



The Dance of Politics: Gender, Performance, and Democratization in Malawi (African Soundscapes)

Lisa Gilman

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Election campaigns, political events, and national celebration days in Malawi usually feature groups of women who dance and perform songs of praise for politicians and political parties. These lively performances help to attract and energize throngs of prospective voters. However, as Lisa Gilman explains, “praise performing” is one of the only ways that women are allowed to participate in a male-dominated political system.

Although political performances by women are not unique to Malawi, the case in Malawi is complicated by the fact that until 1994 *all* Malawian women were *required* to perform on behalf of the long-reigning political party and its self-declared “President for Life,” Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda+. This is the first book to examine the present-day situation, where issues of gender, economics and politics collide in surprising ways. Along with its solid grounding in the relevant literature, *The Dance of Politics* draws strength from Gilman’s first-hand observations and her interviews with a range of participants in the political process, from dancers to politicians.

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