assumed that as a Kirk elder he was morally opposed to homosexuality, especially as he frowned on family planning and abortion (Kalipeni and Zulu 1993). Mapanje’s poem “The Cheerful Girls at Smiller’s Bar, 1971” encapsulated the hypocrisy of the one-party era where MPs said one thing by day and did the opposite at night. As elsewhere in Africa, Malawi had its share of fundamentalist American and European Christians funding their Malawian colleagues; some of these churches were anti-gay rights (Kaoma 2009: 3).

Thus a culture of religious fundamentalism and homophobia merged with traditional culture to produce a culture receptive to men as “head of the family” and all the patriarchal fallout from it. In this dynamic, women not only remained at an economic disadvantage but were also, in part due to that disadvantage, asking, “*Atikwatira ndani mukamakwatirana?*” (“Who will marry us if you [men] marry each other?”), a manifestation of what could be termed the “homophobia of poverty”.

## Donor Culture

Malawi has, though understandably due to its history and poverty, been “cursed” by a culture of donor dependency. The former colonial power, Britain, was followed by other nations of goodwill in funding Malawi’s many development projects over the years. However, the dependency on donor funding for capital and recurrent expenditures remains high, around 40 per cent. The roots of donors setting the agenda partly lie in the Cold War era when one had to be pro-West to access Western donor money or pro-East to access Russian money (cf. Peiffer and Englebert 2012). Englund (2006) argues that the donor/human rights NGO project can end up privileging

10 See *Forbes*, The World’s Most Powerful Black Women Business Leaders 2012, 31 August 2012, online: <[www.forbes.com/sites/worldviews/2012/08/31/the-worlds-most-powerful-black-women-business-leaders-2012/2/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/worldviews/2012/08/31/the-worlds-most-powerful-black-women-business-leaders-2012/2/)> (2 September 2012).

11 A diluted version of Kamuzu Banda’s Nkhoswe Number One.

the elites against the poor – largely by taking an individualist concept of human rights, forgetting the systemic socio-economic problems that beset Malawi. His argument can be exploited to show that donors collude with the elite to deprive the poor of opportunities to assert certain basic human rights. Kalebe-Nyamongo (2010) makes a similar point in his discussion of the mutual interdependence between elites and the poor. The government certainly exploited the poor in suggesting to Malawians that it was better to starve than to accept “gay-tinged” aid, which endorses/supports same-sex relations.

Donors came to the fore in the multifaceted battles for multiparty democracy; those fighting “dictatorship” had different agendas (Lwanda 2006). In many cases, donors were invited by multiparty activists to take stances against ruling parties. This gave the legitimisation, if any were needed, for Western governments to trade in their isolationist, Cold War stances for a position as donors of “aid for human rights”. The very proliferation of local NGO human rights organisations was dependent on donors keen to create “Western-style” democracies, even as local NGOs were eager to exploit and eventually become dependent on donor money (Lwanda and Chanika 2012). Worse, the Malawian government itself developed a severe dependency on donor money.

In the maelstrom that was the democratic transition and amidst the conflicting ideologies and egos of local NGO activists versus donor consultants, the very definitions of “priorities”, culture, gender, time frames, and so on, were not on the agenda. Therefore, when donors’ “in-your-face” promotion of LGBTI rights began to alienate the government and some local NGOs, it was too late for the local actors to bite the hand that fed them. And the donors had no other conduits to get their aid where it was intended to go. The muted response of some NGOs that should have vigorously defended sexual diversity gave ammunition to “traditionalists and homophobic elements” that were claiming that donors want to “[turn] Malawi[an] men gay” (Donnelly 2011).

The Malawian government itself was in the same position as the NGOs, in need of foreign aid for capital and recurrent expenditures (Wroe 2012). Ruling politicians also need to be seen to deliver, and donor money is often part of the patronage package; in addition, Mutharika’s Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has its eye on the 2014 elections. Despite homophobic rhetoric, Mutharika’s government was keen to continue receiving donor money that funded crucial HIV/AIDS projects, like the anti-retroviral programme. Even projects that addressed MSM issues indirectly, such as work in prisons, received donor support. The “institutional hypocrisy” of the Mutharika government was such that Mary Shaba could address some of

these issues using her “individualised role” to get past the president’s dogmatic declaration, “No gays in Malawi”. Thus her department could use donor money to address problems that “did not exist” without any change in government policy.

## Politics, Gays, Gender and Aid

As long as NGOs were receiving and using donor money for their projects, most of those projects became dependent on and subject to what became known as “donor culture”. It is a cyclical culture of need, proposal, donor input, donor dependency and, inevitably, donor fatigue, disenchantment or even withdrawal. Donors, too, have a culture of their own: target areas, consultants, projects and end points. And “projects” became writ large on the Malawian nation, with many “projects” substituting for state provision, this substitution itself permitting politicians to divert tax money elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> The interdependence between donors, the government and NGOs is thus simple.

Muluzi and Mutharika, in the full knowledge that donors were essential, attempted to neutralise donor influence by getting money from donors who did not “meddle in our politics”. When donors stood their ground, as did the Danes against Muluzi (Tenthani 2002) and the British against Mutharika, politicians put their own interests first. In both cases, valuable projects suffered.

As far as relations between the government and NGOs went, as long as NGOs did not threaten or criticise aspects of governance, there were no major problems. When NGOs criticised the government, ruling politicians sought to marginalise them (see Lwanda and Chanika 2012). This was accomplished by politicians deliberately separating gay or LGBTI rights from the totality of human rights and pointing out that these particular NGOs were supporting the introduction of homosexuality to Malawi by supporting their donor patrons’ commands to permit homosexuality in Malawi. Not only did politicians and their supporters, religious and otherwise, craftily isolate LGBTI rights from the totality of human rights, but they also sought to bring women on board by suggesting that men would be turned into “gays” by money, leaving no one to “marry them”.

Left to defend the isolated gay issues, activists occupied an awkward position: Any defence of human rights for aid became a defence of “aid for homosexual rights”. Politicians further recruited traditional “authority” to

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12 Such as spending on the five presidential state houses; large convoys; the treatment of elite patients in South African hospitals; and political rallies financed by government departments.

attempt to show that homosexuality and LGBTI issues were a foreign concept to Malawi. This tactic was designed to carry the rural constituency and further outmanoeuvre NGOs and other activists.

Politicians rarely used the gender issue; “gays” were almost always implied to be men. Although conservative elements do not agree with many aspects of gender equality, politicians in Malawi are aware of the strength of the female vote. The one instance of national “lesbian” publicity turned out to be a mistake – two actresses pictured in a play. But among some women, feminist or not, there is a degree of collective economic homophobia, best expressed by the question “If you [men] marry each other, who will marry us?” Given Malawi’s poverty, this fear is easily roused by politicians.

## Conclusion

A wag once observed that it was unfortunate that donors came to fund human rights; they should have come to fund health services, schools and roads instead. The focus of their funding then became human rights, often at the expense of basic rights. Malawian politicians, aware of the *sungadye demokalase* (“you can’t eat democracy”) discourses, often exploit this contradiction, promising the populace improvements in basic provisions like fertiliser, health services and education, while exploiting donors and taxpayers to – essentially – fund their own political agendas. Although most Malawians know that they are donor-dependent, politicians feign (before their own citizens and the rest of the world) Malawi’s economic independence. This is achieved by the use of rhetoric and, if required, force.

Donor dependency, contrary to the opinion of some observers, does not reduce Malawian politicians’ options; rather, it gives them more scope for autocracy and “extraversion”. In Malawi, politics is a “major industry” and nothing energises power politics more than a clash involving “modernity”, culture, gender, religion and politics, as the gay rights debate has demonstrated. The debate, while ostensibly pitting “heterosexual traditionalists” and fundamentalist religious groups against liberal sexual rights activists, was exploited by politicians. The politicians and their allies even managed to recruit some women’s groups, citing the “who will marry us” argument. This recruitment itself exploited poverty, the very problem which most donors are meant to tackle.

Further, the relative silence and/or timidity of some of the arguments for gay rights from local NGOs exposed the differences between some local NGOs and their foreign donors. The “who will marry us” argument was a reflection of how the debate had led to a retrogression of women’s rights.

Although development is the responsibility of the recipient nation, donors do have both a role and a responsibility in the political dynamics of development and liberalisation; through a quirk of history, they can be another plank in the forces that dis/enable democratisation or “political liberalisation” (Peiffer and Englebert 2012). It is how they exercise their leverage that counts. In Malawi, donors had allowed themselves to be sucked into an essentially domestic component of the “sovereign right” argument.

Malawi is already becoming addicted to another donor, China. The Chinese have not, so far, broached the topic of gay rights. But Malawi and its donors need to begin the process of weaning the country off of its dependency; as a suggestion, a version of the Marshall Plan would be a good start on the donors’ side.<sup>13</sup> On the Malawian side, there is an urgent need to learn to invest donations in money-generating projects, freeing activists from government and donor patronage. Only then can activists debate “rights” in a manner not subject to various political, sexual and monetary considerations.

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13 Cf. George C. Marshall Foundation, *The Marshall Plan*, online: <[www.marshallfoundation.org/TheMarshallPlan.htm](http://www.marshallfoundation.org/TheMarshallPlan.htm)>.

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## **Gender, Gays and Gain: Entwicklungshilfe für Malawi und die Rechte Homosexueller**

**Zusammenfassung:** Für ihren Diskurs der "God-fearing Malawi Nation" bedienten sich viele Politiker Malawis an religiösen und kulturellen Debatten, während sie Malawi gleichzeitig als säkularen Staat anerkannten. Dieser Diskurs wurde in den frühen 1980er Jahren fortentwickelt, als Christen und Muslime im Rahmen des malawischen Einparteiensystems – und unterstützt von externen Geldgebern – ihren Glaubenseifer steigerten. In ihm schwingt die Vorstellung patriarchalischer, konservativer politischer Verhältnisse mit. Der vorliegende Beitrag verfolgt die Entwicklung des Diskurses der "God-fearing Nation" in der malawischen Politik. Die Autoren zeigen auf, wie die Regierung die Frage der Rechte für Homosexuelle zur Desorientierung von Menschenrechtsaktivisten und Gebern einsetzte: Die Rechte Homosexueller wurden von den anderen Bürgerrechten getrennt betrachtet und so konnte zu diesen Rechten – die von Unterstützern der Regierung als „antichristlich“ oder antimalawisch“ angesehen wurden – ein entgegengesetzter Standpunkt eingenommen werden. In der Auseinandersetzung mit den Gebern ver-

suchte die Regierung, sich als souverän und autonom darzustellen und in der Bevölkerung eine Antihaltung gegenüber externen Zuwendungen zu wecken: Lieber keine Hilfe als eine Hilfe, die zur Förderung der Homosexualität beiträgt.

**Schlagwörter:** Malawi, Innenpolitik, Auslands- und Entwicklungshilfe, Homosexuelle/Homosexualität